

position to allow the evacuation of any further accumulation of fluid.

During the ensuing night, about four ounces of fluid like the former came away, and three days afterwards the external wound was perfectly healed. The effect of the operation immediately after drawing off the water was very doubtful; the extremities continued very cold, and the surface of the body was covered with a cold watery exhalation. The lips were livid, the eyes sunken, respiration and pulse scarcely perceptible. The following mixture was ordered:—*One ounce of French brandy, and two of gruel; a table-spoonful of the mixture to be given immediately, and a tea-spoonful to be repeated every ten minutes,*—the extremities being wrapped in warm flannel.

Vitality now gradually increased, and, after forty-eight hours, slight fever came on, with inflammation of the conjunctivæ. Three grains of calomel, with six of rhubarb, were given, which produced three or four evacuations. A saline mixture followed, and was continued for several days. The febrile symptoms subsided, the child took its food well, urine and stools were regular and natural, respiration free, sleep sound, and to all appearance the child was perfectly recovered from the effects of the operation, and its general state of health much improved. At the expiration of ten days, a second accumulation of water was discovered, which, by shaking the child's head, was distinctly audible, and, from the sound, I supposed the ventricles were not much diminished, this latter circumstance, no doubt, arising from the cranial bones being for the most part united. Three weeks afterwards, symptoms of nervous debility came on, rapidly increased, and the infant expired at the end of three days, without any appearance of pain.

On opening the head, the external membranes were found to be perfectly united, as was also the perforation through the brain; but the perforation of the membrane lining the ventricle was distinct, slightly dilated, and free from any appearance of disease. About three or four ounces of transparent fluid were found in the cavity, but the brain was of a healthy appearance.

This case, in my opinion, satisfactorily proves, that by the operation of tapping, in cases of hydrocephalus, when done soon after the fluid has begun to accumulate, and before the constitutional powers have suffered too much from that cause, the lives of many children may be saved. And had the present case been treated six or eight months earlier, I have little doubt but it would have been attended with success; for when this disease is fully developed, we have not on record a single instance in which

the child has recovered by medicinal treatment alone; indeed I believe medicine to be of no use, till the pressure is removed from the brain. Mr. Callaway, I have heard, is the gentleman who first ventured on performing the operation, and I regret much that a man of his talent should have discontinued a practice which, in all probability by this time, would in his hands have been attended with the most beneficial results. Dr. Armstrong, I believe, performed the operation in several cases, but I fear that delay on the part of the parents, in giving consent to permit the operation, has been the chief cause of failure. The trocar used by me in the case above described, was the common one, but in future I shall use one which I have contrived, the stiletto of which is *spear-pointed*, the canula of an *elliptic* form, three inches and a half in length, a section of the calibre, perpendicular to its axis, being somewhat larger in area than that of the common hydrocele trocar. I see no necessity for so small an instrument as that which some surgeons recommend, since that part of the brain which I perforated sustains no injury from the instrument. Moreover, I consider this part of the brain to be the safest, in consequence of the instrument's passing anterior to the great meningeal vessels.

Thavies Inn, Jan. 27, 1831.

## ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

### CLINICAL LECTURE

DELIVERED BY

Dr. ELLIOTSON,

Jan. 24, 1830.

VARIOUS CASES. — MERCURIAL DISEASE — IMPETIGO — CHRONIC BRONCHITIS, &c.

ONE of the cases which were presented last week, Gentlemen, was of so much more importance than any of the rest, on account of its rarity, that I intend to devote the chief part of the lecture this morning to it, and will speak in a more cursory manner of the others. The case I allude to was that of *scurvy*, which I showed you in the theatre when we last met.

