part of the thighs, sometimes also at the bend of the arms; it generally affects the lower more than the upper part of the body; there may, however, be occasionally seen, along with the affection of the lower parts, an erythematous patch on each cheek.

In most instances the rash extends over the whole body, producing frequently a tumefaction of the skin, equal sometimes to that seen in small-pox. The heat of the body is increased, the pulse is quick, and the tongue white, but the sensorium is not usually affected.

This eruption is evidently vesicular, but the vesicles are so small at first, as to require a magnifying lens to discover them. They go on increasing till they acquire the size of a pin's head, when they become puriform, burst, and discharge an acrid and irritating matter, which emits a most offensive odour. In a few days the patient may be excoriated from head to foot, one part discharging an adhesive matter, and another a thin ichorous fluid.

There does not appear to be any fixed limitation of the eruption; as it subsides, the skin acquires a pale brown colour, and is left in a state of roughness.

The first desquamation may be succeeded by a second and third, so that the whole body will appear as if covered by a white powder.

When the eruption is universal, it generally lasts five or six weeks, and will sometimes be followed by the separation of the nails, and the falling off of the greater part of the hair of the body.

Such are the appearances with which the disease will be found to correspond, when its form is regular and severe. In other instances it only appears on the arms and inside of the thighs, and it soon dies and disappears.

(To be continued.)

CASE ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE EFFECTS OF A LOADED STATE OF THE BOWELS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

If you think the following notice of a case which occurred to me some time since worthy a place in your Journal, you are welcome to it. It shows at least, in the first place, what a lucky hit will sometimes do; and secondly, that the public are about as apt to bestow their praises as their censures wrongly, when the performances of medical men are under their consideration.

I am, Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

THOMAS E. AMYOT.

Diss, February 28, 1848.

It was in a summer month that I was called over in a very great hurry to attend an old lady, the widow of a farmer. She appeared about fifty-seven or fifty-eight years of age, was very corpulent, and of a florid complexion. I found her supported by chairs, alternately groaning and screaming, with agonies of pain in her right

leg, which, from the groin to the foot was swollen, and dark coloured from the turgid state of the blood-vessels; it was intensely tender to the touch, but not oedematous, neither was there any appearance of erythema or erysipelas. Her pulse was rapid and excited, but perfectly compressible; the tongue was foul, and the bowels, according to her own account, *open, or even rather relaxed*. I confess the real cause of the mischief did not at the time strike me, and after cudgelling my brains during a seven miles' ride home, I resolved on simply trying the effect of a brisk calomel purgative, and a saline and senna draught, determining at the same time to visit my patient early on the following morning, and, if possible, to form a just opinion of the real nature of the case. To my great delight, on my second visit, I found the purgative, which I had looked upon only as a *demurrer*, had done its duty most handsomely, having completely removed the pain and swelling,—and what is more, the cause thereof, in the shape of two or three most copious, dark, lumpy, and very offensive motions. I have no doubt the large intestines had been so distended, as to interrupt the venous circulation, and so to cause the symptoms above detailed.

The case at least taught me never to depend simply on a patient's assertion, when there is any cause to suspect *constipation*, but to examine carefully the evacuations, however regularly they may be passed; and if the *feces* be flattened in shape, or *loose and offensive, without the symptoms of debility produced by true diarrhœa*, to clear the bowels effectually before adopting any other treatment.

DISLOCATION OF THE HUMERUS REDUCED UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF CHLOROFORM, WITH OBSERVATIONS.

By W. NEWNHAM, Esq., Farnham,

At the present time, when it is peculiarly necessary to form just ideas of the value, and the precise position of chloroform, I think it may not be undesirable to chronicle in the Journal, even the following case, which has no pretensions to rarity, or to remarkable skill, or to any other peculiarity, except as illustrating the value of chloroform in certain cases. I am disposed to think the remedy has been taken up too sanguinely by the profession in general, and I am fearful of its abuse; but I doubt not, that it is a valuable agent, and that it will by and bye find its proper level. I have lately become acquainted with a case of fatal consequences following its exhibition, though I am not at liberty to publish it; but I do think that great caution should be employed; before its use is determined upon; nor can I yet bring myself to the conviction, that it is desirable to employ it in all cases of midwifery, though I would not hesitate to give it, where any obstetrical operation were to be performed. The following is a simple statement of the case referred to:—

I was called in by Mr. Yate, of Godalming, to consult about the management of a dislocated humerus, in an old lady, who had met with this accident sixty-one days previously, but who had not known the nature

of the accident, nor consulted any one about it, till she called in Mr. Yate the day before. The dislocation was into the axilla; the usual means of extension and counter-extension were employed by pulleys. Finding that we did not succeed, and that the pain was becoming intolerable to our patient, we determined on exhibiting chloroform; and shortly after she came under its influence, we succeeded in reducing the shoulder, and she has gone on remarkably well ever since. Previously, she had not slept in consequence of pain accruing from the pressure of the dislocated humerus on the axillary nerves, but with the exception of the first night, she has since slept peacefully, and the old enemy to sleep—pain—is completely removed. I do not say, that we *might* not have reduced the shoulder without the aid of chloroform, but I am satisfied that the reduction was facilitated, while the pain to the patient was spared by its employment.

