

cious to be desired. He says, "Why resort to doubtful and dangerous remedies merely because they are new?" But surely if we are not to try new remedies, but to continue those which are old and often utterly inefficient, we shall make no progress at all. From what I have seen in hospital practice of the use of iodide of potassium in the treatment of acute rheumatism, it is of little avail in meeting any of the urgent symptoms, such as pain, effusion into the joints, or high temperature, and Dr. Barton is compelled to supplement it by blisters, Dover's powder, &c.

Anyone who has seen two cases treated, the one with carefully-regulated doses of salicylic acid, where the patient is free from pain and swelling, with an abated temperature, in from twenty-four to thirty-six hours, and the other treated in the old-fashioned and somewhat barbarous plan of blisters, first on one joint, then on another, &c., until the patient suffers almost as much agony from the blisters as from the disease, and where, finally, the disease itself remains almost unabated, only shifting its quarters, and lasting "generally a week or ten days"—anyone who has seen such cases could not fail to say at all events in which case there is the least pain.

I think Dr. Barton is in error in stating that salicylic acid has in any one case been proved to have caused a fatal result, and I demur to his calling it "a doubtful and dangerous remedy." There is no evidence whatever to show that deaths or cardiac complications are more frequent under its use, if not the reverse. I have treated some fifty cases with salicylic acid, combined with the minimum of bicarbonate of soda and ammonia, to effect its solution, and published a letter with a report of a few in THE LANCET, 1877, whilst I made a series of experiments upon guinea-pigs,¹ &c., giving one twenty grains every day for a fortnight, without any ill results, the said animal being alive a year after, and I also gave it doses of ten grains, which, considering the size of the animal, is a very large dose.

Whatever may be the relative merits of the salicylic-acid treatment, and that by other methods, such as the alkaline or iodide of potassium, as regards the frequency of relapses, the chances of cardiac complications—these are only to be determined by an accumulated amount of experience, and revealed by statistics; but I am of opinion, from my own experience, and that of many others, that the former method of treatment is far superior to the other methods in the rapidity with which it lowers the temperature, and relieves the pain, if it does not also shorten the duration of the disease.

Timidity in dosing (which is but natural to those who believe in the dangerous nature of the remedy) is one cause, and the principal one, of the failures which occur in the salicylic treatment. I found that I could detect it in the urine within ten minutes after its administration, and in the blood in less than that time. Considering then its rapid elimination from the system it is useless to give doses of ten or fifteen grains every four or six hours.

In the report of the Boston City Hospital, 1877, as regards the duration of the disease under this treatment, the average time to relief of pain was 1·46 days, complete cessation of pain 2·85 days, the average time the acid was given was 6·22 days, and the stay in the hospital 18 days. The total number of cases, 106. These figures certainly show better results than any yet obtained under any other treatment; at the same time they are much more favourable than Dr. Southey's recently-reported account of fifty cases under the same treatment.

I believe that by the use of a combination of iron and salicylic acid the anæmic condition and debility frequent after the use of the acid alone, or combined with soda, may be avoided, and thus the stay in hospital, apparently so prolonged after the actual cessation of the disease, may be shortened. I have always given it in this form after the first few days, and the result has been most satisfactory.

The form in which I use the acid is as follows: Salicylic acid, 20 gr.; carbonate of ammonia, 5 gr.; bicarbonate of soda, 5 gr.; water to one ounce; and I afterwards add 5 or 10 minims of tincture of perchloride of iron. I have found this more effectual than the simple salicylate of soda, and less depressing. It is also much more active than salicine.

As far as regards relapsing and subacute rheumatism (and Dr. Barton's remarks would appear to apply to that form rather than to the acute disease), I have found that the

salicylate treatment is not so successful, and I prefer to use iodide of potassium or some other drug.

I remain, Sir, yours truly,

ENGLEDUE PRIDEAUX, L.R.C.P. Lond., &c.

Wellington, Somerset, Feb. 17th, 1880.

* * The publication of this letter has been unavoidably delayed.—ED. L.

SALICYLATE OF QUININE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Perhaps you will allow me, by way of supplementing my remarks on salicylate of quinine, to state that during the last two or three weeks I have had several favourable opportunities of further testing the value of this medicine.

I have had no case of acute rheumatic fever wherein to administer it. My cases have rather been mild, subacute gouty, or rheumatic-gouty, with erratic pains, muscular and articular. In one case of chronic gout in a lady beyond the middle term of life, I had to discontinue the medicine in consequence of headache, which it was supposed to occasion. In all the others the effect has been satisfactory, and in four remarkably striking, the patients themselves commenting on its success, and asking to be allowed to have recourse to it again should necessity arise.

