The ordinary symptoms of poisoning by arsenic are those which are frequently exhibited in the course of natural diseases, and numerous instances are on record, of death occurring from the administration of arsenic, in which no suspicion of the exhibition of any deleterious agent was entertained until after the fatal event. The danger of overlooking the presence of arsenic in the system is much increased by the absence of the signs of poisoning by this mineral, which have been laid down as pathognomonic by medical jurists and toxicologists. Several cases affording examples in a greater or less degree of exceptions to the general rule, have been noticed, but the most rare deviation from the effects ordinarily consequent upon the administration of arsenic, consists in the accession of symptoms usually attendant upon the action of a narcotic rather than an irritant poison.

The foregoing case is not detailed as a specimen of genuine narcotism; at the same time the symptoms indicate more of a narcotic than of an irritant action. These, with the absence of morbid appearances in the stomach, afford an instance of the primary action of the poison manifesting itself in organs distinct from that to which it was originally applied. This case is also remarkable as evincing an entire immunity from acute suffering on the part of the patient. Appearances of extreme danger were not appreciable until within a very short period of dissolution, and had not the act of eating the poison been witnessed, I consider there was no feature in the case calculated to raise a suspicion of the true cause of the indisposition, and its melancholy termination.

Maldon, July 9, 1845.

FATAL CASE ATTENDED BY A DRUGGIST: INQUEST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND
SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

By the insertion of the following case of death, of a healthy young woman, aged 21, who was attended by a druggist, a partial report of which has appeared in the newspapers, you will oblige

Your most obedient servant,

GEORGE WEEKES.

Hurstperpoint, Sussex, July 8, 1845.

I was desired to see the deceased on Sunday, 29th of June, for the first time. I was informed by the attendants that she had been drooping for a fortnight, had complained of pain in her back and legs, and felt much lassitude: they believed she got her feet wet during the menstrual period, which they said was the cause of the malady. A druggist of this place had attended her on the Wednesday previous, and gave her a Dover's powder, her bowels being much confined at the time, with pain in her head. The next day she was worse; he then gave her aloes and myrrh, and other emmenagogues, which acted very powerfully on the bowels, and caused much pain. She was delirious at night; he then gave her ten grains more of Dover's powder, and a fever mixture, (as he called it,) every four hours. On Friday he gave her three more pills of aloes and myrrh; she was still delirious at times; the

emmenagogues and mixture were continued; she became gradually worse, and the druggist continued to visit and prescribe for her, until just before I saw her, on Sunday morning; he then ordered her a draught of an ounce and a half of the compound tincture of aloes, (in the opinion of myself and others,) which had been poured into the mouth just before I arrived, and told them there was no danger.

I found her lying prostrated on her back, insensible, the face flushed, pulse very frequent and small, tongue seen with difficulty, was brown and dry. I considered her case hopeless, sent her two diaphoretic alterative powders, saw her again in the afternoon, and about ten in the evening, she was gradually dying; she died at three o'clock in the morning.

With the assistance of a neighbouring surgeon, who was sent for by the druggist, I made a *post-mortem* examination of the body, by order of the coroner and jury. The brain and its meninges presented a congested and inflamed appearance; there was no effusion; the large intestines were healthy; the small intestines slightly congested and inflamed, such an irritation as would be produced by drastic irritant purgatives; the other organs presented a healthy appearance, the uterus included.

I considered the principal exciting cause of death was the disease of the brain, which had been unarrested by the previous treatment. In removing the calvarium, the lateral sinus was lacerated by the saw, which produced an effusion of blood, which was artificial, and was attested by two other medical men present.

The surgeon sent for by the druggist was next sworn, and deposed as follows:—I am of the same opinion as Mr. Weekes; I knew nothing of this case until I opened the body this evening; my opinion is, that deceased died from inflammation of the intestines, and an effusion of blood upon the brain. The pills, in all probability, would do no harm. I dare say they would not be what a regular practitioner would give. The druggist tells me they were composed of aloes and myrrh; if so, they would not cause death, they were a mild aperient; they are used to restore obstructed menstruation. This bottle, (the fever mixture,) is, I am satisfied, a mere simple fever mixture; the contents of the other bottle, (the draught,) are tincture of aloes and myrrh with water; neither the pills, nor mixture, nor draught, would cause death, though an improper mixture, which a regular practitioner, most likely, would not employ. I cannot say that she would have lived if properly treated; that would only be making the man out a murderer. I consider her disease obstructed menses, inflammation of the bowels, and congestion of the brain; in general the disease, if properly treated, would not end in death.

