pepsia, and his bowels were habitually constipated, with great consistency of the evacuations—their discharge occasioning actual pain, which passed gradually into the unpleasant sense of pruritus. The main indications for treatment appeared to me to remove the excessive hardness of the fæces, to avoid the causes producing aggravation of symptoms, and to improve the general health, and especially the condition of the large intestines—to remove, in fact, the existing torpor. Secondly, as of minor importance, to soothe the existing irritation about the verge of the anus; since, on examination, slight excoriation and redness was found to exist.

Mild and occasional laxative* aperients were directed; warm and soothing enema, to dilute and break down the hardened fæces; frequent and regular exercise, without fatigue; the careful avoidance of long sitting, and especial attention to the quantity and quality of the diet. Two parts of the unguent hydrarg. nit. oxyd. to six of unguent cetacei, well mixed, were directed to be smeared occasionally around the anal verge; and all rough handling, by scratching, during the violence of the itching, or after evacuations, to be avoided as much as possible.

This gentleman, shortly afterwards, returned to a country life, and, by attention to these measures, completely recovered; but even now, on return of constipation, has also a return of pruritus. Had these means failed, I should have tried other astringents and stimulants, as unguent gallæ—with, or without admixture of hydrocyanic acid; and, as a final recourse, the permanent separation of the opposed surfaces, by some small, smooth, metallic instrument, confined in that situation.

EDWARD HOCKEN, M.D.

15, Featherstone-buildings,
January 13, 1841.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I beg to offer a few remarks on the treatment of "Pruritus Ani." The complaint in question will generally be found to proceed from one of two causes; viz, from the irritation of ascarides in the rectum, or from a plethoric state of the hæmorrhoidal vessels: hence we have only to be correct in our diagnosis, to enable us to adopt an appropriate and successful mode of treatment. I have known several instances where people of florid complexions, and full habit of body, have, on exceeding their usual quantity of beer, had an immediate determination of blood to those vessels, followed by great heat and itching in the verge

of the anus, which have speedily been removed on taking a mercurial dose and magnesian aperient. I would suggest, therefore, in your subscriber's case, that, should the symptoms arise from this cause (which I think probable), the patient should abstain from the use of malt liquor—which enriches the blood, and distends the vessels more than any other beverage: use warm ablution to the part daily, take a blue pill at night, and a magnesian aperient every morning, until the complaint be removed, which, under this plan, I doubt not, will speedily be effected. Should such not be the case, the French practice, of applying leeches to the anus, will be found very beneficial. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM MOSS.

Windsor, Jan. 25, 1841.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—For the space of three years, I was much troubled with pruritus ani; the itching being most violent during bed-time. From the moment I lay down the irritation commenced, and, though in some measure I could abstain from scratching whilst awake, the lacerated, and often bleeding, state of the anus in the morning, showed what violence must have been done to the part during sleep. Other remedies failing, I hit upon an expedient, which proved completely successful. Believing that the complaint was prevented from healing, by every fresh invasion of the nails, I tied up each hand, at bed-time, in a tight linen bag. These bags I continued to wear in bed for about two months, when I laid them aside, and, happily, have never again been obliged to resume them. Hoping this simple suggestion may be equally beneficial to others, I am your most obedient servant, S.

WALTHAMSTOW SPECIMEN OF VACCINATIONS

UNDER THE

POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS' ACT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—The subjoined correspondence was occasioned by a return of 39 cases of vaccination, returned to the board of guardians, by Mr. Alfred Evans, one of the contracting vaccinators for the parish of Walthamstow, the first week that he entered upon his contract, and the next week they were again returned *all successful*. An inquiry, I believe, was instituted by some members of the board into the validity of such returns, and it was found that in Wanstead, where this *itinerant vaccinator* had found his way, that the majority of these *successful cases* occurred in two or three families, every member of whom, whether vaccinated previously or

* Soap or oleaginous purgatives are the best.

