other. The broad end is received by the vessel that contains the fluid, and the pointed end either rests upon the dressings of the affected part, or is suspended immediately over them. The water is taken up by the strip of cloth, and carried along it on the principle of capillary attraction, or in the manner of a syphon; and thus a continued supply of water is conducted to the part, affected, without inconvenience or exposure to the patient. In order to get rid of the fluid, there is a concave bottom, perforated with large holes, through which the fluid passes into the inferior part of the box, and from which it is conveyed by a tube into any vessel that may be placed outside the bed for the purpose of receiving it. The perforated bottom, for the sake of cleanness, is made to take out; and there is a soft cushion, covered with painted linen, on which the limb rests, and consequently the whole is not kept wet.

The quantity of fluid which may pass can be regulated by placing the vessel or reservoir containing the water either higher, or on the same plane as the patient's bed. If placed high, so much as three gallons of fluid may be supplied in the course of twenty-four hours. If warm water be required, as in cases of strains and lacerated wounds, the temperature of the reservoir may be kept up by means of a spirit lamp.

The irrigating machine is made and sold by Messrs. Weiss and Son, instrument makers, 63, Strand, London.

The advantages of such an apparatus as I have described are sufficiently obvious to all persons acquainted with the effects of moisture at different temperatures, according to the nature of the injury, in appeasing the sensations, and in preventing or abating inflammation.

CASE OF COLICA PICTONUM, WITH BLUE DISCOLORATION OF THE GUMS,

By HENRY JOHNSON, M.D., Shrewsbury.

(Read at the Anniversary Meeting of the Shropshire and North Wales Branch of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association.)

Thursday, July 8, 1841.

IN the 23d volume of the Medico-Chirurgical Transactions, there is a paper by Dr. Henry Burton, "On a remarkable effect upon the gums, produced by the absorption of lead." A few days after I had read this paper, a case occurred in which I noticed this phenomenon, and, with the permission of the Association, I will read a brief account of it.

Jan. 7, 1841.—I was desired to see William Benson, æt. 49, a plumber. He complained of constant aching pain at the epigastrium, which was very much aggravated at intervals. He had also pain in the knees, ankles, arms, and in the tendon of the pectoralis muscle. These pains were not increased by pressure or motion. The tongue was white and moist. Pulse soft, not quick. The bowels were confined, and the appetite was generally craving.

He stated, that about a fortnight ago he was in his usual state of health, and was at work in Wales laying down some lead pipes, in which occupation he was much exposed to cold, and thinks

his present illness, which has only lasted about a week, was brought on by that exposure. His bowels are habitually inactive, three or four days passing without a motion. Has been a plumber several years. On looking into his mouth, I discovered the peculiar blue line on the gums, as described by Dr. H. Burton in the Medico-Chirurgical Transactions. The edge of the gum, where it is attached to the neck of the teeth, was fringed with a very distinct blue line, about one-twentieth of an inch in width, so that three or four of the molar teeth on each side in the upper jaw were thus half surrounded towards the roof of the mouth with a blue crescent.

Active purgatives were administered.

8.—All the pains better; almost none in the lower extremities. Has had no sleep. Epigastrium slightly tender. Pulse 96, soft. Thirst and retching. Bowels freely moved. Stools dark and scybalous. Repeat the purgatives.

9.—Has had some sleep. Four stools. No scybala in the last, but dark and bilious. Pains much abated. Pulse 84. Urine high coloured and turbid. Tongue very white and moist. Some appetite.

R Calomel, two grains,
Opium, one grain,
Antimonial powder, three grains.

A powder to be taken every sixth hour.

11.—Hardly any pain in the stomach. Bowels regular. Appetite improved, and sleep returning.

17.—Quite well. The blue line still visible, but more faint.

REMARKS.—This is the only instance in which I have observed the phenomenon pointed out by Dr. Burton. He, however, has seen it in many cases, and suggests its presence as a valuable diagnostic sign in derangements of health, caused by the accidental introduction of lead into the system. But, it is unnecessary for me to quote farther the particulars of this paper, which may be in the hands of every member here present. Dr. Burton makes no attempt to explain how the coloured line here spoken of is produced. The following explanation has occurred to myself:—

It appears that lead, when taken into the system, has a peculiar tendency to affect the salivary organs, producing an increased flow of saliva. From this and other facts, it is probable that it enters the mass of blood, and circulates therewith over the whole body. The salivary glands are stimulated to increased action by its presence, whilst another operation goes on in the gums. From the decomposition of particles of food, the decay of teeth, or the putrefaction of the tartar, it is probable that the mouth of almost every one contains at times a small portion of sulphuretted hydrogen. Even among those who clean their teeth, and therefore do what they can to remove the above sources of this gas, I have repeatedly found that a slip of paper, impregnated with a solution of lead, in a few minutes gave a trace of this gas, by becoming slightly discoloured.

