

DR. BEDFORD'S NOTE ON CHAILLY'S MIDWIFERY.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—Every individual in the community has a bearing upon the character of the whole. There is no one so humble in life who is not able to do some act which may in some measure tend to degrade the nation to which he belongs; and, *vice versa*, to elevate it. Professional men, more especially, are in view of the world thus situated. Foreigners who visit us do not reason according to the logic of Dr. Watts, or Professor Hedge,—that is, from generals to particulars; but they reverse the rule, and from particular, individual, isolated and detached instances, they stamp the general features of professions, and the morals and manners of society.

I was led into these reflections by Dr. Bedford's note on Chailly's Midwifery, entitled "*Active Motion of the Fœtus.*" This note, which is given at length in the Medical Examiner,* from which we obtain our knowledge of it, gives an account of a person who is called a *physician*, having been called to a woman who supposed herself pregnant and in labor. The doctor, after instituting an examination, declared "that all was right—that the labor was quite advanced, and in a very short time would be completed." The result was, that the woman had mistaken the motion of wind in her bowels for that of a fœtus, and that the labor was of that article only, and ended in its discharge. This, as it relates to a female who was never pregnant, and whose bowels were swollen or distended with flatus, may all have been very probable. But for a person having the title of *physician* bestowed upon him, who had just given such a diagnosis and prognosis as this attendant is said to have done, we object to it totally, summarily, decidedly and forever.

Our first impression upon reading the case was, that it was absolutely impossible. And now, notwithstanding the credibility of the source from which the account of it is derived, we do think that any one who has ever attended a single case of parturition can hardly have his incredulity removed. But aside from this, we protest against the utter impolicy, impropriety, inexpediency and unprofessional bearing of giving such a case publicity to the world. We view it a disgrace, supposing that such a case existed; as well as undignified, and uncalled for, in him who has given it to the public.

ARGUS.

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Diseases of Clergymen.—In modern times the clergymen of New England suffer from maladies that were wholly unknown to our grandfathers.

* See Dr. Huston's Medical Examiner, May 4th, 1844. Philadelphia,

Dyspepsia is a prevailing complaint, which engenders a train of disturbances in the system of a formidable character. Bronchitis is another disease, so common as not to excite much surprise—especially since the fact has been ascertained that a delightful remedy for it is a voyage to Europe, at the expense of the parish. This is a curious circumstance in clerical history, which the Puritan, a widely circulated religious newspaper, published in Boston, has had the independence to treat more severely than would be becoming to any other class of editors.

That very many are out of health, is admitted; and the number who have asked for dismissions from their people, on account of inability to conduct their pastoral labors, from various causes, is quite large in the northern States. A melancholy circumstance in regard to this measure of clerical health, is based on the fact that a majority of them are young men, who have hardly become pillars of strength in society, before they yield to the weight and sink prematurely under the wreck of a shattered constitution. What combination of events can have produced these painful results?

Before answering this question, however, let it be brought to mind that the old school of New-England clergymen were men of laborious industry. Their salaries, for a year, in many places, were less than some of their delicate successors now receive in a single quarter. They were therefore often obliged to perform some out-of-door labor, though this was perhaps as often done from choice. They brought up large families; and they preached fervently and almost uninterruptedly, from early life to three score and ten, and were distinguished in all respects for their faithfulness, christian benevolence and zeal.

What efforts should be made to procure a return of this amount of clerical health? What process will conduce to more muscular power, more active digestion, and probable longevity? The answer is—Physical activity. The clergy of the present day, as a class, are too sedentary—too much inclined to avail themselves of the comfortable advantages of elegant libraries, heated to a debilitating temperature by sea coal fires. They should, where it is practicable, labor more in the fields, and manifest some interest in the culture of the soil. Bodily labor is the remedy for many of their physical woes, and without it they will be but broken reeds. Air was made for breathing, and the earth to be trodden upon and taken care of by intellectual man; if he neglects to go out upon its green carpets, to cultivate its fruits, and inhale its pure air, he violates an essential law of his economy, and suffers for it in the loss of all that makes life desirable—good health and a cheerful heart.

