slowly yielded to the application of two large issues over the epigastrium, and the use of catechu internally. Finally, in some patients, the disease chiefly shewed itself in the middle or lower portions of the digestive tube; in these, the appetite was not affected, the tongue scarcely furred, the epigastrium free from pain, but digestion was accompanied with colic, secretion of foetid gases, and irregularity in the action of the bowels. Several cases of serous diarrhoea without symptoms of inflammation occurred in children, and yielded to the use of quinine and animal diet.

In the course of the month of February, when gastric fevers had already prevailed for some time, a considerable number of cases of typhoid fever were noticed. Most commonly these fevers put on the ataxic character, and were accompanied from the commencement with violent headache, sometimes limited to a circumscribed spot of the head, and of which the patients steadily complained until the setting in of delirium. This form was very generally fatal. We have elsewhere referred to a case of typhoid fever, which resulted in the critical formation of an enormous anthrax on the hip, and which M. Rayer has described under the name of *fièvre typhoïde charbonneuse*. We have also frequently seen certain symptoms usually among the precursors of ataxic fever—such as obstinate cephalalgia, with general prostration, heat of skin, and quick pulse, continued for eight, ten, or twelve days, without the accession of fresh symptoms, and thus constituting in themselves an affection which we shall vainly seek in nosological systems. Besides the case referred to, the practice of M. Rayer has offered one still more unusual, characterized by very strongly marked precursory typhoid symptoms, jaundice, followed by intestinal hæmorrhages, and numerous spots of purpura hæmorrhagica. The patient died about thirty-six hours after the formation of the jaundice, and on examination of the body a phlegmonous abscess of the liver was found, the characteristic lesions of typhoid fever, and in particular the tumefaction of the glands of Peyer and of the mesenteric glands, were entirely wanting.

Typhoid fever is sometimes complicated with genuine peritonitis, without perforation of the intestines. In two cases, elsewhere reported, this affection shewed itself during convalescence from the primary disease, but in addition a certain number of cases of simple idiopathic peritonitis were received into the Hospitals, chiefly towards the end of March.

It is well known that remittent fevers are of rare occurrence at Paris, and especially during the winter; but in the months of January and February a certain number of cases of these fevers were observed, both in hospital and private practice, for the most part taking on the adynamic type. If, without looking too much to this latter character, and especially taking into consideration the type of the fever, the sulphate of quinine was boldly administered, the cure was quickly obtained, and the success so certain and so rapid is in itself, an evidence of the specific nature of the affection. Several cases of confirmed malignant fever, with well-marked exacerbations, were also observed in the town. In one of these death took place during the third paroxysm, notwithstanding the employment of sulphate of quinine in large doses; the quinine treatment, assisted by the occasional application of

leeches behind the ears, with a view of combating the cerebral symptoms, the consequences of the paroxysm, proved more successful in the others.

It has been ascertained that about the months of March and October of each year, puerperal fevers are prevalent in lying-in hospitals; this year, from the month of February, and during the whole course of the month of March, these fevers were frequent in all the lying-in establishments, as well as in those hospitals into which recently delivered females had been received; frequent examples also, though less numerous, occurred in private practice. This diffusion of the epidemic in different localities, and under different circumstances, points to some other origin besides crowding and infection, and implies a more general occult cause; and as we have just seen that certain symptoms premonitory of typhoid fever may detach themselves, so to speak, from the entire morbid type, and become isolated in certain patients, so certain symptoms connected with the generative organs, forming part of the group of symptoms which constituted the reigning puerperal fever, presented themselves in an isolated form, in women who had been delivered twelve or fifteen days, and even in patients who were neither pregnant nor had been recently delivered. Among these were deep-seated hardness in the cellular tissue of the pelvis, pains of the kidneys, and of the lower part of the abdomen, &c.

Finally we may remark, that measles, for the most part of a malignant character, was very prevalent during the months of February and March, carrying off a considerable number of patients.

Such is a summary of the principal diseases which prevailed during the quarter; it remains to show on what common foundation these several variations of form rest. This foundation is extremely limited; adynamia and ataxia form its essential character, and are the only two expressions which can give the general physiognomy of all these affections, so different in their seat, anatomical alterations, and symptomatology, as the indication of the principal traits of this physiognomy, in each of the affections which have just been passed in review will shew.

(To be continued.)

TWO OUNCES OF POTASSÆ NITRAS TAKEN IN MISTAKE FOR EPSOM SALTS.

By WM. GILLARD, Esq., Surgeon, Totness.

(Read at the Annual Meeting of the South-Western Branch of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, held at Exeter, Thursday, July 16, 1846.)

January 14th, I was sent for by Captain C., residing about two miles from me, one of whose grooms had taken two ounces of nitrate of potass. He said about five minutes after having taken it, he felt a burning pain in his stomach, which was immediately followed by sickness; he then suspected it to be nitre, as he had that evening brought it home with the packet of Epsom salts. On finding it to be the case, he desired that Captain C. might be told of it, who requested him to take some mustard in hot water, and kept up the sickness until I arrived, which I considered sufficient to empty the stomach. As he still complained

of the burning pain in his stomach, I gave him about three drachms of carbonate of magnesia, with half a drachm of tincture of opium in four ounces of water. I then ordered him to take another dose of magnesia after three hours, to be plentifully supplied with diluents during the night, and to take an ounce and a half of castor oil in the morning.