Respecting the other cases, I would briefly mention that they were seven in number; three of them cases of rheumatism; two of that peculiar state of the system which is seen after syphilis and mercury, and which some persons call a mercurial disease and others a pseudo-syphilitic state,—one that is not very well understood, and the treatment of which is by no means satisfactory, though

many place great confidence in the treatment of it by sarsaparilla. The case of *impetigo* of the hands, to which I directed your attention in endeavouring to draw the diagnosis between it and pustular itch, did well. I said the treatment was to be antiphlogistic, and that she would be cured; the woman was cured by bleeding and purging, low diet, and the application of cold water and oxyde of zinc: she went out with her hands perfectly well. I believe if I had not bled her, no local application would have been of any use. There was the case too of remittent fever, in which I gave the salicine, and which was speedily cured; and one of bronchitis also cured. But another case of bronchitis proved fatal; it was chronic. Nothing is more unpleasant to treat than chronic bronchitis. When you consider the vast extent of mucous membrane that must be affected when every tube is diseased, and in this man, I believe, there was not a single tube not diseased: and when you recollect what a small portion of mucous membrane lines the urethra, and yet how difficult it is to cure gleet or old gonorrhoea in the male or leucorrhoea in the female,—you may easily imagine the resistance offered to a cure when the whole bronchiae are diseased, particularly when you also reflect, that that surface is continually exposed to irritation from the admission of cold air, or air of variable temperature. It is hardly possible, unless you could change the climate or procure a perpetual summer here, to do a great deal of good in many of these cases. That every part of the tubes was affected, I concluded from having heard a sonorous rattle at every spot on applying the stethoscope. At last the case resembled phthisis, and no one could have said, except by the use of the ear, that it was not a case of phthisis. He was spitting up a great deal of pus, and was greatly emaciated; the ends of the fingers were not enlarged, but otherwise every symptom of phthisis appeared. When I examined him there was no pectoriloquism, nor cavernous respiration, nor gurgling rattle. A case of erysipelas of the head also proved fatal. The patient had not come to the hospital till the eighth day of the disease.

I proceed, however, to the case of  
SEA SCURVY.

Robert Haines, aged 25, was admitted on the 13th of January, with scurvy. He said he had been ill a month; that he had that morning landed, after having been seventeen weeks on his passage in the *Lavinia* of London, from Buenos Ayres hither; that he had had salt-beef and salt-pork all the passage, together with bread; that two pigs had been killed on the passage, one only so recently as Christmas-day, when he had been ill some time, and was not able to

taste it; and that the other had been divided among the whole crew of thirteen, and was a very little pig, so that each had but a mouthful or two. With that exception he had eaten nothing but salt-beef and salt-pork on board for seventeen weeks; so that you might almost say he had had no fresh meat at all. They had no lemon-juice on board nor citric acid, nor any medicine of any kind, nor a doctor. His appearance you saw last Monday; there were petechiae on different parts of the body, particularly on the legs; spots and specks innumerable, of a very purple and dingy-red, down the thighs and legs. You observed that on the inner and lower part of the thighs there were large ecchymoses, large black and blue patches, as though he had been severely bruised. You observed, likewise, that there was considerable hardness there; the thighs felt there as hard as a board. His gums were a little affected, not materially. The fact, I believe, was, that he was already much better when he came into the hospital. He said his gums had been very bad; that his mouth and breath had been very offensive; and that his gums had been so severely affected that he must have lost altogether about a pint of blood from them. He felt exceedingly weak; his spirits were very much depressed, and the stiffness and pain of the thighs made him lame. When he came here he had had fresh meat for a week: he had been so near shore for a week, i.e. after his arrival in the Downs, that he had had an allowance of fresh meat and had improved considerably. The day on which he was admitted, it was necessary for him (for the purpose of making some arrangements) to go out again, and he had to walk some distance. Through the exertion the inside of his thighs became very much more ecchymosed and hardened than before; they were dreadfully hard; in fact the insides of his thighs were little more than one great mass of ecchymosis and perfectly unyielding substance; the stiffness had become so great that he walked very lamely, being unable to extend his left knee.

*Symptoms.*—The usual symptoms of scurvy, as you will find them stated in books, are petechiae, vibices, and ecchymoses; petechiae being, as you know, the most minute, the vibices larger, and the ecchymoses being the size of bruises. You will find likewise mentioned, that the thighs particularly are very hard. Where the case is severe, there is always induration of the thighs. The surface of the whole body, too, is in severe cases swollen, and the person altogether looks very unhealthy—bloated. If you examine the gums, you find them to be spongy, and the teeth fall out. This man's teeth were loose, so that you could move some of them about; he said they had all

