NOTE ON THE DIGITI SEMI-MORTUI.

By MARSHALL HALL, M.D., F.R.S.

I AM frequently consulted in cases, in which one or more fingers lose their sensibility, their colour, and their temperature for a time. The appearance is that of death, and I have therefore designated these fingers "*digiti semi-mortui*."

In one case, witnessed this morning, a thermometer applied to the middle finger, which was *semi-mortuus*, denoted a temperature of 61° Fahr.; applied to the fore-finger and the ring-finger, it rose to 81°; the difference being 20° of temperature. I think, that if the finger in this state were pricked with a needle, there would be little or no pain, or flow of blood; but I have not yet tried the experiment. External cold produces this affection; warmth and rubbing remove it. When the patient has been once subjected to it, it is very apt to return. It occurs in middle, as well as in old age. What is its precise nature, cause, and effect?

I am about to have a drawing taken of a finger or fingers so affected, and to gather a few instances together for the LONDON JOURNAL OF MEDICINE. I mentioned the subject at the Harveian Society, on Thursday evening last, the 15th instant, but the fact seemed to have been noticed but by few of the members present.

Manchester Square, London, Feb. 17, 1849.