persons, both male and female, who engage in the practice of midwifery, being more or less educated. This, perhaps, would be done most effectually, by practitioners in different parts of the kingdom publishing the result of their practice, with the view of showing the proportion of cases in which the life of both the mother and the child depended upon immediate assistance. With this intention I beg to offer for publication the result of 800 cases of midwifery, of which I have kept an account. With reference to the unusual number of dangerous cases, I would merely observe that they constituted a large proportion of the difficult cases occurring in the neighbourhood, many of them residing several miles from my house.

I am, Sir, yours very truly,

KENRICK WATSON.

Stourport, Nov. 5, 1844.

The following is the result of 800 cases of midwifery of which I kept an account during a period of eighteen years:—

Premature labours	12
Twin cases	18
Face presentations	14
Breech ditto	11
Presentations of arm, &c.	11
Dangerous flooding	17
Convulsions during labour	3
Ditto after birth of the child	1
Rupture of the vagina	3
Ditto of an artery in the labia pudendi	1
Cases where it was necessary to open the head	12
Severe flooding after extraction of the placenta	2
	105
Natural Labours	695
	800

Of the premature births several were occasioned by one or both parents being affected with syphilis.

In two cases in which the arm presented in the vagina, the placenta had been over the os uteri, but had been forced into the vagina by the protrusion of the arm. The flooding in the first instance, in both cases, had been violent, but had ceased when the placenta was forced into the vagina. The women in both cases were strong and healthy, and the uterus strongly contracted round the body of the child.

Of the seventeen cases of severe flooding, fifteen arose from the adhesion of the placenta over the os uteri; and in two cases the placenta was not so situated, and the flooding ceased after the membranes were ruptured. Of the fifteen cases one died before I got to the house, and one soon after she was delivered. She had been flooding two or three days before I saw her. In these seventeen cases four children were saved.

In one of the cases in which the head was opened the woman was dropsical. She had been in labour many hours; the uterus was so thin that the limbs of the child could be distinguished by the touch through the parietes of the abdomen. The uterus was dilated, the head was large, and the bones detached. After the head was punctured, about a quart of fluid was discharged, as the bones were so loose that they afforded no hold to the crotchet. I passed my hand by its side, and brought down the feet. No

contraction of the uterus followed; the re-introduction of my hand produced no effect, the uterus continued like an empty bag, with the placenta attached to its fundus. I gave her brandy and ammonia, poured cold water on the abdomen, and then injected cold water into the uterus without the least effect. I then applied a thick compress upon the abdomen, and a flannel roller round the body. There was no discharge of blood at the termination of two hours. I left her in the charge of her medical attendant, and in the course of the night she died.

The case in which a rupture of the labial artery took place, was attended by a midwife. Two hours after delivery, she complained of pain and swelling of the right labium, bearing-down, and discharge of blood from the rectum. She died on the third day. Upon examination, thirty hours after death, the perineum and surrounding parts were found injected with blood; the integuments of the abdomen emphysematous, a cavity in the labium lined with coagulated blood, and communicating with the rectum, through a laceration about half an inch in extent.

In two cases the placenta was diseased. In one, the maternal part was left firmly adhering; great irritative fever supervened, with very offensive discharges, but by injections into the uterus, bark and acids, the woman, who was nearly fifty, recovered. In the other, a discharge of water took place in the fourth month, and continued to recur from time to time till the seventh month, when labour commenced. At this time the uterine tumour was divided into two parts. When the os uteri was sufficiently dilated, I passed my hand and found the foetus, with the membranes entire, occupying one half of the uterus, and the placenta and a quantity of grumous blood, the other half. So far as I could ascertain, the putrid mass was formed by blood and hydatids. The woman recovered.

In one case there was a knot on the umbilical cord, and in another, a rupture of the umbilical artery. In a third case the child was apparently seized with convulsions before labour commenced, and died. The woman when at work, ironing, in a very hot room, became faint from the violent motion of the child; it shortly became still, and never moved again. She was delivered on the fourth day afterwards, and the child was in a state of decomposition.

Several cases required the use of the lever or the forceps, and in no case, unless the death of the child was evident, was the head opened till one or other of them had been tried.

Out of the 800 cases seven proved fatal,—three from rupture of the vagina; two from flooding; one from rupture of an artery in the labia pudendi; and one, in which the head was opened and the child putrid, where peritonitis had either preceded, or occurred during, labour.

EFFECTS OF MIASMA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

As the etiology of disease has always excited the attention of the medical practitioner, perhaps you will deem the following contribution, abstracted from my

note-book, of sufficient interest to merit a place in the pages of the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*.

