

lege, by the way, how *pleræque radices* are to be found *antequam caules aut folia exserant*. It is now the season for gathering the root of taraxacum, it being now in possession of its maximum of juices, which juices, obtained by expression, and inspissated by spontaneous evaporation in shallow earthen dishes, will form an extract of decided medicinal properties, and will be found to be a very valuable remedial agent, in various forms of dyspepsia, in doses of from five to ten grains three times a day. I do not believe it has any direct influence on the liver, but by its relieving gastric and intestinal irritation, will frequently do more for cases termed bilious, than calomel and other active medicines. I have frequently seen the most happy results follow the use of taraxacum alone, in cases which have been tormented by mercury and other heroic remedies, which have superinduced a degree of irritation more serious than the original disease itself. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH HOULTON.

87, Lisson-grove, July 20, 1838.

SMALL-POX IN UTERO.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—IN THE LANCET for 20th January, 1838, there is an account of a case with remarks, which was read by Mr. Streeter, at the Westminster Medical Society, on the effects of modified small-pox upon the foetus in utero. He stated in this paper that one case only of this disease, under these circumstances, had occurred in his practice, and that he had only heard of three other cases. As a record of facts respecting this point in the disease, by practitioners, might ultimately tend to determine the law by which its effects on the foetus are regulated, I have sent you the following case, which you will oblige me by inserting in THE LANCET. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

WILLIAM DAVIDSON, M.D.

71, West Nile-street, Glasgow,
29th June, 1838.

CASE:—A married lady, æt. 21, of healthy constitution, vaccinated when an infant, having a regular cicatrix on her arm, and in the eighth month of her first pregnancy, was seized on 9th Dec., 1837, with pyrexial symptoms, cough, and urgent difficulty of breathing, attended with pain in the chest. She was bled from the arm and blistered on the chest, with decided relief to the pain and difficulty of breathing, the blood being buffy; but complete relief was not obtained until the eruption of small-pox made its appearance on the 12th; after which the pulse gradually subsided to its natural

standard, and there was scarcely any increased quickness of it during the maturation of the pustules. The eruption was slightly confluent on the face, but perfectly distinct, though copious, over the rest of the body. It began to decline about the eighth day, and she soon recovered her usual good health; felt the movements of the foetus as before, and no pits or marks were left on the face or any other part of her body. During the course of the disease, in addition to the treatment already mentioned, she had castor oil or occasionally and small doses of tartrate of antimony. After the usual period of utero-gestation was completed, and after an ordinary labour, she was delivered of a son on the 18th January following, who though small and somewhat emaciated, seemed to labour under no disease, and there were no marks of any kind on his body; or, indeed, any other appearance, which could induce the supposition that he had laboured under small-pox.

He was vaccinated when about two weeks old, but without effect; this was repeated three times at intervals with dry matter, but with the same result. It was again done with fluid matter, but still without effect; but it was at last performed successfully on the 18th of this month, and three very regular and beautiful vesicles, containing very transparent lymph, were produced, which were after the 8th day surrounded by the usual areola. It may, perhaps, be supposed by some persons that the difficulty of succeeding in the vaccination of this case arose from the child having been affected with the virus of small-pox while in utero; but it is much more probable that the repeated failures were owing to the necessity of attempting it when he was so young and possessed of so little plumpness or vigour in the system; for the same want of success frequently occurs in ordinary cases under similar circumstances of body, or if the skin be harsh and dry.

HYDATIDS OF THE HEART.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In the last number of Dr. Copland's valuable Medical Dictionary, at page 218, he treats of "watery cysts and hydatids" found attached to, or within, the substance of the human heart. He considers that the former are not unfrequent, but he thinks that the presumed hydatids mentioned by continental writers, are mostly mistakes, being watery cysts merely. There is, however, a case by Trotter, and published in his "Chemical and Medical Essays," in 1796, which looks more like the truth, but respecting even the correctness of this, the Doctor throws considerable doubt. Indeed, although he does not venture to deny that

loose hydatids may have been found in the heart, yet he adds "that it is of extremely rare occurrence." This induces me to forward to you the following case, thinking that the actual symptoms previous to death might be new to many of your readers.

