

the employment of suitable treatment, fortunately subsided. Having prevented the agglutination of the wound by the introduction of prepared sponge and charpie, I succeeded in obtaining a sufficiently dilated orifice, and a regular cicatrix.

The girl returned to her family twenty days after the operation in full health, and since she has menstruated regularly for three months.—*Il Raccoglitoro Medico di Pano.*

UPON HYDROCELE OF THE TUNICA VAGINALIS AND ENCYSTED HYDROCELE OF THE CHORD.

By M. GUERSANT,

(Lecture delivered at Hôpital des Enfants-Malades.)

In many points the differential diagnosis between the two is the same in the infant as in the adult; but certain phenomena appear specially proper to the former. Hydrocele coincides very often with solid tumours of the scrotum, but it is then only a complication, and can be easily recognised. The encysted hydrocele has not a regular contour: it is knobbed, not transparent, fluctuating in certain points, and harder in others; the tuberculous testicle is also knobbed and irregular, but then it communicates to the hand the sense of weight.

Another point connected with hydrocele is the following. Can the Surgeon always recognise whether the sac does or does not communicate with the peritonæum. In the majority of cases there is no difficulty in determining this fact; but it may so happen that the communication is so extremely narrow, but yet permeable, and such cases require the greatest care when treated by injection.

It is impossible to allow an infant to grow up with such an infirmity, which may have an influence on the functions of the testicle; and an operation carefully performed does not usually entail risk. When the tunica vaginalis is obliterated, M. Guersant recommends puncture, injection, or the seton.

Frequent puncture is recommended by Antoine Dubois, and has been practised successfully by M. Guersant; the tunica vaginalis ultimately may become permanently empty.

Injections are required when the simple puncture fails. M. Guersant uses pure wine, warm or cold; tincture of iodine, mixed with water in various proportions; and pure alcohol. The tincture of iodine is preferable when the testicle is engorged; its contact does not entail danger upon the tissues, and a little of it may be left in the tunica vaginalis; it is taken up by the absorbents. The seton consists of two or three fine threads introduced by a common needle. This, however, is not so advisable, as it has been known to bring on violent inflammation and constitutional disturbance.—*L'Union Médicale*, July 20, 1854.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

COMMUNICATION OF CHOLERA BY THAMES WATER.

[To the Editor of the Medical Times and Gazette.]

SIR,—I have been engaged, during the last ten days, in an inquiry which promises to yield very conclusive evidence respecting the mode of propagation of cholera. You are, no doubt, aware, that there is an Act of Parliament requiring those Water Companies of the Metropolis which obtain their supply from the River Thames, to procure it at some point above the reach of the tide, and, consequently, free from the sewage of London. A certain time, which is not yet expired, was, however, allowed for the completion of the necessary works. The Lambeth Water Company, which formerly obtained their supply from a point near Hungerford Suspension-bridge, completed their works at Thames Ditton upwards of a year ago, and have ever since distributed water perfectly free from the sewage of London. The Southwark and Vauxhall Water Company, which, along with that just named, supplies the greater number of houses on the south side of the Thames, still obtain their supply from Battersea-fields, near Vauxhall. The mortality from cholera was much less during the epidemic of last autumn, in the districts to which the new supply of water extended, than in those districts which are exclusively supplied by the Southwark and Vauxhall Company. This will be seen on referring to a table in the return of deaths in London, for the week ending the 26th of November, 1853. Soon after the commencement of the present epidemic, the difference in the mortality of the respective sets of districts was equally apparent,—a difference which did not exist in 1849.

In order to ascertain clearly on what this difference in mor-

tality depended, it was necessary to make an inquiry in detail. The only districts which are supplied exclusively with the water from Thames Ditton, are such distant places as Balham, Streatham, Dulwich, and Sydenham, whose freedom from the epidemic might be attributed to other causes than the mere absence of the polluted water. In the districts of Lambeth, Newington, and St. George, Southwark, the customers of the two Companies are so intimately mixed with each other, that two adjoining houses have very often a different supply of water; and it was, therefore, impossible to determine what kind of water was used in the houses in which the deaths from cholera occurred, except by an inquiry on the spot. I consequently resolved to call at each house where there had been a death from cholera; and Mr. Farr has been kind enough to allow me to take a copy of the addresses of those cases which have not been published in the weekly returns. I have gone over the sub-districts of Lambeth, called Kennington, first part, and Kennington, second part, as regards the deaths from cholera which occurred down to August 12; and the sub-districts, Waterloo, first part, and Waterloo, second part, to August 19th. The following are the results I have obtained:—

