

Levy in his account of the epidemics amongst the military in 1837—47, states that fewer adults than boys died. In the present cases, the ages varied from 3 to 28. Of the five recoveries, four took place among the youngest; and all who died had attained puberty.

As concurring to impress upon these cases their remarkable fatality, may be their nervous-lymphatic temperament, scrofulous habit, physical debility, great sensibility, excessive alarm, and inordinate fatigue.—*Omedei Annali.*

SURGERY.

ON A NEW AND SIMPLE METHOD FOR THE CURE OF FISTULA.

By H. B. Evans, Esq., M.R.C.S., &c.

The frequent occurrence of fistula, and the often unfortunate and unsatisfactory results of an operation intended for its cure, induce me to make known to the profession, through the medium of *The Lancet*, a simple plan of treatment, which has proved eminently successful in two cases under my care.

In October, 1850, W. E., box-maker, aged forty-two, applied to me with an abscess in the neighbourhood of the rectum, pointing externally, which was opened, and gave exit to a large quantity of pus. This gradually degenerated into a deep fistulous tract along the rectum, and communicating with it at its extremity. For two months the usual remedies were adopted without success, and I then expressed my opinion that an operation must be resorted to. In this I was fully borne out by the opinion of an eminent hospital surgeon whom I called in. This the patient obstinately refused to submit to, and such refusal led to my adopting the mode of treatment I am about to detail.

A blunt-pointed silver probe, five inches in length, (the sinus itself being four inches in depth) was inserted into the wound, having previously been dipped in dilute nitric acid, (one part of acid to one part of water) and suffered to remain there a minute. That this had a strong cauterizing effect, I knew from the pain it occasioned. Thus far the result was desirable; but in consequence of the destruction of the silver probes by the acid, and the impossibility of using them more than three or four times, I had some copper ones made, and used them in the same manner, only as substituting a nitrate of copper for a nitrate of silver, and I think with a better effect. Under this treatment I was pleased to see the depth of the sinus daily decrease by the gradually filling of it up with healthy granulations from the bottom. This was continued nearly every day for two months—February 22nd, 1851, being the last occasion on which I thought it necessary to apply the nitrate of copper. The patient is at the present time perfectly sound.

In March, 1851, H., aged thirty, applied to me with strumous disease of the testicle. Iodine and iron were given, which arrested the progress of the disease, and produced a corresponding improvement in his health. The outward form of the testicle was retained, but with an open sinus of an inch and a half in length in an oblique direction from the apex, and discharging a thin white glairy fluid, peculiar to fistulæ. The same treatment was pursued as in the former case, the sinus becoming entirely filled up, and the patient discharged at the commencement of September, without any external marks of previous disease, beyond a slight irregularity on the surface and a small cicatrix.