

europæus grows in abundance in the western part. I have seen it abundant, also, in Connecticut and New York.

Unionville, Mass., July, 1840.

Respectfully yours,
E. G. WHEELER.

CASE OF HYSTERIA.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

ON the 3d of March last I was called to see a young married lady, æt. about 23, who was the mother of one child, a female, about 16 months old, which yet nursed. I found the mother laboring under a paroxysm of hysteria, with quite severe spasms. On inquiry, I learned that she was naturally of a nervous and irritable temperament, but of a healthy and robust constitution; that about six months before, she had an attack of hysteria, in consequence of a severe fright, and that this, the second attack, was brought on in consequence of violent mental emotion. The patient's head and breast being made bare, and removed from over the bed and supported by an assistant, I threw on, by three dashes each, two pails of cold water, which allayed the spasms entirely in a short time. To prevent the return of the fits, I administered some anodynes, with antispasmodics and a mild cathartic. The patient immediately recovered. The child was soon placed at the breast, and nursed heartily. On the following day, about 24 hours from the time of the recovery of the mother from her paroxysm, I was called to see the child, which I found with all the symptoms of hysteria; violent and convulsive laughing, alternating with crying and screaming, suffocating spasms of the throat, a wild and furious expression of the countenance, which soon terminated in convulsions of a pretty severe character. The little patient was treated in the same manner as its mother, and recovered as rapidly.

The following extract is from Eberle:—"Hysteria is essentially a dynamic affection of the nervous system, manifesting itself by morbid phenomena in every sensitive and irritable part of the system, in the voluntary and involuntary muscular systems, in the sensorial organs, the brain, the intellectual faculties, the digestive apparatus, the various glandular viscera; in short, it presents, in its multifarious symptoms, every morbid sympathy, perhaps, of which the animal system is susceptible.

"Hysteria, though not exclusively, is chiefly confined to females. It never occurs during childhood, and its appearance in the form of convulsions or distinct paroxysms in old age, is almost equally uncommon."

Fairville, N. Y., Aug. 5th, 1840. C. G. POMEROY, M.D.

P. S.—Will Dr. McIntyre be so good as to give us a history of the case of *Fungus Hæmatodes* which occurred in his practice last spring, and in which he performed amputation.

C. G. P.

SMALLPOX CONTAGION CONVEYED IN A LETTER.

[THE following case is related, in the last No. of the American Journal of Medical Sciences, by W. L. Atlee, M.D., of Lancaster, Penn.]

Mr. Robert Atkinson, of Lancaster, Pa., was taken sick on the 8th of December, 1839, with the eruptive fever of smallpox. He passed through the distinct variety of genuine variola under the care of my brother, Dr. John L. Atlee, without any very unfavorable symptoms. The attack was of a violent grade, and the skin was completely covered by the eruption. On the 18th of the same month the pustules began to dry, and on the 22d he was able to be out of bed. By the 29th the scabs had all scaled off, leaving a few scurfy exfoliations upon the hands and head. On this day he wrote a letter to his brother, Richard Atkinson, in Wellsville, Columbiana County, Ohio, giving him an account of his recent illness and of other domestic afflictions. This letter was written on glazed writing paper, and sealed with a wafer moistened by his own saliva. Being detained on the road by the great snows which fell about that time, it did not reach Wellsville until between two and three weeks after it was written. After receiving the letter, Richard Atkinson tore open the wafer, and carried the letter in his vest-pocket for several days. He wrote an answer to it on the 15th of January, 1840, and during this time had the letter, which he had received, lying before him and under the sheet on which he was writing. He wrote another letter to a friend on the 9th of February, and on the 12th he walked twelve miles on business, and on Monday, the 17th, he took sick with the prominent symptoms of smallpox. The disease proved to be of the confluent character, and terminated fatally on the 1st of March.

Mr. Atkinson, of Ohio, had a sore on one of the fingers of his right hand, and one upon his breast. These sores first took on the appearance of variola, before the surface generally became affected.

An old man, who had assisted in putting the body into the coffin, went afterwards to a neighboring tavern, and, before having washed his hands, shook hands with a young man, who, without any other known cause of contagion, took the confluent smallpox and died about the 25th of March. The smallpox and varioloid now spread through that neighborhood.

There had been no cases of variola at Wellsville or near it for two years before, and no other cause for its introduction could be ascertained than the letter from Pennsylvania.

Both the Messrs. Atkinson had been vaccinated about twenty years before in England, neither of whom took the vaccine disease.

The above statement was made to me by Mr. Atkinson, of Lancaster, who went to Wellsville, after the death of his brother, and ascertained these facts. As he is a gentleman of the strictest veracity, the statement can be relied on. Should there be any error in it, it is hoped that the physicians there will correct it.

Several questions naturally suggest themselves, arising out of this interesting case. How did this letter communicate the disease? Can the furfuraceous sequelæ of variola produce smallpox by inoculation, or in any other way? Could the disease have been communicated by any loose scurf folded up in the letter? Or by any taken up from the fingers by the wet wafer? Could the saliva with which the wafer was moistened

have contained contagion? Could the paper have imbibed it from the hand of the writer? Or could it have imbibed it from the air of the room when it was saturated with the effluvia? Could the ink have absorbed it, as fluids do certain gases? Would the deceased have been likely to have received the contagion had the skin of the hand been unbroken, or had he not carried the letter about his person? Can letters or packages taken out of a variolous atmosphere, infect districts through which they pass? Is our quarantine calculated to prevent similar results? These and other questions may arise out of the above case, but I will leave others to pursue them.

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DISEASES OF CHILDREN.

JAMES STEWART, M.D., of New York, whose translation of M. Billard's treatise on Infantile Diseases made his name familiar to the public, has recently issued proposals for a treatise, expressly his own, on the diseases of children, which will make 450 pages, octavo, of admirable typographical execution. Notwithstanding the large profits arising from the sale of this gentleman's translation of Billard, in consequence of the failure of the publisher Dr. Stewart never realized a farthing for the immense labor the work must have cost him. Independently of his acknowledged fitness for the execution of the proposed volume, he certainly has a claim upon the sympathies of the profession—for let physicians do what they may in this country, they are but poorly compensated under the most favorable aspect of the times.

The manuscript being nearly ready, it will probably be printed about the first of January. Those who are disposed to encourage medico-literary enterprise, since it is to be published by subscription, may transmit their names to the author, at No. 385 Hudson street, New York. If more convenient for those residing in the New England States, they may be forwarded to this office.

“In carrying out the proposed plan, the work has been arranged agreeably to the system of the functions adopted by the ancients—which is the foundation of the various systems of the present day—and which, from its simplicity and natural order, and for other obvious reasons, is more applicable to the condition of children than that of Bichat, now usually adopted.

“The diseases have accordingly been arranged under the three different heads of the *vital*, *natural* and *animal* functions; a system in close connection with the recognized principle of the succession of developments. The respiratory system is thus the first in the natural order, as it is the first that demands the attention of the physician. A physiological view of the respiratory organs in children, and the signs of disease which these organs exhibit, precede the consideration of their diseases. The diseases of this system follow, each under four different divisions:—etiology, semieology, morbid anatomy and pathology, and treatment. The next in