When the New-England clergy take to the plough, the hoe, the scythe, and enter spiritedly into horticultural and agricultural pursuits, at least one third of their time, they will have sound minds in vigorous bodies.

Another Giant.—If it could be said of old that *there were giants in those days*, it is true also that there are such in these days.

When Mons. Benin was in Boston, that monster youth Freeman, and Porter, we were particular to gather their histories, because they were such extraordinary departures from the usual standard height of man. Before the impression they made is fairly effaced, another walking phenomenon has entered the city. Having had an interview with him, the following facts were elicited.

Nathan Lammpan, now at Mr. Kimball's Museum, was born at Coxsackie, N. Y., April 8th, 1828, and he was, therefore, sixteen years old in April last. There is nothing remarkable about him but his altitude. His head towers above the whole multitude, being seven feet and half an inch high! He is not from a family any way remarkable for height—the father being only about five feet eight inches, and his mother five feet five inches. Neither has he brothers or sisters who are tall—nor any relative so tall as himself by fifteen inches. In a word, Nathan is a great, tall, awkward, good-natured, sixteen-years-old boy, whose chin has never been smoothed by a razor, and who bids fair, being still actually growing, to reach another foot. He is a sort of farmer's boy, and partly a carpenter's fag, without really being, however, in either line, much of any thing. In the last year he positively declares that he grew nine inches! At present his weight is one hundred and ninety-eight pounds. The body is stilted up on a pair of the longest legs, perhaps, on the western continent, whose base is a pair of feet, fourteen inches from heel to toe! Nathan is a sight worth seeing. Should his life be spared, we may fully expect that he will ultimately eclipse all the giants of modern times, for everything is in his favor, viz. youth, health, good habits, and a desire to outgrow all the descendants of Adam.

We are always vigilant in collecting these gigantic memorials of all who happen to come within the sphere of our observation, that physiologists may not charge us, as chroniclers of medical and physiological events in our day, with neglecting any fact or circumstance which should have been preserved for reference, and for an illustration of the mental or physical condition of society and its anomalies in our day and generation.

New Orleans Medical Journal.—A bi-monthly Journal, the first number of which is exceedingly well arranged, has been commenced at New Orleans. It is edited by E. D. Fenner, M.D. and A. Hester, M.D., who manifest in the preface a disposition to send forth a periodical that must meet the approbation of the profession. They remark, "It is subservient to no personal, no party interest. We pursue a higher and nobler aim—the cultivation of medical science and the improvement of its followers." The leading articles show that there is talent enough in New Orleans to give the highest degree of authority to a Journal of Medicine; and with regard to matter, no city on the continent has richer or more abundant materials, new and strange, than New Orleans.

The reputation of some of the surgeons and practitioners of New Orleans is quite familiar to us in this northern part of the Union; and we shall be happy in the prospect of knowing more of them hereafter through the pages of a periodical that is the appropriate organ for expressing their views on medical and surgical subjects. Five dollars a year, in advance, is the price of subscription. A determination to deal for ready money should be closely maintained, since a tried experience convinces us, as well as others, that trusting is the great evil in periodical publishing, which neither time nor patience ever corrects. Wishing the editors the realization of their hopes, we tender them our congratulation, and assure them of the pleasure it will afford us to aid them in the undertaking, in any way in our power.

Honorary Degrees of Medicine.—At New York, on the eleventh commencement of the University, the honorary degree of M.D. was conferred on Dr. Razoir of Greece, Dr. Guerin of Paris, Dr. Tarall of Kenyon College, Ohio, and Dr. Augustus Davezac, Jr., of New Orleans. The degree of M.D. was conferred on five medical students in course.

