the mother. He never heard of such a case, but it might be possible."

Now, knowing as I do by personal experience that the reports of scientific evidence in the daily papers are not always to be relied upon, I should not have ventured to take any notice of this matter had not the subject been deemed sufficiently important to merit discussion in the "Medical Annotations" of THE LANCET of last week, where I find the writer, in common with myself, had been struck with the importance of Dr. Letheby's assertion. Some I am aware are inclined to censure him for not having been more positive in his assertion regarding the possibility of an infant being poisoned through the medium of its mother's milk. His cautious reply, however, to my way of thinking, furnishes us with grounds for approval.

It is not until one has been himself placed in the position of an expert that he is fully able to appreciate the responsibility of the situation, and the necessity of cautious replies. The general public seem constantly to overlook the all-important fact that the reply of the medical witness, which acquits the accused of to-day, may be the very means of condemning the accused of the morrow.

The case I wish to record occurred some years ago in University College Hospital. One day, when going through the wards, I observed a child with peculiar facial twitchings, and, on closer inspection, found that it had also convulsive movements in other parts of its body, which a very simple investigation proved to be due to the action of strychnine. The mother, who was then suckling the child, was taking this substance in medicinal doses for an affection of the nervous system; and on inquiry I found that she had herself observed the twitchings in the child, but they had never presented themselves, she said, in so marked a manner until within an hour of my visit, which, as it turned out, was very shortly after she had taken her last dose of medicine.

On calling the attention of my colleague, under whose care the patient was, to the case, he immediately ordered the strychnine mixture to be discontinued, which was soon followed by the desired result, for within two days all symptoms of strychnine poisoning in the child had disappeared.

Now this case has two very important medico-legal bearings connected with it: 1st, as showing that the suckling infant may be poisoned by strychnine through the medium of maternal milk; and, 2ndly, the no less important one, that the child may present all the symptoms of strychnine poisoning, without the toxic agent having produced any of its physiological effects upon the mother; for, be it observed, in the instance here recorded, the mother, according to her own account, had not been in any way inconvenienced by the drug.

The latter fact, remarkable though it be, ought not, however, to surprise us, for experiments on animals have shown the much greater susceptibility of the young over the adult to the effects of strychnine poison. This, though sufficiently marked in warm-blooded animals, becomes still more apparent when cold-blooded ones, such as the frog, are experimented upon. As far back as thirteen years ago, in some papers on the physiological action of strychnine which I published in your journal,* it was shown that the young of frogs were so exceedingly susceptible to the action of strychnine, that $\frac{1}{180000}$ of a grain of the acetate, equal to $\frac{1}{180000}$ of a grain of the pure alkaloid, was sufficient to cause death.

To return to the case in point. Are we not justified in concluding, if a child can receive sufficient strychnine in its mother's milk to bring on tetanic spasms, in a case where the mother is taking medicinal doses so small that she herself remains physiologically unaffected by the drug, that in a case where the mother has taken sufficient to be poisoned, her offspring at the breast may die from the effects of the alkaloid, although she herself may recover?

In conclusion, I need only further remark that, in addition to the medico-legal points of interest presented to us in the foregoing case, there is yet another of no less *therapeutical* importance; for the case conclusively proves how a child at the breast may suffer from the poisonous effects of strychnine given medicinally to the mother, even in so small a quantity as not to affect her. The medical practi-

tioner will do well, therefore, to be cautious in the medicinal administration of strychnine to women during the period of lactation.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE HARLEY, M.D., F.R.S.,
Professor of Medical Jurisprudence in University
College, and Physician to University College
Hospital.

Harley-street, W., May 17th, 1869.

MR. SYME.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your voice is a very powerful one. Could it be lifted in a better cause than that of persuading her Majesty's Ministers to confer some titular honour on Mr. Syme?—perhaps of all living men the one who has done most for the science and the practice of surgery.

Such an honour would come with a peculiar grace now that the learned Professor is stricken by the hand of Providence; and I am well assured that the step would be hailed with acclamation by the profession, not only in Great Britain, but throughout the whole of Europe.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

South Petherton, May, 1869.

HUGH NORRIS.

THE GERMAN HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me to direct the attention of your readers to a collection of autographs and photographs which will be exhibited for sale at the bazaar to be held for the benefit of the German Hospital in London, at the Hanover-square Rooms, in the first week of June.

