

Of Mauriceau's eighteen cases, according to the above table, three proved fatal: one died undelivered because she would not allow any treatment to be adopted; another (484) died twelve days after delivery, from diarrhœa. These two cases have been used to swell the fatal list of maternal mortality in placental presentation, where the established mode of treatment was employed.

From the above statement it appears that Portal also observed eighteen cases of placental presentation, only one of which likewise proved fatal, and this result arose from the operation of turning not being performed sufficiently early. It was not the operation for turning that destroyed the mother, but the want of it, and yet this case appears in Dr. Simpson's new statistical table of the Mortality of Placental Presentations as a case of death where the established mode of practice was duly adopted.

In the second edition of the statistical table, Mauriceau and Portal's cases are thus stated—

Reporters.	Number of cases.	Mothers lost.
Mauriceau	18	3
Portal	14	1

These four cases of "mothers lost" are added to forty-one mothers said to have been lost in the practice of Dr. J. Ramsbotham, and forty-nine in that of Dr. F. Ramsbotham and other reporters, and the following remarkable conclusion is drawn:—According, then, to the evidence of this table, out of 654 cases of unavoidable hæmorrhage, this complication was fatal to the mother in 180 instances, or one in every three or four of the mothers (1 in $3\frac{1}{3}$) perished in connexion with it."

A third edition of this famous statistical table, it is obvious, must soon appear, to upset the present edition, which is full of omissions and errors. I would propose, among the corrections, that the following be made at the commencement of the forthcoming table, to show truly the number of mothers lost in the practice of Mauriceau and Portal, from turning in placental presentation:

Reporters.	Number of cases.	Mothers lost.
Mauriceau	18	1
Portal	18	0
Sum total	36	1

It is further alleged that I have committed "errors regarding Dr. J. Ramsbotham's cases." The following extract from a letter of Dr. F. Ramsbotham to me, dated Oct. 9th, 1847, will satisfactorily show how little truth there is in the assertion. "Again," says Dr. F. Ramsbotham, "the cases which my late father published in his 'Practical Observations' were all selected cases; and most of them, under every complication, as well as that of placental presentation, were chosen for their danger or difficulty: the average of the maternal mortality, therefore, appears from these cases to be very much greater than occurred to him in the generality of similar cases. It is consequently very *unfair*, as well as erroneous, to add such cases to any general table from which to adduce or calculate an average of deaths. I believe you are aware that I put the subject in this light when Dr. Churchill published his 'Statistics.' I also stated the same to Dr. Simpson, and he, seeing such a mode of proceeding would altogether destroy the value of statistical reports, asked me to send him a tabular account of all my father's cases of placental presentations, as well as a similar table of my own." It is of no consequence whether Dr. Simpson borrowed from Dr. Churchill's "Midwifery" or from his "Statistics;" that he did borrow, and largely too, the errors of Dr. Churchill, there can be no doubt. Portal's cases were omitted in Dr. Churchill's table; and I verily believe, if the truth were known, that Dr. Simpson inconsiderately trusted to Dr. Churchill's accuracy instead of mine, which would not have misled him, when he excluded Portal's cases from his table, and was not ashamed to profess openly that he was wholly unacquainted at the time with Portal's work, which it is utterly impossible to believe. Dr. Churchill having candidly acknowledged that his table, which was composed by a pupil, and not by himself, contains errors, it must be wholly unnecessary for me to notice those which it is said I have fallen into respecting Dr. Churchill's table. This table I have already stated must be set aside, put out of the way as wholly useless, like Dr. Simpson's old rickety table.

I regret extremely to say, that in spite of all the labour bestowed by Dr. Simpson on cases recorded of placental presentation in my "Clinical Midwifery," and elsewhere, I cannot discover any of the errors respecting my own cases which he has attempted to point out; but in the second edition of my "Clinical Midwifery," now in the press, if any such errors exist, I shall feel the greatest pleasure in correcting them.

I now beg leave to quit this subject, which, after all, is not the one really at issue. The question under discussion is, not whether I have omitted one of Mauriceau's cases, or have left out another in my table of cases, circumstances which could not possibly affect the practical results;—but the point in dispute is—Did Dr. Simpson write a statistical table containing numerous gross blunders and misrepresentations—a table which he imposed upon the profession as containing a true account of the mortality in unavoidable uterine hæmorrhage, where the established practice was adopted, and on the strength of which table he endeavoured to introduce another mode of practice, the result of which could only be of the most deplorable character? The utter worthlessness of Dr. Simpson's statistics, and the danger of the plan he recommends to tear away the adherent placenta from the neck of the uterus, and to leave the child to its fate, have now been most triumphantly demonstrated, and therefore they require no further notice from me.

