some suitable laxative in the morning. When a grain of calomel with the morning laxative is insufficient to act two or three times on the bowels in the forenoon, a grain and a half may be given, and it may be gradually increased to any quantity, so long as it is carried off by the laxative in the morning, and the gums remain unaffected—an object to be, except in certain cases, scrupulously avoided. With this treatment may be given some nitrate of potash, or Mindererus' spirit, with or without ipecacuanha. In females, sometimes calomel cannot be borne, in which case, blue pill, in doses of from three to five grains can be used. When the tenderness has been removed, the exhibition of a tonic dose of calomel or blue pill is to be given every seven or eight hours. This tonic dose consists of a grain of calomel, or ten grains of blue pill, made into twenty pills, with extract of liquorice and ginger, or with any other medicine which accompanying symptoms may require. With this change in the additional use of means, may be given some stomachic tincture twice in a day. Occasionally, counter-irritation may be required; but in what cases, and for any fuller information which may be wished, I beg to refer to the writings of Dr. Philip.

There are certain cases in which this treatment is found wholly inadmissible, as that peculiar idiosyncrasy of constitution, which at once, from a single dose of any mercurial preparation, is thoroughly salivated. Another case is that of an individual in whom the mucous membrane of the alimentary canal is so irritated by a mercurial preparation, that to persevere would be to make the patient worse instead of better. Again, the disposition to profuse uterine discharge which afflicts many females, often proves a source of much embarrassment to the practitioner. And sometimes the state of the nervous system is such, and the circumstances are altogether so unfavourable for the endurance and perseverance necessary to restore healthy action, and to maintain it for a certain time, in an organ which has been for a long time out of health, that to attempt the cure would only be to encounter disappointment.

REMARKS, HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL, ON DISEASES OF INFANCY.

By E. COPEMAN, M.D., Norwich.

There are few subjects, perhaps, which have engaged more of the attention of medical practitioners within the last few years, than the diseases of children; nor is there, probably, any branch of medical science which has received greater advancement from the labours of those devoted to its elucidation. For a long time neglected, and therefore very imperfectly understood, the diseases of children were treated, (if treated at all save by mothers and nurses,) without the slightest regard to anything like system or practical discrimination. If a physician deigned to notice them at all, his treatment consisted in the merest empiricism, and it appeared as if it were hardly expected that any good could result in such cases from the interference

of a professor of the medical art. In the early part of the eighteenth century, however, some little progress was made in this department, and in 1715, a work entitled "De Morbis acutis Infantum" was published by Dr. Walter Harris, a learned physician in great repute at the Court of William and Mary, and whose writings bespeak him to have possessed a highly religious and exemplary character. He was an intimate friend of the great Sydenham, by whose advice it was, he informs us, that he made public his method of treating infantile disorders. His descriptions of disease are by no means clear, nor does he treat much of symptoms; his principal object is to direct attention to a more successful method of treatment than had hitherto prevailed. Dr. Harris' plan is indeed sufficiently simple, and if as universally applicable as he believed it to be, it would save the physician an immensity of difficulty in diagnosis, and remove almost all doubt about the choice of remedies. He says, "As the constitution of young persons is very humid, I do not hesitate to pronounce that all their diseases are of the same kind, and produced by one and the same cause; and that according as different parts of the body, whether upper or lower, are affected with this or that disease,—according, for instance, as the stomach, intestines, lungs, head and nerves are chiefly affected, different names are allotted to the same disease." Thus, according to his theory, all the diseases of children arise from one and the same cause, this being the natural humidity, or fluids of the body, degenerating into an acid. "Porro symptomata infantum singula acido, ut parenti legitimo, ortum suum debent." From these simple premises, he deduces an equally simple indication of treatment; namely, to neutralize the predominating acidity by testaceous powders in large doses, and to purge them off at intervals. The powders were to be given two or three times a day in some aromatic water, and every two or three days, an aperient of rhubarb alone, or mixed with cream of tartar, to remove the contents of the bowels. Several cases are narrated in which the effect of this treatment was remarkably beneficial in various acute diseases of infancy; and this comprises nearly the whole of what is to be learned from his book upon the subject of infantile diseases. In convulsions, Dr. Harris recommends bleeding, under certain circumstances, but only in the intervals between the fits, and not during the fit. On the subject of bleeding in general, he offers some sage remarks deserving of being quoted. "As regards venesection in children, although a marked transference of the febrile matter into the lungs, and convulsive coughs, sometimes require it in the smallest infants; yet it is very manifest that it is not a remedy adapted to their nature, nor better suited to this most tender age than for decrepid old people. I do not therefore think it at all necessary to require its aid in any affection of infancy, except in convulsive coughs, or where a troublesome cough accompanies a fever of sudden origin, &c." Rhubarb he extols as without exception the best purgative for children; and considers aloes injurious; also Ethiop's mineral as the best mercurial "quia qualicunque quantitate, et quotiesumque exhibita salivationem non solet excitare." Dr. Harris thus sums up his remarks upon the treatment of acute diseases of children, and I transcribe his

