with one-third of a grain of morphia, were given. The following day the patient seemed to be much exhausted, the eyes fixed, and the corners of the mouth retracted; attempts at deglutition excited spasm in the throat, with a sense of impending suffocation, and occasional pain with much distress in the præcordial region. The chloral and morphia was repeated, but little sleep obtained; there were profuse perspiration and much thirst, and any attempt to relieve them aggravated the spasm and restlessness. On the evening of the tenth day, an effort to take some beef-tea brought on a violent convulsion, which, though mitigated by the immediate administration of chloroform, caused death in about half an hour from its onset. The temperature rose to 100° on the evening of the ninth day, but fell in a few hours to 99°, and was not again elevated; while the pulse on the morning of the ninth day went to 100, and on the tenth to 120. No *post mortem* examination was allowed.

NERVE-STRETCHING.

By W. A. BERRIDGE, M.R.C.S., etc.

THE cases of successful nerve-stretching recently reported in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL encouraged me to have resort to this proceeding in the following case, which was so severe that the patient herself hailed with delight any operation which afforded some prospect of even partial relief from her distressing symptoms; and it is with great regret that I am compelled to record a total failure of any benefit from the operation. There was no reason to suspect syphilis. Nevertheless, the patient had previously been treated with mercury to very slight salivation, and also at another period with iodide of potassium until the well-known spots appeared, without the slightest benefit; so that the nerve-stretching was only attempted as a last resort, and after the failure of other means besides those mentioned.

The patient was a female, aged 36. When an infant, she had had eyes until she was two years old; then they quite recovered. She had scarlet fever when fourteen. She first menstruated at fifteen, and was always regular, never having much pain. She had "low fever" when twenty-one. At the age of twenty-seven, she had a pain all round her back and stomach, and felt a tight feeling like an iron band. She used to sleep against an outside wall, and the wall was damp; to this she attributed the commencement of her present illness. The pain in her back preceded the pain in her legs. The legs felt so heavy, and there was such a feeling of numbness, that she could not get about. She quite recovered for a time. The following winter she became worse, but again recovered slightly in the summer, although she could not walk without assistance. She had at this time no pain—only a feeling of weariness. Each succeeding winter the symptom increased; and in 1876 she saw Dr. Hughlings Jackson, and was in London for some time.

The patient first came under my care in July 1879. She could then walk with great difficulty, and the pain in her back and legs was so severe that she could not sleep at night. On attempting to walk, she had great tremor. There was no incontinence of urine; no albumen or sugar in the urine. The temperature was normal. On examination with the ophthalmoscope, "the discs were pale, the edges clearly defined". The muscular rigidity of the lower extremity had been gradually increasing, and she had been quite unable to walk since Christmas 1879.

On March 8th, 1881, I grasped the left great sciatic nerve with my forefinger and thumb, and stretched it as hard as I possibly could. The spray was used, and all the usual antiseptic precautions. At 7 P.M., she had no pain in the left leg, only when it "drew". It "drew" with any movement. The right leg was very painful at night. She had passed urine; there was no incontinence. Pulse 72; respirations 16; temperature 98°. The left leg was strongly drawn back upon the thigh, and the thigh drawn up towards the abdomen. It could be pulled down by considerable force, but soon went up again. Sensation was fairly good all over it. There was a difference in the temperature of the two legs of only one degree (right 98°, left 97°). There was a good deal of pain in the leg. The right leg was much contracted, and was very painful. On March 9th, sensation was impaired over the back of the left leg. There was not so much pain. Temperature of the right leg, 98°; of the left, 98°. From March 10th to 14th, sensation was still slightly impaired in the left leg; but it moved better. It did not require so much force to pull it down; but it soon drew up again. The temperature of both legs was still 98°. She had had less pain and better nights. On March 20th, the legs were both quite as much contracted, and as painful as they were before the nerve-stretching. The wound healed by first intention.

ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF SALICYLIC ACID.

