On Esmarch's Operation for Closure of the Jaws by Cicatrices. By Christopher Heath, F.R.C.S.; Assistant Surgeon to, and Lecturer on Anatomy at the Westminster Hospital.

In the *Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science* of May, 1863, I brought before the profession the causes and treatment of immobility of the jaws, using as illustrations three cases treated in the Westminster Hospital by Mr. Holt and myself. In Mr. Holt's case, and in one of my own, internal division of the cicatrices, with the subsequent adaptation of silver plates to the gums, gave very satisfactory results; in the third case I performed the operation proposed by Professor Esmarch, of Kiel, *i.e.*, the resection of a wedge of bone from the lower jaw in front of the cicatrix, thus
leading to the formation of a false joint. I have now to record a second case in which I have performed Esmarch’s operation with a good result.

The subject of the contraction of cicatrices in the mouth, and their treatment, has attracted little attention among British surgeons, and even in the last published surgical works, Erichsen’s Surgery, 4th Edition, 1864, and Mr. Pollock’s Essay on Diseases of the Mouth, in Holmes’s System of Surgery, Vol. IV. (1864), on mention of them is made; in Paris, on the contrary, the question has attracted much attention, and has furnished the topic of frequent discussions at the Société de Chirurgie. Since the date of the publication of a paper upon the subject by M. Verneuil (Archives Générales, 1860) several operations have been performed by French surgeons, but apparently with but little success, since in cases operated on both by the method of Esmarch and Rizzoli re-union of the divided jaw has taken place.

Thus, on the 4th February, 1863, M. Boinet brought before the society a little girl on whom he had previously performed what he terms Esmarch’s operation, (but which appears to have consisted in the simple division of the jaw, recommended by Rizzoli, and not the removal of a wedge of bone, as originally proposed by Esmarch), and in whom the bone had re-united. M. Deguise thereupon quoted a case in which he had removed a centimetre and a half of bone with the same unsatisfactory result, and expressed a doubt whether a single successful case could be produced. On the 11th February, 1863, M. Deguise brought the case he had alluded to before the society, and showed that the failure “depended upon the formation of an osseous callus at the level of the resected portion.” At the same meeting M. Bauchet showed a young Syrian girl in whom contraction of the left side had taken place, together with a loss of substance of the cheek, and commissure of the lips, equalling a five franc piece in size. In this case a centimetre and a half of the jaw was removed; and though extensive suppuration and necrosis of the jaw ensued, the girl made a good recovery, and at that date (4th February) a very satisfactory amount of movement and power of mastication had been obtained.

On the 29th July, 1863, M. Verneuil communicated to the Société de Chirurgie the histories of several cases operated upon by M. Rizzoli himself, the results of which were most satisfactory. In the first the operation (simple division of the jaw from within the mouth) was performed in 1857, and after six years the boy was