Art. I.—On Hydrocele of the Neck, with Cases and Observations. By James O'Beirne, M.D., Surgeon Extraordinary to the King, One of the Surgeons of the Richmond Surgical Hospital, House of Industry, Dublin, &c. &c. &c.

It is now nearly twenty years since Professor Maunoir, of Geneva, described a disease to which he gave the name of hydrocele of the neck, and which, although essentially different in its nature, and requiring a very different mode of treatment, bears such a resemblance to bronchocele or goitre, that it has constantly been confounded with the latter disease, and treated accordingly. The manuscript memoir in which he described this disease, was read at the Royal Institute of France in 1815, and afterwards transferred to the Academy of Natural Sciences; by which body the late celebrated Baron Percy was selected to report upon its merits. It was not, however, until April, 1817, that the Baron presented his report, which proved highly unfavourable to Professor Maunoir's opinions and
practice. In 1825, the latter published, for the first time, his memoir, with the whole of the unfavourable report made thereon, and a most able and satisfactory defence of his peculiar views on the subject.* But it would appear that, as too often happens, the authority of a great name, aided by bold and specious objections, proved more powerful than either the strongest facts or arguments; for, after considerable research, I have failed in finding even the slightest notice of this memoir in any subsequent French or English work. So little, indeed, does it appear to be known in both countries, that Delpech† and Lawrence,‡ who, between them, have related three cases which appear to have been examples of the disease, not only make no allusion to it, but, by employing incision in the treatment of these cases, would seem to show that they were unacquainted with its existence; for it is only natural to presume, that, if they had known the equally certain, and less dangerous and disfiguring mode of treatment by seton, so successfully adopted by Maunoir, they would have given it the preference.

About four years ago, the three memoirs to which I have already referred came accidentally into my possession, and the singularity of its title induced me to read that "Sur, l'Hydrocele du Cou." Since that time, accident again favoured me by enabling me to observe three striking examples of the disease, all of which displayed the utter fallacy of Baron Percy's objections. According as they presented themselves, accurate notes and drawings of these cases were taken with a view to publishing them, at some future day, and giving such a general account both of the memoir in question and the whole subject, as might prove acceptable to the profession. That time is now come, and I trust that, aided by the two annexed lithographic plates, I shall be enabled to carry my intentions into effect.

† Chirurgie Clinique de Montpellier, t. ii. p. 79—87.
‡ London Medico-Chirurgical Transact. vol. xvii. p. 44 et seqq.