

At the last meeting of the Academy of Medicine for the season there was a social reunion and collocation, and at that of the New York County Medical Association, a discussion on "The Natural Mechanism of the Expulsion of the Placenta, and the Proper Management of the Placental Period," by Drs. Harrison, Lusk, Shrady, Dudley and others.

P. B. P.

### "Sioux Midwifery in Chicago." A Reply.

*Dear Sir:*—The dignity of a journal like THE JOURNAL requires impartiality towards every member of the Association, and a little reserve in the condemnation of professional opinions based on observation. They may not be in accordance with the ideas of the editors of THE JOURNAL, or the current methods of leading members of the profession. Is it a crime to have independent notions? Every honest endeavor to find a truth is honorable. To find what is best for suffering humanity must be the aim of our profession, not the glory of individuals. We may all err sometimes in striving to accomplish our aims. Erring is a human attribute—infallible only the Pope. I am willing to admit that I have been mistaken all these years, if THE JOURNAL convinces me that women have come to grief under my management. Let THE JOURNAL prove that my patients thought themselves cruelly maltreated. If so, why should they have employed me again? My experience tells me that other women did not in the least do better than my patients.

THE JOURNAL calls my method a relic of barbarism. Why? Because I have been using my hands to complete the work in one minute which nature might *perhaps* have accomplished in five or ten days—*perhaps* not in so many weeks. Why does the surgeon take off a frozen or a necrotic limb? Why doesn't he wait until nature accomplishes this? Because experience has taught him the sooner dead tissue is detached from the living the better for the whole organism. Should not the same hold good for parturient women? THE JOURNAL speaks of the fearful danger of septic infection. Roemer, of Berlin, says that in both the non-interfering methods the ratio of puerperal sepsis was about the same. Ahlfeld's method gave an increase of post-partum hæmorrhage. I have claimed, and can prove it, that I lost in all my obstetrical practice only three cases from *any* cause. Should I not be entitled to draw conclusions and say whatever there is to be said to defend my standpoint? Speaking of air embolism; that I should not have seen one single case! How should they happen? The firm and speedy contraction of the muscular structure of the organ, induced by gentle manipulation in and outside of the uterus, until it drives the hand out, is the surest prevention of such a horrible accident. THE JOURNAL ridicules my expression about knowing

the pelvic organs of my patients as well as I know their faces. I hope surgeons, and especially obstetricians, will admit that a *well educated hand* is a pretty good substitute for the eyes.

The large numbers of lying-in houses do not impress themselves upon my mind favorably. There is no control over the condition of the women after they are discharged on the tenth or twelfth day post-partum. It is different in private practice. The patient is seen time and again for months or years. One hundred well observed cases in private practice are worth thousands of hospital statistics. We are in the age of numerous statistics. They certainly are valuable, and I am far from underestimating the precious work done by these gentlemen. But for all of it, I must have the right to gain my own conviction from what I experience. Possibly my method is as old as the world. There have been observing, independent, thinking people in all ages, in all nations. Logical conclusion from effect to cause has been the guide for clear thinkers of all ages. Empiricism has been the mother of all wisdom on earth. It is not twenty-five years since chemistry attempted to reverse this order of things, by establishing and fixing the laws of molecular changes, and then by analogy could say, such a stuff will act like those, because they belong to the same molecular composition. But even then it has to be proved how the substance would act in the living organism. We know of a very few drugs what rôle they play in the organism. What we know is from observation and empiricism. To know what we are doing when we administer to suffering humanity should be our aim.

To gain the best possible knowledge of our patient's body (and spirit) is compulsory. This is carried so far as to open the cavities of the human body—explorative; and then, in the face of this fact, should it be called a crime to explore the cavity of a widely dilated parturient uterus?

From the tenor of THE JOURNAL, critic I expect nothing less than to be put on trial for heresy, and sentenced to—capital punishment, in the nineteenth century, by a tribunal of inquisitors, for having an opinion of my own. Yours very respectfully,

ROSA H. ENGERT, M.D.

August 8, 1888.

### Acute Rheumatism in an Infant.

*Dear Sir:*—On reading the report of a case of acute rheumatism in an infant reported in THE JOURNAL, vol. x, No. 24, by Alex. Guthrie, M.D., of Cairo, Ill., I was forcibly reminded of two cases occurring in my own practice of recent date.

