

I think, therefore, that we need not seek for any contamination of the blood to explain the sudden intervention of the nervous symptoms, inasmuch as we have a ready explanation in the sympathy of the brain with the rapid disorganization of an essential organ.

The great practical question in reference to these severe forms of jaundice is, what is the morbid action, or morbid influence, upon which the disease depends? Is it inflammatory, or is it not?

The opinion of Dr. Budd has been already given. He is clear against the inflammatory nature of the complaint, and refers it to a poisoned condition of the blood, producing suppression of the biliary secretion, and resulting in the disintegration and destruction of the secreting cells of the liver, while the toxic influence of the contaminated blood on the brain gives rise to the severe and fatal head-symptoms. Rokitansky, the highest authority on pathological anatomy, ranks the disease among atrophies, or diseases of nutrition, but,—rather inconsistently as appears to me,—describes it as marked by symptoms very different from those of ordinary atrophy. Thus, he says: "This affection is characterized by extreme rapidity in the reduction of size. It is remarkable for the rapid course it runs, for extreme tenderness of the liver, nervous attacks and jaundice; it terminates fatally with febrile symptoms of a disorganized state of the blood, irritation of the brain and its membranes, and with symptoms of *exudation and suppuration generally*, and especially of the mucous membrane, pneumonia, &c." Would not one suppose he was describing a case of pyæmia? A later investigator—Wedl—of the same school distinctly contradicts the opinion of the great Viennese pathologist. He says: "The condition termed by Rokitansky 'yellow hepatic atrophy' must be regarded as a diffuse hepatitis in which the parenchyma of the organ is softened in consequence of the albuminous exudation, &c., &c."

I shall conclude this paper, which has extended much beyond what I at first intended, by quoting from that excellent but, unfortunately, unfinished work, "The Elements of the Practice of Medicine," by Drs. Bright and Addison, published in 1839. It will be found to contain the description of a disease identical with that of which we have been speaking, and referring especially to its occasional fatal termination, without, however, attributing any especial peculiarity, and agreeing completely in the view of Wedl as to its pathology. The identification of the "yellow atrophy" of Rokitansky, and of the "fatal jaundice" of Budd, with the "sub-acute hepatitis" of Bright and Addison, will be of im-