from the decomposition of glucose by alkalies, and particularly by the formic acid.

5. The formic acid and the other deoxidating bodies produced, according to my views, during the ingestion of amylaceous and saccharine substances, exercise a salutary reducing effect, the genuine counterpart of respiration, or, in other words, of respiratory oxygenation; thus, the absence of these compounds in the blood of diabetic patients, produces a noxious disturbance in their circulation, arising from an oxygenation over and above that of the protein elements which this fluid contains.

6. Finally, formic acid combined with soda has been detected by MM. Bouchardat and Sandras in the blood of man and of animals three hours after they had eaten sugar in considerable quantity.

(To be continued.)

SUGGESTIONS TOWARDS THE ADOPTION OF A PLAN FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PRACTICAL MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

By THOMAS HUNT, Esq., Herne Bay.

(Read at the first Anniversary Meeting of the South-Eastern Branch of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, held at Ashford, Wednesday, June 24, 1846.)

The first avowed object of our Association is the collection of useful information, tending to the advancement of medical and surgical science. This end we have hitherto been endeavouring to accomplish, chiefly by the publication of original essays, hospital reports, and cases occurring in private practice. Much has been done in this way, but perhaps much more may be accomplished by enlisting the services of *men who do not write*; but like their modest prototypes in the wilderness, are content to—

“Waste their fragrance in the desert air.”

Many of our best provincial surgeons are unfortunately *not* writers, yet, nevertheless, men of observation and reflection; and their experience, however valuable, is liable to be lost to the world at their decease. There is no calculating how many important discoveries have been already buried beneath the clouds of the valley. Men, who by their talent, character, and influence, have moulded the opinions and guided the practice of large rural districts, have too often been removed from the sphere of their labours, leaving behind them nothing but traditional recollections—vague and vanishing—of the principles and practice which made them ornaments to their profession and blessings to society. It is with difficulty I can resist the temptation of naming one or two individuals, as illustrations of this remark; but I feel assured that the memories of all who are present, will readily suggest some respected names of men, the memorials of departed worth, known little beyond their respective localities, whose reputation still lingers over the scenes of their former labours; but who have left behind them no other monuments of their greatness. And, doubtless, there are living men (and I know that this room will furnish specimens,) of equal power and attainments, who would at least willingly and promptly respond to direct and definite enquiries on any

question of experience, addressed to them from a respected source, who yet, in the absence of such a motive, may never record their views. Many are too busy, some too diffident, a few perhaps too indolent, while others are deterred by a positive inaptitude to the use of the pen. John Hunter himself, whom but to name is to revere, was *no writer*; and who shall tell how much we have lost by this misfortune?

It has occurred to me, that our weekly periodical might be made the medium of certain definite enquiries, addressed to all our members on any given question, and the statistical results of their replies might be published in our annual volume of “Transactions,” and there collated and compared with whatever practical information on the same subject might be gleaned from the periodicals during the last year or seven years; and thus we might settle some disputed point, or discover some new principle. This would be a beginning, and by degrees, the system might be extended over the whole profession, through the National Association or any other respected medium.

Success in one department would soon encourage the attempt in others, and the time might come, when by this simple arrangement, many of the important practical questions which now agitate and vex the profession, might be quietly and permanently settled. I am aware of the formidable difficulties which must present themselves on the very threshold of such an undertaking; but, if only the majority of my brethren who are now present will consent to put their hands to the work, I do not despair of something important being accomplished.

The details I leave for future discussion. My present object is to sound the feelings of this Branch of the Association, and collect the opinions of the Members of the South-Eastern District, on the practicability of the plan; and I will trespass no longer on your valuable time.

CASES IN THE HOSPITAL PRACTICE OF T. M. GREENHOW, ESQ., SENIOR SURGEON TO THE NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE INFIRMARY.

(Reported by Mr. C. J. GIBB, House Pupil.)

SECONDARY SYPHILIS.

CASE I.

Patrick Lagay, aged 36, a labourer, admitted May 22nd, with a foul ulceration of the throat; a copious eruption of syphilitic acne and lepra over the back and shoulders; an extensive crop of condylomata over and between the nates, and severe nocturnal pains, of the shins particularly; health affected, but no great loss of flesh. Had indurated chancres four months ago, healed by mercury, and became affected with secondary symptoms by the help of uncleanness a few weeks ago.

To use the warm bath frequently, and to have the lead lotion with laudanum to the nates, with a nitric acid gargle to the throat; to take ten grains each of Dover's powder and rhubarb every night, and drink a pint of the compound decoction of sarsaparilla, with fifteen grains of the iodide of potassium daily; and to have mild diet.

28th. Improving in every respect.

June 6th. Health good again; sleeps well; eruption

disappearing; condylomata smaller and almost without pain or discharge; throat nearly well. To omit the powders and have good diet.

13th. Throat well; eruption almost gone, and condylomata greatly reduced.

22nd. Eruption gone; slight condylomata only. To continue the lotion, baths, and decoction with the iodide.