been quite loose before he obtained fresh meat. The gums sometimes are exceedingly swollen, and of quite a fungous appearance. I recollect distinctly, when a pupil, seeing a man with scurvy that had been to one medical man, and had taken out several teeth for him. He had been also to a very eminent surgeon, who had pronounced it a case of cancer—a case of fungous hæmatodes of the gums. Now all these blunders arose from a case of scurvy being so exceedingly rare—so rare, that many even in the navy have never seen a case. It is necessary, therefore, that I should on the present occasion particularly draw your attention to it, for though some of you may never meet with a case of the kind, yet others may meet with one, and if you had never seen such a case, you might treat it as the case I have mentioned was treated, and pull out the tooth; or you might despair of curing it—consider it a hopeless case, and let the patient die; whereas by recognising the disease, you will be able to cure it with the greatest ease. It is on this account that I consider the present case the most important of the set.

There are also mentioned in books, depression of spirits, general weakness of the body, and absolute fainting. There is such debility, that persons cannot get out of bed, and the least effort will make them faint, and the pulse, under such circumstances, is feeble. This man was low-spirited, weak, and faint, and his pulse feeble, and the surface of his body cold. It frequently happens, too, that there are ulcers upon the surface of the body, and these discharge a thin, fetid, bloody fluid. The discharge from them is as fetid as the breath and the discharge from the gums, and, at last, what was a bloody fluid, becomes, both in the ulcers and in the gums, real blood—coagulated blood, which is separated with considerable difficulty, and after you have removed it, you find the parts below, dark, soft, and spongy; for the solids of the body, as well as the fluids, become affected, and if you remove this coagulum of blood, it is instantly renewed, and at length a fungus sprouts out, and will spring up as fast as you cut it away, just like a case of fungus of the brain after an injury to the head, where the bone has been fractured and a fungus arises, and is reproduced as fast as it is removed. This is called, in the case of scurvy, by sailors, *bullock's liver*, from its resemblance, I suppose, to that organ; and many of those funguses acquire a monstrous size. If you repress them by pressure, a gangrenous tendency is observed, the less will swell, grow spotted and painful, and mischief is produced. You know, too, that in the case of fungus from the head, if it is compressed carelessly, and without precaution, comatose symptoms will come on, and death,

perhaps, result. So it is in scurvy,—if you compress the fungus, you give a tendency to gangrene; you produce swelling of the extremity, which will also grow much more spotted than before. Any part of a person labouring under scurvy, may, if bruised ever so slightly, become ulcerated, and when an ulcer is produced, it assumes the characters which I have already described to you. Old wounds in this disease will break out afresh, showing that those parts of the body which have been once injured and repaired, are still weaker than other parts. Not only so, but the callus of bones that have been broken will soften down, and the solution of continuity again occur. A very extraordinary symptom sometimes takes place in this affection, which one would not be prepared to expect, and that is nyctalopia. It has been spoken of, for example, by Mr. Bamfield, who practised abroad, and by Sir Gilbert Blane.

*Cause.*—Respecting the causes of this disease, the case before us as fully illustrates the cause as the symptoms of the affection. It is always, I believe, a want of fresh animal and fresh vegetable food; consequently it was formerly very common at sea, where there were not fresh, but salt provisions, and bad management. So great was the havoc by this disease in former times, that Lord Anson in 1741 lost one half of his crew in six months: 961 sailed with him, and of the 961, 335 only were alive at the end of the year; at the end of the second year, of the 961, 71 only were fit for the least duty,—not for any, but for the least duty. Formerly deaths were so common, as to amount to eight or ten every day in a moderate ship's company; and bodies sown up in hammocks, lay washed about upon the deck for want of strength and spirits on the part of the miserable remaining sufferers, to cast their old shipmates overboard. Formerly, too, it was common in London, so that in the seventeenth century from 50 to 90 deaths were stated in the bills of mortality as occurring annually; and in the year of the plague, 105 deaths took place.