Savile-row, October, 1847.

Postscript.—The following important communication has just been received from Dr. F. Ramsbotham, from which it appears most clearly that the great mortality in placental presentation does not depend upon the injury inflicted by the operation of turning, but because the operation is not performed in due time. In twenty-six of the seventy-four fatal cases of turning by Dr. Ramsbotham and his father, it will be seen that the patients were moribund before the operation had commenced.

"14, New Broad-street, Oct. 19th, 1847.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have looked over the tables of my father's and my own placental presentations, and the following is a synopsis of the two together. The whole number is 318; of these, 134 were entire presentations, and 184 partial. In 184 cases where the child presented, either with the head or transversely, 'turning' was resorted to; of these, sixteen were transverse presentations, one being a second of twins. Of the 184 cases in which turning was performed, seventy-four women died, and 110 recovered; one of those that recovered died suddenly in a month. I should say that at least twenty-five or twenty-six were moribund when the operation was undertaken, many of them, indeed, being marked so, and others dying within a quarter or half an hour, and two besides died undelivered. In twenty-one cases the breech or feet presented; in all these delivery was more or less accelerated by traction at the feet. There were six cases of twins. In three, craniotomy was performed, the head presenting; besides those in which the base of the skull was perforated, after the breech and shoulders were brought down; and five were delivered by the forceps. The proportion of twins is rather more than the ordinary average—almost double; but that can easily be accounted for by the double placenta occupying more space in the uterus than a single one, and the consequent greater chance of some part of it being situated over or near to the mouth. But a principal feature that this list displays, is the amazing comparative number of transverse and breech, or footling cases, as I remarked before. This would indicate that when one irregularity in regard to the uterine contents exists, another is likely to be superadded.

"Believe me, my dear Sir, very truly yours,

"To Dr. Lee."

"FRANCIS H. RAMSBOTHAM.

ETHERIZATION IN MEDICAL PRACTICE.

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THE satisfactory results which have accrued from the use of ether-inhalation, for the purpose of "cheating pain" in surgical operations, have naturally led to their employment in the medical treatment of painful diseases. A large number of observations must of necessity be made, before this remedy can obtain the confidence of the profession, not only because we have to learn in what cases it will do good, but also because medical men have to be assured under what condition of the system it will do no harm, how frequently it may be safely administered, and what are the circumstances contraindicating its repetition. With this amount of ignorance, then, as to its practical application, it behoves all those who undertake the determination of these points, to exercise great caution in the selection of cases for experiment; and also, to approach the investigation with a mind unbiassed by prejudice, and willing to see failure as well as success. It is with the object, accordingly, of eliciting from the correspondents

of THE LANCET the result of their observations on this subject, rather than because I regard my own as in any way conclusive, that I desire the publication of the following cases. Few as they are, however, they are capable of teaching something:—

CASE 1.—Elizabeth B—, aged thirty-seven, applied at the dispensary, on April 30th, in consequence of having suffered, for four days, from very severe lumbago. She had a former attack seven weeks previously, and the present one she attributes to a renewed exposure to cold. The lumbar pain is most severe at ten o'clock in the evening, lasting, then, through a considerable part of the night; in the remissions, however, she is quite unable to stoop. General health otherwise good, but bowels very costive. Not wishing to use any special remedy for the rheumatism, before employing the ether, I ordered merely a purgative of calomel and jalap.

May 1st.—Pain in the loins increased; bowels have not been relieved. Catamenia appeared to-day; states that she usually suffers but little pain at these periods. Ordered to repeat the calomel and jalap, and to take half an ounce of castor oil every four hours, till the bowels are freely acted on.

4th.—Catamenia ceased to-day; but as they usually return afterwards, for another day the ether-inhalation was deferred. Bowels have acted three times, but not at all yesterday or to-day. Lumbar pain very severe; extends down as far as the knees; chiefly on the left side. Complains of a troublesome cough when she lies down, which increases the pain in the loins. To take half a drop of croton oil every night.

