by smoking tobacco. They were both in men who were seldom without a pipe in their mouths. The first was not a drinker at all. The paralysis commenced by gradually increasing loss of power over the muscles of the tongue and pharynx, (indicated by difficulty of speaking, swallowing and retaining the saliva in the mouth,) the parts to which the poison is applied. He eventually entirely lost the power of either speaking or swallowing, and sank exhausted without apparently the paralysis extending to other parts. His age was fifty-eight when he died.

My present patient, aged forty-nine, has the same symptoms—the difficulty of speaking, swallowing, and retaining the saliva; and there is also slight dragging of the left leg. He certainly has not been a sober man, but his intoxication has been caused as much by tobacco smoking as by drinking, a very small quantity of drink, if taken along with his pipe, being sufficient at any time to make him intoxicated; and he has frequently become quite intoxicated after smoking alone, without any drink.

These two cases have occurred in my practice during the present year, and are merely examples of what I have often seen.

My chief desire, Sir, at present, is to support what I consider Mr. Solly's most important conclusion—one that I have long since arrived at myself, and frequently urged in Society—viz., that over and above its effects on the individual, the great increase in the habit of tobacco smoking amongst the young men of the better classes, is a national calamity and source of danger. Let any one look round amongst the young men of his acquaintance, and notice whether those who smoke largely are not distinguished by a generally deteriorated physique—a sallow, dyspeptic appearance, deficiency of energy and nerve, and inability or disinclination for manly exercises. Such, at any rate, is my experience. I have observed lads, leaders in the cricket-field, and riding to hounds with spirit—as young men, acquire this habit to excess, (perhaps at the university, where it has sunk many a man from the honours-list to a poll, or from the poll to a pluck)—lose all their taste for athletic sports, and all their nerve in the hunting-field.

Further, I consider it peculiarly devolves upon our profession to combat this evil, inasmuch as we are probably the only class who can see its danger in the present stage. There cannot be a doubt that we can do much to arrest its spread, if we resolutely determine so to do, each using his influence in his own circle. It will be contrary to all the antecedents of our profession if a mere desire to excuse a personal indulgence prevents the proper discharge of this duty.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Filey, February, 1857. WILLIAM S. CORTIS, M.R.C.S.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In Mr. J. B. Neil's wholesale denunciation of tobacco in his first letter, there is a very remarkable passage—viz., "that *consumption* was clearly traceable to the one curse of smoking, being transmitted from patients (who were smokers) to their offspring." Might not Professor Taylor and Dr. Quain confer a great boon on the public at large by a careful *chemical and microscopical analysis of the blood* of a certain number of smokers?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
J. C.

CLERICAL SMOKERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Although a clergyman, I am a frequent reader of THE LANCET, and have read with no small degree of interest the very important correspondence which has appeared in your journal on "The Great Tobacco Question." I have been, however, somewhat amused at a very extraordinary statement which I came across in a letter, signed "J. B. Neil," in last week's impression, which is now before me. Your correspondent is speaking of two tests, which he says might be applied in determining the injurious effects of smoking. His first test is curious enough; for after asserting it, he in effect discards it. But in his second test, which by-the-bye he appears also dubious of, because clergymen serve "an apprenticeship to the vice when at college," he gives us the following astonishing information (the italics are his own):—"But still, *after* they are ordained, permission is *never* granted them by their bishops, unless a *very strong case* is made out for the indulgence."

My first thought was that your correspondent was only just having a bit of fun at the expense of the parsons. My second

thought was, that he was only giving his own impression of what *ought to be*, and not what *really is*, the practice of the bishops respecting the use of "the weed." Surely your correspondent does not seriously believe that the clergy are under any such restrictions. If he does, let me tell him that, so far from this being the case, some of the bishops themselves are noted smokers. I could give names if necessary; but as your correspondent takes up the matter so very gravely, I had perhaps better content myself with this general assertion, only observing that he may easily satisfy himself of the truth of it by a reference to the clergy of his own neighbourhood, who, doubtless, are as well acquainted with the fact as myself.

It is a pretty general opinion that the heads of the church find quite enough to do just now in settling the unhappy differences which prevail amongst their clergy on subjects *really* belonging to their office. I am afraid that if their lordships were to take the hint of your correspondent, and commence a crusade against "smoking" on the part of the clergy, their labours would be so greatly increased that we should find them anxious to resign their dioceses, even without a pension, and that the offer of a vacant bishopric would be met with one universal cry of "nolo episcopari."