I might also give you another illustration of its prevalence in the navy by stating, that in 1726, Admiral Hosier sailed with seven ships to the West Indies; that he buried his ships' companies twice, and then died himself of a broken heart. You will find in Roderick Random, and in Smollett's History of England, a good account of the mode in which sailors were supplied formerly with food. Smollett gives an account of the armament that was fitted out to Carthagens, much about the same time at which Lord Anson's voyage took place; and he says the provisions consisted of *putrid salt beef*,—to which the sailors gave the name of *Irish horse*,—(I suppose the contractors

lived in Ireland, and that it looked like horse-flesh),—salt-pork, and musty bread. The salt pork came from New England, and was neither fish nor flesh, but savoured of both. The bread came from the same country, and every biscuit was like a piece of clock-work, moved by its own internal impulse, occasioned by the myriads of insects that dwelt within it. As to their butter, it was served out by the gill, and exceedingly like train oil thickened with salt. You cannot wonder, then, that the men should have the scurvy. He also adds in proof of the bad management, that though there was water enough on board for every man to have half a gallon a day for six months, each was allowed only a purser's quart, in the torrid zone, where a gallon would have been hardly enough to repair the loss by perspiration.

As regards the cause of it in England in former days, the food was very different among the common people to what it is now. They lived on salt-beef and pork, and veal. The lower orders of society had very little else in the time of Henry the Eighth. Land was then but very little cultivated; the chief were pasture lands; and even hay was not made as extensively as it is at present. The consequence of all this was, that the cattle were all killed as soon as they were fattened, or ready for killing, and salted. Beef and pork were salted, and put up as provision for the winter; no more cattle were killed during the winter; for there were little means of supporting the cattle after the grass season was over; every-thing was salted at the beginning of winter, and the people lived during the winter on the cattle so killed and so salted. In those days, too, there was hardly any garden stuff: for, in 1700, a cabbage cost three-pence, which, in 1760, cost only a half penny. Other greens were at first proportionally dear; and garden stuff was only used then as a dainty, when people had company. Queen Catherine, of Arragon, one of the numerous wives of Henry the Eighth of blessed memory, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, had actually a gardener sent for from the Netherlands to raise her a salad, there not being a man in England who could at that time manage such a matter. It is also said, that in Henry the Eighth's time, the price of salt-meat was fixed at one-twentieth, and wheat at one-tenth of the present prices, because salt-meat formed the chief support of the people, and the attention of government was directed principally to it, for the purpose of affording a cheap supply to them. However, it is not the salt-meat that produces the scurvy, nor is it putrid meat; for the disease will occur where there is no salt-meat used, nor any meat at all. It is

not owing to this kind of meat being eaten, but through fresh meat and fresh vegetables not being eaten, that scurvy is produced. It is the want of other food—the want of fresh animal and fresh vegetable food. You will find in the second volume of the Transactions of the College of Physicians, two cases, published by Sir Francis Milman, of women who had the scurvy in the country (I think Derbyshire), who had eaten no meat at all, but lived merely on tea and bread and butter, having formerly been accustomed to better food. I myself had a poor man in the hospital with scurvy in January, 1828, who had fallen from good circumstances into the most abject poverty, and lived on tea and gruel for some time. I may remark that sea and land scurvy are the same, though once considered different. (Other cases of the kind I might refer to; for many persons have had the scurvy who have had no salt meat, who have had no putrid meat, but who have been merely living in a state bordering on starvation.

It is also mentioned by writers, that the scurvy was not only common in London (as you might well suppose from the food I have mentioned); but in a work published in 1703 by Dr. Musgrave on the Gout, it is said to have been common in Somersetshire; and we read in Pliny that it prevailed in the Roman armies when in Germany, and in the armies which served in the wars impiously called, like some other things, holy.

*Predisposing Causes.*—Although this want of fresh animal and fresh vegetable food appears to be the cause, yet many other circumstances increase the tendency to scurvy. Cold, and want of exercise, greatly predispose to it. This is proved by the fact, that sailors will suffer it in cold climates under all the other circumstances in which they escape it in warm climates. As to exercise, Sir Gilbert Blane mentions that the prime seamen only of a ship's company used to suffer, who were excused from working the pump, the ship being leaky; while those who worked it escaped. Captain Cook informs us, that the Kamschatkans who are habituated to hard labour have no scurvy, while the Russian and Cossack in garrison are indolent and subject to it. The disease was first particularly noticed in 1497, in the men of Vasco di Gama.

The difference in ships' crews now and formerly, as regards scurvy, is very striking. In the two accounts of Lord Anson's voyage and Capt. Cook's, you will find that while Lord Anson's crew suffered in the way I have mentioned, Capt. Cook's, in going round the world, suffered nothing, because they had a good supply of portable soup, sour crout, and fresh meat. They were kept regularly exercised, extreme cleanliness and proper ventilation attended

to; and they were only out about three weeks at a time on their longest cruise, though absent so long.