own words, even at the risk of being considered prodigal of quotations, because the conclusion arrived at from his experience, his desire for improvement in practice, and his dependence on Providence for the success of means judiciously employed, can scarcely be more briefly or more forcibly expressed. "I am fully persuaded, after a long life and much experience, that the more simple methods of cure, unlike the elegant technicalities of certain learned men, are generally more grateful to the stomach, more conducive to the restoration of health, and are more frequently accompanied with the divine blessing, than a pompous farrago of medicines, however much a manifold authority, new or old, may militate against this opinion or contradict the simple truth." The method of prescribing, at the period in which Dr. Harris practised, and before his time, was so contrary to the simple plan he advised, and consisted of such an incongruous mixture of multifarious ingredients, that it was not likely he should live to see old prejudices surmounted, and his plan generally followed; indeed, for many years after his death, the art of prescribing remained complicated and indefinite, and it was left for the present generation to separate the good from the bad,—to choose the former and reject the latter,—to profit by the advanced state of botanical and chemical knowledge, and thereby to contribute materially to the alleviation of the various ills of mortality.

(To be continued.)

CASE OF POISONING BY ARSENIC,

PRESENTING SOME PECULIARITIES.

By M. M. DE BARTOLOME, M.D., Sheffield.

(Read before the Sheffield Medical Society, Oct. 2nd, 1848.)

The destruction of human life by the agency of poison has of late years been most lamentably on the increase, and although the improved and daily improving state of chemical science fortunately enables us to ascertain with ease and certainty, (at least in the case of mineral poisons,) the precise poison employed, yet cases are now and then met with presenting certain anomalies, either in the *post-mortem* appearances, or in the results of the analysis by which we endeavour to detect the poisoning agent employed. Conceiving that it is the duty of every medical man to lay any such cases which may fall within the scope of his observation before the profession generally, I am induced to bring before this Society the following case, and in doing so, I shall endeavour to call your attention to those points of resemblance to, or deviation from, the usual routine of similar cases:—

The subject of the melancholy investigation which I am about detailing, was Mary S., a scissor-burnisher. It appears from the evidence at the inquest, that an improper intimacy had for some time existed between her and an apprentice, who was frequently employed in the same room with her, the result of which was her becoming pregnant; and it likewise appears that she had frequently expressed her determination never to become a mother, although both the lad by whom she

was "enceinte," and another man with whom she "kept company," had often expressed a willingness to marry her.

On Wednesday, August 16th, 1848, she left her home about 7 p.m., and returned about 9 p.m., during which absence it is supposed she procured the poison, either by buying it herself, with a view to self-destruction, or by having it from some one with the intention of inducing abortion. On this point we are completely in the dark, for although the police enquired at more than fifty druggists' shops in the town, not the slightest information could be gathered by them, either to establish the fact of her having bought the poison herself, or tending to criminate others. On her return home she complained of being very ill, and her mother made her some gruel, into which it is presumed the poison was put by herself. On the following day, as she continued very unwell, her mother gave her some Epsom salts, and again on the Friday, her suffering still continuing, her mother gave her some castor oil; but no one having any suspicions of the real state of matters, no medical man was sent for until about ten minutes before her death, which occurred on Friday, August 18th, at 8 p.m., although vomiting and purging had existed, almost without intermission, for upwards of twenty-four hours. Mr. Martin having been sent for, and being from home at the time, Mr. Newton, his assistant, saw her, as I have stated, about ten minutes before her death, which actually took place while he was still in the house.

On Sunday, August 20th, 1848, at 9 a.m., thirty-six hours after death, the body was inspected by Mr. Martin and myself, assisted by Mr. Newton. The body externally presented no marks of violence, but it was much ecchymosed from gravitation. About midway between the pubis and umbilicus a tumour was felt, like a truncated cone, which, on removing the abdominal parietes, proved to be the uterus, evidently in an impregnated state. The head externally presented nothing abnormal. On the surface of the brain there was a good deal of venous congestion, and its substance presented a much greater number of bloody points than natural. The ventricles contained about half an ounce of serum each. The cortical matter of the cerebellum was more injected than that of the cerebrum; the medullary less so. *Thorax*:—The right lung was perfectly healthy and crepitated freely; the pleura on the same side was healthy; the left lung was likewise healthy, and crepitated freely, but the left pleura was adherent all over its surface. The heart was rather larger than natural, particularly the right side; otherwise apparently healthy; on cutting into it, however, its substance was found very flabby, and its cavities filled with coagula—particularly those of the right side. The valves were all perfectly healthy. *Abdomen*:—The peritoneal coat covering the fundus uteri was more injected than natural, and in some places ecchymosed, giving the viscus a mottled appearance. The fundus uteri, at its broadest part, was about seven inches in diameter, and from the fundus to the os uteri the distance was nine inches. On cutting through the fundus uteri an ecchymosed