6th.—Bowels freely acted on. Pain very severe. Urine presents no deposit of lithates. Inhaled the ether for fifty seconds, when she fell asleep, and continued to sleep for two minutes, during which time, the pulse was remarkably slow and weak. After an interval of five minutes, she again inhaled the ether. She was now asleep in thirty seconds; slept for a short time; and very gradually recovered; the recovery being accompanied by a little delirium. She can now stoop readily; and declares that the loins are quite free from all pain and tenderness.

7th.—The freedom from pain lasted ten hours, but she felt "giddy and flighty" all the evening. It returned, however, in the night, during sleep, and awoke her at twelve o'clock, later than the ordinary period of exacerbation, by two hours. Still she can stoop much better than she could yesterday, and also can raise herself more readily; and whereas yesterday she was unable to draw a deep breath, in consequence of the pain, she can do so to-day, with but little inconvenience. Refused to inhale again, and left the dispensary.

In this case, the ether administered during the remission removed uneasiness for ten hours, retarded the nocturnal paroxysms for two hours, and rendered the subsequent remission of pain more perfect than the former. On the other hand, it did not prevent the return of the nocturnal attack. It proved palliative, therefore, and showed signs of being curative, had its use been persisted in. The pulse of persons under the influence of ether is commonly increased in frequency and force. In this instance, the contrary occurred, and yet no evil results followed, and she bore well a repetition of the dose. Another circumstance to be noted is, that the second inhalation produced its effect in a little more than half the time required for the first.

CASE 2.—John H—, aged fifty-eight years, a labourer, of short stature and stout conformation; of temperate habits; has been subject to attacks of lumbago, of greater or less severity, for the last two years, and the present one has lasted for a month. He now complains of severe pain in the loins, especially when he attempts to stoop, to turn in bed, or to rise from a recumbent posture; he is relieved by warmth; there is no tenderness accompanying the pain. Ordered, on May 1st, to be cupped on the loins to ten ounces; a purgative of calomel and jalap was prescribed, and also a colchicum mixture.

May 4th.—Pain relieved after the cupping; has walked about a quarter of a mile to the dispensary; no headache; bowels freely open. Ordered to omit his medicine. Inhaled the ether: the eyes were fixed in 110 seconds, and he remained unconscious for a minute, having completely lost his sensibility. On recovery he said he had been dreaming. After an interval of four minutes he inhaled it again; the inhalation was continued for five minutes; it only produced a little delirium, and he recollected nothing that he had said on recovery.

5th.—Has had no pain in the loins since the use of the ether except when he moved, and then less than before.

6th.—Lumbar pain returned as severely as ever last night in both loins. Inhaled the ether: fell asleep in ninety

seconds, and slept, with snoring, for 150 seconds; the lips were livid, pupils contracted, respirations deep; had no delirium on waking; said that some pain still remained when he stooped or raised himself erect, but he could do so more readily, and could walk pretty quickly about the room.

7th.—Walked home better after the ether yesterday than before, but the pain returned in about five hours, and has continued till now. Inhaled ether for twelve minutes; in 140 seconds he commenced praying, and continued to do so for twelve minutes, constantly repeating the same words. On recovery, had no recollection of what had occurred, and complained of no pain except on rising quickly from his chair.

8th.—Felt very weak and giddy for a quarter of an hour after using ether yesterday, and says he is now in as much pain as he was before; does not wish to take it again. From this time the pain was very severe, except now and then for a day, until he was discharged, in the beginning of June; during this time he was again cupped, without relief, on the loins, took iodide of potassium in increasing doses, and used opiate plasters and friction, with tincture of aconite, the latter appeared to relieve him most. It was observed, that during the period of using the ether he suffered altogether less pain than before, or after it had been abandoned. The relief from the first day's inhalation was more prolonged than from the second, and from the second than from the last. Its remedial influence, then, in this case, appeared to lessen with repetition. On each occasion the inhalation, however, was followed by immediate relief. The relief obtained was the same whether sleep or delirium occurred as the effect of it.

