The observant writer asks "what could be the cause of this striking difference of complexion?" I would answer, it might probably be found in the foreign matter held in solution in the water of the clear and sparkling fountain. Similar, though perhaps less marked differences, are visible in different districts of Buckinghamshire, as I have often noticed; and I have long believed that with the different complexion there was also an actual modification of constitution and health, and that a practitioner, by his long abode in a place, the more readily distinguished the shade of morbid affection, as well as appreciated better the required form of remedy.

It may be mentioned, as allied to the subject of medical topography, that a valuable and experienced medical friend, whose useful career and medical reputation were cut short; after nine years' residence in a certain locality, took a new station, and declared to me his conviction that he now found the same disease, nominally, called for a modified use of remedy, simply an observation of fact.

As another example of the influence of certain waters, I would mention the case of a gentleman who suffered for several years from a very troublesome cutaneous disease of the hands, intimately connected with the water, as it proved, which baffled all remedies suggested by the most experienced. It was clearly made out to depend on ablutions with the water of his house, in every respect beautiful to the eye and taste, and then immediately remedied. He can now reproduce it at any time, by a week's perseverance in the use of the water.

After having long learnt that Beaconsfield was, with rare exceptions, unproductive of renal calculi; when called to patients seized with the symptoms which usually lead to suspicion of that painful disease, I never hesitated to pronounce at once, that it would not prove to be gravel; remarking, as I have done, to a by-standing pupil, that were these symptoms witnessed a few miles from Beaconsfield, I should be disposed to pronounce that they were caused by the passing of gravel, but you will soon have the proof that it is not so here. Thus, a young lady was attacked with violent and sudden pain on one side of the loins, extending to the groin. The bladder was constantly excited to action, the urine was bloody, vomiting was constant; and the knowledge, only, that I stood beyond the geographical bounds of this disease, induced me to hesitate to pronounce the case gravel. It turned out to be inflammation of the ureter.

The great point remains, viz., to say what that element is which constitutes the cause of disease, which I have thus observed and relate, as connected with place and water. That it abounds where chalky districts prevail is to be remarked; that it is not equally prevalent in all chalky countries, and that it is sometimes seen in districts in which there is no chalk, I have observed, though very rarely. That it is identified with some element which abounds where chalk abounds, though it may not be any of the combinations of lime, I have been forced to conjecture; and that where no chalk exists, and the diseased principle is to be found, I have observed an abundance of sand to prevail in the soil. No doubt a very large portion of this kingdom abounds in the cause of this principle of disease, which shows itself in the various forms which I

have noticed. It is a happy circumstance that every place is furnished with the antidote to be found in the use of rain-water, so easily collected, so easily deprived of its impurities, so easily intercepted in its natural descent to the regions which furnish it with unwholesome foreign matter. It is necessary to say that the impurities which rain water picks up from the roofs of houses, are easily separable by the filterers, which are now of such common use; although it is quite otherwise with respect to chemical solutions of the numerous combinations of lime, silex, &c., which are found in wells and natural springs.

It is no doubt the long and habitual use of water, thus unwholesomely impregnated, that affects the system, predisposing it to the specific ailment which at length succeeds. Its effects are often seen at the age of four, in the production of the enlarged thyroid gland; but its fearful ravages are more strikingly exhibited in females from 18 years and upwards.

I have seen the enlarged thyroid gland in an infant at birth. I have known it begin to make its appearance within a year of arrival in a locality known to abound in it; and at this moment I am acquainted with two instances of its existence where the subjects have taken up their abode in its districts, three years.

I am anxious no longer to keep these observations to myself, in hopes, that while to put them forth need have no tendency to suspend my own exertions, it may encourage and excite more industrious labourers to exertions in so important a field.

I am, Sir, your obliged

and obedient servant,

NATHANIEL RUMSEY, M.D.

Henley-on-Thames, May 27, 1844.

DEATH FROM FRIGHT, AFTER THE OPERATION FOR SOLUTION OF CAPSULAR CATARACT.

By JONATHAN TOOGOOD, M.D., Bridgewater.