Division of the Portio-dura; Excessive Pain.—The following brief narration is interesting in a physiological point of view. A dancing-master had a tumor developed over the articular surface of the lower jaw, to remove which means of every kind were tried in vain: the tumor at length having acquired the size of half an apple, the patient consented to have it removed by operation, in the course of which, the surgeon saw that the trunk of the facial nerve passed right through the middle of the morbid mass, a mixture of steatoma and hydatids. Seeing no means of sparing it, the surgeon cut it through at one lusty stroke of the knife. The pain occasioned by this seemed horrible. The patient threw off the three assistants who were holding him, sprung from the seat, looked wildly around, and stretched out his hands in agony. The spectacle was made the more piteous by the semi-paralysis of the face and distortion of the features that instantly ensued: the mouth was drawn completely over to the other side, the angle on the paralyzed side hung down relaxed, the cheek lay hollow and meaningless; the eye seemed sunken and smaller. It was by-and-by found that three-fourths of an inch of the trunk of the facial had been removed.

What is still farther remarkable is this: that the deformity did not continue even in the evening of the same day; the features had recovered themselves greatly, and after a fortnight, unless when the patient spoke, particular attention would have been required to perceive that anything was amiss with him.—*Bredow, in Caspar's Wochenschrift, No. 12, 1844.*

Abscess of the Tongue. By DR. MOLLER.—A locksmith applied for advice regarding a swelling under the chin, with violent pain at the root of the tongue, almost wholly preventing deglutition. Upon examination a large tumor was found in the tongue, that nearly filled the entire cavity of the mouth: it was dark colored, and fluctuating. There was no time to lose. A bistoury armed with linen to near its point was plunged into the swelling, whereby a great quantity of thin pus was evacuated, and the patient straightway relieved. The wound healed in eight days. The tumor under the chin was treated in the same way. The patient was 60 years old, and of phthisical habit—a circumstance in accordance with what certain writers have advanced, namely, that phthisical individuals are more especially prone to this rare kind of abscess.—*Oppenheim's Zeitschrift.*

Therapeutical Powers of Iodide of Potassium.—In a communication to the *Provincial Medical Journal*, April 24th, Dr. Oke gives the results of an extended therapeutical experience of the iodide of potassium. He had not found it of any service in cases of abdominal tumor, scirrhus induration, or ulcerated cancer, lupus, indurated glands, scrofulous ulceration, affections of the lungs, enlargement of the liver, ascites, or encysted

dropsy. The diseases in which he had found the medicine useful, on the contrary, were phagedenic ulceration, disease of the periosteum, and chronic rheumatism.—*London Medical Gazette.*

Case of Death from a Piece of Potato-skin in the Larynx.—Dr. Jackson, of Leith, was called to see H. S., a cooper, aged 31, of irregular habits, who had died when in a state of intoxication. On dissection, the lungs and heart presented all the appearances characteristic of asphyxia. The cause of this was made apparent on examining the larynx, where it was found that a piece of potato-skin, of an irregular triangular shape, little more than an inch long, thin as the finest paper, and perfectly transparent, lay entangled between the folds of the thyro-arytenoid ligaments, one of the ends being fastened over the posterior end of the rima glottidis, whilst the other two margins were free, forming a valve which would open by each expiration, but shut at each inspiration, so causing speedy suffocation. The piece of potato-skin had probably been ejected from the stomach by vomiting, along with other matters.—*Cormack's Edin. Journal.*

Medical Miscellany.—Amongst the policemen on the great English Western Railroad, are three members of the Royal College of Surgeons.—Sir Henry Halford left his whole fortune, by will, to his son, who is now Sir Henry Halford.—Dr. Thomas F. Devan, a physician in New York, has been ordained as a Baptist missionary to China.—Dr. Chown recently introduced a woman to the notice of the Westminster Medical Society, who had four nipples.—A medical school has been projected in the ancient city of Damascus, under the superintendence of Dr. J. B. Thompson, an English physician.—A second volume of the St. Louis Medical Journal has been commenced.—A medical college is now well organized at Montreal, with excellent prospects. The winter term closed as late as the last week in April. There is also a medico-chirurgical society in the same city, admirably conducted.—Surgeon J. J. B. Wright, U. S. A., ordered to Fort Marion. Assistant Surgeon B. M. Byrne permitted to proceed to New York for examination—for promotion.—Dr. Silas Holmes has gone out Surgeon of the U. S. Brig Truxton, to the coast of Africa.—Fifty thousand dollars have been subscribed in Boston to enlarge the Massachusetts General Hospital.—Dr. Hall has the whole charge of the dispensary at Macao, China. Fears were entertained in 1835 that the Missionary Hospital might be obliged to give up, as it was stipulated to do so in case the public authorities should require it. The public sentiment has so much changed since that period, that the institution has become the most important and valuable establishment, in Chinese estimation, in all China.