CASE 3.—Mr. R—, a graduate of Cambridge, has suffered from very frequent and severe rheumatic attacks during the last thirteen years, which have at various times affected every part of the trunk and limbs, the jaws and tongue: a few months ago, also, he had a sharp attack of rheumatic ophthalmia. For the last eighteen months he has, almost daily, been awoke at three in the morning, with rheumatic pains, affecting the muscles of respiration, of a severe character, accompanied by a sense of contraction of the chest and dyspnoea, which sometimes caused much depression of spirits and defect of mental energy; the urine is sometimes phosphatic and ammoniacal. The medical men whom he has hitherto consulted have recommended him to employ rather a spare than a free diet, and have interdicted the use of stimulants. The pain is apt to continue through a great part of the day, but the sense of contraction ceases towards morning. He has taken colchicum, calomel and opium, and iodide of potassium, at various times, and now almost believes he shall never get free from it.

June 1st.—Has some pain remaining since last night, as well as some difficulty of breathing. At about one o'clock in the afternoon he inhaled the ether. He was not fully affected for nine minutes and a half, and then he commenced laughing and talking in a vague and incoherent manner. He felt also much less pain after the inhalation, and could draw a deep breath more readily.

2nd.—The paroxysm was deferred this morning for three hours, not occurring till six o'clock, and it was less severe in character than former ones. He feels now (ten A.M.) much better than usual, as well as more cheerful. To adopt a liberal diet, with bitter ale, and to take three grains of disulphate of quina, with nitrid acid, three times a day.

3rd.—Pain and sense of contraction occurred, as usual, at four A.M., and he inhaled ether with the effect merely of producing delirium as before. It gave relief to the sense of contraction, but left a gnawing pain behind. He has now (ten A.M.) a "stupid headache," which incapacitates him for mental exertion. In consequence of this unpleasant result, the ether was omitted; but he continued to take the quina and a grain and a half of opium, with three grains of camphor, every night at bedtime. This produced immediately good effects. The attacks became less severe, and at last, after five nights, he ceased to suffer from them at all. His urine ceased to be ammoniacal, and no deposit of phosphates occurred. The palliative result of the inhalation in this instance is so similar to that observed in Case 1, that no further comment is requisite. It is also another example of a beneficial effect, although there was no sleep, but delirium only.

CASE 4.—Caroline R—, aged thirty years, residing in a badly-drained locality, and very regular in her mode of living, applied at the dispensary for relief of a severe pain at a spot to the left side of the sternum, opposite the fourth costal cartilage. She has suffered from it for about four months. When it first occurred, she used to be much troubled with flatulence and abdominal swelling after her meals; but she

has now no complaint of this nature, her appetite being good, and her food giving rise to no uneasiness. In addition to this, she has an intermittent headach, the pain being of a throbbing character, seated over the coronal suture, and commencing daily, at eleven A.M., with an appearance of wheels revolving before her eyes, and lasting till four P.M. Her countenance has a heavy appearance, and while the headach continues, there is a constant frown upon the forehead. There is no flushing of the face at these times; the bowels are regular; occasionally in the mornings she hawks up a pellet of clear mucus; no physical sign of disease in the lungs or heart. I ordered no medicine, being desirous that the impending catamenial period should pass over. After this she had no more headach, and the frowning ceased; but she complained still of the pain in the chest, and a sense of stupidity and languor.

On May 1st, she inhaled the ether, was very quickly affected, and remained unconscious for about three minutes, during which time she dreamed. On recovery, she stated that she had lost all pain and tenderness in the chest, as well as the sense of stupidity which oppressed her, and her countenance assumed a much more cheerful aspect.

4th.—Had no return of thoracic pain till yesterday, for a minute or two, and the "stupid sensation" in the head only occurred to a slight degree this morning. Inhaled the ether twice consecutively—the second time before the effects of the first inhalation had quite gone off. She appeared to sleep; but when requested to open the eyes did so, and answered questions put to her, rose from her chair, and sat upon the edge of the table. She then shut her eyes, and appeared again to sleep for a minute, slowly re-opened them, and wondered how she came to be sitting upon the table, stating she had no recollection of what had passed.

7th.—Has been suffering from pain on the right side of the sternum, corresponding to the former seat of it on the left, as well as from pain under the right mamma. Very little headach, and no "sense of stupidity;" is much troubled with flatulence. Etherized; was fully asleep in twenty-five seconds, and slept four minutes and forty seconds; she did not dream, and on recovery stated that she was perfectly free from all pain.

