at once relieved from all his sufferings, and quickly recovered, without any interruption. Now, you will remark that the contents of the abscess, in the two last-mentioned cases, could not have been distinguished from each other, or from those following injuries of the rectum, where the intestinal matters might be supposed to have found egress; and I may add, that abscesses of a similar character are not unfrequently met with not only in the neck and neighbourhood of the anus, where no communication can be traced with the mucous surface, but in other parts of the body entirely beyond the reach of any such influence, as in the arm which you may recollect seeing lately. On the whole, therefore, it would appear that the irritation of the wound, independently of foreign matters being admitted, is sufficient to produce the effect in question. But, at all events, it must be admitted, that if an ulceration on the bowel were to allow the escape of its contents, the effect would be similar, and, if possible, still more serious.

Now the abscesses which, under all ordinary circumstances, occur at the verge of the anus, differ entirely from those which we have been considering. Instead of being large and diffused, they are small and circumscribed; instead of being preceded by intense inflammation, and attended with violent constitutional disturbance, they take place without either the one or the other of these conditions; instead of being rapidly they are slowly formed; and instead of dark-coloured fetid matter, they contain merely a little of what used to be called well-conditioned pus. It is such abscesses which lay the foundation of fistula in ano. When allowed to open spontaneously they almost invariably do so on the external surface—that is, through the skin; and if, when this has happened, or the contents have been evacuated by an incision, a finger is introduced into the rectum, while a probe is employed to explore the cavity formed by suppuration, it will be found that the mucous membrane, although to a considerable extent completely denuded, still remains entire. Sooner or later an aperture is formed by ulceration through this detached portion of the lining membrane, and then the fistula becomes complete or open on both the external and internal surface with which it is connected.

Then, as to the urethra, it has long been taught that abscesses connected with it in general proceed from ulceration of this membrane, allowing urine to escape into the cellular texture. But whenever urine can be positively ascertained thus to issue from its proper channel, the local and constitutional effects are so violent and characteristic as to prevent the possibility of overlooking them; while the abscesses that usually precede the formation of a fistula in perineo take place slowly and insidiously so as frequently to escape observation until they discharge their contents, which, in the first instance, are almost always simply purulent, the urine finding its way through them only by a secondary process of ulceration in the denuded mucous lining of the urethra, which, like that of the rectum, remains entire for a time. It is true that strictures frequently give rise to abscesses of the perinæum, but not by impeding the flow of urine so as to cause its extravasation, their real agency in producing this effect being through the excitement of irritation, which gradually leads to the result in question. Of this you have an excellent illustration in the case of T. F—, who was admitted on account of a very tight stricture, together with a swelling in the perinæum. I succeeded in passing a small bougie through the contracted part of the canal, and followed it up by others of a larger size, so as speedily to effect complete dilatation. While this was doing, the perineal tumour, which at first seemed about to open on the external surface, gradually diminished, and finally disappeared, which it certainly would not, and could not have done if dependent upon urinary extravasation.

I trust that these remarks will enable you to study with more interest and instruction the particular cases which I now, and may, have occasion to bring under your notice.

EXTRAORDINARY CHARGE OF MANSLAUGHTER AGAINST TWO ARMY SURGEONS.—Last week, Mr. G. Hills, coroner for the district, held an inquiry at Chatham on a private in the 38th Regiment, named William Stinson, who died from the effects of an over-dose of laudanum, administered in mistake for a dose of senna, while the deceased was under medical treatment. After a lengthened investigation, the jury came to the conclusion that the mistake was the result of carelessness on the part of the medical gentlemen concerned, and they accordingly recorded a verdict of "Manslaughter" against Augustus Frederick Turner, and Henry Bedwell, the hospital medical officers in charge.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

A NEW MODE OF USING THE COMMON TOURNIQUET.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you allow me, through the medium of your columns, to recommend to the profession a mode of applying the common, old-fashioned hemp tourniquet, by which, I conceive, the most serious objections to its use will be in no slight degree obviated. It is, then, simply by employing counter-pressure on the opposite surface of the limb, by means of a narrow strip of wood, placed transversely, so that the straps run across from end to end, thus increasing the surface, and removing pressure from some of the vessels. The short splint used for fracture of the forearm, suitably padded, will be found to answer; but should it be too wide, it can be readily split into halves.

I take the liberty of offering this hint to those who might not be in the habit of employing either Professor Skey's or Signorini's instruments. For my own part, I prefer manual pressure on the artery, either in the arm or thigh, and where the assistant is trustworthy, I think this plan is the best; but when the operator has to shift for himself with the old-fashioned apparatus, he may perhaps find my suggestion serviceable.

I beg to remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
Wells, Somerset, Feb. 1856. J. HAWKES.