July 2nd. Dismissed cured.

CASE II.

George Brown, aged 25, a labourer, pale and greatly emaciated, with a gastly hippocratic countenance, admitted June 19th, with a deep and foul ulcer at the back of the pharynx; large patches of syphilitic rupia on the arms, thighs, and different parts of the body, and excruciating nocturnal pains in the superficial bones; is exceedingly weak, and sleeps none. Had simple primary sores eight months ago, for which he took mercury; has lived irregularly, and a few months ago became afflicted with the secondary syphilis, for which he has been again copiously dosed with mercury.

To have a tepid bath and nourishing diet; poultices to ulcers; a nitric acid gargle; ten grains of Dover's powder and rhubarb every night, and the decoction of sarsaparilla with the iodide during the day.

23rd. Greatly easier; sleeps; ulcers cleaning well.

26th. Throat much improved, and ulcers on the body clear of scabs, and pretty good looking; stronger, and sleeps well, being almost free of the pains. To omit the poultices and use the nitric oxide ointment to sores; to have beer.

July 1st. Throat almost healed; some of the ulcers on the body closed, and the others cicatrizing rapidly; no pains, and feels himself greatly stronger.

6th. Throat well; only one small ulcer on the arm; able to walk about; general health improving daily.

12th. Remains a little weak only. Dismissed cured.

CASE III.

Joshua Forster, aged 25, a potman, admitted October 9th, with an extensive syphilitic ulceration of the pharynx, extending rather deep, and having a dirty white appearance, with much inflammatory redness of the surrounding parts; a few occasional pains, and health but slightly affected. Had chancres four years ago, when he took mercury; has been salivated lately for the present affection.

To have a warm bath, a nitric acid gargle, the decoction of sarsaparilla with iodide of potassium, and mild diet.

11th. Throat somewhat easier; bowels confined. To continue, and have a dose of castor oil.

14th. Throat clean, and ulcer quite superficial now; bowels freely open.

18th. Ulceration healing very rapidly; feels stronger, and is quite free of pain. To continue, and have good diet.

25th. Throat well; health perfect. Sent out cured.

CASE IV.

John Hall, aged 30, a joiner, admitted December 4th, with many secondary ill-conditioned ulcers on the face and shoulders, some on the forehead, exposing the skull in a carious condition, and others more or less covered by scabby incrustations of considerable thickness. The

whole of the face and neck is covered by a scabrous eruption, which, matted together by the pus it exudes, totally obscures the features as with a mask of the most disgusting and filthy description; ulceration of throat; no pains; sleeps pretty well; health greatly weakened. Had chancres six months ago that healed under medicines which did not affect the mouth. Has had the present symptoms six weeks, and has not taken much medicine.

To have a warm bath, and nitric acid gargle; also four grains of hydrargyrum cum creta every night, twelve grains of iodide of potassium in the decoction of sarsaparilla daily, and the lead lotion containing laudanum constantly to the affected parts.

8th. Slightly improved; scabs beginning to fall off; unable to sit up from weakness.

12th. Ulcers tolerably clean, and healing rapidly; eruption less concrete, and firmly attached; throat greatly improved.

18th. Doing well; scabs have fallen off some parts of the face, but are succeeded by slighter ones; bowels purged and griped. To omit the hydrargyrum cum creta, but continue the other remedies, and have some castor oil with ten drops of laudanum directly.

26th. Throat well; some of the ulcers healed, the others closing; eruption becoming thinner, and disappearing in some parts; able to go about freely; bowels regular. To continue the medicines and the oil-silk mask.

January 4th. Face clean in some places; only two small cutaneous ulcers remain on the forehead.

14th. Ulcers all healed; only a few thick scabs on the face, which are still firmly attached, and painful to the touch; a little dryness and soreness of the skin. To have a warm bath and continue.

21st. Scabs all separated, and a few thin and almost detached incrustations alone remain on the healthy but slightly infected skin; irritation of skin gone.

25th. Sent out cured, being ordered, however, to persist with the decoction of sarsaparilla for some little time longer.

Remarks.—The above are the severe cases of secondary syphilis admitted during the period they embrace, and as they were all placed under the same course of medicines, the results, which were so highly satisfactory, manifestly exhibit its superiority over that pursued in past times, when patients might be seen mutilated in every manner, and affording numerous dead and living examples of the shocking effects that the indiscriminate use of an active but most useful drug, (mercury,) can produce, when thrown into a person, who from foul ulcerations or a general cachexia, might sometimes almost be termed a mass of corruption. The opportunities for observing syphilis in its most severe forms are always great at a considerable hospital, and it appears that, as with the nocturnal pains and osseous diseases, so also in almost every case of secondary ulceration, the iodide of potassium, whether given with or without the decoction of sarsaparilla, agrees well, and deserves almost unqualified praise; and when aided by like accompanying treatment, such as the exhibition of opiates and nourishing diet, it exerts a surprising tonic and corrective influence over that cachectic condition of the body which so generally prevails, and during which the syphilitic virus appears sometimes to be completely destroyed,

whilst in others only so partially as to make it difficult to distinguish whether it is the poison that prolongs the affection, or merely that state, which, similar to the chronic miasm produced by dissection-wounds, needs only simple restoratives to give nature her accustomed health.