I would more particularly roughly narrate one case. It is that of a young gentleman, the descendant of an eminently gouty family. Both grandfather and father have been so afflicted for a large portion of their lives. The father, still living, and between seventy and eighty, has had gout for at least forty years. The son, my patient, aged thirty-three, had his first attack of gout two years ago. It was an acute attack. One foot and great toe, especially, were the seat of the affection. Since that time he has only had slight threatenings. Recently, however, he observed that he was becoming rapidly and uncomfortably stout. His hands and fingers, his feet and his toes, were swollen and puffy, and he was unable to write with comfort. Being private secretary in a department of H.M.'s service, at a very busy time, it was important that he should be able to discharge the pressing duties of his secretaryship. Medicines which used to benefit him seemed of comparatively little avail now. I had just come to know the benefit of salicylate of quinine, and I brought it into requisition. I administered it in three-grain doses every six hours. The result was as rapid and satisfactory as anyone could desire, for in the course of thirty-six hours the swellings had nearly quite disappeared. He soon became quite well.

I may state that in all the cases where I have employed this salt no other medicine whatever was used.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Chester-square, April 5th, 1880.

ARCHIBALD HEWAN.

* * In reference to the difficulty of obtaining salicylate of quinine, mentioned in Dr. Hewan's former letter (THE LANCET, April 3rd), we have received communications from Messrs. Young and Postans, and Messrs. Gale and Co.—ED. L.

CHIAN TURPENTINE FOR CANCER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As Mr. Clay does not make it quite clear whether he regards his experiments with Chian turpentine in the treatment of cancer as absolutely new or merely as revivals, you will perhaps permit me to state that turpentine is not a novel remedy for this disease. During some recent consultations, for a purely literary purpose, of Paracelsus' writings, I encountered in the "Chirurgia Magna," and elsewhere, many references to the treatment of the various forms of cancer, ulcer, fistula, &c., by means of balsams, resins, and turpentine, both as local applications and as internal medicines. I do not remember to have met with the precise mention of Chian turpentine, but the list of "turpentine" given in the second book "De Præparationibus," makes it almost certain that Chian turpentine was included. In the works of Riverius, into a translation of which I casually looked on reading Mr. Clay's paper, turpentine,

¹ The Practitioner, September, 1878.

bellium, myrrh, &c., are recommended for the cure of cancer of liver, spleen, womb, and other organs.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Harley-street, W., April 6th.

JOHN TWEEDY.

A CASE OF EARLY PREGNANCY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As the following case appears to me to possess some interest, I am induced to call attention to it. Although there are cases of pregnancy on record as occurring in England at an earlier age than the following, yet the girl in this instance was so extremely young, and parturition proved so unexpectedly easy, that the matter seems worthy of being recorded :—

L. E— (born February 7th, 1867, daughter of a farmer) was brought to me in November last to be treated for amenorrhœa. I learned from her mother that the menstrual flow, which had made its first appearance during the preceding April, had not occurred since. Struck by the peculiar figure of the girl, I inquired of the mother whether she had any suspicion of the nature of her daughter's condition, and I then elicited that it had recently come to the knowledge of the parents that there had been an improper intimacy between her and a lad of twenty, employed as farm servant. In consequence of this I made an examination, which verified my suspicion that she was pregnant. I may here mention that the affair became subsequently the subject of criminal proceedings against the lad, who in January last was sentenced to a term of twelve months' imprisonment under the provisions of the recent Act of Parliament.

Although L. E— was more developed than are most girls of the same age, I naturally anticipated, from her extreme youth, a very tedious if not perilous labour. The sequel will show how agreeably I was disappointed.

On the morning of Feb. 26th I was sent for to visit her, and on reaching the house learned that labour had commenced the previous morning at about half-past ten o'clock. At the time of my arrival (8.30 A.M.) I found the os uteri fully dilated and the head presenting in the first position. From that point labour progressed rapidly, and in one hour and a half terminated in the birth of a healthy, well-developed male child. The mother never had a bad symptom, and both she and the child have been doing well since.

It will be seen from the above dates that L. E— was, on the birth of the infant, thirteen years and nineteen days old.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

ALBERT E. MAY, L.R.C.P. Ed., &c.

Moreton-Hampstead, March 16th, 1880.