not, he indiscriminately operated upon with "*his fresh matter*;"* and these are the cases reported to the board as successful cases of vaccination; and these are the cases presented to the board for the payment provided by the statute. I was requested by Mr. Brown, surgeon to the union, to examine the arm of a boy, named Gunn, who lives beside the church, at Walthamstow, whom Mr. Evans had vaccinated, and reported as one of his successful cases. This boy was about 13 years of age, and had been vaccinated by Mr. Brown nearly 13 years ago, for which vaccination he received the sum of seven shillings. This case, Mr. Brown informs me, has been entered in his own note-book as a *successful case of vaccination*, and still Mr. Evans considers him a proper subject for vaccination, and returns him as his first successful case; and, what is most strange, Mr. Evans never saw this boy from the time he introduced his "*fresh matter*" to the nineteenth day after, when the circumstances were brought before the notice of the board, and even then had not seen the boy, as his mother informed me; and, still, this "*fresh matter*" vaccinator has the effrontery of representing and returning to the board his list of thirty-nine cases, and all of them successful cases of vaccination. I may mention that the ages of these thirty-nine cases were mostly from 10 years to 24—ages at which a person would conclude that they had previously undergone vaccination. I should have mentioned, that on examining Gunn's arm, I found two old cicatrices in one arm, and one in the other, which satisfied my mind that he had at a remote period passed successfully through the vaccination, for, although the presence of a cicatrix does not protect a person from variola, or even from secondary vaccinia, and although the person retaining the vaccine cicatrix does not enjoy an immunity from the infection of variola, or vaccinia, still I should be very much disposed to consider that person who did not present the variolous or vaccine cicatrix not exempt from taking either disease, if brought at all under their separate influence; therefore I should say that any person whose arm presented the variolous or vaccine cicatrix, had at one time of his life passed successfully through either. The appearance of the crusts on Gunn's arm after the second vaccination with this *fresh matter*, which I witnessed on the sixteenth day after inser-

tion, were flimsy, and the pustules appeared to have been abortive, presenting the aspect that a person acquainted with the features of primary and secondary vaccination would at once recognise and pronounce as modified cow-pox, or vaccinella; and this was the evidence that I adduced when I was summoned before the board of guardians upon the subject; and still, after all this, Mr. Evans is retained as one of the vaccinators for this parish. I now leave the case before the public, just observing, that the board of guardians, by showing lenity to an offender who gratuitously and intentionally violates the law of the land, is but discouraging the well-affected; and, as a member of the British Medical Association, I would strongly call its attention to these facts, and recommend the council of that association to investigate such a flagrant outrage. I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient,

R. L. PINCHING, Surgeon.

Walthamstow, Jan. 21, 1841.

To the Chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Westham Union, Stratford.

Sir:—May I take the liberty of addressing you, as chairman of the board of guardians of the Westham union, and respectfully inquire if the conduct of one of the contractors for vaccination in this parish, which came so prominently before the board on a late occasion, has been represented to the poor-law commissioners; and if any communication has taken place upon the subject with the board of guardians, I consider it desirable that the medical practitioners who attended the investigation may be favoured with a copy of such correspondence. I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

R. L. PINCHING.

Walthamstow, Dec. 24, 1840.

To Robert L. Pinching, Esq., Walthamstow. Board-room, Stratford, Dec. 26.

Sir:—In reply to your note, received this morning, I beg to inform you that a very large board of guardians were unanimous in expressing their disapprobation of the conduct of the contracting vaccinator, whose case was brought before them. Yours, sincerely,

JOHN PARDOE.

To the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, Stratford.

Sir:—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 26th instant, apprising me, that "a very large board of guardians were unanimous in expressing their disapprobation of the conduct of the contracting vaccinator, whose case was brought before them." As one of the medical practitioners who attended the investigation referred to, and one of the contracting vacci-

* Mr. Evans, in a note of admiration at the bottom of the return of these thirty-nine cases, gratuitously advances as the reason why his cases had been so singularly successful, and fearing that the board of guardians might cancel the validity of such return, I suppose, inserts the following note (as far as I can recollect the words) "successful owing to using *fresh matter*."

nators for the parish of Walthamstow, may I respectfully beg a copy of the minutes of such proceedings, passing a vote of censure upon Mr. Alfred Evans, surgeon, &c., the above-named contracting vaccinator, for the false return made by him to the board of guardians; and may I ask, Whether he had anything to offer in justification for making such return?