*Treatment.*—The *remedy* for this state is fresh food, vegetable and animal food, and particularly lemon-juice. With respect to the man whose case I have been considering, I gave him no medicine; the case was not so severe, but that I felt satisfied a change to healthy diet would entirely cure him. If I had given him lemon-juice, no inference could have been drawn as to the virtue of it, for, of course, it was my duty to give him proper food.

Scurvy is a disease (if any disease is) purely *chemical*. The body, structure, and functions are not in the least in fault; in one sense, each part of the system is ready to perform all its functions, but one of the external things necessary for its doing so is taken away. In the case of *suffocation*, the body is not at all in fault, but it suffers from a want of fresh air; so in scurvy, the functions are all right, but the food which the body by nature requires, is withheld from it. Give the body this proper food, and it will make proper use of it; give it a good sound raw article, if I may so speak, and it will manufacture properly, and the diseased state will disappear. This is very different from the state of some other cases in which chemical remedies have been employed. For example, you know that in cases of softness of the bones, some have recommended a good supply of bone earth—of phosphate of lime, as though the bony substance was only wanting. Here there has been no want of proper supply of any-thing, but the system is wrong, and give it what phosphate of lime you will, that will not put the body in order. The disease does not consist in a want of bone earth, but in the want of the proper functions which make the bone, or evolve it from the materials they receive. So in the case of diabetes; it is not that the body is overloaded with an excessive supply of sugar, or been deprived of a due quantity of animal food, but that the functions of the body which form the compound fluid called urine are diseased, that occasions the diabetes, in which sugar appears, and uræa, lithic acid, and salts, are deficient; and yet you may keep a person exclusively to animal food, but very rarely I believe cure diabetes in that way. You may assist somewhat by giving only animal food, in making it more difficult for the diseased function to manufacture the peculiar urine, but as to curing it by animal diet, I believe that, in general, you will find this impossible—I, at least, have found it impossible.

To take a chemical view of such affections is not even countenanced by chemists themselves. The case of scurvy is exactly like the case of impending suffoca-

tion—the body would be in good health if not deprived of its proper external supply. I therefore gave this man fresh diet, and he at once became well; fresh meat every day, and fresh vegetables twice a day—greens night and morning, for farinaceous vegetable food is insufficient. An improvement was visible every day; and, in fact, in four or five days after I showed him to you he felt so well that he would not remain in the hospital any longer, but determined to lose no time in going into the country to his friends whom he had not yet seen; he felt that he had nothing to do but to live out of the hospital as he lived in it, and then that he would get rid of the very slight remains of the complaint that were still perceptible.

The power of lemon-juice over the disease is said to be very great—its effects speedy and marvellous. The compiler of Lord Anson's voyage, seeing the dreadful appearance of the body in this disease, seeing how fatal the disease was, and how horridly it disfigured and disabled the body, making it a loathsome offensive mass of corruption (perhaps more than any other disease whatever), declared that a cure was impossible by any remedy or by any management that could be employed, and no hope of ever curing it could be entertained; and yet now we know that such a state as that may be at once removed by a change of diet, and by a little lemon-juice! This circumstance, I confess, gives me great hope of the improvement of our profession. Many diseases certainly can now be cured which were formerly considered hopeless, from our sounder pathological views. By looking out for inflammation for example, generally, and by treating it vigorously and steadily, we cure affections that formerly were despaired of (for inflammation is now known to be the foundation of numerous diseases). There can be no doubt also that a number of drugs, both mineral and vegetable, have greater power over diseases than is yet known. I consider the marvellous effects of lemon-juice in this, the most horrid state of the body that can be well conceived, sufficient to justify a hope that a number of drugs may be known in the course of time that may cure a number of diseases, which even at present appear to us to be hopeless. Let me again mention that formerly the scurvy appeared to be entirely incurable, and the attempt to cure it absolutely ridiculous.