<i>Kennington, First Part.</i>		No. of Houses.
Supply.		
Southwark and Vauxhall	27
Lambeth	2
Pump-wells on premises	2
Total		31

<i>Kennington, Second Part.</i>		
Southwark and Vauxhall	11
Lambeth	2
Total		13

<i>Waterloo, First Part.</i>		
Southwark and Vauxhall	7
Lambeth	1
Not yet ascertained	1
Total		9

In Waterloo, second part, 27 deaths have occurred in 24 houses, which are supplied as follow:—

	No. of Houses.	
Southwark and Vauxhall	17	
Lambeth	3	
Pump well close to the Thames; water dirty	1	
Wells at the Lion brewery	1	
Not yet ascertained	2	
Total		24

If the cases are enumerated instead of the houses in this last sub-district, the return is as follows:—

Supply.	Cases.	
Southwark and Vauxhall	19	
Lambeth	3	
Pump wells	3	
Not yet ascertained	2	
Total		27

According to the returns made by the water companies to Parliament and to the Board of Health, there are quite as many houses supplied by the Lambeth as by the Southwark and Vauxhall Company, in the above districts; and both Companies supply alike all kinds of houses,—those of the rich and the poor indiscriminately. It is evident, therefore, that, in the sub-districts to which the inquiry has extended, the people having the improved water supply enjoy as much immunity from cholera as if they were living at a higher level, on the north side of the Thames; and I ascertained that in two of the instances where the water supply afterwards turned out to be of the improved kind, the cases could be traced to personal communication with previous ones.

I intend to continue the inquiry, extending it to the other sub-districts in which the two water companies are intermixed, and to bring it down to the 26th inst. After this date, I am informed by Mr. Farr that the supply of water at the house in which every fatal attack of cholera may occur, will be returned by the Registrars in all the Districts on the South of the Thames. An amount of information will thus be obtained that will be very conclusive. In the mean time, I have considered that the inquiry, even in its present stage, is too im-

portant to be withheld from the Profession, at a season when every week is adding so much to the mortality from cholera.

I must say a word on the nature of the water supplied by the Southwark and Vauxhall Company. It is not worse, either physically or chemically, than the water that has generally been supplied to town populations. It undergoes a coarse kind of filtration before it is distributed, and it passes with careless observers for being quite clear, though it is not so in reality. It contains organic matter, both in solution and suspension, and deposits a small quantity of whitish flocculent matter on standing. It also contains a much larger quantity of chlorides than Thames water obtained above the reach of the London sewage. As the Chelsea Water Company obtain their supply from almost the same part of the Thames, and have in every epidemic very much less cholera in their district, I may as well explain, that they filter their water much better than the Southwark and Vauxhall Company, and no doubt rid it to a much greater extent of the cholera evacuations which pass down the sewers into the Thames. I am, &c.

18, Sackville-street, Aug., 1854.

JOHN SNOW.

COLD AS AN ANÆSTHETIC.

[To the Editor of the Medical Times and Gazette.]

SIR,—Under the idea that you are just now anxious to collect evidence as to the anæsthetic effect of the application of cold according to the plan recommended by Dr. Arnott, I forward you the following for insertion, if you think fit, in your valuable Periodical. I am, &c.

NATHANIEL WARD.

1, Broad-street-buildings, Aug. 28, 1854.

"I was consulted a few days back by a gentleman between 30 and 40 years of age, of a highly nervous temperament, concerning a tumour situated over the right clavicle, and which required removal. It was just one of those cases in which a Surgeon, on the one hand, would not have sanctioned the use of chloroform, and on the other, in which the patient would have protested against anything being done unless it could be accomplished without pain. The tumour was of a sebaceous character, as large as a walnut, had been gradually increasing for two or three years, and gave him inconvenience during every movement of the arm. On informing my patient that chloroform (to which he was much averse) would be attended with risk, but that the removal of the tumour could be effected with safety and without pain by the previous application of cold, his nervous anxiety subsided, and he consented to the operation.

"I mixed together two parts of pounded Wenham-lake ice and one part of salt, and put them in a common white pocket-handkerchief, and kept the mixture pressed on and around the tumour during the space of one minute by the watch. The integument that was submitted directly to the action of the cold became remarkably corrugated. It was then cut into, and the tumour removed without the slightest sensation of pain, and much to the astonishment and delight of the patient, who said that the only thing that annoyed him, and that not much, was the burning sensation of the application. No vessel required ligature, the bleeding, in fact, being very trivial, and the wound had healed at the end of the week."

ON DR. BECK'S DISSECTIONS OF THE NERVES OF THE UTERUS.

[To the Editor of the Medical Times and Gazette.]