OPERATIONS ON THE SHOULDER-JOINT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the discussion on the use of chloroform, at the Medical Society of London, on January 19th, I alluded to the success that had attended Baron Larrey in his operations upon the shoulder-joint, but I could not remember the proportionate number of deaths. As the discussion was renewed at the next meeting of the Society, you will, perhaps, allow me to give the particulars as quoted in an interesting memoir of this celebrated surgeon, published in THE LANCET, May, 1843.

"Before the French revolutionary wars, there were scarcely more than two or three examples of amputation at the shoulder-joint, an operation first performed by Ledran. This operation, however, Larrey boldly and repeatedly performed, and even extended, by removing large portions of the shoulder and scapula, and with such success that out of 111 cases, 97 were cured." Larrey, too, especially urged the importance of immediate amputation on the field, and adduced potent examples of its comparative success.

In the paper I read at the Society on the recorded deaths from chloroform (THE LANCET, July 4th, 1853), I stated my belief that the sudden deaths from this agent were unimportant as compared with those in which chloroform might ultimately destroy life by altering the constitution of the blood, and thereby (perhaps) increase the tendency to hæmorrhage, phlebitis, erysipelas, and other affections. I do not say that such is positively the case, for the evidence at present is imperfect and contradictory; but I say that these are matters that must hereafter seriously engage the attention of the profession.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,
Parliament-street, Feb. 1856. EDWARDS CRISP.

CHILD-BED SCARLET FEVER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The paper you did me the honour of publishing in your number of January 19th, on "Some Rare Cases in Midwifery Practice," if I may judge from several letters I have received from strangers, seems to have been received with satisfaction. I need hardly say that this is pleasing to me: and it, moreover, tends to show the value of a medical periodical like THE LANCET, first endowed with life by yourself, in raising a friendly intercommunication on scientific subjects, as well as by bringing us, although at a distance, into more immediate and kindly social intercourse, a desire you have ever manifested in your disinterested and philanthropic leaders to accomplish. Would that the whole body of

us could feel alike, and act upon the sterling and valuable advice you have lately given upon medical reform! we should then be firmer cemented in a unity of purpose which would redound to our credit and future prosperity. This is a time, above all others, that particularly requires such a feeling, as important measures for the health and well-being of our fellow-creatures are becoming actively developed, and a portentous crisis as to our *rights* is at hand, and may shortly be agitated in Parliament, and by other executive government officials.

I remain, your obedient servant,
Cambridge-terrace, Hyde-park, Jan. 28, 1856. W. H. BORHAM.

Medical News.

ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.—The anniversary meeting of this Society will be held at the Society's rooms on Saturday, March 1st, at eight o'clock in the evening, instead of in the afternoon, as in former years.

MEDICAL PRIZES.—The Gilbert Blane Prize Medals for the best reports of cases occurring on board any of Her Majesty's ships have just been awarded by the Presidents of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons and the Director-General of the Naval Medical Department, to Dr. William M'Kinlay, of H.M.S. *Cormorant*, 1850; Dr. George Mackay, of H.M.S. *Powerful*, 1851; Mr. James Salmon, of H.M.S. *Prince Regent*, 1852; and Mr. Robert T. C. Scott, of H.M.S. *Hastings*, 1853. These medals are of the value of ten guineas each, and are exquisitely executed by the late Signor Pistrucci; on the obverse is a striking likeness of the founder, with the following inscription:—"Gilbert Blane, Baronettus Archiaterus, æt. lxxxi." On the reverse is a representation of a wounded sailor falling into the arms of a messmate, and Britannia, looking mournfully on the occurrence, points to an altar on which are deposited the symbols of the healing art, with the inscription "Mente Manuque, founded M.D.CCC.XXX." On the legend is engraved the name of the fortunate recipient.

DR. SANDWITH.—It has been suggested, that the first to be decorated with the Victoria Cross should be Dr. Sandwith. The fact of Dr. Sandwith so eminently deserving the honour, his being the first to be decorated, would afford an excellent precedent for the award of these orders to medical officers.

A GOOD EXAMPLE.—We should be very glad to see the following plan adopted by our metropolitan magistrates, as it would be advantageous to many deserving medical charities. On Monday last, a charge of adulterating wheat flour with large quantities of alum, was preferred, at the Wakefield Court House, against Mr. Abraham Ginn, who carries on a large business as a flour dealer. Having been found guilty, the magistrates ordered seventeen sacks to be forfeited, and inflicted a fine of £10, the condemned flour to be sold for cattle, and the proceeds to be applied in equal proportions to the Wakefield Dispensary, the Clayton Hospital, and the Wakefield Soup Kitchen. The magistrates also ordered 40 other bags to be detained for further analysis. At Pontefract, also, Mr. Morritt being found guilty, had his flour condemned for cattle, and the fine, £30, was likewise distributed to the local charities.

