of the air-press. The air loses its latent heat in proportion to the degree of its condensation, and as it has to regain it when it resumes its former volume, the stream of air which issues from the reservoir acquires a great refrigerating power. "Now, the application of cold in any form acts injuriously on the ear, not only on the auditory nerve, but even on the membranous coats of the organ, where the vital heat and small supply of blood is quite unequal to resist the power of cold."—(Kramer.) I myself have witnessed several cases of dangerously protracted syncope, from merely syringing the ears with cold water; and the late instance of sudden death, alluded to in the former part of this paper, was undoubtedly produced by the long-continued circulation of a stream of air, which had become highly refrigerating, in escaping from the air-press. The explanation is furnished by the relative anatomy of the region: the carotid canal is separated from the tympanum by a septum of bone, which is not thick enough to protect the vessel within it from the constricting effects of cold; the brain may in this way be suddenly deprived of its accustomed supply of arterial blood; the equilibrium between the cerebral substance and the fluids circulating within the skull is disturbed; and syncope, dangerous in proportion to the suddenness of the alteration, is the consequence. Hence the sickness, faintness, and other unpleasant symptoms which attend the operation, especially on susceptible invalids. Any one may prove in his own person that these observations are not chimerical, by a simple experiment; let him syringe his ears with cold water, and, however sceptical before, he will at once join with me in the hope, that another sacrifice of human life will not be required to teach a proper distrust of universal remedies.

One would almost conclude, from the many precautions interspersed in Kramer's work, that he must have met with untoward cases of this description. Thus, he enjoins that the whole force of the stream should not be turned on at once, but gradually, the operator attentively listening at the ear of the patient to ascertain when it reaches the tympanum. In some aggravated cases the air will not be found to enter that cavity for a considerable time; when it does, if the dulness of hearing depends on mucous obstruction, remarkable improvement is experienced immediately; if the case be not one amongst the few which can be thus benefited, the operator improves his diagnosis by noticing the particular anormal sound made by the circulating air. In either case the instrument should be laid aside, as it can be of no further use on that occasion; on the contrary, it may do harm by "exciting the ear."

Mucous engorgement is the only ailment

remediable by the air-press; the relief depends on the re-establishment of the vibratile power of the tympanic membranes. Distention of the tympanum is relieved by a partial discharge of the fluid; if the latter be thin, no material deafness is experienced, because it will find a ready outlet through the Eustachian tube. In all cases, whether recent or ancient, the douche should be used occasionally only, and general treatment resorted to. Under these circumstances it is exceeding the bounds of justice to include all those who profess to cure deafness by exclusive measures, air-press or no air-press, under the opprobrious epithet of quacks, especially as the principles of rational treatment are few, plain, and simple, and are easily deducible from a limited anatomical examination of the organ. Moreover, when such persons assert, in the face of the whole world, through the medium of pamphlet, book, or any other species of advertisement, that they can cure all complaints of this description, ought not such communications to be regarded as forming a part of that great system of imposture by which the public are every day misled, and prevented from seeking relief at the hands of those who really merit their confidence?

7, Lower Southampton-street,
Fitzroy-square, August 21st, 1839.

EFFICACY OF THE IODIDE OF ARSENIC IN THE CURE OF CANCER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—The following recital of a perfect cure of a cancerous disease of the breast, and the efficacy of the iodide of arsenic, may prove worthy of your valuable columns and acceptable to the profession:—

M. H., ætat. 29, in the early part of November, 1838, presented herself to me with disease of the right breast; by her own account she had received a blow upon it from the clenched hand of a person in play, about eight or nine years ago, since which time she had occasionally experienced lancinating pains in it. Had been married nine years, but borne no children.

In the last two years the breast had increased much in size, and become very sensitive to the touch, and pressure of clothes. She felt several distinct swellings in the breast, accompanied by severe shooting pains, extending to the arm-pit, and down the corresponding arm, affecting her constitutionally, making her weak, and extremely uneasy in her mind. Had shown the breast to several medical gentlemen, who told her it was can-

cerous disease. Had been advised to go into the public hospital to have the breast removed.

