Sydenham method of treatment, nor to the quality of the diet as an all-important element, permitting the safe use of opium which he advocates. If, as Mr. Banks says, Mr. Thomas did not claim originality, all I can say is that he has not claimed his due. I find on comparing their works that Sydenham taught that laudanum was essential, with control of diet; while Mr. Thomas teaches that the quality of the diet is all-important, and the sedative only supplementary.

Mr. Banks has stated his own views on the subject, and his faith in rest and opium is not too great to prevent him from saying that they "are mightily unsuccessful in really serious cases, however much they may do for those which would have got well under any treatment," which is tantamount to reducing the value of such treatment to a nonentity.

To sum the subject up, I contend that, until some authority has shown that before 1874 he has treated cases of obstruction according to the true Sydenham method *ab initio ad finem* without modification or addition, the credit of rejuvenating the true and original rest, opium, and starvation treatment is due to Mr. Thomas alone, and until the treatment he advocates has been faithfully tried by the profession it cannot be said to be the recognised treatment; and I challenge Mr. Banks, or anyone, to show the publication of any one case so treated from the time of the death of Sydenham to the first appearance of Mr. Thomas's work.

Let me say, in conclusion, that I am sorry Mr. Banks has taken such a personal view of the matter; I certainly never intended to hurt his feelings, although I fail to see with him that the fact of my being an old pupil of his should restrain me from entering a friendly protest on behalf of one whom, though not a fellow professor of Mr. Banks, I am proud to acknowledge as an old teacher.

Yours faithfully,

Liverpool, Jan. 5th, 1885.

CHARLES E. STEELE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Mr. Banks correctly informed you that at the discussion on Intestinal Obstruction I laid no claim to the discovery of the physiological method of treating such ailments. True as this may be, I had come to my present opinion, and carried it out in practice, many years before I was aware that Sydenham had in a very great measure anticipated me. It was only when the present Professor of Surgery induced me to publish my views that I found that Sydenham had anticipated me, and he alone. Between Sydenham and myself a void exists, and there are no records to fill the gap.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Nelson-street, Liverpool, Jan. 3rd, 1885.

H. O. THOMAS.

COCAINE AS A LOCAL ANÆSTHETIC.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following case may be interesting to some of your readers, as it illustrates the value of this new remedy. Having a fortnight since had occasion to divide the cervix uteri with Küchenmeister's scissors, in a woman with extremely sensitive vulva, and who refused to take an anæsthetic, I painted the entrance with a 10 per cent. solution of the hydrochlorate of cocaine five minutes before operating. It answered admirably, entirely removing the pain, and also completely relieved the spasm as much as if she were under chloroform, thus adding much to the ease of the operation.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

J. BRAXTON HICKS.

George-street, Hanover-square, W., January 2nd, 1885.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A man aged eighty, with an epithelioma of the lower lip, which had been increasing rapidly for a year, consulted me as to what it was and what must be done. I immediately told him that it must be removed; but on stethoscopic examination I found he had extensive cardiac disease. Not thinking him a fit subject for chloroform, I wanted to operate without its administration, but he objected. I then thought of giving cocaine a trial; and having explained to him what I should do, he readily consented. Yesterday, December 29th, he came to my house. Having injected hypodermically three minims of a 4 per cent. solution of hydrochlorate of cocaine on each

side of the epithelioma, I allowed six or seven minutes to elapse, when local anæsthesia was complete. With the assistance of my father I then operated, and during the time the man never flinched once. Afterwards on asking if he felt any pain, his answer was, "I hardly felt anything at all." He remained some little time, but we could not perceive any constitutional effects. On seeing him to-day he says he never felt better in his life, but about two hours after leaving my house yesterday he had pain for some time, which, however, passed away during the night. Had it not been for the solution of cocaine, this man would never have been operated on, and in a very short time he would have died. In cases of minor surgery when I have an opportunity of using the solution of cocaine I shall certainly do so; its simplicity and absence of risk over chloroform seem to me very great.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

LALANDE HAINS, L.R.C.P. & S. Ed.