15th. He had rested well during the night; the castor oil had acted freely, and he was quite free from pain. To remain in bed, take some meat-broth, and repeat the oil on the following morning.

16th. Quite comfortable. To get up and have meat.

18th. Thought he had some pain in his back. I ordered him half a grain of opium, and fifteen grains of powdered gum-arabic, to be taken in water three times a day for two days; when he said he was quite well, and returned to his work, and has never since complained.

Cases similar to the foregoing have been recorded, in which the nitrate of potass has been swallowed in mistake for Epsom salts. Mr. John Butter, of Plymouth, relates the following in one of the earlier volumes of the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*:—

Mrs. E., aged 25, had bought a quarter of a pound of nitre, and two ounces of Epsom salts at the same time, and placed the two papers on a chimney piece, near to each other. Feeling unwell on the following morning, she continued in bed, and desired her husband to mix half of one of the papers in some warm water, and give the mixture to her, intending to have taken about an ounce of the Epsom salts. Instead of the paper of salts, that containing nitre was taken by mistake, and half of it mixed in some water. Almost as soon as the solution was swallowed, vomiting ensued, first, of the contents of the stomach, and then of blood. When Mr. Butter saw the patient, which was about an hour after, he administered a basin of warm water immediately, and ordered the same quantity to be given after each vomiting, and then hastened to procure some mucilage of gum-arabic, four ounces of which, with a few drops of laudanum were given, and remained on the stomach for twenty minutes. The subsequent treatment pursued by Mr. Butter, was the frequent administration of copious mucilaginous drinks, thick gruel, linseed tea, &c., with an occasional dose of mucilage of gum-arabic and laudanum, but the vomiting continued at intervals for some hours, and on the following morning blood was observed in the evacuations. Much burning pain, with spasms, was felt in the stomach and all over the abdomen for three or four days, but at the end of a week she was convalescent.

It has been questioned by some writers whether nitrate of potass can be considered as a poisonous substance. Mr. Butter's case, however, was very nearly terminating fatally, and in the following cases, quoted by Orfila, death actually ensued:—

A man, attacked with periodic fever, took by mistake an ounce and a half of nitrate of potass. Very shortly after extreme pain, with a feeling of internal cold, was felt in the stomach. Sense of sinking and faintings rapidly followed, and in less than ten hours the patient expired.

A lady, affected with erysipelatous redness of the leg, took, as a purgative, an ounce of crude saltpetre, dissolved in a glass of water, with the addition of two

ounces of syrup of apples. (The nitre had been sold by the druggist in mistake for sulphate of magnesia, which had been prescribed.) Cardialgia, nausea, painful vomitings, purging, and convulsions followed in about a quarter of an hour after swallowing the dose. These symptoms were succeeded by syncope, failing of the pulse, coldness of the extremities, burning pain of the stomach, and torturing pains in the abdomen, which nothing could relieve. Death took place in three hours. The stomach was found, on examination, intensely inflamed from the cardiac orifice to the pylorus with patches of approaching gangrene.

CASE OF CATARACT IN BOTH EYES: OCCURRENCE OF THE AFFECTION IN THE MALES OF THREE GENERATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

Considering the following an interesting case, I trouble you with it. Should you think it worthy a place in your Journal, you will, by its insertion, oblige

Your humble servant,

SAMUEL SUMNER DYER, M.R.C.S.

Late House Surgeon to King's College Hospital.
Ringwood, August 8, 1846.

William Wiseman, aged 62, originally a labourer, but latterly, from his inability to work, through total blindness, living unemployed upon parochial allowance, a native of Burley, in the New Forest, where he has always resided, applied to me in February last, and made the following statement:—

That he was one of a large family; that his father had never had good sight from childhood, becoming totally blind at fifty-four years of age, but was afterwards operated upon for cataract, and was much benefitted by the operation, being, up to the time of his death, which happened some years after, enabled to read small print with facility; that the sight of his sisters was good—that of the brothers always imperfect; one died young—another now resident near this town is quite blind. He, himself, “always had a mist before his eyes,” has been blind for twenty-one years, and unable to distinguish dark from light for the last two years. He has two sons, both with imperfect vision, (in one a cataract is forming,) and a daughter, whose eyes are perfect. The second son is married and has a large family, the sons are purblind, the sight of the daughters being perfect. I have seen all these individuals at different times. Their eyes have a peculiar lustre, the pupils act well, but there is that constant motion of the eyeball, evidently dependant on its not being fixed on any particular object.

The man, who applied to me, remembering his father's case, was very anxious that something should be done in his, and as his general health was excellent, and he could distinguish a bright light when the pupils were acted upon by belladonna, I felt but little hesitation in complying with his request. Accordingly, I performed the operation of depression in both eyes during the last month, my father fixing the eyes with