After receiving a bottle of medicine, (which appeared to be chiefly common salts,) along with injunctions to drink freely of brandy and lime-water, he returned home towards evening. His friends would not allow him to take the lime-water and brandy, but administered two doses of the mixture on the Monday; after which, becoming alarmed at his increasing weakness, I was called up early on Tuesday morning to visit him.

On pushing my enquiries further, it occurred to the mother, that for about three, or at the utmost, four weeks, her attention had been often excited by finding the chamber-vessels more than usually filled every morning, but as there was no complaining in the family, the circumstance merely led to a passing remark upon the fact to some female member of the household. She had noticed, however, that her son had contracted a habit of drinking much water. His companions also now recollected, that for the same length of time, four weeks, he could seldom pass a pool of water on the way side without drinking largely of it, for which they frequently censured him. His father imagined, but by no means affirmed it positively, that he noticed his son to look rather worse about six weeks before. There is a strong phthisical tendency in the family.

Treatment.—The bowels being obstinately costive, various purgative medicine was administered, but it proved inadequate to accomplish the end without frequent clysters, the contents being perfectly dry, and in small, dry, scybalous masses. After this, a mixture of liquor ammoniæ acetatis and laudanum was given, along with wine, to counteract the great tendency to sinking. He was neither able nor willing to take much of anything. The prostration kept fast increasing; he became restless and uneasy in every posture, and the temperature of the body rapidly sank; a powerful opiate failed to procure more than two hours repose, after which the jactitation and other symptoms of failing nature returned, and he died in the course of Thursday night.

Remarks.—I have been thus particular in minutely detailing the history of the above case, in order to do away, as much as possible, with any ambiguity respecting the nature of the disorder, which might very easily arise in the minds of your readers. The closing scene of life, the remarkable coldness of the whole cutaneous surface, more especially of the extremities, the cold breath and failing pulse, so forcibly reminded me of cholera, that I fully expected meeting with the serum of the blood along with the urinary secretion, but the most delicate reagents failed to detect its presence, at least no albuminous product was apparent. Still, it is something more than an idle vagary of the imagination, to regard the present case as somewhat analogous to an aggravated attack of English cholera; the chief and obvious difference consisting, firstly, in the thinner portion of the blood having been drained through the renal instead of the enteric passages; and secondly, in its having obtained a saccharine impregnation previous to elimination.

However this may be, the case appears plainly to have been of a very acute character, and furnishes a very uncommon exception to the usual progress of this affection, chronicity being regarded by all writers as an essential element of its diagnosis. No *post-mortem* investigation was permitted; but this, perhaps, is not

to be much regretted, as both the course and history of the case preclude the probability of any other coexistent malady having contributed towards the sudden extinction of the vital powers.

CASE OF POISONING BY ARSENIC; WITH REMARKS.

By GEORGE PARKER MAY, M.D., Maldon.

April 25, 1842. 4 P.M. A lady having occasion to go to a closet in her dining-room for an article she required, left the door unlocked for a few seconds until she should have replaced the article. Her back had been scarcely turned upon the door of the closet, before she missed her infant son, a remarkably fine and healthy child, twenty months old, who the instant previous had been playing on the carpet. On turning to the closet, she was horrified at seeing the child mounted on a step, and eating from a box a paste kept for the purpose of destroying mice, the composition of which she did not then know. She succeeded in forcing with her finger a considerable portion of the material from his mouth, and administered a dose of ipecacuanha wine. A few minutes after this, I visited the child. The emetic had operated freely. The ejected matter consisted principally of mucus of a slightly yellow tinge, with several pieces of the paste suspended in it, some of which were as large as an almond, and of the consistence of dough. The vomiting was carefully encouraged for some time, and the little patient made to drink copiously of milk. Between the acts of vomiting he appeared lively.

6 P.M. Has vomited much. No solid matter can be detected in the fluid. Has had two natural motions, and has manifested no signs of pain. Is now sleeping calmly; countenance entirely natural; pulse 130; respiration a little hurried. His mother states that this is his ordinary hour for repose, and that he is sleeping in his usual manner.

8 P.M. The same.

9½ P.M. Still sleeping, but appears restless; skin hot; pulse 140; no expression of pain.

About ten o'clock some gruel was administered to him, which he soon rejected without any admixture. Soon after this he got worse; the extremities and face became cold; lips livid; eyes sunk, the pupils fixed and rather dilated; pulse scarcely perceptible; respiration feeble, accompanied with sighing. After lying about half an hour in this condition, he expired without a struggle at half-past eleven, nearly eight hours subsequent to the accident.

The paste proved to be a mixture of honey, flour, and arsenic.

Autopsy, twelve hours after death. The stomach and intestines exhibited little deviation from the healthy appearance. The former viscus contained a small quantity of mucus, and a few particles of the paste. The villous surface manifested no signs of inflammation. Two or three vascular patches were detected, so faint indeed that they would probably have escaped notice, had not the interior of the stomach been an object of special investigation. There was no opportunity of examining the other viscera.

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