PUBLIC BATHS AND WASH-HOUSES IN THE CITY.—Mr. Thomas Abraham has given notice of the following motion in the Court of Common Council:—"That the physical and moral condition of man is much influenced by cleanliness in his dwelling, person, and apparel; that the want of public baths and wash-houses is severely felt by the labouring classes; and that it be referred to the Coal and Corn and Finance Committee to consider and report to this Court the best means of supplying the want alluded to and the estimated cost thereof."

A LADY PHYSICIAN.—A lady, the daughter of the late Mr. Samuel Blackwell, of Bristol, has just completed her medical studies in Paris, and obtained a diploma to practise as a physician. She has a sister, who pursued her studies also in Paris, who is acting in a similar capacity in New York, under the title of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. The lady who has just obtained this honourable distinction is Dr. Emily Blackwell. Her studies have been principally directed to the diseases of women and children.—*Avertiser*.

ARMY SURGEONS AND THE ORDER OF THE BATH.—There are only seven army surgeons remaining who are officers of the Military Order of the Bath. One of the seven is a Knight Commander; the other six are Companions of the Order. The Knight Commander is Sir James M'Grigor, Bart., late Director-General. The six Companions are—Inspectors-General H. Franklin, Dr. French, Sir James Grant, Dr. Hume, Dr. Gunning, and Dr. Woolrich. They all served in the Peninsular campaigns, or at Waterloo. Sir James Grant was Chief of the Medical Department of the Duke of Wellington's army in the Waterloo campaigns.

DEPUTATION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL BOARD OF HEALTH.—A deputation from the Royal College of Surgeons had an interview, on Tuesday, with the Right Hon. W. Cowper, President of the General Board of Health, at his office, Whitehall. The deputation consisted of Mr. W. Lawrence, President, Mr. Benjamin Travers, and Mr. Edward Stanley, Vice-Presidents of the College.

THE MURDER OF MR. HOPE.—The convict, Thomas Jones, has been committed for "Wilful Murder." There appears no other motive for the deed than that we have reported, except that the prisoner had an idea that favouritism existed in favour of some of the men on the lower-deck not requiring treatment, to the exclusion of men like himself. He regretted not having had the opportunity of exterminating the whole of the medical officers of the ship. Two convicts stated that a better and kinder man than Dr. Hope never existed, one saying that he was more like a father than a doctor. The wound passed through the windpipe to the spine, and was made with a razor. The prisoner states that he was never searched.

SOUTHAMPTON.—Mr. P. Mackey, surgeon to the Southampton Workhouse, has applied for increase of salary on the ground of increased duties. The consideration of the application has been deferred till after Easter, at Mr. Mackey's request.

GENERAL MOURAVIEFF AND DR. SANDWITH.—The *Literary Gazette* observes that the testimony borne by Dr. Sandwith to the chivalrous generosity of General Mouravieff will strengthen the estimation in which he was already held in this country for other noble acts during the siege. "While the war continues there may be some delicacy in making public recognition of his conduct, but General Mouravieff has now the grateful respect of the English people, who would rejoice, if peace is concluded, to see him honoured by some mark of national approbation."

ST. MARK'S HOSPITAL FOR DISEASES OF THE RECTUM.—The annual general meeting of this institution was held this week, when it appeared that 652 patients had been treated during the year; and of these 345 were discharged cured; 218 materially relieved; 22 were deemed curable; 12 had been dismissed for irregular conduct, and 55 remained on the books.

HEALTH OF LONDON DURING THE WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH.—The mortality of London is much below the average; but catarrhal affections prevail, and three deaths from influenza have been recorded. 1036 deaths were registered in the week that ended on Saturday, the 16th instant, or 115 less in number than the deaths in the previous week. 481 children and young persons died under 20 years of age; 169 persons were of the age 20-40; 179 were of the age 40-60; 165 were 60-80; and 37 had passed the 80th year. The oldest person who died in the week was 93; she was the widow of a master leather-dresser in Dean-street, Soho, and died of bronchitis. 21 persons died of small-pox: 12 under 20 years of age; 8 of the age 20-40; and 1 of 40 and under 60. Five of the deaths from small-pox took place in the Woolwich Royal Ordnance Hospital. Two of the men had marks of cow-pox; two, it is said, died after vaccination. Hooping-cough was fatal to 62 children under 10 years of age. There was one death from simple cholera; 16 from diarrhoea; 56 from typhus. Typhus chiefly destroys men and women of the middle periods of life; thus only 10 of the above numbers were under 20 years of age, 17 were 20-40, 20 were 40-60, and 9 were 60-80. Consumption is still more fatal in the middle periods of life; 18 died of that disease under the age of 20, 66 at 20-40, 41 at 40-60, and 9 at 60-80. 28 persons died of apoplexy; 26 of paralysis; 167 of bronchitis, asthma, or pneumonia. The deaths of 29 persons who died violent deaths were registered; 10 died of burns and scalds, 3 of suffocation, 4 of drowning, 9 of fractures and injuries, 2 of wounds, and 1 from accidental injury.