May I also beg to be informed, if it is the intention of the board to allow the sum provided by the statute for each and every case returned in such report, and if they are to be registered upon the records of the parish as successful cases of vaccination. I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient servant,
R. L. PINCHING.

P. S.—I shall also be glad to know if the board of guardians still continue to retain and recognise Mr. Evans as one of the contracting vaccinators for Walthamstow.

Walthamstow, Dec. 30, 1840.

Board-room, Stratford, Jan. 1, 1841.

Sir:—In reply to your letter, addressed to me as chairman of the board of guardians, I beg to say, that we consider the affair of Mr. Evans as matter entirely between the board and himself, and that we cannot in fairness furnish individuals with copies of our minutes on this or any other subject. Your obedient servant,

JOHN PARDOE, Chairman.

*The Chairman of the Board of Guardians,
Stratford.*

Sir:—I beg very respectfully to tender my resignation, as one of the contracting vaccinators of the parish of Walthamstow, from this date. I have the honour to be, your most obedient servant,

R. L. PINCHING.

Jan. 7, 1841.

BRANDY AND SALT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—It might serve to denude this coarse and unskilful compound of the reputation which its supposed novelty and inexplicable virtue are procuring it, with a portion of the public, if a simple statement of the *modus operandi* of its medicinal properties (such as they are) were submitted. It would then appear that, while the *principle* of this vaunted specific is just one of the most familiar in regular medicine, it is, at the same time, one of the most objectionable—one, which the intelligent practitioner rarely has recourse to, and which only igno-

rance, on the part of those who recommend it, as a general specific, or else a reckless and unprincipled desire to profit by popular delusion, could possibly bring into general use and favour.

My remarks are applicable to brandy and salt, solely as an internal remedy; and thus viewed, what are brandy and salt, and what is the secret of that efficiency and utility which they may be admitted to possess? Simply, that this compound is a *spirituous solution of a purgative*, than which union nothing is more ancient and stale in the compounding of drugs!! This boasted *spirituous tincture of salt* (for it is nothing more or less than this) differs in nothing from the well-known spirituous tinctures of senna, jalap, rhubarb, &c., except that it is the tincture of a mineral substance, while these last are of vegetable substances! But the *principle* of union is, in both cases, identical; namely, the allying of a substance that purges with another that acts as a cordial, and prevents griping, dispels flatulency, &c. So much, then, as to any novelty in the principle or nature of the remedy.

But two further remarks are to be made. With many ignorant or simple persons, the circumstance of so common a substance as domestic salt being of so much supposed efficacy and power, excites wonder, and appears to them something very new and uncommon. These persons ought to be made aware, that the selection of common or domestic salt, far from being judicious, is the contrary; since sulphate of magnesia, or Epsom salts, sulphate of soda, tartrate of soda, or Rochelle salts, would all be, not equally only, but more efficacious, and more easy in their action.

The second remark is, that the *principle* of union of two such substances as salt and brandy, although quite familiar in medicine, is not, in general, an eligible one; is one not often put in use by the physician, and propounded, as it is, by its inventor and partisans, as a form for *frequent and general* employment, is most hazardous and reprehensible. Saline drugs are appropriate in states of the stomach and bowels, in which brandy is most inappropriate, namely, in vascular, heated, tumefied, irritable states of the gastro-enteric mucous membrane. The combining of these two substances, therefore, is, in fact, and in some degree, to prescribe *incompatibles*.

It were desirable that the editors of public journals would diffuse the above easily-intelligible view of this charlatanic remedy, as thereby much mischief might be prevented, and much suffering, among the ignorant and the poor.

ROBERT DICK, M.D.

London, Jan. 26, 1841.