THE BEARER CORPS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Although it is a matter of very secondary importance to anyone as to which was the first Bearer Company in action in the late war in South Africa, yet as it appears to have been made a matter of moment by Surgeon-Major Scott in his recent letter to THE LANCET (p. 266), I may remark that a regularly-organised company of Kroomen belonging to the Naval Brigade, previously trained by Fleet Surgeon Norbury, R.N., C.B., was in action with that officer at the battle of Inyezane in January, 1879, and besides this, there was also a large number of trained Native Bearers.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

JOHN BOWDEN TRIGGS, M.B., Surgeon R.N.,

In Medical Charge of H.M. Flag-ship *Active*
during the late war.

Royal Naval Hospital, Cape of Good Hope, March 15th, 1880.

HONORARY QUEEN'S CADETSHIPS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There are a certain number of cadetships given every year at Sandhurst, called "honorary Queen's cadetships." These are not to be confounded with "Queen's cadetships." The first-mentioned are boons conferred on officers' sons whose fathers have done good service in the army, and the holders have only to "qualify," and not to "compete," for their commissions. By the warrant these

boons are limited to the sons of the so-called "combatant" officers. The sons of medical officers are excluded from them, no matter what good service their fathers may have done. This is most unjust.—Yours, &c.,

March, 1880.

I.V.R.C.

PARIS.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE proposal to create a new chair of Pathological Anatomy has met with the greatest opposition on the part of the Faculty of Medicine. The professors have all signed a report, which has been sent into the Minister; and they have concluded that the proposed innovation is unnecessary, and that it may be dangerous. It is of course true that it is not absolutely necessary to appoint a new *professor* for this purpose; a post of less importance, such as that of *chef des travaux anatomo-pathologiques*, might be sufficient, and in this manner the wounded susceptibility of the faculty would be soothed. It is also true that such a precedent might prove dangerous to the interests of the present professors, who have every reason to keep their number as restricted as possible. But as far as teaching is concerned, this report is simply a quibble; some change is greatly needed. At the present time practical morbid anatomy is not taught at all in Paris. Post-mortem examinations are only held at the caprice of the house-surgeons and physicians, and that so irregularly, that a student might pass weeks on the look-out for an autopsy. Paris is not only behind Europe in this respect, but also far behind some of the French provincial schools. At Nancy, autopsies are performed in all cases by a competent pathologist, M. Feltz, the professor of anatomy. In Lyons, similar functions are performed by M. Pierret; and at Lille, by M. Kelsch. There is one reason against the new creation in Paris which, although freely whispered, has not yet been stated. The professor who was designed for the chair by the Minister of Public Instruction, M. Cornil, whose work in connexion with morbid histology is well known, happens to be a member of the Chamber of Deputies. The Faculty of Medicine affects the belief that the whole affair looks very like a job, and is afraid that it would afford a precedent for the future creation of new chairs, to suit the convenience of Ministerial favourites. It will be a great pity if the opposition of the Faculty be allowed to prevail. However the wire-pulling may have been conducted, there can be no doubt that some radical improvement is urgently required.

The Société de Médecine Publique et d'Hygiène Professionnelle are going to discuss the proposition of one of their members, Dr. Bourgeois, that the State should take measures to prevent the marriage of individuals suffering from certain hereditary diseases which are most generally transmitted to the offspring. According to Dr. Bourgeois, by the prohibition of such ill-advised alliances, phthisis, epilepsy, and mental disease would soon be exterminated. The commission appointed to examine and report upon the proposition, has, as might be anticipated, concluded against it. In the French law there is only one case in which an individual is incapable of contracting marriage, and that is in the case of an *interdit*—that is, a person interdicted on account of mental incapacity from the exercise of civil rights, and this is on legal, rather than on hygienic grounds. For a marriage to be legal consent must be given, and as an *interdit* cannot legally give a valid consent, he cannot contract marriage. Dr. Bourgeois would have every candidate for wedlock submit to medical examination, and would allow marriage to those only who had obtained a medical licence. He also thinks that a difference of twenty-five years between the ages of the two parties should constitute an absolute bar to their union when one of them is over sixty, so that a man of that age would be forbidden to marry a woman of four-and-thirty.

The *République Française* of this day relates a remarkable freak of nature which has occurred at Cherbourg, and which it copies out of the *Vigie de Cherbourg*. If the *République Française* were not always of the most respectable prosiness, one might suppose that it was trying to get off what Artemus Ward would call a "goak." The "infant phenomenon" in question is a child, six months old, and the *Vigie* seems proud that Cherbourg should be privileged to show a marvel