For myself I smoke but little, and I must say that the very excellent and temperate letters of Mr. Solly have deeply impressed me. I enclose my card, and am, Sir,

Your faithful servant,

February, 1857. CLERICUS ANGLICANUS.

ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There is a little mistake in your number of the 7th inst., at p. 150, where it is stated: "Dr. BARKER announced that it was intended to try Dr. MARSHALL HALL's new treatment for the recovery of persons who had been immersed." It was Mr. Baker, a member of the Committee of the Royal Humane Society, who mentioned that some medical officers of the Society intended trying Dr. Marshall Hall's Ready Method in cases of suspended respiration from drowning.

The favourable cases hitherto reported have been chiefly asphyxia in new- (still-) born infants, and though Dr. Marshall Hall's treatment is physiologically correct, further experience is required before it is considered expedient to discontinue the use of the warm bath, &c. The Royal Humane Society have paid every attention to Dr. Marshall Hall's suggestions; but they must leave the numerous medical officers connected with the Society to act upon their own judgment, in giving a fair trial to the Ready Method, in preference to that treatment which has been successful in such numerous cases.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
Feb. 1857. A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE.

THE EXHUMATION AT CASTERTON OF THE BODY OF THE LATE MRS. BACON.

THE EXCLUSION OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS FROM VIEWING THE BODY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Considerable dissatisfaction having been caused amongst the medical gentlemen of this place by the manner in which a legal investigation has been carried on, I take the liberty of communicating the facts to you.

The exhumation of the body of a Mrs. Bacon, supposed to have been poisoned, and buried in May, 1855, at Great Casterton, a village two miles from this town, was ordered by the Secretary of State, on Friday, the 6th inst. Dr. Taylor, of Guy's Hospital, was deputed, on the part of the Crown, to superintend the post-mortem; and a surgeon of this town was ordered by the coroner of Rutland to perform it. At the time appointed for the inquest, I proceeded to Casterton, where I met with two other medical practitioners from Stamford, Mr. Barber and Mr. Morgan, also bent on the same purpose as myself—of witnessing the exhumation and post-mortem. To our surprise, we were not very courteously refused permission to be present at the examination, *no reason for our exclusion being assigned*. We, therefore, presented a request in writing to the coroner, stating "that we wished to be present for scientific purposes, and not in any way to interfere with the manipulations;" but the order was refused on the grounds that the official medical gentlemen had advised that none other of the profession should be present. In case there should have been any particular

reason for secrecy, we then requested to see the body *after* the post-mortem had been performed; but this was also refused.

Now, as our object was solely to take the rare opportunity of witnessing the examination of a body that had been many months in the grave, and perhaps presenting unusual appearances, on which we might, any of us, be called to form an opinion on a future occasion, it savours very much to me of an exclusive practice, likely to injure the cause of science, and prevent its progress: at all events, if it be the law, it must be a very recent one, as even Palmer was admitted, with suspicion against him, to Cook's post-mortem at Rugeley.

Perhaps you can inform me if there be a remedy for this evil? for if the opposition to the presence of other medical practitioners than those officially appointed is only "frivolous and vexatious," in the event of a similar case occurring, being *forewarned* we would wish to be *forearmed*. If there be no law in the matter, one would have thought that courtesy alone would have secured our object.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Stamford, February, 1857. SPENCER PRATT, M.D.,
Physician to the Stamford and Rutland Infirmary.

POOR-LAW MEDICAL REFORM ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I shall feel obliged by your inserting the accompanying letter from the Poor-law Board, which, with the preceding one of Jan. 31st, published in your journal of Feb. 7th, are most important to the Union medical officer. The correspondence clearly defines his duty, which is, to attend the poor resident in his own district *only*, and that he is not legally called upon to render assistance to a pauper out of it, though living in the same union. It also informs us, that the relieving-officer's duty is to "procure attendance by giving an order on the district medical officer, or such other means as the urgency of the case may require." Hitherto it has been customary for the union medical officers to assist each other gratuitously; in future I trust they will make the guardians pay for their services. In cases of difficulty, and where aid is imperatively necessary, let them in writing inform the relieving-officer, or, in cases of "sudden and urgent necessity," the overseer, whose order is then of equal force with that of the relieving officer, and request an order for such assistance, and it will be at his peril to refuse it. The Poor-law Board have decided in my own case that the guardians must remunerate me, and this decision will apply as a rule to all.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Royal-terrace, Weymouth, Feb, 1857. RICHARD GRIFFIN.

"Poor-law Board, Whitehall, Feb. 9th, 1857.

