NOTES

ON

ALPINE SUMMER QUARTERS FOR INVALIDS IN 1869.

By CHARLES J. B. WILLIAMS, M.D., F.R.S.

ON the 2nd of August, I started with two of my daughters to spend my holiday among the mountains of Switzerland, Italy, and the Tyrol, as has been my custom for several years—on this occasion, not with the less zest because, in the preceding autumn, the substitute of a tour in Cornwall and Devon proved much inferior in its effect on strength and health. In fact, leaving town in the extreme heat of the August of 1868, we found Penzance and the Land's End so cold and damp, that toothache drove me back to London for the aid of the dentist; and, although a second visit to Devonshire supplied abundant objects of interest and occupation, yet the keen air of Dartmoor brought on a severe attack of eczema solare, which I had never had before, even after any amount of exposure to the sun and air of snow-mountains and glaciers in Switzerland.

No sooner were we seated in the train at Victoria Station, than a well-known London *confrère* joined us, with the words, "To the Engadine, I suppose, like every one else?" "Well, we mean to take the Engadine in our way; but I should be very sorry to make the Engadine the only object of our tour." But we had not got far on our journey, before we found that it was the grand object of the greater number of English travellers going to Switzerland. Numbers of friends encountered *en route* were all setting in the current for the Engadine—many to join relatives already there, whose marvellous improvement on the change from London to a high Swiss valley was summed up in this, that they could hardly get enough to eat. One of our fellow-travellers was wisely providing somewhat for this want, by taking with him a *live turtle*—an object of unceasing curiosity to many passengers and railway officials, who had never before seen such an animal.

I confess that I had little sympathy with this rage for the Engadine. About seven years ago, I paid it a visit, in company with two of my sons, in the month of August; and, so long as the weather was fine, we enjoyed the pure bracing air, and were much struck with the peculiar savageness and grandeur, if not beauty, of much of the scenery. We went up the Prättigau to Davos Amplatz; explored the Strela Pass, the Dischmatal, and the Schwartzhorn; then down the Landwasser Valley to Alveneu and Bergun; crossed the Albula in a berg-wagon (it was not then open to ordinary carriages), and took the best quarters we could get at Pontresina. Thus arrived in this promised land, we made good use of our time. One day, we tramped some miles on the great Morteratsch glacier. Another day, we climbed the Piz Languard. Another excursion was made to St. Moritz, with its pretty lake: but the kurhaus on its swampy border gave a shuddering impression of coldness and damp. It was then unenlarged by the recent more comfortable edifice, and unadorned by its present gay garden and fountains. In these three days of fine weather, there was much enjoyment; although the sun seemed hotter by day, and the air more chilling at night, than in other parts of Switzerland. But then came a change to what is proverbially said to be the more common weather of the Engadine in summer.* First came rain; next day, snow; and at night, frost; and *this in the month of August*. As there was no inducement to make excursions into snow and cloud (except for a few minutes, to keep ourselves warm), the disappointed travellers were shut up, miserable enough, in the *salle à manger*. An attempt was made to light the stove; but it ended in smoke, of which we had already too much from the unrestrained devotees of the pernicious weed. Then provisions ran short, and the viands of the *table d'hôte* were little more than *bouilli et comploté de pruneaux*. So, feeling somewhat in danger of double starvation, and not being disposed to prolong this experiment of hybernation in a summer month, we ordered a carriage to take us out of these winter-quarters. The transition was marvellous. In two hours, we were at the top of the Engadine, leaving Sils and the upper lake in a snow-storm. In two hours more of rapid descent down the beautiful Maloja, we found ourselves at Vicosoprano, eating grapes and peaches in sunshine and summer; and, as we posted on from Chiavenna to Lake Como, except a shower or two, we had such a bright blue Italian

sky, that we could hardly credit our sense of the past, till, looking back, we could see the lofty mountains, which we had left, still wrapt in the dark cold clouds. Oh, how we pitied those still remaining in that Arctic region!