Mr. William P. Broderibb was called to see a respectable female of Warminster, in 1835. He learned that she had, after passing a quiet good night, been seized, whilst dressing, with severe dyspnoea. Her respirations were unnaturally frequent; the face was pallid; the lips livid. She was quite conscious, but unable to articulate, and when questioned "as to her pain," put her hand upon the chest; the pulse was very small, and beating 130, but without irregularity or intermission, or very slightly so. The hand being placed over the region of the heart, that viscus was felt to beat with great force and violence. In this state she continued until she died, which happened three hours after the seizure.

Upon examination of the subject the heart was found to be in a natural state, excepting that one large hydatid occupied so entirely the right ventricle that the passage of the blood into the pulmonary artery must have been prevented. Upon opening this single hydatid it was found to contain about eight or ten others floating about in a fluid. That they are common hydatids I have not the shadow of a doubt, and no one who has seen the preparation has expressed one.

As I am upon the subject of hydatids, I will add that in a newly-born infant Mr. Charles Bleack, also a practitioner in Warminster, found two bags filled with these, and resembling closely packed grapes. One bag is about four inches broad and five long; the other somewhat less; each must contain some hundreds of hydatids. The bags were attached by a few very slender filaments to the peritoneum, otherwise they were hanging quite loose.

Both these preparations are in my museum deposited at the Infirmary, and open to the inspection of all professional and scientific persons, who will favour it with their company. Of course it is to the liberality of my Wiltshire friends that I am indebted for these valuable presents, and I am happy in this opportunity of returning my thanks to them thus publicly. I remain, Mr. Editor, yours truly,

RICHARD SMITH,
Senior Surgeon, Bristol Infirmary.
38, Park-street, Bristol,
July 13, 1838.

Allow me to add, by way of P.S., that Mr. John Brady presented to me a short time since a bony compact deposit, which weighs four pounds; it was attached to the mesentery only. The uterus and appendages had also deposits, in number about twenty, varying in size from a chesnut to a small

orange. It is a curious fact, that this woman, who had been many years the inmate of St. Peter's Hospital poorhouse, died at the age of 72, having never complained of the smallest pain or inconvenience. The post mortem examination was an accidental occurrence by the apprentices of Mr. Brady, who had no suspicion of anything particular.

QUESTION OF REMUNERATION

FOR

EXTRA LABOURS OF UNION SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In THE LANCET of the 28th of April, is a paragraph setting forth, in most positive terms, the necessity of complying with an order from the House of Commons to make out certain medical returns from the Unions, stating that noncompliance with such order subjects the party to personal inconvenience and pecuniary loss; and it also states, that upon a proper application to the Boards of Guardians and the Poor-Law Commissioners, they would probably make the medical officers some compensation for their trouble.

I have, at a very considerable sacrifice of valuable time, complied in every way with the order, and accomplished a most arduous task, filling upwards of forty folio sheets, reporting upwards of 1100 cases, and upon presenting them to the Board of Guardians at Croydon, and applying for some compensation, they directly saw the justice of the application and requested their clerk to write to the Poor-Law Commissioners, who replied that they had no power to grant anything to the medical officers for that purpose.

Since then I have received another order to report all nuisances in the neighbourhood, which are likely to affect the public health. Now it does appear to me most extraordinary, that a medical man, whose time is generally so fully occupied, should be requested to make out returns of the kind without any remuneration.

The first report called for, containing the number of cases, with recoveries, deaths, &c., &c., in the course of a year,—a report very difficult to make out, and occupying much time,—it was then presumed that no other would be required. When a medical man enters into an agreement to attend the sick poor of a district, he never contemplated that he would have the duties of a clerk to fulfil; the weekly reports are of themselves quite sufficient to occupy a very considerable portion of time.

Your attention to the above will confer a great obligation upon your very obedient servant,

GEORGE BOTTOMLEY,
Croydon, July 13, 1838.