CLAIM TO PRIORITY OF THE
APPLICATION OF NITRATE OF SILVER IN
ULCERATION OF THE LARYNX.

By JAMES BEDINGFIELD, Esq., Surgeon, Stowmarket.
(Read at the Suffolk Branch Meeting, held at Hadleigh,
Friday, June 15th, 1849.)

In a recent number (May 16th, 1849,) of the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*, there is a very interesting and instructive case of "Ulceration of the Larynx," from the pen of Dr. Fletcher, of Birmingham. In all its details, both prior to the dissolution of the patient, as well as in the appearances found after death, this case bears a very striking resemblance to some cases published by me, in the *London Medical Repository*, so far back as the year 1814, and afterwards in my "Compendium of Medical Practice," pages 81 to 93 inclusive. The remedy proposed for the cure of this formidable destructive disease is also the same as that suggested by me. This disease, I believe, proves uniformly, sooner or later, fatal; but this fatality is not to be attributed so much to the want of, or efficiency of, a remedy, as to the difficulty in its application. The mice, after a long consultation, proposed to put a bell about the cat's neck, and a most admirable device it was; but then there was great difficulty as well as great danger, in carrying this operation into effect. I suggested the application of nitrate of silver to the ulcers, and a most efficient remedy I am still inclined to think it would be found, but then there is great difficulty, as well as great danger, in performing the operation. The nitrate of silver, to be successful, must, I apprehend, be applied in substance, not in solution. To make an opening in the trachea, and apply the substance directly to the ulcers, as proposed by me, would be an exceedingly hazardous, although, considering the uniform fatality of the disease, when left to itself, not altogether unjustifiable proceeding; to apply it in substance in the manner proposed by Dr. Horace Green, of New York, will, I fear, be impossible. I ground my opinion of the inefficiency of the solution upon the little benefit I have derived from its use in uterine affections; but when applied in substance its effects have been almost magical. But even in a state of solution the nitrate of silver is said to afford great relief, and in so harassing a disease this is no trifling consideration. Instead of fastening the saturated sponge to a piece of whalebone, I would suggest that it should be attached to a hollow tube, pervious at both ends; for although an extraneous body thus introduced into the trachea must necessarily be very exciting, the introduction of an open tube would secure a free respiration. A large elastic male catheter, containing a piece of wire so bent as to give the instrument the requisite curvature, would probably answer the purpose. The root of the tongue might be depressed by a pair of forceps bent at right angles, with which I have frequently succeeded in removing extraneous bodies, both from the pharynx and meatus auditorius externus. The blades slightly separated, so as to pass on each side of the epiglottis, into the pharynx, would, perhaps, be found more

convenient than the rectangular spatula recommended by Dr. H. Green.

I shall conclude these observations by offering for your inspection a specimen of this disease; and which will convey a much more accurate idea of its formidable and destructive character than can be given by any verbal description. It is the case of Sarah Hopkins, which you will find in my "Compendium." The appearances are thus imperfectly sketched by me:—

"The rima glottidis was very much contracted, and the epiglottis abraded upon its sides and concave surface. An ulcerated surface, commencing at the superior and posterior part of the larynx, extended downwards to a small distance below the ventricles of Galen. The trachea was filled with purulent matter. Upon this being sponged away, an extensive and deep ulceration was discovered upon its posterior part, about half an inch below the inferior aperture of the larynx. About one quarter of an inch below this, upon the anterior part of the membrane, another ulcer was situate. This ulcer spread in a circular direction, and nearly embraced the whole circumference of the trachea, for the space of one-third of an inch. In short, the whole surface of the trachea was more or less destroyed by the disease to within half an inch of its division into the bronchi. Upon this small portion there were slight traces of inflammation, and its follicular structure was very apparent. The membrane lining the bronchi was highly vascular, but no disease existed in either the lungs, heart, or abdominal viscera."

With respect to the nitrate of silver. It is not a matter of high importance by whom its use, in ulceration of the larynx, was first suggested. That honour—if honour there be—is claimed by Dr. Fletcher, for Dr. Horace Green, of New York. Some German physician, whose name I do not at this time recollect, has recently proposed this method of treating the disease, and claims the proposition as originating with himself. Let dates decide the question. It was first proposed by me in the year 1814.

COMPOUND DISLOCATION AND REMOVAL
OF THE ASTRAGALUS.

By R. S. NUNN, Esq., M.R.C.S., Surgeon to the Essex
and Colchester Hospital.

(Read at the Suffolk Branch Meeting of the Provincial
Medical and Surgical Association, held at Hadleigh,
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On the 23rd of January last I was called by my friend, Mr. Symmons, of Bures, to see a patient of his who had met with an accident. I found on my arrival that he was a farmer, of stout strong build, with florid complexion, and having every appearance of robust health. On inquiry, I learned that he had been thrown from his cart, whilst travelling at a moderate pace, and had fallen upon the side of his foot, and that upon attempting to rise and stand, he found he was unable to do so. He was carried home, and Mr. Symmons, on visiting him, discovered the stocking protruding through a cut in a strong top-boot, just below the