By GEORGE KEMP, M.D. CANTAB.

DR. T. D. ACLAND, in a communication on the Uræmic Results of Salicylic Acid, published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL for March 5th ultimo, states that, in the JOURNAL for January 29th, there are reports of six cases of acute rheumatism treated with salicylic acid, and accompanied by delirium. The results of his inquiry into the subject are not, however, altogether satisfactory, as he operated by means of salicylate of soda, not salicylic acid; and we are far from justified in assuming that the therapeutical effects of salicylic acid and salicylate of soda are identical.

In physical characters, they differ essentially, the one being very soluble in distilled water at 60° Fahr., the other only reasonably soluble in water at a far higher temperature; but a more important consideration is that, whilst the soda-salt can be administered in comparatively large doses with impunity, salicylic acid, even in small doses, produces great irritation in the mucous membrane of the mouth, fauces, and stomach; indeed, to such an extent, that its administration in the usual form is at all times difficult, and in some cases prohibitory, especially when we have respect to the absurdly dangerous doses of eighteen or twenty grains, as we find reported.

I am convinced, from careful and anxious observation, that the maximum dose should not exceed eight grains, repeated as frequently as the exigencies of the case may require; and this may be done without the slightest inconvenience to the patient, and, in fact, without his knowledge, by giving it in beef-tea, or, when highly albuminous diet is prohibited, by solution in weak "osmazome" tea, which is always ready at hand in the form of the so-called "meat-extracts"; the only recognition of the presence of the drug being, "You have put too much seasoning into my soup". A little celery-seed boiled with the liquid and strained off makes it more palatable, and assists in the disguise.

There are other modes in which this valuable remedy may be used with advantage, which, so far as my reading informs me, have not as yet received due attention. One of these is, its application as a counter-irritant in superficial rheumatism; and, of course, in this case, a very large additional dose may be employed. Thirty grains of salicylic acid, intimately mixed with an ounce of any suitable unguent, has been found to alleviate local pain in a remarkable degree. Whether this be due to its properties as a counter-irritant *per se*, or the absorption of the remedy conjointly, can only be decided by a large collation of cases; but its advantage is greatly enhanced by the addition of iodide of potassium in an equal quantity.

Another use of this remedy is in the form of enema. A case of severe and long-continued dyspepsia, implicating both stomach and duodenum, with bacterial fermentation to a most distressing extent, only relieved by constant resort to emetics; complicated, moreover, by great sluggishness of the lower bowel, with occasionally severe colicky pains from accumulated fæces, the patient at the same time suffering from rheumatism on the slightest exposure to moisture and cold, was treated by enema, with thirty grains of salicylic acid and half an ounce of tartrate of potash dissolved in a pint and a half of lukewarm water. Of course, the addition of two fluid-drachms of tincture of hyoscyamus, or its analogues, would have been a great improvement, but the object was to keep the conditions of the case as simple as possible. The result was quite remarkable; the colon was not only relieved of its scybala, but its tonicity was greatly restored, suitable general treatment being resorted to consentaneously. Should this case be confirmed by the experience of others, the record will not be useless.

THE first number of a new French periodical, entitled the *Journal d'Encephale*, under the direction of Professors Ball and J. Luys, appeared on the 25th March.

ILLEGAL PRACTITIONERS.—We hear, from a Bristol correspondent, that some American charlatans, named Mayfield Lilly and Eugénie Lilly, were summoned, on the information of Superintendent Harris, of that city, "for that they, on the 14th March, not being registered under the Medical Act, nor possessed of any diplomas or certificates of having taken any English, foreign, or colonial degree, not having taken such degree, and not having practised as doctors of medicine or physicians before the 1st day of October 1858, unlawfully, wilfully, and falsely did pretend to be doctors of medicine and general practitioners in medicine, and recognised as such by law, contrary to Section 40 of the Medical Act". The defendants, it is said, have decamped, leaving their surgery, stock of worms, etc.; and warrants have been issued for their apprehension.