Now, it is easy to understand how the sulphuretted hydrogen, acting upon the lead within the vessels of the gums, precipitates the sulphuret of lead, which, remaining in the substance of the mucous membrane, imparts to them the peculiar blue tinge above described; and this occurs only at the dental margin of the gums, partly, perhaps,

on account of the thinness of the membrane at this point, and also on account of its proximity to the tartar of the teeth, one great source of the sulphuretted hydrogen.

PROVINCIAL MEDICAL & SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SATURDAY, JULY 31, 1841.

THE anniversary meeting of the Provincial Association takes place at York during the ensuing week. Perhaps no one of these anniversaries has before been held in which questions of such vital interest to the medical profession were submitted to the consideration of the members, as are likely to come before them on this occasion. The reform of our medical institutions, and the organization of the profession on just and comprehensive principles; the operation of the poor-law in regard to the administration of relief to the sick poor, the mischiefs resulting from the unrestrained practices of empirics, the necessities of the benevolent fund, must all more or less engage the attention of the members assembled, in addition to other subjects—subjects of scientific or practical inquiry, more immediately connected with the primary objects for which the Association was originally constituted. The feverish impatience with which the devising of a special form of organization for the profession, was at one time looked forward to as the panacea for every grievance under which medical practitioners of all classes are more or less suffering, has given way to a more just and rational mode of viewing this great question. In the discussion which it may be expected will take place, the calm and temperate counsels of those who have long considered and well weighed the subject in all its bearings, will now be listened to with attention, and in any decisions which may be come to, we feel assured that no hasty or ill-digested attempts in favour of specific remedies for evils deeply-rooted and of long duration, will meet with the approbation of the meeting.

The object which the Provincial Association has in view, is not the advancement of any Utopian scheme of fancied perfection, but the obtaining of an efficient and equitable arrangement, by which the whole profession may be so united and organized as to increase the usefulness of the medical practitioner to the public, to elevate his character, and protect his interests. The question involves, however, more than one point for consideration,

and while the principles upon which the necessary measures should be founded may not unfitly be laid down, the ends of the Association are more likely to be obtained by being, as far as may admit of it, separately sought. The Association will do well to follow up with diligence and renewed energy the proceedings which they have so well commenced in regard to the poor-law. The documentary evidence which has been collected through the indefatigable exertions of their committee is full and conclusive, and cannot fail to exercise much influence in ultimately bringing this important question to a satisfactory settlement.

The strongest grounds are thereby afforded for reiterating the calls for redress, and the recorded statements may at once be referred to whenever information is asked for. The facts are incontrovertible, and of the most decisive character, and cannot readily be explained away, since many of them are furnished, willingly or otherwise, by the very authorities by whom the evils complained of have been perpetrated and upheld. The sifting of the evidence furnished by the assistant commissioners forms a valuable part of the reports of the committee of the Association, and the statements of these gentlemen will be often found to constitute the best and most effective commentary on the complaints of the union officers and the practitioners of the union districts. Let this subject then be pressed; the evil is manifest and not denied; the complaints are urgent; the evidence by which these are supported, collected, and placed in an accessible shape; the means of redress pointed out; even the clauses necessary for an enactment on the subject have been drawn up by a sound and skilful lawyer, and adopted, as likely to secure the attainment of the very moderate and reasonable wishes of the profession by all who take a prominent part in the question. Nothing remains therefore but to press the subject, to force it on the attention of those who are in authority, not once or twice, but again and again, until the success which perseverance in a just cause ever merits, shall be at length obtained.

It is satisfactory to witness the manner in which these public questions have been treated at the various meetings of the branch associations. But one feeling seems to have prevailed respecting them, and that feeling has been decidedly and unequivocally expressed in approval of the firm yet temperate proceedings adopted by the general association. "Your council," says the report of the Newton Branch, "have had great pleasure in observing the rapid progress which the question of medical reform has made during the past year." "Still it is manifest that the present state of this question is such as to demand the most careful