Dr. Davis and the more numerous dissentient authorities may both be right; that the cases may terminate favourably; and also that they may be beset with peril.

ON GENERAL BLEEDING.

By H. Wilkinson, Esq., Rotherham.

In bringing the subject of general blood-letting before the notice of this meeting, I am aware that I am treading on very delicate ground. But, as Lord Bacon has said, “Human experience, which is constantly contradicting theory, is the great teacher.” Another reason, as I do not intend to introduce anything but facts, letting alone theory, I shall not expose myself to severe criticism from those who may think differently.

The propriety of blood-letting, particularly venesection, has undergone considerable modification in the minds of practitioners in late years. What has occasioned this change of opinion, I am at a loss to know; for my own part, I am more and more convinced of the value of the remedy, and am often reminded of the remark I once heard from the late Dr. Young, of Sheffield: “That he had often had to regret not having taken sufficient blood, but seldom, very seldom, that he had taken too much.”

My gentlemen are of opinion that the aspect or type of disease has changed, and that we have no longer that acute form of disease we used to see. These altered views may account in some measure for the disuse of the lancet in those who entertain so decided an opinion. Another reason may be, that the patient may have been bled once during the attack, with relief to the symptoms, but, reaction having returned requiring a second venesection, and that not being carried out, the patient has died, and the lancet has been blamed for the want of decision on the part of the practitioner. Whatever others may think, however, in reference to the altered aspect of disease, I confess that I am so dull or so blind that I cannot see it; on the contrary, I am more and more satisfied with the truth of Dr. Young’s remark, and every day’s experience induces me to believe that the remedy admits of much more extensive application than it has ever yet met with, unless we are to believe Gil Blas, when he tells us that Dr. Sangrado bled all his patients till they died, and then declared that they had not lost enough blood. I fear, however, judging from the spirit of the medical journals, and from those whom I frequently meet, that blood-letting has undeservedly fallen into disrepute; and for that reason, I will do the best I can to save it from perdition; convinced, as I am, that where dejection is really indicated, there is no substitute for the lancet; and the patient, when suffering from an acute inflammatory disease, must die, unless dejection be freely carried out.

But, as I have already said, the spirit of the profession is opposed to this practice. As an instance of this, I was particularly astonished, about a year and a half ago, in reading in the Lancet, of a paper being read at one of the medical societies, wherein the author came to the strange conclusion, that pneumonia was an acyanic disease; and what surprised me still more was the circumstance, that, in so learned a society, no one should venture to criticise such singular views. If the gentlemen believes that all diseases are acyanic, I can go with him to a certain extent; but if he means to classify pneumonia with syncope, hypochondriasis, and the like, according to Cullen, then I should say that these are certainly most dissimilar. Indeed, there is scarcely one inflammatory disease, when acute, which admits of a greater amount of dejection than pneumonia; and although I am aware that some members in the profession maintain that it can be cured without bleeding, I am ready to prove that it can be cured much more speedily and with much less risk, with it.

Having introduced the subject of my paper, I will bring before the meeting a living illustration of the value of blood-letting, in a patient of a most unlikely appearance to bear or require the process.

CASE I. S. G., aged 46, a weak spare man, had suffered from asthma for a long time, when he consulted me for a violent paroxysm of the disease, attended with bronchitis. To all appearance, he could not have lived many hours with such violent dyspnoea; when I considered the bleeding in the arm as a last resource, which he bore freely, without fainting, and which gave him instant relief. He has been bled from the arm twenty-eight times within the last ten years, always with the same amount of relief; and although he still suffers from the asthma, he consid-

ers himself in better health than he has been for a field of disease in which blood-letting is applicable, both inflammatory and congestive.

I will next give an outline of what I will designate as three extraordinary cases, treated in an extraordinary manner.

CASE II. On November 26th, 1855, I was sent for to a little girl, aged 8 years, who was suffering from anasarca as a sequel of scarlatina. She was frequently sick and vomiting, but complained of no other uneasiness. After diuretics had been administered for four days without relief, she began to complain of dull pain in the head; and as I considered the vomiting to arise from the state of the brain likewise, I gave the alarm to her parents (highly respectable and intelligent people), and advised that the head should be shaven, and a blister applied to each temple. On the night of the same day, about ten o’clock, I was hastily summoned to this child, in consequence of convulsions having suddenly supervened. After the fit had continued unabated for two hours without intermission, I thought it high time to do anything; and I gave for the want of a purgative, which he had requested to be given. I bled him second time, to the amount of four ounces, and he always bled with my finger on the pulse until the heart’s action faltered, or I should exhaust my patient to little effect. This bleeding had the effect of removing the sickness at once: the convulsions gradually ceased, and in a few days he was quite well. I may say, that in this case, we found great benefit, after the bleeding, in the use of croton oil, which may be given for several days as a purgative, and the blister was removed. The thoroughly shaven child was free from nine days after the bleeding, and has remained well ever since.

CASE III. A brother of this young lady, aged 9 years, was taken with sickness on the day I was first sent for to her. He had a mild attack of scarlatina, with very slight rash; an anasarca followed, and on December 3rd, twenty-seven days from the first, violent convulsions having set in, I bled him from the arm to seventeen ounces; the convulsions ceased, and never returned; he continued to take specimens and diuretics for six days after, and then quite recovered, and remained well.

CASE IV. Another little sister of the above, aged 5 years, had so slight an attack of the disease that fever and anasarca were scarcely perceptible till December 29th, when convulsions came on. She was complaining of some pain in the head, and the Parents came to me, and requested me to come. I bled her the same day, to the extent of about eight ounces more, which again removed the fits; consciousness returned after the first sleep; she got quite well in a few days, and has continued so up to the present time. I ought to observe, that in every case the head was shaved, and cold applied.

I leave to my hearers the privilege of forming their own opinions as to the propriety of the treatment pursued.

CASE OF MONSTROSITY.

By Charles Murray, Esq., Oldham.

On Thursday, June 4th, 1857, A. C. was safely delivered of a full grown healthy child. It is perfectly formed; the limbs are all complete and very well developed. But from between the sternum and pubis, the body is considerably smaller; and the head is quite out of proportion to the body. It is endowed with penis and scrotum, but no urethra; if there be any, it is closed; and the anus is imperfect.

The infant has thriven from the time of its birth; and nothing has prevented the due performance of the natural functions of the body. It is disturbed, and cries, when the body of the other is handled.

Dr. Ramsbotham, in the appendix to his work on midwifery, given him, with similar examples, of such a monstrosity, of a Chinese, named A-Ke, 10 years old; a second, mentioned by Ambrose Paré; a third by Fallop; and a fourth by Winslow. Some of these children lived many years.

As far as appearances enable one to judge, the child I have described promises to do well.