Totnes, Dec. 30th, 1884.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Of the value of cocaine in operations on the eye, larynx, &c., there has been abundant evidence, but I have read little of its action upon the vaginal mucous tract, and of the help it gives in dealing with painful affections of that region, and therefore I think the case I am about to relate will prove of interest. A married lady has been under my care for some time suffering from chronic endometritis, with ulceration and erosion of the os uteri and a granular condition of the vaginal mucous membrane. Digital examination is simply agonising to her, and of late, in order to use the speculum for the purpose of cauterisation, &c., it has been necessary to put her under chloroform, as it was absolutely impossible to pass the speculum, the pain and vaginismus being so great. I determined to try the effect of cocaine in the form of suppository and in solution, prepared for me by Mr. Martindale. I passed a suppository containing one grain of the muriate of cocaine well up to the os; after five minutes I painted the vaginal orifice with a 4 per cent. solution of the same drug, and after another five minutes I proceeded to pass the speculum. The freedom with which I could do this was nothing short of marvellous, and what would previously have been unbearable was borne with comparative comfort. There was certainly a little pain felt, but even this I think at a future examination I shall obviate, (1) by waiting rather longer than ten minutes for the suppository to melt, as I found on introducing the speculum some of the suppository still unmelted, and (2) by using two suppositories instead of one, the tract of mucous membrane being so large. I think it very necessary to paint the vaginal orifice with the solution, in addition to using the suppository, as the vaginismus and the consequent opposition to the entrance of the speculum into the vagina are thereby done away with.—I remain, yours very truly,

Penryn, Cornwall, Jan. 6th, 1885.

JAMES BLAMEY.

THE PROPOSED NEW TEACHING UNIVERSITY FOR LONDON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read with much interest and no little anxiety all that has been written in THE LANCET with reference to the establishment of a teaching university in London. Sympathy with the object proposed, and desire for the success of the undertaking, are, I doubt not, common to all the members of the medical profession; and with regard to the faculties of arts and science, I have had the assurance from many quarters that there is a deep and widespread feeling that the regulations of the existing university are by no means adequate to the growing educational activity of the country. If I rightly understand the matter, the object, as far as medical degrees are concerned, is to compete with the vigorous and flourishing universities of Scotland. Now, in order to understand clearly the difficulties in the way of accomplishing this, and the dangers to be avoided, it would be well to inquire into the causes which have led to the large influx of medical students to the northern universities, and more especially to that of Edinburgh. As I am somewhat intimately acquainted with the regulations of the universities both of London and of Edinburgh, and as the directions published in the

calendars give a very imperfect idea of the working of these regulations, I propose to point out one or two differences which have, I think, conduced to the result referred to above.

First and foremost, there is the matriculation examination at the London University, which embraces a wide variety of subjects, and which is conducted on the all or none principle with the most charming impartiality. I have known candidates present themselves three or four times for this examination, and ultimately, while passing in those subjects in which they had failed before, fail in one or two of those in which they had previously satisfied the examiners; and the same has happened, even to a greater extent, in the science and arts departments. Now, at Edinburgh the medical preliminary examination can be taken one subject at a time, if the candidate so prefers; and provided he has passed in the subjects required for registration he can proceed to attend medical classes and pass at any time during his medical curriculum in those subjects required by the university over and above what are necessary for registration, it being always understood, of course, that he is not to be admitted to any professional examination until these additional subjects have been mastered. There is no doubt that many do pass in all the subjects at once, but a very large number do not, and the latter not unfrequently surpass the former in the ease with which they grasp and assimilate the purely professional parts of their course. The two kinds of study require mental endowments of two different kinds, and it not unfrequently happens that these are not combined in the same individual. A young friend of mine, who found the greatest difficulty in mastering the elements of mechanics, and who was nearly giving up the attempt in despair, shortly afterwards proved himself a sound anatomist and a brilliant dissector, and passed his professional examinations not only with credit, but also with distinction. While he had to do with abstractions relating to nothing in particular, his mind was shrouded in a mist which nothing could dispel; but when hand and eye and mind came to act together in the acquisition of knowledge, then he found that he was not quite the "duffer" which, in his dejection, he had often called himself.

