

ble." More than twenty of these persons, when asked for a candid expression of their experience, said that this gave very decided relief in extracting teeth, and that they preferred to trust it again if ever needed. All of these persons had had teeth extracted before, and some of them had inhaled chloroform or ether on former occasions.

The box of teeth I place here on the table for examination, contains some 30 or 40 of those *actually extracted without pain by the aid of galvanism*. It is evident that such teeth ordinarily give great pain in extracting. The rationale I am not prepared to give. No known current or shock of electricity, or galvanism, however modified or applied, has been known to be instantaneously paralyzing, or benumbing to pain under ordinary circumstances, without being also disorganizing more or less, and hence dangerous. We make use of no such current or shock. But a to-and-fro current from a Sinee's Battery, with the strongest pole attached to the forceps; and contact made exactly at the instant that the instrument fastens upon the tooth, does succeed in taking away three-fourths of the awful pain experienced in having teeth extracted. To have uniformity of success, the electrical current must be gentle, and adjusted, as to intensity, for each case according to the experience of the operator; and this current must be insulated from the hand that holds the instrument, as well as from the lips and gums of the patient, so as to spend its exact quantity of force on the tooth only. It is certainly a nice operation to succeed, but I believe, when carefully and accurately performed, it will more generally succeed than in these cases I now report. If any one item in the process is not observed, the whole is a failure.

EXTENSIVE SLOUGHING OF THE ABDOMINAL PARIETES, WITH EXPOSURE OF THE INTESTINES.

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E. M., forty-three years of age; married, and the mother of five children. The first was born when she was at the age of 23, and the youngest at the age of 34 years. Of medium height, but of strong and athletic form; catamenia, except during gestation and lactation, always regular.

Her first four children were born by head presentations; her labors were easy and of short duration. The fifth and last child was a footling presentation, and of very large size. The labor, however, was not long, having commenced in the morning and terminated about 12, M. The child being born, the placenta was retained; this, the physician in attendance was compelled to deliver, and in the act employed considerable force in order to detach it from its connection with the uterus, causing severe pain, which was referred especially to a point beneath and below the left hypocho-

drium. During the succeeding two weeks, she continued to experience much pain in this region. She now discovered "a purple spot, of the size of a walnut," in or near the median line, and about three inches below the umbilicus. At this stage she became delirious, and so continued for a number of days (the precise time not remembered). The spot referred to gradually increased in size, till its area equalled that of an ordinary hat-crown. The skin, together with the several layers of muscles composing this portion of the walls of the abdomen, sloughed away, leaving the intestines beneath completely exposed.

When consciousness returned, the abdomen presented the same appearance as at the time of examination, which was 5 years subsequent, except that the abdominal fenestra thus formed had contracted to a considerable degree its dimensions. Its form corresponds to that of an irregular ellipse, the transverse diameter being about 4 inches, and at right angles to the median line, while its conjugate is about 3 inches. Convolutions of intestine close the opening thus described, and appear to have contracted adhesions both to each other and to the parietal peritoneum at the margin of the perforation, throughout its entire circumference, in such manner as to furnish a closed sac for the other abdominal viscera, yet not seriously interfering with the peristaltic action which can be clearly observed. This action at times causes a large mass of intestines with their contents to protrude to the extent of from 15 to 20 cubic inches, unless firm mechanical contrivances be adopted to prevent. The intestinal peritoneum, in consequence of exposure, and friction of compresses, has entirely lost its true serous appearances and texture; it is quite moist, and resembling that condition seen in granular conjunctivitis. Near the right extremity of the axis was seen a deep depression, which, upon farther exploration, was found to extend between the folds of the intestines and mesentery, and to terminate at a point near the spinal column.

Immediately upon the detachment of this extensive slough, the intestines were discovered to be perforated at three different points, one near either extremity of the transverse axis, and the third near the centre of the hernial mass. These still remain open, hitherto resisting the efforts of nature to close them, the interposition of art never having been invoked.

Their size was not definitely determined, they not being evident upon the surface presenting, but in the sulci between convolutions of the intestines, and only relatively ascertained from the varying amount of fæces finding exit therefrom. Through these fistulæ more than twice the quantity of fæces escapes as per annum; evacuation takes place naturally by the latter once in two or three days. Cathartics taken into the stomach produce kindly their well-established effects, stimulating peristaltic action, and occasioning discharges through these orifices as well as per anum, but in the proportions before stated. She attempts a degree of cleanliness, but

with very imperfect success, by wearing a compress of cotton cloth over the perforation, and over it a swathe carried around the body. Still her presence, in consequence of the disagreeable fecal odor emitted, is quite offensive to those near her, and scarcely less so to herself.

This grave infirmity disqualifies her from engaging in many occupations in which others more fortunate easily obtain their livelihood. This for the most part she gains by washing and other kindred laborious service. With this deplorable exception, she is perfectly healthy, every organ performing well its appropriate function. Being without a home, and destitute of the means to secure one, no relief was attempted. This was, however, suggested, and would have been undertaken had she been more favorably situated.

In justice to myself it ought to be stated that these notes were committed to writing some months subsequent to the time of examination, which at best was made hastily, late in the afternoon, and in a room very imperfectly lighted; I then expected to make another more carefully and completely in a few days, but this privilege I have never been permitted to enjoy. Some important features in the case have in consequence been omitted, and others perhaps in some slight degree misstated. I have used every means, by correspondence, to ascertain her present residence, but without success, that I might now, after the lapse of five years, complete that which I had before neglected, or at least have the opportunity of verifying the above statements.

Boston, July, 1858.

WILLIAM DICKINSON.

REMOVAL OF THE FLUID OF ANASARCA AND ASCITES BY PUNCTURES IN THE LOWER EXTREMITIES.

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IN the number of this JOURNAL for April 8th, of the present year, I gave the particulars of a case, which, though perfectly satisfactory as to the advantage and propriety of this operation, necessarily ended fatally a few days after the report was forwarded. The following case, still more interesting, occurred in a man under treatment, in Ward 32 of the Charity Hospital, for consumption; a well-marked case, presenting all of the physical signs, and too well known general symptoms of the disease in its apparently most hopeless form. After this patient had been under treatment for upward of two months, without having evinced the least appearance of a dropsical tendency, he began to complain of swelling of his feet, which, upon examination, were found very sensibly to pit, on pressure being made. This swelling gradually and