It is owing to the great interest manifested in the chief towns and universities of Germany for the above-mentioned institution, that I have been enabled to collect the autographs of about 700 German naturalists and physicians, distinguished by their researches in the various branches of natural philosophy and medicine. These autographs have been arranged in twenty-one different groups, as astronomy and mathematics, physics, geology, chemistry, zoology, anatomy, physiology, science and practice of medicine, &c.

The collection may be called unique of its kind, and I trust that the German Hospital will be benefited by its sale in a manner which will far surpass the expectations of those who have so liberally assisted me in this undertaking.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Bremen, May, 1869.

ED. LORENT, M.D.

P.S.—I venture to direct attention also to a little box containing small pieces of crystal for the polarisation of light, presented to the bazaar by an officer of a smelting-house.

PARIS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

DISTURBANCES AT THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.

DURING the last week considerable agitation has reigned among the students of the Faculty of Medicine. The immediate cause of this agitation is the great severity displayed by the Professor of Natural Philosophy towards two candidates who, being unsuccessful at their third examination for the Doctorate, that of the accessory sciences, were sent back for a period of six months—a fact which must cause considerable delay in the further prosecution of their studies. The whole body of the students manifested their displeasure by interrupting the Professor in the lectures which he delivered, or attempted to deliver, on the following days, and compelled him to retire from the lecture-room. The Dean of the Faculty and a few of the more popular Professors subsequently intervened, and it was only on their promise that the period of postponement should be shortened that the students assumed a more tranquil atti-

* THE LANCET, June 7th, 14th, and July 12th, 1856.

tude. This shows, in a most forcible manner, how necessary it is that the School of Medicine should have a separate body of Examiners, altogether independent of the Professors entrusted with the lecturing department. The inconveniences of the system now in force are so obvious that they are admitted by all parties.

This incident, however, is only an outbreak of the general hostility entertained by the students against the present curriculum, in which too excessive an importance is given to the accessory sciences—viz., chemistry, natural philosophy, and natural history. At the outset of their professional studies, and before being permitted to register as students of medicine, they must be possessed of the title of Bachelor of Sciences; and the examination for the bachelorship includes chemistry, natural philosophy, and natural history. During the following three years of study they must pass each year an examination applying to the several special branches which they are made to study during the year. The successful passing of each examination is destined to show that they have made proper use of their time, and allows them to proceed to the following branches of study. Now, the first of these three test-examinations again includes chemistry, natural philosophy, and natural history. After the successful passing of these three examinations a year elapses, during which the student "takes his four last inscriptions," and then he may go up for the different examinations which constitute the Doctorate proper, and which are five in number. The third of these examinations is again on the accessory sciences exclusively. The students complain that this is too much of a good thing. There is only one examination in therapeutics—only one examination at the bedside—whereas there are three examinations, on the whole, on the sciences which are called accessory. It is contended that this is attaching too excessive an importance to a certain department of the curriculum; and that, as the mass of students are destined to be, not scientific men, but medical practitioners, some provision should be made in view of the more necessary branches of practice. The worst of the thing is that the third examination in chemistry, &c., turns up just when the student has been devoting four or five years of his time to mastering all the difficulties of anatomy, physiology, pathology, and clinical medicine; and then, when he has forgotten all the purely technical details of the sister sciences, he finds himself obliged to leave aside medicine, and to set to preparing anew the sciences I have mentioned with their details, and specially in view of his examination. The consequence is that the students are far from being brilliant when they do go up; and the professors, being much disappointed, are naturally and justly inclined to be severe; while the students consider this portion of their studies as being a great and unnecessary bore. Instead of becoming alive to the importance of these studies, they are led to take a dislike to them, and to undervalue them. For my own part, I should say, let a scientific education be given, by all means, to medical men; but, as far as this applies to the Paris School of Medicine, would it not be better realised in the following manner? The students when they register have already been compelled to study the sciences in preparing their *baccalauréat*. Let them, then, devote the first year of their medical curriculum to the complete mastering of chemistry, natural philosophy, and natural history, thus laying a good scientific foundation for their subsequent professional studies; and, instead of intersecting their future examinations by again introducing an examination on the technicalities of chemistry, botany, &c., let them be interrogated only on the medical applications of these sciences, which may well be included in their purely professional examinations. Thus the examination on physiology would comprise biological chemistry and physics; while the examination on *materia medica*, pharmacy, medical jurisprudence, &c. (constituting the fourth for the doctorate) would include all the other practical applications of the accessory sciences.

