

of instances. The occupation of this man operating constantly on a constitution previously debilitated, exposed always, as he said he was, to damp clothes and foul air, was in all probability the exciting cause of this unhealthy deposition of matter.

The escape of foul gas without any communication whatever with the external atmosphere was a curious feature in the case.

The secretion of any gas within the confined walls of abscesses is rare, some say that the admixture of air from some source is absolutely necessary to its formation, witness the fetor of pulmonary and alveolar abscesses, where the contact of the air is the exciting cause; here, however, there was no communication at all with the air, and yet half the contents of the abscess was gas; on making the opening I was surprised to see so small a quantity of matter escape, as the sense of fluctuation was great, and led me to expect a much larger quantity. I may add a few words on the treatment: It will be seen that from the commencement it was *expectant*, with the exception of occasional leeching, fomentation and poulticing with hyd. c. cret. and opium, for the purpose of improving the hepatic secretions and allaying pain. I did nothing but wait patiently for the issue, the administration of mercury would have been extremely injudicious in such a case, as it would have tended still further to lower the vitality of a constitution already low enough. Tonics, with porter and a highly nutritious diet are most generally called for, as they best counter-act the tendency to pyæmia, which in many instances leads these cases to a fatal termination.

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ART. XVII.—*Cases of alleged Poisoning.* By D. BERGIN, M. D., Cornwall, C. W.

*To the Editors of the Medical Chronicle.*

GENTLEMEN,—Enclosed I send you a report of an inquest, held here, upon the bodies of two females who were said by their medical attendant to have died from the effects of poison, taken by the younger of the two “with the intent to procure abortion, and by the elder, accidentally.” I have reported this case specially for your Journal, as it is likely to prove exceedingly interesting in a Medico-legal point of view.

With your permission, I will comment upon the evidence after you have published it, as I differ *toto-cælo* with those who entertain the “poisoning theory.”

Yours very truly,

D. BERGIN, M. D.

Cornwall, Dec., 1858.