

BANDAGE IN PARACENTESIS
ABDOMINIS.*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—I take leave, through the medium of your widely-circulated pages, to recommend the adoption of the eighteen-tailed bandages, in paracentesis of the peritoneal and ovarian caustics, instead of that old, clumsy, and unscientific apparatus, “the sheet,” as affording, at once, great support and comfort to the sufferer, and assistance to the operator, by a regular and steady pressure, in consequence of its presenting an uninterrupted broad and flat surface over the whole of the parietes, during the operation, and, as it supersedes the usual after bandage, much fatigue and probable risk to the patient are avoided.

The bandage is made in five minutes, of stout calico, doubled, two yards long, and in width extending from the scrobiculus cordis to the pubes, the ‘tails’ about four inches broad, and divided to the normal size of the abdomen, so that when the fluid is drawn off, the points of their junction shall embrace the parietes sufficiently to afford the requisite support, the ‘tails’ are then to be passed round, and secured.

N.B. The broad part is to be applied in front, and the tails interlaced behind, and approximated by one or two assistants, during the operation.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

T. W. WANSBROUGH.

Chelsea, Oct. 2, 1839.

IDENTITY OF COW-POX AND
SMALL-POX.*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR:—During the last three years, whenever an opportunity presented itself, I have tried to establish the fact that the pox, which occurs spontaneously on the cow, is the same disease as that which occurs to the human subject, and which we denominate variola or small-pox. The means which I have taken to arrive at this conclusion, are exceedingly simple, and may have been tried by others before me; but, if so, I do not think they have been published.

Having a patient, labouring under variola, I took some virus therefrom, and inoculated a cow’s udder. On the sixth day, I took some lymph from the cow, and vaccinated a child, two years of age, therewith. On the third day this produced the vaccine vesicle, and at the fifth day came to maturity. I have frequently tried the experiment since, with the like success. The characteristics generally noticed, when a child is vaccinated with lymph procured in this manner, are—the vesicle is sooner formed, sooner comes to perfection, and there is greater irritation

and inflammation around the pustule. These peculiarities gradually diminish, according to the number of individuals through whom the virus pours afterwards; and hence I consider the more recent the matter is taken from the cow, the greater security will there be against the individual vaccinated having the small-pox in its more malignant form, if he should happen to have it all.

I was led to perform these experiments from having seen the cow-pox go through all its proper stages in a person, who was vaccinated two days previous to the small-pox making its appearance on him; and imagining that two dissimilar eruptive diseases could not happen in the same person at once, I considered that the pox as it exists in the cow was the same disease as the small-pox in a milder form.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY H. RUGG, Surgeon, &c.
London, Oct. 21, 1839.

TESTS OF POISON.

RECENT INQUEST AT HERTFORD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In your last Number but one, under the head “FORENSIC MEDICINE,” there was (abstracted from the *Hertford Reformer*) an account of an inquest held in this town upon the body of a woman who was supposed to have been poisoned by oxalic acid, and in whose case Mr. Shillitoe and myself had been engaged in post mortem examination, and in testing the contents of the stomach. You were kind enough to transfer our report of the case at full length into *THE LANCET*. In that report we stated, that “In one respect only did the contents of the stomach fail to give the same result as a solution of oxalic acid in water. A white, heavy precipitate, as before stated, will be caused by the action of nitrate of silver on solutions of various substances; but it is characteristic of that produced on a solution of oxalic acid to *detonate*, when dried on a filter, and exposed on a spatula to the heat of a spirit lamp. No detonation could be caused by the precipitate from the liquid found in the stomach.” We accounted for this absence of detonating property, by the facts that the quantity of acid in the stomach after death was very small, owing to the constant vomiting which had continued for several hours before death, and that this small quantity was mixed with a large proportion of animal matter, precipitated by the nitrate of silver, together with the acid.

Now, in a case like this, where any doubt might exist, it is satisfactory to know that a boy, living in the same house as the deceased, has, since the inquest, come forward to confess “that he bought two pennyworth of oxalic acid for the deceased, a few days before her