symptoms of disease during life, and the great organic changes seen on dissection; we are amazed and perplexed at the discovery of what we regard as latent disease.

In the present case, however, I am led to believe, from attested facts by competent observers, that gastro-enteritis did exist in a minor degree, probably for some days, disguised and obscured by the combined influence of old age and tobacco smoking, and that it was rapidly increased on the morning of the fatal event.

That inflammation, particularly of the mucous coat of the intestines, does spontaneously arise in old persons of an insensible or enfeebled constitution, and exist in a latent state, and then, under the influence of ordinary causes, rapidly increase, and become suddenly fatal, is well known to the experienced members of the profession. Physiology and bed-side observation do show and explain the depressing influence of gastritis and enteritis on the vital powers: and we can understand their rapidly fatal consequences in old persons, independent of any violent extensive shock to the nervous system.

Is it extraordinary, that in a person of eighty, fatal syncope should be readily induced by the stomach derangement, which the inspection shows, after all allowances for after-death organic changes, to have subsisted in General Dick. I admit that so sudden a death from abdominal inflammation, unattended by more severe symptoms, is extremely rare. I have indeed had one case of sudden and extreme tympanites intestinalis, in a very aged lady, fatal in four hours, where the chief symptoms were remittent pain and fainting. If medical men had more frequent opportunities of anatomically inspecting very old persons, dead after a sudden and brief illness, I am persuaded that the disease and the death in the present sad case would have excited less perplexity, and the jury would have been enabled to return a less equivocal and less distressing verdict; one that would have excluded the shadow of a suspicion that other than ordinary causes were in the least degree involved. And it would have been more conducive to the honour of the profession in the Bath Coroner's Court, if the medical men present could have given a decided judgment on the bearing of the facts deposed to, both those occurring before, as well as after the death, so as to dispel the mystery which evidently enveloped the minds of the Coroner and the jury, and so as to fix a persuasion that the death was a natural event.

Bath, August 28, 1845.

CASE OF POISONING BY ARSENIC: EMPLOYMENT OF THE HYDRATED PEROXIDE OF IRON: RECOVERY.

By WILLIAM ALLISON, Esq., East Retford.

About half-past five p.m., December 2nd, 1844, I was desired to visit M. J.—, aged thirteen, residing three miles off, a girl of violent temper, who, having been warmly reproved by her father on account of misconduct with a young man, had swallowed arsenic. Before four o'clock, a large teaspoonful, and before five o'clock, about a like quantity was taken: each portion was mixed in water; and she had suffered violent spasmodic pain, according to the messenger's,

(her brother's,) account, "writhing," "twisting about," "moaning," and "making strange faces."

On arriving at the house with a stomach-pump, castor oil, magnesia, and hydrated peroxide of iron, she was found vomiting, and more free from pain, but complaining of a sensation of burning heat in the throat and stomach, with a feeble pulse and a cold skin. After a little resistance on her part, and on my part, after having both coaxed her to swallow a heaped table-spoonful of the iron mixed in water, and threatened to overpower her and to use the stomach-pump, the iron was swallowed. About ten minutes afterwards, when thin gruel, containing magnesia, was just cool enough to inject into the stomach, effectual vomiting occurred. A second quantity of iron was swallowed, and on my going up-stairs a second time with the liquid for injecting, free vomiting again led to the administration of a similar dose of iron: about ten drachms had been then swallowed. After waiting half an hour, the girl, complaining of violent pain, drank an ounce of castor oil, which soon returned, with a part of the iron. I then went home, having promised to send something to relieve her pain.

Mitte pil. opii, (gr. j.) No. iij.

R. Rhei pulv., Magnes. carb., Sacch. alb., sing. dr. ij., Aquæ, oz. vj. Fiat. mistura.

R. Magnes. carb., Pulv. acaciæ, Sacchari albi, sing. dr. iij., Aquæ puræ, oz. vj., Fiat mistura.

A pill to be taken when in much pain; two table-spoonfuls of each mixture alternately every hour.

December 3rd. Several motions, evidently containing the preparation of iron.

4th. No motion during the night; pulse becoming natural; pains slight.

R. Rhei pulv., scr. ij., Magnes. carb., gr. x., Syr. papav., dr. ij., Aquæ, dr. x., pro. haustu. Mitte ij.

R. Magnes. carb., dr. iss., Magnes. sulph., Sacch. alb., utr. oz. ss., Tinct. hyoscyami, dr. ij., Aquæ, oz. vi. Capt. partem quartam ter iadies.

10th. Recovering. Aperients necessary, and she begged for pills. R Pil. hydr., scr. i., Ext. coloc. co., scr. ij. M. et divide in pilul. xij. j. capt. ij., subinde.

A question naturally arises—"Did the girl actually swallow the specified quantity of arsenic?"

No one saw her drink it; but her parents and brother told me that they had no doubt about it; and that they believed her temper would lead her to commit any act. Her mother found a mug with some milky liquid at the bottom, in which she had no doubt her daughter had mixed arsenic, from a packet labelled—"arsenic, poison," which had been procured for the purpose of mixing amongst seed wheat. The arsenic had been taken from a hole made through the paper and was not to be found. The girl did not say what she had done, until she confessed to a favourite brother, at the time when she was in violent pain, at half-past four o'clock. The girl was but thirteen, and was not likely to know the symptoms which arsenic would produce, and which she described—burning pain in the throat and stomach, the pain at times much more violent, &c.