The power of lemon-juice over this affection is said to have been known two hundred years ago. It is said to have been mentioned in a book called *Woodall's Surgeon's Mate, or Military and Domestic Medicine*, by John Woodall, Master in Surgery, which was published in 1636; and he ends his praises of it by saying he dare not write how good a sauce it is at meat, lest

the chief in the cabin should waste it to save vinegar. It is said even to have been known earlier, and been mentioned in Purchass's *Pilgrim*, published in the year 1600; and yet, notwithstanding all that, it appeared to have been almost forgotten. And this is again a very instructive circumstance to us. It teaches us not to despise a medicine without very good reason. If a medicine is recommended on good authority, we are bound, be the authority old or new, to ascertain whether what is said of it is true, unless we have other medicines that fully answer every purpose. I have no doubt that many medicines were once used and are now forgotten, which would be very good in certain cases, or certain states of cases, and have been thrown aside without any reason whatever. As to the colchicum, when I was a pupil, I recollect that it was not employed—I never saw it used,—I heard it mentioned undoubtedly in lectures, but as a remedy that was highly dangerous, and yet this is as old a medicine as there is in the *Pharmacopœia*, praised by very old writers for its powers of cleansing the joints, in short for its power in gout and rheumatism. The lemon juice was, though so well appreciated so long ago, so little known as a remedy in scurvy in the last century, that Sir Gilbert Blane states (and his select dissertations, as well as his other writings, are full of excellent information) that when the London College of Physicians was applied to by Government for a remedy in scurvy, they advised the use of vinegar, which has very little power: and that in 1733 a Fellow of the College wrote a book on the subject of scurvy, and never even mentioned lemon-juice. It was owing to Dr. Lind chiefly that the knowledge of lemon-juice was revived. Above a century after Woodall published, he stated its peculiar power.

The Navy, however, suffered very severely from scurvy till 1795, when Lord Spencer, the father of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, was at the head of the Admiralty, and at the recommendation of Dr. Blair and Sir Gilbert Blane, established a full supply of it to the Navy; in which from that time scurvy has been scarcely known. Such has been the difference of the disease that though so late as in 1780, nearly two centuries after the publication of Purchass's *Pilgrim*, there were 1754 cases of scurvy in Haslar Hospital, in 1806 there was but one, and in 1807 but one!

I believe that the lemon-juice itself is considered more efficacious than the citric acid. I, of course, can speak from no experience of my own, but some people imagine that the lemon-juice itself is more efficacious. It is preserved very well, I believe, by putting about one-tenth part of spirits to it. All the *Hesperidæi* have the same virtue,—

the lime, the Seville and unripe China orange; malt and sour crout are also thought good. An ounce of lemon-juice with an ounce and a half of sugar daily is the navy allowance; and now scurvy is never known on the longest voyage, unless in an instance of gross neglect, like that of the man whose case I have now considered. Before the supply took place which is now served out, the average of patients sent to hospitals was in the preceding nine years, one-third of the whole Navy. In the succeeding nine years but eighty-four cases occurred.

I may mention as a good illustration of the use of lemon-juice, that *The Suffolk* left England in April, 1794; that she had no communication with land for twenty-four weeks, and yet only fifteen of her crew were slightly sick, and were soon cured by an augmentation of the usual allowance of two-thirds of an ounce, and not one had the scurvy on her arrival. In 1800 the Channel Fleet had no fresh provisions for sixteen weeks, but plenty of lemon-juice, and not a case of scurvy occurred; whereas, in 1708 the Channel Fleet could not keep at sea beyond ten weeks, and was worn out with the scurvy and fever.

The best application to the ulcers is also the lemon-juice,—a slice of lemon, as Pere Lebat appears to have pointed out in his voyage to the Antilles. Pain in the breast and limbs is often felt during the scurvy, especially, it is said, if rapidly cured by lemon-juice.

In 1690, on the 2nd of April, Commodore Lancaster sailed from England with three other ships for the Cape of Good Hope, and arrived at Saldanha Bay on the 1st of August, the Commodore's own ship being kept in perfect health by the administration of three table-spoonfuls of lemon-juice every morning to each of his men; whereas the other ships were so sickly as to be unmanageable for want of hands, and the Commodore was obliged to send his own men on board to take in their sails, and hoist out their boats.

