

all in their power, in a sure and efficient way, to make this meeting a great success. With this object in view the committee will be pleased to invite you personally to attend, as well as the members of the society or medical fraternity to which you belong, in order that through your presence and works the certain success of the congress that science expects of its representatives will be assured.

The committee hopes that you and the other members of your institutions will meet at Guatemala Aug. 5 to 10, 1908, and sincerely begs that from now on you will not hesitate to keep yourself in fraternal relations with this committee, and also that you will let us know beforehand if you intend to attend the congress in person or to send some scientific contributions.

The committee hopes to receive a reply shortly to the invitation to this meeting, which should serve as an incentive to unite professional interests, to stimulate the advance of medical science and to contribute to the preservation of the health and the prolongation of the life of the people of the Americas.

We take advantage of this opportunity to express to you the best regards of
Yours truly,

JUAN J. ORTEGA, President.

JOSE AZURDIA, Secretary.

National Committee for the Republic of Guatemala.

Sudden Death After Injection of Diphtheria Antitoxin.

[A report of a death of a man in a physician's office, immediately after receiving an injection of diphtheria antitoxin, had wide circulation in the newspapers. A request for information addressed to the physician referred to has brought the following reply.—Ed.]

NORRISTOWN, PA., Jan. 6, 1908.

To the Editor:—On the evening of Dec. 12, 1907, Ely Weitzel, aged 34 years, a man of splendid physique and apparently in the best of health, came to my office and asked that I give him an immunizing dose of antitoxin, saying that he had on that morning kissed his little daughter, who was found, less than two hours afterward, to be suffering from diphtheria, both throat and nose being filled with the membrane.

A few minutes before 8 p. m., after having carefully sterilized the right side, I introduced the needle about four inches above Poupart's ligament, and slowly injected nearly all of 1,000 units of diphtheria antitoxin. He said that neither the introduction of the needle nor of the serum gave him any pain, but spoke of the "lump that raised" when I withdrew the needle.

At the time of the injection he was reclining in an office chair, having removed his coats and vest. As near as I can judge, he remained in the chair for from two to three minutes after the injection. Just as he got out of the chair he said: "What is in that stuff? I feel as though it were blistering me." He reached for his clothing, and as he did so he said: "My scalp and face itch and burn terribly," and with both hands he began to scratch his head vigorously. His next remark was: "I can not breathe." I observed that his expression denoted anxiety, and that his lips began to swell and turn dark. I told him to sit down, which he did. He then complained of the itching all over his body, and in a moment said: "I am on fire inside." His breathing was now very labored; his lips, face and neck were much swollen and very dark. A thick heavy froth began pouring from his mouth. He was apparently paralyzed, for he made no voluntary motion of any part of his body. He had a slight convulsion, lasting but a few seconds, after which he ceased to breathe. The action of the heart continued for a considerable time after the breathing ceased.

Soon after he sat down I realized that his condition was alarming and had three physicians called, all of whom live within a few yards of my office. They responded immediately, and we used all the recognized means to re-establish breathing, but did not succeed.

The time elapsing between the introduction of the serum and his death was not over five minutes. He did not speak again after saying: "I am on fire inside," except to mutter: "I—am—dying," nor did he seem to be conscious after that.

The serum used was sent to my office a few minutes before

I injected it, from a neighboring drug store. The date limit was "March 7, 1908."

I have used diphtheria antitoxin in over sixty cases and have never seen any untoward symptoms, except in one instance—an attack of urticaria.

No autopsy was made in this case. I might add that this man from childhood could never be about horses without suffering from symptoms of asthma.

It would be a Herculean task to answer personally the many letters I am receiving from physicians in all parts of the country, so I trust this will answer them through your columns.
S. N. WILEY.

The Inventor of the Guillotine.

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 4, 1908.

To the Editor:—In THE JOURNAL, Jan. 4, 1908, page 68. I note that Dr. William Pepper is reported to have said: "Dr. Guillotin, the inventor of the guillotine, had his own head chopped off." If Dr. Pepper has been correctly quoted, the value of his paper on "Diseases of Great Physicians of the Past," which was read before the Philadelphia County Medical Society on Dec. 11, 1907, is much lessened. Dr. Guillotin lived until the year 1814, and died quietly in his bed. Furthermore, he did not invent the machine which bears his name.

The use of a beheading machine can be traced to the middle ages. In Genoa it was known by the name of "manuaja," and it was by means of the manuaja that Beatrice Cenci was beheaded at Rome in 1605. The "maiden," an instrument resembling the guillotine, was long known in Scotland. In the reign of Elizabeth it was used in Halifax and in Yorkshire.

Joseph Ignatius Guillotin, an eminent physician, was a deputy for Paris in the constituent assembly. In 1789 he prepared the draft for a law to the effect that the mode of inflicting death on criminals should be the same for all alike, without any distinction of nobles or plebeians. The bill proposed by Dr. Guillotin was voted and the assembly enacted, Jan. 21, 1790, that: "the criminal should be beheaded by means of a simple machine." In October, 1791, the same assembly voted that: "the penalty of death shall consist in the simple taking away of life without the accompaniment of any sort whatever of torture; and the convict so condemned shall be beheaded."

Having decided on decapitation, the committee of legislation directed Dr. Louis, the perpetual secretary of the Academy of Surgery, to make a report on the best method of decapitation. He suggested the plan on which the instrument should be made, and was empowered to have one constructed. A German named Schmitt was employed for the purpose. On April 19, 1792, Louis informed Roland, then minister of the interior, that experiments had been made with Schmitt's machine on three dead bodies and that: "the heads were cut off with such precision that he was astonished at the strength and celerity of its action."

The machine was first used on May 27, 1792, to execute a highway robber. The first political execution was that of Collenot d'Anglemont, on Aug. 21, 1792.

The beheading machine was at first popularly known by the name of Louison or Louise, from the name of its inventor. By some caprice it was soon called the guillotine, although Dr. Guillotin had nothing to do with its invention or construction. Dr. Guillotin was opposed to cruel and unusual punishments, and in this he showed himself to be a true physician and a humanitarian.

JAMES MOORES BALL.

Warning Against an Insurance Agent.

MARSHALL, MICH., Dec. 24, 1907.

To the Editor:—I wish to warn the members of the profession against an insurance agent who gives his name as Herbert Squires. He represents himself as an agent of the Home Accident and Health Insurance Company of South Bend, Ind., and his object is to get some physician in each city to represent the company. On the payment of \$3 the physician is given a policy for one year and is to treat the policy-holders at the regular rates to be paid by the company. The agent leaves town and nothing is seen of the policy, nor any word from the company. He claims to be a Knight of Pythias, and