The symptoms, on her presentation to me, were, sallow complexion, anxious countenance, much feverish heat, great sense of debility and declining strength, as though the constitution was giving way; loss of appetite, severe pains at the pit of the stomach, right breast much swollen, and tender to the touch; great increased heat, with several distinct internal tumours, varying from the size of a hazel-nut to that of a small walnut. The veins under the skin were knotty and thick, with a sensation of a stringy connection to the arm-pits, as though so many tense chords attached the swelled breast to the arm. The pain consisted of sharp lancinating throbs, shooting into the arm particularly, but affecting the chest generally; was a good deal subservient to the change of weather as respects pungency, but otherwise the pains were constant. Could not lie on her right side. The opposite breast was quite natural in size, appearance, and feel, but she occasionally experienced a lancinating pain in it, as though proceeding from the right breast.

I felt fully convinced that this was a case of cancer in an advanced state, and hesitated not a moment in placing her under the treatment of the iodide of arsenic, as recommended by Dr. A. T. Thomson, in his paper read at the Medical Section of the British Association of Newcastle, in August, 1838, and reported in *THE LANCET*.

She was kept under the treatment steadily for nearly eight months, with gradual and eventually a perfect disappearance of the tumours and an absence of all pain, with generally improved health and strength. In the beginning of June I considered her perfectly cured; she discontinued her medicine, and took leave of me. I saw her again a few days ago, it being two months since she had taken any medicine whatever; she then expressed herself free from all pain in the breast, and is enjoying a better state of health than she ever recollects to have done previous to the treatment.

I should observe that the dose of iodide of arsenic was an eighth of a grain, which was reduced to a twelfth, and gradually increased to a third of a grain, beyond which it could not be borne. However, in a case of inveterate common leprosy (*lepra vulgaris*) the same remedy was carried to the extent of one grain to the dose, with the most decided advantage and curative effects. Of this case I will forward to you at some future period an account, as also of a case, successfully treated, of extensive carcinomatous disease (open cancer), extending over the lower part of the abdomen (including part of the left iliac and inguinal regions); likewise a case of the removal of a large tumour with cyst of melanotic contents,

both by the agency of the chloride of zinc: I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

F. C. CRANE, M.D.

Canterbury, Aug. 21, 1839.

P. S. I have another case of cancerous tumours of the left arm-pit, in a patient ætat. 63, which is yielding rapidly to the effects of iodide of arsenic.

INQUESTS IN MIDDLESEX.

SUSPECTED INFANTICIDE.—THE SUSPICION NOT JUSTIFIED.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Owing to a report that Joseph William Johnson, an infant, aged two months and twenty-one days, came to his death by improper means, while his parents were in a state of intoxication, it was thought necessary to hold an inquest on the body, in order to elucidate the history of the case, and the real cause or causes of death. Pursuant to your order, I made a post-mortem examination of said body, which continued for nearly three hours, on the evening of the 13th inst, and now, at your request, I beg to forward the following particulars relating to the investigation.* I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS H. BURGESS, M.D.

23, Tavistock-place, Tavistock-square,
August 22, 1839.

History.—Mrs. Johnson deposed, that Joseph William, her thirteenth child, was attacked with whooping-cough five weeks after birth; the cough for the first fortnight was slight, and did not occasion any uneasiness; after this period the hoop peculiar to the disease appeared at intervals of considerable duration, for several successive days; at the end of which the cough became severe, the hoop loud and shrill, and the paroxysms intense. The child was subject to violent startings in his sleep, and frequent loud moanings. During the last fortnight of his existence the disease became greatly aggravated; the attacks were most frequent and severe between midnight and sunrise. He had usually no more than two "fits" in the day-time, but at least four or five between night and morning. If the child *cried*, while the mother was laying him on his back in the bed, a violent convulsive fit was sure to ensue. The body was thrown backwards, and became rigidly fixed; the eyes were turned upwards; the mouth frothed; the lips became purple; a blue rim appeared around the margin of the mouth; the fingers and thumbs were bent inwards towards the palms of the hands, and

* As I did not see the child before death, the *history* of the case is altogether derived from the mother's depositions.