MARRIED.—In Sandwich, Benjamin Hubbard, M.D., of South Weymouth, to Miss Ellen M. Perry.

Number of deaths in Boston for the week ending July 6, 34.—Males, 13; Females, 11. Stillborn, 1.

Of consumption, 4—disease of the heart, 1—brain fever, 1—intemperance, 1—erysipelas, 1—marasmus, 1—Inflammation of the lungs, 1—cancer, 1—murdered, 1—lung fever, 1—dropsy in the brain, 1—scarlet fever, 4—bowel complaint, 1—child-bed, 1—worms, 1—Inflammation of the bowels, 1—liver complaint, 1.

Under 5 years, 9—between 5 and 20 years, 3—between 20 and 60 years, 11—over 60 years, 1.

Filing the Teeth.—Mr. Robinson, in an article on filing the teeth, published in the *Forceps*, says, the teeth that are more generally attacked with caries, and for which the application of the file is more frequently brought into request, are the four central incisors and canines of the upper jaw, although in many instances it may be used with success to the bicuspides and molares of both jaws. The permanent central and lateral incisors of the upper jaw frequently decay at an early period at their sides. This arises either from a too crowded state of the mouth, and the undue influence exercised on the parts by their too rapid advance before the maxillary arch is sufficiently developed to admit the increased size, or from the patient at that period neglecting to perform those daily ablutions so essential and necessary to the health of these organs. In either case it unquestionably forms the exciting cause of caries in those situations, which, if allowed to extend beyond a certain point, renders the operation both difficult and dangerous to the tooth itself, owing to the confined space the operator has to use his instruments, with that force so requisite to the well packing of the gold to the exclusion of all foreign substances, with the liability of fracturing the enamel. Even if this difficulty should be overcome, the tooth may be broken in the attempt at stopping it, or the gold may become loose at the end of a few months. Hence arises the necessity of filing in the early stages of caries, in preference to stopping. In every stage which requires the use of the file, the dentist ought not to be content with merely dividing the teeth, but should extend the operation until the whole disease in the tooth is eradicated, and presents a surface as white as the healthy part of the tooth. A considerable portion of a tooth can be filed away without the slightest injury, if the operation be performed with caution, and the posterior portion removed without any perceptible disfigurement; in many cases, the caries can be removed by scraping away with an instrument, without having recourse to the file. Mr. Robinson has frequently, after dividing a tooth, discovered near its cutting edge a large cavity, which it would be impossible to remove without destroying more than half the tooth, and disfiguring the patient; in any attempt to stop it with gold, the chances would be, either a fracture or an imperfect stopping. In these cases, he has substituted gum-mastic steeped in water—an admirable substitute—which has remained in the cavity for months, and can be renewed at pleasure by the patient. In many instances, when the cavities have been examined three or four years afterwards, they have been found perfectly healthy, not in the least indicating a return of the disease.—*London Medical Times.*

Tooth-ache.—An anonymous writer in the *Forceps* says, that one of the best palliative remedies, when tooth-ache arises from exposure of the nerve, is a mixture of morphia, creosote, and arsenic, made into a thin paste, and applied to the nerve on a small pledget of lint. If the tooth-ache be caused by fungus of the nerve, it is occasionally removable by the application of caustic, which, if repeatedly used, will destroy the diseased growth. Temporary relief from pain may also be obtained by causing the fungus to bleed freely, but the only permanent cure of this affection must be accomplished by the forceps, as the disease generally returns after a few months.—*Ibid.*