11th.—Has had a return of the pain on the right side of the sternum, equally severe as on the 7th, and also has complained of pain below the angle of the right scapula. Yesterday afternoon felt very fidgety, and had great difficulty in sitting quietly. Etherized; asleep in eighty seconds, and slept without dreaming five minutes and fifty seconds; stated on recovery that she felt no pain.

14th.—On the 12th the pain on the left side of the sternum returned; is very much troubled with flatulence; was a little fidgety last night. Finding the ether produce now only temporary relief, its use was abandoned, and carbonate of ammonia, with decoction of bark, was prescribed, which relieved the tendency to flatulence; and with the disappearance of this the sternal pain also lessened. On each of the four occasions on which this person inhaled the ether, its anodyne operation was marked, but became less durable on each repetition, till at last it was found desirable to suspend its employment. As a stimulant, it proved very effectual in removing the sense of languor and heaviness which oppressed her.

CASE 5.—Sarah T—, aged twenty-five years, residing in a damp house in Somers Town. Has been suffering more or less severely from lumbago during the last four months. At that time she weaned her first child, having suckled him for fourteen months. The prolonged nursing produced some amount of debility. She states that the attack commenced suddenly with severe pain across the loins, which for twenty-four hours was unabated; and although it has been generally less severe since, yet she has not been free from it for a day. A month ago she miscarried, and lost a considerable quantity of blood. The lumbar pain, which had never left her, yesterday became extremely severe, as much so, indeed, as on the first day of its occurrence, and is very bad to-day, of a sharp, shooting character, causing her suddenly to start, and extending down the outside of the right thigh, as far as to the knee. She is unable to stoop or raise herself; she thinks that the pain is relieved by the application of warmth. With the exception of feeling weak, her general health is good. Has a slight habitual cough, and there is a little dulness under the left clavicle, with a harsh respiratory murmur, and expiration quite as loud as inspiration. Inhaled the ether for seven minutes and a half; she appeared to sleep, with snoring, for half a minute, and on waking was delirious for some minutes more, very gradually recovering herself, and then stated that she became completely unconscious, and had been dreaming

about her husband and child. She walked about with alacrity, and could stoop without the least inconvenience. No medicine ordered.

July 2nd.—States that she continued quite free from pain for four hours, when it returned as severely as before, and has continued till now, but is not quite so bad to-day; was with difficulty persuaded to take the ether. This time she was asleep in forty-five seconds, and slept for four minutes; once or twice half awoke herself with starting and crying out. On recovery, she recollected having dreamt about her daughter, to whom she said she cried out; complains of legs and feet feeling benumbed, and of a sense of stupidity and giddiness; walked and stooped without pain.

6th.—Has been very much better since the 2nd, and had no pain on that day, and none on the 3rd; on the evening of the 4th, and yesterday night, felt a little, but very slight in amount, and it lasted but a very short time; catamenia appeared on the 3rd.

13th.—Catamenia disappeared on the 10th; has had no return of pain whatever; says the catamenial flow was, on the whole, rather less than usual. Discharged.

I am disposed to refer the more rapid action of the ether, on the second occasion of taking it, to the difference of the mode in which it was administered. On the first occasion, as in all the cases previously related, a simple sponge had been used; but on the last, the portable apparatus manufactured by Mr. Squire. That a lumbago of four months' standing entirely disappeared after the second time of using the ether, is evident; but the question arises, was the amendment due to the remedy, or to the catamenial flow which occurred the day after the inhalation? The probability that the former was really the cause of it appears to be strengthened by these three circumstances: first, the temporary improvement noticed after the first inhalation, coupled with the results obtained in the cases above related; secondly, the fact that the catamenia were rather less than customary; and thirdly, that a month before—that is, at what would have been a catamenial period, had she not been pregnant—she lost blood with the miscarriage, to a considerable extent, without any relief whatever. This case is encouraging.

CASE 6.—Ann H—, aged fifty-two years, residing in Somers-town, and labouring under hypochondriasis, had for some months been under the care of one of my colleagues, at the dispensary, without benefit. It appears, that twelve years ago—that is, one year before the cessation of the catamenia—she suffered from dyspeptic symptoms, with flatulent distention of the abdomen, and a sense as of a weight there, rolling from side to side as she turned in bed, and all of which appeared traceable to a very defective mastication of her food for some years, in consequence of the premature loss of a great many of her molar teeth. After these symptoms had continued for two years, she states, that one night she felt a something burst within her, the feeling of weight disappeared, and she has from that time laboured under the delusion that there is an animal of some kind in her abdomen, respecting which she speaks with the utmost gravity and serious anxiety. She has become very low-spirited, and is fearful that it will soon cause her death. She describes it as occupying chiefly the left hypochondriac region during the day, but descending at night to the lower part of the abdomen, and always rising to the hypochondrium, and eating all the food she swallows as soon as she commences a meal. The bowels were freely purged, and then, on the 25th of May, she took the ether for the first time. She lost her consciousness only for a few seconds, and the delusion was as great as before.