Probably this was an extreme case; but it was my first experience of the Engadine, and sufficient to make me less eager to join the multitude thronging to that, as the happiest and healthiest of valleys. We therefore lingered on our way to enjoy scenery far more beautiful than any to be met with in the Engadine. Our first halt was at Wesen, on the Lake Wallenstadt, with its lofty mountain banks, the rugged wildness of the northern forming so striking a contrast with the rich woods and pastures of the southern shore, yet all sweetly mirrored into harmonious softness in the trembling waters of the azure lake. The weather changing, and spoiling these attractions, we were glad to move to the more comfortable quarters of the Glarnerhof at Glarus, one of the best hotels in Switzerland. From this, excursions may be made in almost every direction—up the Klonthal, with its pretty lake reflecting the rocky precipices of the huge Glarnisch, which towers almost perpendicularly up to its snow-ridged summit, 10,000 feet above; the Linthal, remarkable for the diversity of its mountainous sides—some dazzling in the richness of their verdure; some darkening with threatening masses of overhanging rock, rising to the greatest height at the Pantenbrücke, the end of the valley, where the stupendous Selbsandft raises its dark brown mass in a perpendicular of 9,000 feet, overtopped by the snowy Todi. This long valley is further beautified by a variety of lofty waterfalls, and enlivened, if not beautified, by numerous large manufacturing establishments—proofs of thriving industrial enterprise. Half-way up this valley, too, are the baths of Stachelberg, much frequented by the Swiss and Germans. The water is sulphurous and alkaline, and is said to be very effectual in rheumatism and diseases of the skin. The supply of the spring is scanty, and hardly equal to the demand on it. It is foreign to my purpose to describe the Klausen Pass, which leads to Altdorf; the Sernfthal, which leads to Eln; and other interesting points connected with the Valley of Stachelberg. This valley is more beautiful than bracing, being, at Stachelberg, only 2,178 feet above the sea.

Our next halting-place was Thusis, at the foot of that wonderful triumph of engineering art, the Via Mala. Thusis is healthily placed—not so much from its absolute height (2,448 feet), as from its being high and dry above the rich Domleschgertal, and overtopped only on one side by the pine-clad rocks of the Via Mala. The small Hotel there is also very comfortable. Travellers going to the Engadine, who wish to see the Via Mala, may well halt here, and afterwards join the Julier or Albula routes by the new road just opened through the Schyn-pass to Tiefenkasten, which is by no means a good place to stop at. At Tiefenkasten, we took the diligence over the Julier, to make a second trial of the Engadine. All that I had heard of the crowded state of St. Moritz and Pontresina determined me to try Samaden, where I knew the Bernina Hotel was sure to provide well in the way of food. Even here, although they have upwards of one hundred beds, and I had written a week before, we were obliged to be content with bedrooms in the village for two days. However, nothing could be more courteous than the conduct of the landlord, M. Franconi; and we were most comfortably lodged and fed afterwards, at prices quite moderate, considering the demand of the season. And let me say here, once for all, that the complaints which were continually reaching our ears, of the short commons at some of the establishments at St. Moritz, by no means applied to the Bernina at Samaden. In fact, we were assured that a good many visitors used to come from St. Moritz to the Bernina Hotel for the sole purpose of getting a good dinner.

The weather, which had been wet the whole preceding day, and was showery on our passage over the Julier, became fine on the descent; and we entered the Engadine in bright sunshine. Still there was a scattering of fresh snow far below the usual snow-line; and, as we drove through Silvaplana, Campfer, and St. Moritz, we observed ladies wearing warm cloaks and even furs—a very sensible proceeding, but telling its tale of the climate in the middle of August. The weather continued generally fine during our week's stay at Samaden; but there were several falls of rain towards evening, succeeded by the appearance of fresh snow on the mountains on the following morning; and, on four out of the seven nights, the grass of the valley of Samaden and of Upper Pontresina was white and crisp with frost in the early morning. Of course, all this vanished with the first approach of the sun's rays: in fact, so hot were they, that veils, white handkerchiefs, and umbrellas were brought into full requisition to avoid their scorching effect on the skin; and, even with these protections, few of the more zealous excursionists entirely escaped the branding and skinning of the face and neck, so familiar to holiday mountaineers. To many, these face-burnings were trifles; and, by giving a ruddy glow to a hitherto pallid

* "Neuf mois d'hiver, et trois mois de mauvais temps—voilà l'an de l'Engadine."