To-day (Jan. 28th, 1845) I met her accidentally, and in private conversation begged, for my own instruction, she would tell me whether or not she really did swallow the alleged quantity of arsenic, as I wanted to know how much might be swallowed without produc-

ing death; to which she unhesitatingly replied, "To the best of my knowledge I really did swallow, at twice, altogether more than half a tablespoonful, expecting it would very soon kill me."

I once related a case, (*Lancet*, vol. 1, 1836-1837, page 401,) in which a girl was seen drinking thirty grains of the red nitric oxide of mercury, from which she recovered, as I thought, from the use of the stomach-pump.

March 20th. The favourite brother of the girl who took arsenic, told me to-day that, agreeably with my request, he has endeavoured to elicit the truth from her, and that he believes she has stated simple facts.

August 5th. To-day I was sent for to see the girl, whom I found pregnant by the man on whose account she took arsenic. Whilst alone with her I said, "You suspected pregnancy when you took the arsenic." She replied, "No; but I took the first half expecting I should soon die, and when I found I did not, I took the second quantity, thinking that would be sure to kill me."

The evidence and symptoms are tolerably conclusive that arsenic, (half a table spoonful,) was swallowed.

The stomach-pump was indirectly useful, for I think the iron would not have been taken without the dread of the pump being used; and that the sight of it produced vomiting more than once. As one large tea-spoonful of arsenic was retained in the stomach more than two hours, it is probable that the iron had some chemical effect upon it whilst passing through the alimentary canal.

On several occasions I tried to surprise the girl by such questions as the following:—"How did you stir arsenic in the water?" Answer, without hesitation—"With my finger."

CASE OF PLACENTA PRÆVIA.

By HUGH E. WALKER, M.D., Surgeon, &c.,
Chesterfield.

Mrs. H—w, aged 30 years, residing two miles from this town, was taken in labour of her sixth child on the 14th instant. Previous labours represented as difficult.

I saw her about four hours after labour had commenced, in a most alarming state of exhaustion, exhibiting in an extreme degree all the symptoms consequent upon great loss of blood. Her attendants informed me that they had removed a great quantity of clots, and her clothes and bedding were completely saturated. Soon after the accession of labour pains, flooding had come on, and still continued unabated, the quantity increasing with each pain. On making an examination, I found the vagina filled with clotted blood, the os uteri fully dilated, and a large portion of the placenta presenting, nearly closing the orifice of the uterus. With some difficulty I passed my finger round the anterior edge of the placenta, to ascertain the presenting part of the child, and felt what I thought was either a shoulder or the nates. The attempt increased the hæmorrhage slightly, and fearful of further reducing the already too exhausted powers of my patient, I desisted. Having previously determined to adopt the plan of treatment lately brought before the profession by Drs. Radford and Simpson, I proceeded to remove the placenta. Introducing my left hand, I completely and in one mass separated the placenta, which was

immediately expelled with my hand into the vagina; after its complete removal, the hæmorrhage, which before was considerable, *entirely* ceased. At this time the pains were feeble, and not of frequent occurrence. At my next examination, I found that a hand had followed the placenta, and now presented at the os externum. With the usual precautions, version was easily accomplished, and the woman safely delivered of a still-born child. The uterus contracted with tolerable firmness, and no further hæmorrhage supervened. On the day following I found my patient comfortable, though suffering slightly from the effects of the hæmorrhage, and in a few days she was perfectly recovered.

Remarks.—This is another case exemplifying the beneficial results of the plan of treatment above alluded to; the hæmorrhage immediately ceasing on the separation of the whole of the placenta, notwithstanding the almost inert state of the uterus, and the unequal pressure exerted by the presenting portion of the child, decidedly proving, in my opinion, that the closure of the uterine vessels is not wholly dependent upon the mechanical efforts of the uterus.

Chesterfield, August 27, 1845.

PROVINCIAL

Medical & Surgical Journal.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1845.

Now that the agitation connected with the settlement of the medical institutions of the country, by legislative enactment, has, for a time at least, somewhat subsided, the members of the profession will have leisure to look into certain questions of internal reform, no less intimately connected with their prosperity, and which must sooner or later engage their attention. One of the more important among these questions is that which relates to the mode of appointing to official situations of various descriptions, and especially to charitable and other institutions intended for the relief of the sick.

It is unnecessary to remind our readers that the holding of hospital appointments was made, whether wisely or not is not here the question, one of the grounds of selection for the Fellowship of the College of Surgeons under the new Charter. Seeing, then, the importance which is attached by a chartered public body to such appointments, it becomes a matter of the deepest import to every individual qualified practitioner that they should be neither capriciously nor unadvisedly bestowed.

We are well aware that much difficulty surrounds this question,—that serious objections may be urged against every plan that has hitherto been proposed for an improvement upon the present system,—and that perhaps the attainment of one free from all objection, is an Utopian idea. The exclusion of the subscribers to charitable institutions, most of whom are but ill-qualified to judge of the merits of candidates for medical appointments, from all share in the election to such offices, were it even advisable, would be