As to the decoction of sarsaparilla, the compound is that which is always administered to the patients of this hospital, and there can be no doubt of its doing good, either by its real virtues, which statistics made here would incline one to believe it possessed largely, or, by the favourable mental impression of its efficacy which universally prevails throughout all classes.

PROVINCIAL
Medical & Surgical Journal.
WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1846.

The necessity for giving insertion to the important letters on the subject of the Medical Annuity Fund, and on Life-Assurance Certificates, and to the correspondence of Mr. Cautrell with the Poor-Law Authorities, precludes any extended remark this week. We would, however, observe, in reference to the Medical Annuity Fund, that we fear some misconception has prevailed among certain members of the Association, which may have been, in some degree, detrimental both to the Annuity Fund and to the Benevolent Fund of the Association. It should be borne in mind that these admirable institutions, although allied in their objects, are yet sufficiently distinct to obviate all rivalry between them: they are perfectly compatible the one with the other, and so far from being opposed to each other, are rather calculated to be of mutual assistance. The objects of the Annuity Fund have, on various occasions, been well explained by Mr. Daniell, and may, in a few words, be said to be of a provident nature, and the more extensively these are carried out, the more available will the purely Benevolent Fund become for such cases of unlooked-for destitution as come within its scope. The objects of the Benevolent Fund are mainly to supply that temporary or casual assistance which unforeseen or unprovided-for circumstances occasionally render of the greatest benefit, and the Fund thus becomes available, in cases which the Annuity Fund in its present condition neither calculates upon, nor indeed is competent to provide for. With this brief explanatory notice, we beg to commend Mr. Daniell's letter to the attention of the Members of the Association. The approaching meeting at Norwich, will no doubt elicit that information on both these Funds, which seems required to place them on a satisfactory basis, and by clearly defining their several objects, tend to obviate all future risk of clashing of interests in the pursuit of them.

YORKSHIRE BRANCH OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ASSOCIATION.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting of the Yorkshire Branch of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association was held at York, on Thursday, June 25th, and was attended by the following members and visitors:—

Mr. J. Allen, Mr. C. Allen, Mr. Allis, Dr. Belcombe, York; Mr. Bainbridge, Harrogate; Dr. Borton, Malton; Dr. Chadwick, Leeds; Mr. Dodsworth, Mr. Dolman, York; Mr. Garlick, Leeds; Dr. Goldie, Mr. R. Hey, York; Mr. Hornby, Pocklington; Mr. Husband, York; Mr. Lambert, Thirsk; Mr. Mennell, Malton; Mr. Ness, Helmsley; Mr. Nunneley, Leeds; Mr. Parry, Harrogate; Mr. Pullan, Hunslet; Dr. Simpson, Dr. Thurnam, York; Dr. Whytehead, Craike; &c. &c.

Dr. Whytehead, the President, took the chair, and introduced in a few pertinent observations his successor, Dr. Belcombe, whose character and attainments he highly eulogised.

Dr. Belcombe then took the chair as President, and delivered an interesting address, of which the following is an outline:—

The President commenced his address by stating that it was in consequence of the wish of the Council that he had prepared one; it was thought advisable that the business of the meeting should be thus opened, and that, therefore, he had not hesitated in complying with such instructions, however unable he felt to perform his task as he could have wished. He alluded cursorily to the present condition of the medical profession, the failure of the late bills, and the obstacles that seem opposed to the settlement of the question; he expressed a hope that the subject would yet be resumed by 'those who concern themselves in the management of public affairs,' that there would be no attempt at sudden legislation, and that there could be little doubt, 'if the task of mending the medical institutions were honestly undertaken and pursued, a real and lasting service would be rendered to the public.'

After some remarks upon the sultriness of the present month, Dr. Belcombe passed on to the medical philosophy of the present day, observing, that as far as he could direct his enquiries, the solidism that Cullen had so ingeniously endeavoured to establish, was giving way, and that the humoral pathology was regaining its ascendancy. This he gathered not only from the labours of pathological chemistry, but that both the English and French schools had been more incessant in their enquiries into the composition of fluids, their alteration in disease, and the diagnosis afforded from them. After a rapid sketch of the composition of the human body, the intimate connection which exists between its several parts, the close dependance of one function upon the other, the mutual action and reaction of mind upon the body, &c., &c., Dr. Belcombe declined an implicit allegiance to either school. 'Happily such questions are foreign to the useful practice of medicine, which is truly founded on experience, a knowledge of the temperament of the patient, and the proper time of prescribing proper remedies.' Some allusion was then made to the present improved mode of education in chemistry, to