cheek, encouraged the impression that they were signs of new health and vigour. No doubt, to many, the bracing air of the high Engadine is reviving and invigorating, and especially to those who have long suffered from the oppressive and relaxing air of the lower valleys and plains. These feel new life and energy in the cool bracing air, and their appetite and strength rapidly improve under its influence. With others, again, the effect is quite different: they are chilled, without being braced; and scorched by the sun, without being permanently warmed. They feel a certain degree of excitement in the air; but it causes fever, instead of strength; and its injurious operation is manifest in restless nights, and in failing, instead of improving, appetite for food. Our party, unfortunately, belonged to this latter class; and, consequently, the week which we spent in the Engadine was by no means a pleasant one; and we were not disposed to try a longer experiment of acclimatisation. We met with several others who made the same complaints. No doubt, the excursions in this neighbourhood are full of the beauty and interest attaching to the highest Alpine scenery. For example, Val Roseg is extremely picturesque and diversified in its pine-grown heights, forming an ever varying framework to the dazzling glaciers and snow-peaks at its upper end. Considering that the woods consisted chiefly of two trees only, the larch and the Alpine cedar, with only here and there a Scotch pine, there was a surprising absence of monotony; the grandeur of the rocky masses, and the brilliancy of the flowers and lichens, making up for the want of variety in the foliage. As usual in sunny days, the ascent was very hot, except where the way was shaded by the welcome trees; but the descent was from west to east, in the face of a cold wind, which became so cutting towards sunset, on our descent to the valley of Samaden, that we returned miserably chilled, in spite of all our wraps and the jolting of the rough berg-wagon, the only vehicle used for the roads.

From these illustrations of the summer climate of the upper Engadine, it is pretty clear that it ought not to be recommended indiscriminately to all classes of invalids; and those that are likely to benefit by its exciting and bracing influences ought to be cautioned and prepared against its extremes, which are especially trying on first arrival. It appears to be the common experience of those who most benefit by the climate, that the powers of circulation and respiration so improve as to be able to bear the changes of cold and heat, which were found very trying at first; and this kind of acclimatisation may be extended to the colder season; so that those who have gone in the summer gain the power of so well enduring increasing cold as to be able to pass through the almost Arctic winter of these heights without suffering or inconvenience.

[To be concluded.]

ON PROCIDENTIA UTERI.*

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As a preliminary to the practical observations which are embodied in this paper, it will be advantageous to set forth, briefly, the relative anatomy of the uterus, and the etiological influences which are in operation in the production of procidentia of this organ.

In a well-formed healthy woman, the uterus is placed in the middle line of the pelvis, and extends from its brim into its cavity to the extent of three inches, or thereabouts. It is poised upon the vagina as upon a stem, while it is suspended by its round and lateral ligaments, and by the Fallopian tubes, from the sides of the pelvis, and by its anterior and posterior ligamentous folds of peritoneum from the rectum and from the urinary bladder. In addition, it receives support from the levatores ani muscles, from the subperitoneal fasciæ and cellular tissue, and from the vessels and nerves by which its own and the surrounding tissues are permeated. It receives support again intermediately by the vagina, from the floor of the pelvis, from the perinæum, and from the vulval tissues. Lastly, it receives support from the urinary bladder in front, from the rectum behind, and from the bony pelvis around.

Let us now note that the uterus is surrounded by small intestines, and that the urinary bladder, to which it is attached, is a viscus which is ever changing its position, and alternately pressing upon, and receding from, the uterus. Let us note, again, that the contents of the abdomen and pelvis are subjected to varying pressure (in addition to that of superincumbent weight) from the diaphragm, ribs, and abdominal walls, by dress, by laughing, coughing, etc., and by locomotor and other exertion. And now let us observe the extraordinary obliquity which holds in the position of the pelvis, and hence of the uterus itself.

Finally, let us observe that the cylindrical stem—the vagina—by which it is supported is so singularly oblique to the uterus, that this organ is inserted, as it were, into the summit of the vagina through its anterior wall; and, in the interest of the latter observation, let us remark the varying conditions of the vagina itself, by the recurring engorgement and changing tonicity of which it is the subject.