The compound tincture of aloes draught, which was clear, and of a golden colour, showed there was no water in the composition. I proposed the addition of some water to the little remnant of it, to prove it, which was objected to by the other surgeon.

The jury returned a verdict that the deceased "died by the visitation of God from congestion of the brain and intestines, and obstructed menstruation, arising from severe cold: death accelerated by want of proper treatment." The Coroner was requested by the jury to tell the druggist they hoped he would not attend people

in future, and that in all probability the deceased would have been alive now had he not attended her.

The druggist had his legal adviser at the inquest, and a reporter, a friend of his. The druggist made no reply to the reprimand. *Miserabile dictu*, it is not the first time, by a great many, that people have suffered severely, to say the least of it, through similar ignorance and presumption.

PROVINCIAL

Medical & Surgical Journal.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 1845.

A recent French writer has designated the representative form of Government as "the aristocracy of words." There is much reason to fear that the experience of years of Parliamentary labour tends much to confirm the truth of the remark. If there is no evil without its counterpoise of good, so also is there in this world's concerns, too often a considerable admixture of practical evil in the workings of truly valuable institutions. Are we, therefore, in order to eschew the evil, at the same time to reject the good, of which it is the constant, possibly the inseparable and inevitable concomitant. To act on such a principle would be to reduce the whole human race from a state of active, often, it must be owned, misdirected energy, to one of listless inertia, and the chequered surface of this habitable world to a profitless and uncultivated desert. Man, with all his thirst of freedom and desire for equality is no leveller; if the patriarchial claims are disregarded, we must have some substitute by which the civil polity of social life shall be regulated,—the institutions of social life conducted. An aristocracy in the genuine sense of the term must be established, and the choice will oscillate between the various qualities of which an aristocracy can be constructed, according to the varying circumstances under which large bodies of the human race are congregated or banded together. Thus we see the aristocracies of birth—of rank—of wealth—of talent—and, according to our French author, of words, each in its turn, or in its own peculiar place, in the ascendant.

Now, we are desirous of seeing our medical polity and our medical institutions regulated and governed by an aristocracy which has long had its representatives in the profession;—an aristocracy of talent and worth, to which all who enter the portals of the medical profession may aspire, and to which each one, according to his intellectual and moral qualities, may have access. Whatever, therefore, may be the fate of the contemplated legislative arrangements for the future constitution and government of the profession, and they are as yet undecided, we trust that this one

great object will not be lost sight of,—that the strenuous efforts of each member will be exerted for his own individual advancement towards such an aristocracy, not in the spirit of emulation, but in that genuine good citizenship, by which each one shall seek, according to his opportunities, to alleviate suffering by the cultivation of practical and scientific medicine. Such must, after all, constitute the aim and object of every one who would distinguish himself; and it is only in proportion to his merited success that he can ultimately hope to take place among, or before his competitors, in the same course of honourable ambition. If the members of the medical profession are true to themselves individually, it will ultimately matter little whether there are two colleges or three, or to which of these colleges they may be attached. Most heartily shall we congratulate them when the settlement of these harassing questions, on satisfactory grounds, shall leave them at liberty to devote their entire energies once again, to the genuine and more elevating objects of their pursuit.

The Physiological Anatomy and Physiology of Man.

By ROBERT BENTLEY TODD, M.D., F.R.S., Fellow of the College of Physicians, Physician to King's College Hospital, and Professor of Physiology in King's College, London; and WILLIAM BOWMAN, F.R.S., Fellow of the College of Surgeons, Assistant Surgeon to King's College Hospital, and Demonstrator of Anatomy in King's College, London. Vol. I. London. 1845. 8vo., pp. 448.

The first part of this volume has already been some time before the public, having been published in the year 1843. It contains, with the usual introductory matter, a sketch of the chemical constituents, proximate principles, and secondary organic compounds of animal bodies; observations on the development of the animal tissues; an account of molecular, ciliary, and other minute movements; and then proceeds to the minute anatomy and physiology of the tissues,—fibrous tissues; areolar tissue; adipose tissue and fat; cartilage and fibro-cartilage; osseous tissue; synovial and serous membranes; and the muscular structure.

The numerous interesting details here brought before the reader, embodying the recent researches of Liebig, Mulder, Schwann, Robert Brown, Valentin, Henle, Müller, Toynbee, Tomes, &c. &c., are already extensively known, as there are few who will not by this time have had the advantage of consulting for themselves this part of the work. The second part, forming the conclusion of the volume, is devoted to the phenomena of innervation, together with the minute and structural anatomy of the brain, cerebellum, spinal cord, nerves, ganglia, and nervous system generally. The minute anatomical details are for