With respect to the time at which the scurvy begins, I think this man began to have the disease at the end of five or six weeks. He told me, but I have not made a note of it. Sir Gilbert Blane (to whom I myself, and Mr. Herschell evidently also, am much indebted for information on this subject) says that the disease usually begins on the 6th or 7th week of sea victualling. Some have of late doubted whether the lemon-juice has any such power as has been ascribed to it. A most excellent man, a friend of mine, Dr. Stevens, the gentleman who in the West Indies first tied the external iliac artery, has peculiar opinions respecting fever, and contends that the blood is in a diseased state in this disease; and that after a time the proper remedy is, cer-

tain substances to alter the state of the blood; minute doses of neutral salts. According to his account (and his statements are all to be depended upon), in the yellow fever, and other fevers, after the first attack is over, when the blood has fallen into this depraved condition, life is saved by administering minute doses of neutral salts, and remedying this defect in that fluid. I have seen them in his experiments render the blood very florid out of the body, and acids make it black. He contends that acids, therefore, must be injurious in scurvy, and citric acid among the rest, and advises nitre; but I must say, that when we have so many evidences of the loss of ships' crews without the use of lemon-juice, and of their remaining healthy under the use of the juice, I think more evidence must be brought forward than he gives to induce persons to agree with him. However, his work on fever will be well worth reading; I recommend it to your notice as soon as it is published, and you will judge for yourselves. In Mr. Herschell's works on the cultivation of the Physical Sciences, just published in Dr. Lardner's Encyclopædia, he mentions, among the great improvements that have been introduced for the good of society, the cessation of scurvy. He mentions this as one of the greatest blessings that have been accomplished for mankind in modern times. You will find him saying, that "at present scurvy is almost completely eradicated in the Navy, partly, no doubt, from increased and increasing attention to general cleanliness, comfort, and diet, but mainly from the constant use of a simple and palatable beverage, the acid of the lemon served out in daily rations. If," he adds, "the gratitude of mankind be allowed on all hands to be the just meed of the philosophic physician, to whose discernment in seizing, and perseverance in forcing it on public notice, we owe the great safeguard of infantile life, it ought not to be denied to those whose skill and discrimination have thus strengthened the sinews of our most powerful arm, and obliterated one of the darkest features in one of the most glorious of all professions."

In regard to the etymology of the word *scorbutus*, I believe it is *scharbock*, corrupted and latinised, and that *scharbock* itself comes from *scharf-pocke*, sharp or violent pock, or *schorf-pocke*, scab or scurf-pock; though scurvy is the medical English name for the disease *scorbutus*, and common people designate any cutaneous disease, with scurf or scabs, by the term *scurvy*. You may remember that when I desired the sister of the ward to bring the man not with the leprosy but with the scurvy, she brought me the man with the lepra, assuring me that that was the man with the scurvy, and

had no idea of the sailor's disease being called scurvy.

Respecting the cases that were admitted this week, there were, among the women, a case of continued fever—a case of rheumatism—a case of bronchitis—and a case of hysteritis. Among the men, a case of nephritis, and two of bronchitis. Among the women there was also a case of

#### PREGNANCY MISTAKEN FOR DROPSY.

When I came to the hospital I found that one of my beds appropriated to women was filled with a female with a large abdomen, who said that her doctor (Dr. Fiddle) had told her she had got the dropsy, and had better come here to be cured. Now, when I was a pupil, I saw a very sharp, clever physician admit two cases of women with big bellies, and prescribe for them squills, superacetate of potass, and other anti-hydropsics, and in due time, indeed before the week was out, each of those persons had a little one sucking at her side. (*Laughter.*) However, this would have been a very annoying and discreditable circumstance now, in these days of diagnosis, and therefore I condescended, or my physicianship *condescended*, in this case to use mechanical means of investigating her state. I not only inquired whether there was fluctuation or not, as physicians are allowed to do, and ascertained that there was not any, but I had her undressed, as I make it a rule in all cases of disease of the trunk whenever there is a suspicion of organic disease. I believe it is considered very discreditable by some for a physician to use his hands or his ears; but as nature has given us both our hands and ears, I for one am very grateful for the gift, and wherever the phenomena of touch or sound occur, I consider them equally worthy notice as phenomena of sight or as details given, and despise not the assistance afforded by nature. I therefore mechanically examined the whole abdomen of this young lady, and found a considerable tumour of the *abdomen*, quite hard; it was broader and broader upwards, till at the commencement of the epigastric region I felt it well defined; its edge rounded off, and its shape something like the segment of a circle. On looking at the breast, the areola appeared to be of the darkest brown. This of course made me very suspicious. At one part of the tumour of the abdomen, the upper part, in the right hypochondrium, I found a smooth, dense, globular projection, as if there was a lobule there; while my fingers were upon it, however, the lobule disappeared—away it went. On applying my fingers there a second time I found it again, but more in the centre; then it receded, and I felt it lower down; while I was feeling it there, it gave