June 1st.—Was again etherized. The process was followed by some delirium, and although she said she felt the animal in her side as before, yet for the next three days stated that she experienced no sensation of its presence whatever. On the 5th, however, it returned, but in a less marked degree.

9th.—Etherized. On this occasion she slept soundly for six minutes—an effect such as had not been produced on previous occasions, and was perhaps attributable to her not having dined on this day before the inhalation. From this, however, no good result followed, her delusion remaining as before.

12th.—Etherized, having dined only half an hour before; but no sleep was occasioned, and very little delirium. However, from this time till the night of the 14th, she felt nothing at all of the abdominal tenant, and believes that "it is at any rate weakened, as it has moved very little since."

16th.—Etherized; had not dined, and was delirious for about five minutes. On the 17th she was all day in bed, with cramps in the legs and headach, having taken cold from getting her feet wet. She says "the animal" was very weak, and on

the 18th she felt nothing of it at all, and only a little on the 19th.

22nd.—Etherized for the last time. She lost her consciousness for a short time; but as it was followed by no further or permanent loss of her uneasy sensations, I thought it best to omit the use of the remedy.

In the course of a month, then, this patient was etherized six times. On three of these occasions, the process was followed by a cessation, after a certain interval, of her unnatural sensations, and on one for so long a period as three entire days; and she persisted in affirming, that on the whole she believed that the ether had the effect of "weakening the animal" which she said inhabited her stomach. These results had not been obtained by any other mode of treatment she had been subjected to. It is observable, moreover, that they followed on those occasions when the ether produced not sleep, but merely delirium. Since omitting the ether, turpentine injections have been administered twice a week, which caused the expulsion of large quantities of flatus, but exercised by no means so marked an influence over her delusion.

CASE 7.—Ellen L—, aged forty-four years, residing in a very confined part of St. Pancras, had several times, within the last two years and a half, been under treatment at the dispensary for neuralgia, affecting the scalp and face, and hemicrania. She is of highly nervous temperament, gains her living as a charwoman, and is sometimes very badly off in her circumstances. Liquor arsenicalis has proved very serviceable to her. For eleven months she had been free from an attack, when she again applied to me on July 20th. Three days previously, the pain had returned with extreme severity, extending over the whole scalp, but being most severe upon the left side, darting through the forehead to the back of the head, worse at night than at other times, the increase occurring about six P.M. There is extreme tenderness over the frontal, temporal, and occipital regions, especially on the left side, where the fingers cannot be allowed to touch the skin, however lightly; and over the left half of the forehead there occur occasionally very painful circular elevations, one of which is now visible over the external angular process. She attributes the attack to a deficiency of meat &c. in her diet. She has some leucorrhœal discharge; bowels confined during the last two days; pulse about 92, not particularly weak. Etherized at about two P.M. In a few seconds she fell asleep, and slipped off the chair upon the ground, as if she had fainted, and suffered a violent paroxysm of convulsive hysteria. She then slept for a few minutes. On awaking, she did not know where she was, and for an hour lay upon the sofa, either asleep, or in a state similar to one of somnambulism. She several times cried out in consequence of pain, which she said she suffered in the left hypochondrium, and part of the time talked incoherently. She gradually acquired her consciousness of where she was, and about an hour after inhalation, felt well enough to go home, but recollected nothing that had occurred since coming to the dispensary. She went away under the impression that she had given me no account of her illness, and had not been prescribed for. However, she was quite free from pain, and there was only a little tenderness on deep pressure over the scalp. She was directed to take some castor oil, and to call at my house two days after.