I have entered into some details on account of the interest which at present attaches to all questions of medical education; and I hope they will not be unwelcome to my readers. I may just add that M. Dechambre, the editor of *La Gazette Hebdomadaire*, in an article written on the recent agitation of the students, states that the Dean of the Faculty, who is the Professor of Chemistry, is inclined to abolish the third examination in chemistry. I have been

told, however, that the reform now contemplated would be simply to change the order of this examination, by putting it at the head of the five examinations for the Doctorate, instead of between the second (pathology) and the fourth (*materia medica*, therapeutics, hygiene, &c.) This would be only displacing the difficulty. It may be argued that this examination, in the order it now occupies, might be strictly confined to the applications of the sciences to medicine; but in this case it would be a repetition of the examinations on physiology, and on *materia medica*, &c.

Paris, May 11th, 1869.

Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.—The following gentlemen, having passed their final examination for the diploma, were duly admitted Members of the College at a meeting of the Court of Examiners on the 18th inst.:—

Cotterill, Alfred, L.S.A., Brigg, Lincolnshire.
 *Elmes, William H., L.K. & Q.C.P. Ireland, Limerick.
 Evans, William H., Kensington.
 Fiske, John F., Lavenham, Suffolk.
 Harle, Ezra, Highbury.
 Hughes, John Rigby, Runcorn, Lancashire.
 Kidger, Alfred A., L.S.A., Ashby-de-la-Zouch.
 Lloyd, William H., L.S.A., Llangathen, Carmarthenshire.
 McBrien, William F., M.D. Toronto, Toronto.
 Peacan, Luke, Dublin.
 Terry, William F., M.D. New York, Exeter.
 Trezise, William R., St. Just, Cornwall.
 Willis, Julian, Kilburn.

* This gentleman passed in Surgery at a previous meeting, of the Court, and, having subsequently obtained a medical qualification, was admitted a member of the College.

Four candidates failed to satisfy the Court, and were referred for a period of six months' further professional study.

The lectures for the present year will be resumed on Wednesday, the 2nd of June next, by Professor F. Le Gros Clark, who will deliver on that day and succeeding Fridays, Mondays, and Wednesday, six lectures "On the Principles and Practice of Surgical Diagnosis, especially in relation to Shock and Visceral Lesions," in continuation of his subject of last year. Mr. J. W. Hulke will also deliver, on Thursday the 3rd, Tuesday the 8th, and Tuesday the 15th of June next, three lectures "On the Minute Anatomy of the Eye." These lectures will commence at 4 o'clock precisely each day.

APOTHECARIES' HALL.—The following gentlemen passed their examination in the Science and Practice of Medicine, and received certificates to practise, on May 13th:—

Barringer, Thomas Stevens Wright, St. John-street, E.C.
 Brooks, Samuel Brewer, Tillingham, Essex.
 Jukes, Andrew, Tiverton, Devon.
 Langford, Phineas Pitts, St. Mark's-square, N.W.
 Nelham, Ambrose, Chrisp-street, Poplar.

As Assistants in Compounding and Dispensing Medicines:—

Kite, John Cazenueve, Bedford.
 Whitby, John, Stratford-on-Avon.

The following gentlemen also on the same day passed their first examination:—

William Kelsey, London Hospital; Alfred John Kite, University College;
 Daniel Ernest Mills, Birmingham; Henry Williams, St. Thomas's.

AN outbreak of typhoid fever at Yokohama has led to the determination to erect a permanent building of considerable size for the reception of cases of infectious disease.

WORKSHOPS REGULATION ACT.—A draper and mercer in the Westminster-bridge-road has been fined £3 and costs for employing ten women "and one young person" in a workshop after four o'clock on a Saturday afternoon. Dr. Puckle, the Lambeth medical officer of health, prosecuted. The defence was that the persons so employed were occupied on piece work, and they were working in accordance with their own wish. The magistrate said the law took no cognisance of the wish of the parties employed; its provisions were absolute.

MR. WILLIAM HOPE, the well-known sewage farmer, has very recently read a paper before the Institution of Surveyors on "The Distribution and Agricultural Use of Town Sewage." Mr. Hope's paper contains a great deal of most useful information on this important subject.