At the preliminary scientific examination at the London University the papers in physics are the great stumbling-blocks to medical students, and most people who know anything of the requirements of medical study will admit that they are unnecessarily severe; and here also there is the same rigid adherence to the plan of plucking a candidate in all his subjects because he has proved himself weak in one. At Edinburgh the first professional examination embraces only botany, zoology, and chemistry; and at this examination, if a candidate, in the opinion of the examiners, has done well in two of these subjects, but has failed in the third, he is allowed to pass in the two and to take the third at another time. The same wise liberality prevails in dealing with the results of the second and final examinations. This liberality, so far from being favoured at the London University, is utterly discountenanced; and if the same want of adaptability to the requirements of different individuals is inaugurated in the proposed new university, it will, I fear, either prove a failure or simply lead to the growth of another Juggernaut like that in Burlington-gardens. This is why I have been watching the movement with anxiety as well as interest. In England we do not worship many things, but there is one thing to which we bow down with the blindest and most unreasoning adoration, and that one thing is the power of examinations to test the ability of candidates to do anything under the sun. I have passed eight examinations, and the only feeling I have now about them is one of deadly hatred, not to the examiners, but to the examinations themselves, feeling as I do that a good deal of the time spent in preparing for them might have been better employed. It is, perhaps, just that the University of London, accepting as it does candidates from all parts of the world, and relying on examination alone to test their fitness for degrees, should make its examinations stringent and inelastic. In a teaching university such stringency would be unnecessary, and the establishment of such a university in London on the liberal principles to which I have referred, although it might be long before it could successfully compete with the well-appointed laboratories and established reputation of the Edinburgh school, would in the end, I have no doubt, achieve a brilliant success. There would still be left to the

existing University of London the high function of conferring its degrees on all who might be able to pass its examinations, without any restrictions as to the place where candidates acquired the knowledge that enabled them to do so.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

WILLIAM J. NOTLEY, M.D., B.A. Lond.

Birmingham, Jan. 1885.

UNSOUND MEAT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As a contribution to the discussion in your journal between medical officers of health and veterinary surgeons, I beg to send you a newspaper with report of the case of prosecution for unsound meat, in which I was recently engaged. I may here mention a fact brought out in evidence which the report does not notice. The animal was carried to the shambles in a low cart. The presumption was that it was unable to walk, which was not denied. Notwithstanding the statements of the local veterinary surgeons that the lungs were not diseased, I cut out portions of lung with extensive deposit, which, along with portions of diseased liver, I forwarded to Dr. Littlejohn, medical officer of health, Edinburgh, and to Dr. Russell, medical officer of health, Glasgow. Dr. Littlejohn has since written me that both lungs and liver were extensively diseased, and that both he and his market inspectors had no hesitation in condemning the carcase as unfit for human food. Dr. Russell writes me that he likewise holds the same opinion. He had, however, submitted portions of diseased lung and liver to Mr. McCall, Principal, and Mr. Limont, Lecturer on Anatomy at the Veterinary College, Glasgow, for examination. After microscopic examination they pronounced the disease not tubercular, but lymphadenoma, and considered the flesh fit for human food, Mr. McCall remarking that if it had been tubercular he would have joined Dr. Russell in condemning it. The market inspectors and food inspector coinciding with the opinions of Messrs. McCall and Limont, the carcase, which had been forwarded to Glasgow, was allowed to be sold as wholesome food. In the newspaper report you will see that the local veterinary surgeons all considered the disease tubercular, but affirmed notwithstanding that the flesh was wholesome and fit for human food. I am glad to find such a high veterinary authority as Principal McCall holds a different opinion. Provost Doig, one of the judges, gave a most remarkable reason why he would not condemn the meat, which is not reported in the newspapers. He asserted that the local authority of the county were in the habit of killing animals suffering from pleuro-pneumonia, burying the lungs and other diseased parts, and forwarding the carcasses to be sold for human food. If such is the case (and he ought to know as he acted as assessor for the county), the sooner such practices are put a stop to the better.

This case, you will allow, has ended very unsatisfactorily, and might well deter medical officers of health from prosecuting similar cases. For this reason I am anxious that some definite opinion should be formed on the points raised—namely: 1st. Can the flesh of tubercular animals be considered as wholesome food, and allowed to be sold as such in the public markets? 2nd. Can the flesh of an animal suffering from general lymphadenoma be considered fit for human food? With all due deference to the opinions of Principal McCall and Mr. Limont, I cannot convince myself that the flesh of an animal suffering from a constitutional disease, such as lymphadenoma or tuberculosis, can be considered fit for human food, and consumed without danger to the health of persons consuming it. Trusting this communication may be the means of eliciting the opinions of medical men and veterinary surgeons on the questions raised,

I remain, Sir, yours sincerely,

WILLIAM F. MURRAY, M.D., &c.,

Medical Officer of Health to the Town of Forfar.

Forfar, Jan. 4th, 1885.

* * We have no hesitation in saying that the carcase of an animal which had suffered from tuberculosis was unfit for human food, because (1) there is little doubt that the malady comes under the class of specific diseases having for their essential pathology the development of micro-organisms—organisms which during their life processes generate poisons, not improbably of the nature of cadaveric