In considering the etiology of procidentia uteri, it is noteworthy that the abdomen of the sufferer is often pendulous, and that its contents are often bulky; but that neither the pendulous condition nor the bulky contents of the abdomen can be recognised as necessary antecedents. Then the procident uterus itself is often enlarged, as by *post partum* subinvolution, by repeated child-bearing, by occasional or persistent engorgement, by hypertrophy of its parts (particularly of its cervix), by the presence of tumours, etc., and by pregnancy. But the uterus rarely descends far, in consequence of pregnancy, if there have been no descent before; and mere increase of size or weight, as by tumours, engorgements, subinvolution, etc., is not necessarily, although very frequently, associated with descent of the organ. Yielding of the ligaments is constantly observed; and yet it is remarkable how easily the procident uterus returns towards its normal position when the body of the patient is placed horizontally. The intestines thus recede from the pelvis, and the pressure of the mass is removed, or very greatly reduced. But it deserves note that the uterus habitually occupies a low position when the play of the ribs is restricted—hence additional work for the diaphragm, and hence downward pressure of the viscera of the abdomen upon those of the pelvis. The descent of the diaphragm in its action upon the pelvic organs is opposed, in healthy subjects, by elastic abdominal walls, as it is by the oblique position of the pelvis itself; but in the big, pendulous belly, the walls give little opposition. Then relaxation and enfeeblement, or other injury to the supports of the uterus at the floor and at the sides of the pelves, are commonly observed in procidentia uteri, as are expansion of the calibre of the vagina and infirmity of its walls; and any cause of great, frequent, or prolonged tenesmus, as engorgement of hæmorrhoidal vessels, irritable bladder, etc., must be operative as a cause of procidentia uteri.

While the descent of the uterus is in the direction of the axis of the brim of the pelvis, the effects of the displacement are not usually severe; and in its progress in the direction of the axis of the pelvic outlet to a point beyond the vulval orifice, it is remarkable how frequently the procidentia is sustained without great injury to the health of the patient. On the other hand, it deserves recognition that slight displacement sometimes produces large effects, while the consequences of the procidentia, in its most complete development, are occasionally most disastrous, by local disturbance and discharges, and by constitutional suffering. In complete procidentia, the uterus is usually found hypertrophied: rectocele, or some prolapse of the rectum, is a common accompaniment, while prolapse of the bladder is almost constantly and necessarily present.

While the course of the descending organ is in the line of the axis of the inlet of the pelvis, I submit that no surgical operation, at present recognised, is required for its relief or its cure, under ordinary circumstances; but when the descent is in the line of the axis of the outlet, and when, particularly, the uterus has reached or passed the vulva, the question may justly arise as to whether some surgical operation may not be performed for the relief of the sufferer. The slightest forms of the malady, like the most complete, are frequently associated with leucorrhœa and with portal congestion; and, these conditions being unchecked, efforts at removal of the procidentia, however judicious these may otherwise be, often fail; but the leucorrhœa or the portal engorgement being removed, the simplest means of treatment will often succeed. For the latter condition, after judicious regimen, the agency of podophyllin, duly protected; of chloride of ammonium, with or without hydrochloric acid; or the latter drug in some bitter infusion with mild aperients, deserves the highest commendation. For the former, the removal of the congestion or relaxation upon which it usually depends, by sustained rest in the horizontal position, and by soothing and astringent applications to the disordered mucous membrane, is the thing indicated. When the chest is oppressed with stays or other articles of dress, and the respiration is chiefly diaphragmatic and abdominal, it will be necessary to remove, as far as possible, the compressing causes, and to free the abdominal viscera from the unnatural pressure to which they have been subjected. The simple pressure of heavy abdominal contents upon the pelvic organs will be best relieved by horizontal rest and aperients; and, when the condition is associated with relaxed abdominal walls and a pendulous abdomen, a well-adjusted bandage, or elastic abdominal support, with an upward pressure, will be an appropriate means of relief: nevertheless, judicious well-regulated exercise will be useful here, as will be, in a high degree, the habitual employment of the cold bath. With all this, a dietary should be adopted which is at once in small compass and nutritious. In the

* Read before the Northern Branch.