Yours obediently,

JOHN C. SMART, M.D.,

Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians.

Scarborough, November 12, 1844.

October 15, 1838; visited M. Hart, servant of all-work in the family of a farmer. She possesses a strong, robust constitution; had a diarrhoea which commenced a few days ago, and ceased on exposure to cold. She now presents the following symptoms:—countenance wild and flushed; slightly incoherent; violent spasmodic action of the muscles of the lower jaw coming on in paroxysms; constant thirst and dryness of the throat; pain in the abdomen, diffused, continued, and increased by pressure; skin hot and dry; pulse 115, hard and full; tongue loaded with a brownish-white fur. The treatment adopted was actively antiphlogistic, followed by salines. She recovered in a fortnight.

On the 22nd of September, 1839, I was requested to visit Anne Hunter, aged 19, servant in the same house, a tall, strong made young woman. About a fortnight ago, during the regular menstrual period, she drank copiously of cold water; the discharge was suspended, but no difference in the state of her health was perceptible until the present evening, when reading the bible by the side of her mistress, she suddenly complained of a pain in the little finger of her left hand, which rapidly extended, she glided from her chair and lay on the floor insensible; violent convulsive action of the voluntary muscles ensued, which continued with only momentary intermissions until I saw her. She presented the same flushed countenance, hot, dry skin, full and rapid pulse, abdominal pain, etc., observed in Hart's case. Active antiphlogistic treatment was resorted to, which relieved the more urgent symptoms; the muscular action became less intense, and together with the pain entirely ceased in three or four days, and was succeeded by mild febrile action, which subsided in ten days, and she soon regained her strength.

In the autumn of 1840, I attended, at the same house, two servant maids; one aged 21, the other 15, presenting the same symptoms, but somewhat milder; and yielding to similar treatment.

I was told that two other servant maids had been attacked in like manner, the year previous to my being called in to Hart: one of whom died.

The foregoing cases viewed separately would excite but little attention; yet, recurring as they did, year after year, at a season when vegetable decomposition is most rife, it became necessary to investigate the cause, and take some precaution against it. A few yards from the kitchen door was a pool, fed by water that percolated through the manure of the fold-yard: this the farmer told me had existed during two or three generations, and nothing had ever been laid to its charge; however, I advised him to drain it off, with which he complied; and up to this time (November, 1844) no more cases have occurred.

It will be observed that the spasmodic action was confined to those muscles moving the inferior maxilla, and the muscles of the pharynx, in Hart's case. In the others, although there was well marked and painful constriction of the pharynx, the whole system of

voluntary muscles was violently excited, and in two of the cases required great force to control them, and prevent mischief arising from the extraordinary exertion made by the patients; which was considerably mitigated by a liberal abstraction of blood, but not entirely subdued, until the secretions were freely promoted by the potassio-tartrate of antimony, combined with chloride of mercury.

Since it may seem extraordinary that the servant maids alone should be attacked, whilst the remainder of the family enjoyed immunity from a disorder, which there is reason to suspect arose from miasm, created by the decomposition of vegetable or animal matter in the above mentioned pool; I may add that the mistress of the house, mother of a large family, was always distinguished for her activity up to the year 1837, when her previously good health and cheerful disposition gave place to anxiety, inaptitude for any mental or bodily exertion and, disorder of the digestive organs, for which medicine only afforded temporary relief. The ordinary period of gestation was curtailed by miscarriages, three of which occurred between 1837 and 1840, and were attended with considerable difficulty and danger. In 1841, the year after the pond had been filled up, she recovered her former vigour, again became pregnant, and was delivered of a fine child at the full period, and has enjoyed good health ever since.

A retrospect of several years extensive practice, in an agricultural district, brings to my recollection many instances, where whole families have been prostrated by a fever, that I strongly suspect was engendered by allowing the refuse of cattle-folds to decompose in heaps, collected close by the dwelling-house, and saturated with a fluid that ought to have been drained off and collected in a tank, thus forming a most valuable manure to enrich the soil, instead of being the means of introducing sickness into the household of the farmer, and often severing his nearest ties.

PROVINCIAL
Medical & Surgical Journal.
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1844.

Among the many responsible duties which must early devolve upon the Council of Health, should that portion of the Medical Bill which establishes such a body pass into a law, is a review of the legal provisions relating to the condition of the insane. The number of this most afflicted class of our fellow-creatures, existing in England alone, has been estimated at twenty-one thousand; but as this does not include either private or union cases, there is reason to fear that the estimate falls very far short of the truth. How important, then, does it become that the arrangements for the care and protection of so large and so helpless a portion of the population, thus rendered incapable of protecting themselves, and placed as it were without