22nd.—Forgot to take any castor oil from the dispensary, but sent for it yesterday morning. Did not remember till this morning, though it was several times repeated to her, that she was to call on me to-day, and thus forgot the hour. Has had no pain whatever since taking the ether, and the tenderness has quite disappeared. Has slept extremely well the last two nights, but has perspired very freely. Has felt in much better spirits than usual. A degree of hoarseness came on about two hours after the inhalation, and continues now. Still has no recollection of what occurred at the dispensary.

This is the most remarkable instance I have met with of the effect of ether in destroying the memory of events; less marked examples of it, however, are common. The prolonged influence of a very brief inhalation, and the occurrence of the hysterical paroxysm, are also well worthy observation, especially since neither were productive of any evil result. The remedial action exceeded my hopes, knowing as I did how very obstinately some of the former attacks had resisted treatment. It appears to me allied in its nature to that of quina opium, an emetic, or any strong mental shock in the cure of diseases of periodical exacerbation. That all power of perceiving painful impressions was not lost during the hour following the inhalation was clear, from the loud complaints she uttered of pain in the side during that period, so

that the arrest of her affection was not due to a simply prolonged anodyne operation. Besides, the cases which have been most successfully treated by ether, in my hands, have been those where there was the greatest tendency in the pain to periodical increase.

Gower-street, Sept. 1847.

Foreign Department.

HOPITAL DU MIDI.

A Course of Lectures on the Venereal Disease, delivered at the above Hospital by M. RICORD, in the Summer of 1847.

LECTURE I.

THE affections we are about to study have for a long time been classed together under the name of venereal diseases; but I intend to comprise under this denomination (which latter I adopt merely as a generic term) diseases essentially different; as, for instance, blennorrhagia and chancre. Indeed, I fully believe that, in the present state of science, it is difficult to give an accurate definition of venereal affections. However, in grounding such a definition upon that connexion between them which is the most usual and best known,—viz., their actual origin,—they might be defined as complaints arising, more or less directly, from sexual intercourse. This definition is no doubt defective in several respects, but I could not possibly frame any other which, without exposing me to any reproach, would combine so clearly the whole range of the diseases which will now occupy us.

The venereal disease is indeed, of all others, the most disseminated, the most varied in its symptoms, the commonest and most regular in its progress; it sometimes gives origin to other maladies, whilst at other times it complicates them. The study of it, already very interesting in this respect, is no less so in several others,—for instance, as regards morals and hygiene. The latter topics I shall discuss when I come to speak of causes, contagion, and hereditary taint. The medico-legal questions connected with the disease will likewise be treated; and we shall then see how these matters have been handled, and how absurd the conclusions that have been drawn must appear to those who are really initiated in the science of these affections.

A question which has often been debated, and which is by no means solved as yet, is the inquiry about the origin of the disease. No light has hitherto been thrown on the subject, and it may safely be asserted that the immense labours of Astruc, Sanches, Gittner, and many others, have had no satisfactory results. When we view the venereal disease as it now reigns; when we take into account the circumstances which surrounded the ancients; we must come to the conclusion that the disease has at all times existed. We find in the Scriptures descriptions of complaints which might very well be referred to blennorrhagia; truly syphilitic affections, however, are not mentioned in them; but then, what are we to think of Leprosy?

Hippocrates speaks of an ulceration of the genital organs; Galen mentions the contagious nature of blennorrhagia; and Celsus gives a description of the different affections of the parts of generation. It must be confessed that the latter speaks neither of their causes nor diagnoses, but he overlooks these matters also in the description of other diseases. The Greeks, the Arabs, (Avicenna, Aretæus, Albucasis,) the physicians of Rome, have one and all given descriptions which cannot be mistaken. William de Salicet and Gordon give detailed accounts of ulceration of the genitals, and they attribute them to intercourse with women neglectful of cleanliness, and who abound in sanies, (1467.) Proceeding chronologically, we reach the famous epidemic of 1493-94. This was really a revolution for the disease, not only with reference to the study of the same, but with regard to the ravages it made at that period. The constitutional manifestations caused the local affection to be overlooked,—all the mischief was attributed to the former, and they alone fixed the attention. At that time, then, the disease was looked upon as an inseparable whole. But these hasty views soon gave place to a calmer consideration of the subject, and the links which had been made to connect the heterogeneous parts of these affections were broken assunder.

Alexander Benedict gave his contemporaries a glimpse into the origin of the syphilitic poison. Fernel studied its source, and the different accidents which may follow it. At last, John Hunter came and laid the true foundation of the