J. G., aged 23, of a scrofulous and hysterical temperament was admitted into the Bridgewater Eye Dispensary, February 16, 1839. She stated that she had always enjoyed good health to the age of sixteen, and had taken the charge of a dairy; that after this period the catamenia not appearing, she became subject to headache, had frequent attacks of hysteria, lost flesh, and was affected with a severe form of porrigo, which no medical treatment relieved. For the last five years the proper functions of the uterus had entirely ceased. About midsummer last she was suddenly seized with an acute pain in the left eye accompanied with dimness, which in a few hours became so much worse that she was barely able to distinguish light. A fortnight ago the right eye became similarly affected, attended with the same sensations, and as speedily followed by complete loss of vision. On the 18th, the operation for solution was performed posterior to the iris, in both eyes, and the cataracts broken up. Nothing unusual occurred, but on the next morning she complained of pain in the right eye, extending over the temple and brow, and the iris appeared somewhat hazy. Leeches were ordered, a plaster of opium and belladonna to be applied over the brow, and five grains of hydrargyrum cum creta, with

three of Dover's powder to be taken every four hours. The proposal to apply leeches excited the most extraordinary alarm in her mind; she exclaimed immediately—"Oh, I can never have leeches; I shall die if I have leeches. Her breathing became very much hurried and laboured, her apprehension for her ultimate recovery so great, that every means of quieting her alarm failed; palpitation of the heart succeeded, with delirium and great prostration of strength, with violent perspiration, and in spite of all treatment, she died at one a.m., the next day, breathing to the last in the same laborious manner.

I remember in a trial for abduction, which took place in this county some years since, in which the counsel for the prosecution took uncommon pains to impress the jury with the belief of a most improbable story, which eventually was proved to be a fabrication, that the judge in summing up, told the jury, that there was nothing improbable in the girl's story, for that it was impossible to estimate the effect of fear on the human mind, and a verdict was given in accordance with that opinion. I can call to mind several instances in which fear has produced the most distressing and alarming effects, but I was sceptical as to its extent until I witnessed this case.

Bridgewater, June, 1844.

PROVINCIAL

Medical & Surgical Journal.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 1844.

We had hoped before this to be able to communicate the heads of the long-promised bill of Sir James Graham, for the regulation of the medical profession, but day after day, and week after week, are still allowed to pass without the looked-for measure making its appearance. Last week the House was counted out on the day fixed for its introduction. What cause of delay is to befall it this week we profess not to be able to foresee; but it is sufficiently evident, that with a session rapidly running its course, unless more determination is shown by the Home Secretary to bring forward the bill, there will be little time allowed for the consideration and discussion of its provisions, if indeed it be intended to pass into a law during the present session. In this uncertainty therefore as to the measure itself, and in the absence of any official information respecting its nature, our readers may perhaps be willing to receive what has been suffered to transpire through other sources. That which bears the most authentic character, and from which, probably, some conjecture as to the actual intentions of the Government may be formed, is the address of Mr. Carmichael, recently delivered before the

Medical Association of Ireland. From this address it would seem, that the heads of the measure have been learned, how it does not appear, and approved by the Council of the Dublin College of Surgeons, and subsequently by the Council of the Medical Association of Ireland, and we further gather something of what the Bill does enact, and more, perhaps of what it does not.

According to Mr. Carmichael, the Bill does not proceed to the full extent in reforming the profession deemed necessary by the Irish Association; it does not unite, as they desired, physic and surgery into one faculty, by combining the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons; it does not separate, as they desired, the practice of pharmacy from the practice of medicine; it does not deprive, as they wished, the nineteen or twenty medical colleges or corporations of the licensing power, and substitute in their place three others in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh; it does not, it would seem, contain any clause enabling the general practitioner to recover by law, that remuneration to which he is entitled for his visits and professional advice, nor any clause depriving him of the power of obtaining remuneration for the medicines supplied to his patients.

On the other hand the bill enacts, or is said to enact, that all general practitioners shall, in future, undergo sufficient examination in both physic and surgery for all practical purposes; it establishes a central council, with powers to regulate the examinations, and to dictate the quantum of qualification to be expected from candidates who seek to enter into the profession; and it deprives the Apothecaries' Company of the power of granting licences to practice medicine.

From these statements Mr. Carmichael draws the inference, that although Sir James Graham's bill does not reach to the full extent of the objects that medical reformers had in view, yet it may be considered as achieving them to a very considerable extent. It will unite physic and surgery in the person of the general practitioner, who, at a moderate computation, at least possesses nine-tenths of all the medical and surgical practice in the united kingdom. It provides for equality of qualification throughout each great division of the empire, through the power of regulating examinations to be conferred on the Central Council; and by depriving