April 10, 1848.

CLINICAL NOTES FROM PRIVATE PRACTICE.*

By W. H. RANKING, M.D., (Cantab.) Norwich.

2. Coma from retained Biliary Secretion: Leeches; Cold Douche to the Head; Active Mercurial Purgative: Cure.

I was called about eleven at night, three months since, to the son of an innkeeper, aged 13. It appears that he had returned from school a few days previously, and had gone to bed in apparently his usual health, at ten o'clock. About half an hour before I saw him, he roused the house by a most piercing scream, and upon his mother reaching his room, he was discovered sitting up in bed, screaming loudly, and staring with an intense expression of terror into a corner of the room. While in this condition I arrived.

I found him as I have just said, staring with fright, and uttering piercing screams. The countenance was flushed, the eyes glistening, the pulse natural in volume, but a little quickened. He took no notice whatever of any one near him, but continued to stare wildly in one direction, in spite of every attempt to attract his attention. He had vomited once. While I was making enquiries as to the antecedents of this formidable condition, he slowly fell upon the bed, and in a few minutes was in a state of complete insensibility. I immediately sent to the nearest chemist for leeches and calomel, and in the mean time had him raised up, and kept a continuous stream of cold water upon the head, first removing the hair; mustard cataplasms were also applied to the calves of the legs. As soon as they arrived a dozen leeches were applied to the temples; and ten grains of calomel were also put upon the tongue, to be repeated in two hours. I staid with him an hour, and left him with returning consciousness, the leeches having bled freely, and the cold douches being continued at intervals of a few minutes. At ten in the morning he was perfectly collected, the bowels had been freely purged, an immense quantity of dark offensive bile having passed. He required no further treatment.

My first impression on seeing this case was, that it was an instance of the sudden invasion of meningitis, an opinion which might have been countenanced by the boy's age, and by the fact that he had lost two brothers, or a brother and sister, of "water on the brain," and was himself of strumous aspect. But the rapid supervention of complete coma, and the absence of convulsions, at once disabused me of this view of the case, and I had therefore no hesitation in attributing the symptoms to sudden congestion of the brain, induced either by the presence of indigestible matter in the stomach, or by the retention of vitiated secretions elsewhere. The age was against the probability of the congestion being due to disease of the cerebral blood-vessels, as was his aspect against the suspicion of the agency of general plethora. I confess, however, that under the urgency of the symptoms, and the clearness of their indications, I felt inclined to leave the pathology to be determined by the progress of the case. The first object was to relieve the cerebral vessels, which was done effectually by the combined effects of leeching, and the cold douche, the latter especially; the second was to remove the exciting cause, which, as the stomach had been freely evacuated, I judged to be seated in the intestines. This was accomplished by the calomel. Many would have used the lancet freely; and as the result proved, by so doing, would have inflicted a very unnecessary loss of blood,—a loss more easily produced than remedied. The cold douche would, I am convinced, if properly applied, in many cases of threatened apoplexy, puerperal convulsions, &c., completely obviate the necessity of the wholesale blood-letting, too often indulged in in such cases; often, I believe, from the convenience with which the lancet is applied, and the little trouble it involves.

The result of this interesting case will, I think, justify the diagnosis at the head of these remarks,—the proximate cause of the symptoms being cerebral congestion; the remote cause, the retention of the fætid cystic bile which was dislodged by the calomel.

For some excellent remarks on the production of coma by retained secretions, &c., I would refer the reader to a paper by Mr. Corfe, (*Medical Times*, October 9, 1847, or *Half-yearly Abstract*, Vol. 6, p. 25.

PROVINCIAL

Medical & Surgical Journal.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 1848.

The French medical journals give a lamentable account of the position and prospects of medical men, under the dislocation of social interests at present existing in Paris. It is in vain that the Feuilletonist of the *Gazette Médicale* attempts to be facetious on the subject; his witticisms are evidently extracted from a spirit more disposed to grieve than to be merry. Miserable as the remuneration of the French

* Continued from page 207.