SIR,—I am directed by the Poor-law Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd inst., and in reply to your inquiry, whether it is a part of your duty as medical officer to render gratuitous assistance to the poor who reside beyond your district, to state that the Board can only refer you to Article 206, No. 1, of the General Regulations of the 24th of July, which will inform you of the circumstances under which it is legally incumbent upon you to attend any poor person. With regard to your request to be furnished with a copy of the letter which the guardians have addressed to the Board respecting your general conduct, I am directed to state that, as the Board have not received any specific charge against you which they can entertain, they do not think themselves called upon to furnish you with a copy of the letter referred to. It will be competent to the guardians to supply you with a copy of the resolutions which they have forwarded to the Board, and the Board must accordingly refer you to them on the subject. They desire me to assure you that no charge against you will be entertained by them without being fully communicated to you, and an ample opportunity being afforded to you of entering into any explanations respecting it which you may wish to offer.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Richard Griffin, Esq." R. W. GREY, *Secretary*.

Article 206, No. 1, referred to by the Poor-law Board is—"To attend duly and punctually upon all poor persons requiring medical attendance within the district of the union assigned to him, and, according to his agreement, to supply the requisite medicines to such persons, whenever he may be lawfully required to furnish such attendance or medicines by a written or printed order of the guardians, or of a relieving-officer of the union, or of an overseer."

TRUE AND FALSE PEPSINE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

As pepsine is now attracting the notice of the medical profession, both here and on the continent, I think I shall be doing a public service in drawing your attention to a spurious kind which is now offered for sale, and which is, as I believe, manufactured in this country.

I propose, therefore, to point out the characters by which the genuine article may be recognised, and likewise those presented by the counterfeit; and also to describe the chemical tests by which they may be distinguished from each other.

I have taken as the normal type the preparation originally introduced by Mons. Boudault, the manufacturer in Paris, the preparation of which was described by him in a paper read before the Academy of Medicine. The process employed by him consists in digesting the mucous membrane of the rennet-bag in distilled water, precipitating the pepsine by acetate of lead, and decomposing this precipitate by sulphuretted hydrogen. A solution of pepsine, nearly pure, is thus obtained, which is evaporated at a gentle temperature to a syrup; it is then mixed with starch, in such proportion, that fifteen grains of the resulting mixture shall possess the power of digesting one drachm of *dry* fibrin. The preparation generally used contains in addition a small proportion of lactic acid. The article sent into the market by Mons. Boudault presents the appearance of a light fawn-coloured, somewhat cohering, powder, possessing a peculiar odour and taste. When treated with cold distilled water and filtered, an amber-coloured fluid passes through, while the starch remains behind. The spurious article, however, is a coarse white powder, without either taste or smell; and, when treated with cold distilled water, partially gelatinizes, filters with great difficulty, and yields a solution perfectly colourless. The insoluble matter which remains behind, when examined by the microscope, consists apparently of a mixture of starch and animal membrane, which may be readily separated by washing with water, the starch remaining in suspension, the membrane caking together and sinking to the bottom.

Let us now examine these solutions with different re-agents. I shall, by way of distinction, call Mons. Boudault's preparation true pepsine, the other false:—

True Pepsine.	Test.	False Pepsine.
Abundant precipitate.	Acetate of lead. ...	Slight cloudiness.
(Peptate of lead.)		
Ditto.		
(Tannate of pepsine.)	Tannin	Ditto.
Precipitates of pepsine.	Alcohol	No effect.

The solution of true pepsine is strongly acid to litmus, whilst the false is so only in a slight degree; but, more than all, Mons. Boudault's preparation does what it professes to do: fifteen grains digests its drachm of dried fibrin, while the spurious compound is entirely destitute of this property.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Oxford-street, February, 1857. P. SQUIRE.

P.S.—It may be well to observe, that M. Boudault confirms my experiments, especially the digestive test. P. S.

QUALIFICATIONS OF ARMY SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the evidence delivered before the Parliamentary Committee upon the present organization of the Medical Department of the Army, a copy of which I have only within the last few days, for the first time, perused, a statement is advanced by Dr. Mapleton, in relation to the incapacity of army medical officers to deal with certain disorders and conditions of the system, to which I must take exception in the most unqualified terms, as not alone tending to lower their merits in the eyes of the profession at large, but which is exceptionable because simply ridiculous and untrue. Dr. Mapleton asserts that his brethren in the British army have no acquaintance with the diseases of women and children, and are equally little conversant with the management of parturition. As I have not the "blue book" at hand, and am quoting Dr. M. from recollection, I pretend only to give the substance of what he delivered himself of before the Committee upon the foregoing points.

By Her Majesty's regulations, 6 men per 100, rank and file,