I was summoned to see the infant son of Mr. R. W., who was only 2 weeks old, with the statement that the child would cry upon the slightest movement. I found the temperature above nor-

mal, with considerable swelling of both elbow-joints. I informed the parents that it was a case of rheumatism, and gave mercury and salicin in 24 doses every three or four hours. The child in a few days was much improved, and was very soon quite well. The mother informed me several weeks later that she had suffered with rheumatism during the entire period of gestation.

The second case was the infant son of Mr. Kennedy. The physician who attended Mrs. K. in her confinement had informed me that she had after-pains of a character that he had never before witnessed, and failed to be relieved by treatment such as he had usually prescribed. About two weeks later I was called upon by Mr. K. to give him some remedy for a persistent colic—stating that both he and Mrs. K. had not had a night's rest since the birth of their child, who cried incessantly at night unless under the influence of an anodyne. His bowels were constipated, never having an action unless from the effect of a cathartic. Suspecting rheumatism from a previous history of the mother's case, I so expressed myself. Mr. K. was given

R. Acid salicyl . . . . .	ʒvj.
Bicarb. sodæ . . . . .	ʒiv.
Glycerin . . . . .	ʒiv.
Aquæ . . . . .	ʒiv.

℞. et S. A tablespoonful every four hours for thirty-six hours, then a dessertspoonful three times a day until relieved.

This treatment was continued until both she and the babe were entirely relieved of their pains, and are now quite well. Constipation in the child was relieved by a small dose of glycerine warmed and given by enema once daily. I am fully convinced that this was a case of rheumatism of the bowels commencing from the birth of the child, which was relieved in a very short time by the administration of salicylic acid to the mother.

Jessie L., a primipara, had intermittent fever at the time of the birth of her daughter. The child had a decided chill and fever on the second day after birth, which was promptly relieved by minute doses of calomel and quinine given for several days to the child. Respectfully,

B. A. DUNCAN, M.D.

West Point, Miss.

#### "Penny Wise—Pound Foolish."

Dear Sir:—In your editorial in THE JOURNAL of June 9, you failed to note one of the most glaring falsehoods that "Justice" makes. He says that on page 70 of the Laws of Illinois, 1887, you will observe that there were over \$58,000 appropriated for the use of the State Board of Health. Please refer to Laws of Illinois, 1887, and see how this statement "pans out." He also fails to mention that \$40,000 of this appropriation was a contingent fund, only to be used in cases of epidemics in the State, etc. Campaign orators are using

this pamphlet to prejudice the people against the State Board of Health.

How much of the contingent fund has been used? Very truly yours,

T. J. WHITTEN, M.D.

Nokomis, Ill., August 2, 1888.

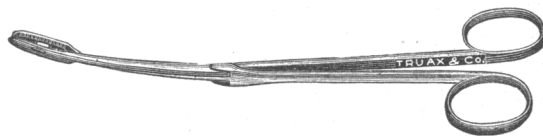
[Thus far \$400 only of the contingent fund have been used. About \$2,000 will be used in the investigation of the State water-supply, now in progress.—EDITOR.]

## NEW INSTRUMENTS.

### FORCEPS FOR REMOVING NASAL POLYPI.

BY T. C. KENNEDY, M.D.,  
OF SHELBYVILLE, IND.

Having on several occasions been called upon to remove nasal polypi, I have devised an instrument which I believe will be more satisfactory to the operator than the straight nasal forceps in common use. I sent to Chas. Truax, of Chicago, and had made the forceps shown in the accompanying cut.



The blades are made with an adjustable back, and are to be introduced separately. There is a slight bend in the blades, so that the hand of the operator is kept out of the line of vision.

When the locked forceps are used, the nares is perfectly occluded, and the forceps seizes any soft, non-resisting tissue that comes within its grasp, often tearing away membrane, and even bone, that should not be disturbed. By using the separable forceps this difficulty is overcome, and the operator can see exactly what he is taking hold of, and does not run the risk of tearing away more than is necessary.

August 13, 1888.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

SCAMPED DRAINS.—A case came before the Court of Appeal last week in which the plaintiff had bought a house from the defendant; the latter, in answer to an inquiry as to the state of the drains, having stated that he had spent £50 in putting them in order. Relying on this statement, the house was purchased; but soon three members of the plaintiff's family were suffering from enteric fever. On this occurrence taking place, the drains were opened up, and a condition of things was discovered which involved, amongst other things, the removal of forty cartloads of sewage-contaminated earth. For the alleged misrepresentation, the illness, the alterations,