SIR,—The following statement was made by Dr. Ludovic Hirschfeld, in the *Medical Times and Gazette*, July 23, 1853:—

"Dr. Snow Beck has two specimens, in the preparation of which he employed eight months, removing, from day to day, with forceps and needles, (as he told me himself,) not merely the cellular tissue, but the neurilemma even, so that he has left only the fasciculi of the nervous tubes. It seems to me, that the work of this anatomist ought not to be appealed to, when the subject of the volume of the nerves of the uterus is agitated, for they only present the nerves deprived of one of their constituent parts—the neurilemma."

Is it possible that this statement, which had been made by Dr. Hirschfeld in the *Compte Rendu des Sciences pendant le Mois de Septembre*, 1852, and is here repeated, can have escaped the notice of Dr. Beck; or, as it has not been contradicted, are we to receive it as an undeniable truth? Being anxious to know whether the uterus has ganglia and nerves, as described and

delimited in Dr. Hirschfeld's *Neurologie*, or is almost entirely destitute of nervous structures, I beg leave, through the medium of your Journal, to request that Dr. Beck will at once admit or deny the accuracy of the above statement.

August 30.

I am, &c.

INVESTIGATOR.

PERINEAL SECTION.

[To the Editor of the Medical Times and Gazette.]

SIR,—In answer to Professor Syme's assertion, that it is not true that a gentleman had lately died *four days* after operation of perineal section at his hands, I beg to state, that I have ascertained that my information as to the exact period of death after the operation was incorrect; but I have been told that the fact is undeniable, that a gentleman has lately died within a *short time* after the operation performed by Professor Syme; and the source of the information is so trustworthy, that I cannot doubt its correctness, especially after such a vague and unsatisfactory denial as appeared from Mr. Syme in your Journal of last week. I am, &c.

Caroline-street, Bedford-square.

HENRY SMITH.

DID THE GREEK SURGEONS EXTRACT TEETH?

[To the Editor of the Medical Times and Gazette.]

SIR,—Having, of late, devoted a few leisure hours to several subjects connected with the history of dentistry, the question struck me as interesting, "Whether the oldest Greek Surgeons extracted teeth, and where the first notice thereof is to be found?" That the Egyptians paid much attention to dentistry, I learned from the following passage of Herodotus:—"The art of Medicine is thus divided among them (the Egyptians); each Physician applies himself to one disease only, and no more. All places abound in Physicians; some Physicians are for the eyes, others for the head, others for the teeth, and others for internal disorders."—Herod. ii. 84.

But, as surgical instruments could not have been made but of steel or iron, none of these apparatus have reached us, although the number of various other utensils which have been preserved is very great.

The next which attracted attention were the many passages of Hippocrates (*Epidem.*), where he speaks of maladies of the teeth, of which the following are a sample:—"With a child suffering under phagedenic affection the teeth fell out, as the bone (jaw) had become hollow." "The wife of Aspasius had violent toothache; the jaw swelled; having used a collutorium of castoreum and pepper she was relieved."—*Epidem.* v. 67. "Milesamler, the gums being affected, swollen, and very painful, he was bled on the arm; Egyptian alum helps at the outset."—*Epidem.* v. 69. "At Cardia, the child of Meterodorus, in consequence of toothache, had a sphacelus of the jaw; overgrown flesh on the gums the suppuration was middling; the molar teeth and the jaw fell (off)."—*Epidem.* v. 100.

Although we perceive that some grave cases of tooth maladies have been mentioned, we find not the least allusion to their having been extracted, for which, however, there was every indication. After much inquiry, I was informed, that there exists a passage bearing on this subject in "*Sprengel's History of Medicine*." It is the reference to the text of *Caelius Aurelianus*, (a) where, speaking of the tablets and presents offered to the Greek temples by patients who have been cured, he says:—"Even surgical instruments were bequeathed by the inventors to those sacred shrines of medicine. Thus, Erasistratus presented to the Delphic temple of Apollo an instrument for extracting teeth." And the passage of *Cœl. Aurel.* contains some more interesting allusions to that subject.

I am, &c.

GEORGE HAYES.

Conduit-street, August 21.

[Mr. Finney, a dentist, late of Alexandria, found a stuffed tooth in a mummy, and several teeth in other mummies which bore marks of filing.—Ed.]

(a) *Cœl. Aurel. de morbis acutis et chronicis.* Amstelod. 1709. 4to.

MARGATE.—This town, which has been considered one of the most healthy in England, stands this year pre-eminent. Notwithstanding we have now 20,000 visitors, added to the 11,000 inhabitants, there has been only one funeral during the week at the parish church.—*South Eastern Gazette.*