show itself in the individual merely in consequence of the attraction produced by the itch matter, or the filth attached to the person?

A delirium of joy at this discovery every day betrays itself in the amphitheatre of the Hôpital St. Louis. When it has subsided, a solution of these questions may be effected by careful and continued research. The only rational attempt as yet made towards this solution, is that of Albin Gras, a student at the hospital. This gentleman submitted his arm to a troop of these parasitical insects, and obtained a development of some characteristic vesicles. A subsequent intolerable itching, combined with the external characters, left little doubt as to the power of these insects to communicate the disease. But still the question is not decided, because the matter adhering to the insects may have been the cause of the vesicles, instead of the irritation simply produced by its presence. It has indeed been proposed by one of the professors (seriously?) to submit the insect to the action of a warm-bath before inserting it under the epidermis, and to pay particular attention to washing, brushing, and drying its feet! The experiments are still in progress.

J. F. S.,
Sept. 30th, 1834.

EMPLOYMENT OF
LAUREL LEAVES IN TIC DOULOUREUX.

To the Editor of The Lancet.

SIR,—Having read in your last Number (page 939, Vol. II., 1833-34) a review of Mr. Scott’s work on tic dououreux, and more especially on the subject of local applications in that disease, permit me to add another and a more gentle remedy, which I have found to be extremely efficacious during the paroxysms of the ailment, and even to remove the affection altogether. It is simply to apply to the painful part a cataplasm of well-bruised laurel leaves for a quarter of an hour or so, until a slight erythema is produced on the skin. It is somewhat curious that even when this remedy is applied on the check, surrounded by a wineglass, the smell of the leaf becomes apparent to those who are around the patient, during each pulmonary exhalation, and the peculiar taste is felt in the mouth. It is thus manifest that the therapeutical principle comes into contact with the immediate seat of the disease.

Reasoning on this fact, and on the great sympathy existing between the stomach and the remotest parts of the body, perhaps some of the readers of your widely-extended Journal would have the goodness to try what effect the internal use of these leaves would have in obstinate cases of this nature, of a purely dynamic character—of course as an alternative, beginning with a grain or so three times a day, and gradually adding to the doses until some decided effect was produced. From your well-known liberality, I feel confident you will be kind enough to publish the results, even if unsuccessful. I am,

Sir, your very obedient servant,

CHARLES LOUDON, M.D.
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire,
Sept. 24, 1834.

MERCURIAL INUNCTION
IN ERYSIPelas.

To the Editor of The Lancet.

SIR,—Having been induced by the favourable notice taken in your journal of the treatment of erysipelas by means of “mercurial inunction on the inflamed surface,” as lately adopted in some of the French hospitals, to try its efficacy when combined with the administration of minute doses of tartarized antimony, in several cases of that formidable disease which fell under my care in Mercer’s Hospital, in the course of the last spring and summer, I gladly avail myself of your pages, to bring the result to the observation of the members of the profession, in hopes that they may be induced to follow up the inquiry, by subjecting the practice to a more extended trial, so that its claims to preference over those in general use (if any) may be ascertained, and the prejudices existing in the minds of some against the employment of unctuous applications in this form of inflammation, obviated.

The plan of treatment consisted (the bowels having been previously well freed by a bolus of calomel and jalap, succeeded, when necessary, by a purgative draught of salts and senna) in the inunction of 58s of mercurial ointment, night and morning, on the inflamed surface, over which warm fomentations were applied, and the whole enveloped in ciled silk or prepared Indian rubber cloth, so as to prevent evaporation and retain the heat,—saline draughts, containing from 1/6 to 3/4 gr. of Ant. Tart., being prescribed every third or fourth hour, so long as