such a kick that I started and withdrew my hand. The nature of the case was perfectly clear, but I said nothing about it; and asking the maiden how long she had had the dropsy, she replied a month. I asked her if she still menstruated, and she replied that nothing of that kind had happened for ten months; I asked her if she was ever sick, and she replied, "Sick all day and every day."

I think it very likely from all this, and from what I have often observed, that she had no idea of being pregnant. I believe that many women become with child and are not aware of it; not that they are not conscious of having taken the proper means of getting into that state, but that they have no idea that those means have taken effect. It is so common for women to indulge and think no harm will come of it, because so frequently no harm does come and they perhaps themselves have so long indulged with impunity. It is so common for women to suppose that no harm can come, and not to know that in these matters very little sometimes goes a great way. (*Much laughter.*) From earnestly hoping that no harm will come, some will really go on in pregnancy for a long time, without at all suspecting their situation, and at last are taken by surprise. I know that some are impostors, declare themselves not to be with child when they know they are, and protest and pretend they are so virtuous, that the thing is out of the question, or quite impossible. Yet I do believe many women are themselves deceived. This woman, I think, must have been deceived, and for this reason—that she told me very honestly and frankly, that she was continually sick, and had not menstruated for many months. Now I think, if she had really wished to deceive, she would not have admitted all this. I have been told by gentlemen who practise midwifery, that single women frequently are so little aware that they are with child, that they will be taken with their labour pains, and not even then believe the real nature of their state. I have been told of women who suffered the commencing pains of labour, without being at all convinced that they were, still persisting that they could not be with child; of course it must then be absurd for a woman any longer to attempt deception, and I think it must generally be from not believing it. I think that women who are in the family way, frequently have not the least idea how very easy it is for them to become so. (*Much laughter.*) A man cannot be too tender towards the other sex, and I therefore did not reproach her with imposture, nor even declare her state to her in express words. I said nothing more than that she had not got the dropsy, and requested you to listen to the little one's heart, which beat dis-

tingly 120 in a minute, while the mother's pulse was 76.

The case was interesting, particularly on this account:—When we applied the stethoscope to the abdomen low down on the left side, the child's heart was heard distinctly pulsating with a double beat. I myself, and several of you, counted it 120, while the mother's pulse was 76. It was perfectly distinct; there could be no doubt at all about it, and several gentlemen examined it as well as myself. I never heard a fetus's heart pulsating before.

Respecting the treatment of the case, the prescription I wrote was "*Excet*—Let her depart in peace."

The case is also important, as showing the necessity of taking pains to make a careful diagnosis. Any one might suppose that a mistake at this advanced period of pregnancy could not be made; but, as I have said, I do recollect, when a pupil, two cases admitted into a hospital, but not examined in bed, prescribed for, where, after an examination with the clothes on in the admission room, diuretics, and other remedies of dropsy, were employed. Though, luckily, no harm was done, yet it made the physician look exceedingly ridiculous; it occasioned a laughing and a talking among the pupils, and must have made the patient herself think, at all events, that he was no conjuror.

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## MODERN SURGERY.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—The very horrible narration which you gave in a late number, of the case of the poor boy who was so unscientifically mangled at Bartholomew's, is enough to chill the blood, even of a Hospital-surgeon himself. If the nail had been driven into the petrous portion of the temporal bone by a hammer, then perhaps we might have supposed such violence as was used in this case justifiable, but, most certainly, unwarrantable in the present instance. I am an old practitioner, and have met with many cases in which substances have been introduced into the meatus auditorius, but have always succeeded in extracting them by introducing beyond them the eye-end of a silver probe slightly curved.

I cannot help taking this opportunity of saying, and I do it with grief, that I think the art of surgery, especially in the metropolis, is fast declining, and that it will continue to do so, whilst some of the most eminent surgeons are content to keep their hands in their breeches-pocket (except to



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