action on the nerve endings in the lungs, which are paralysed before paralysis of the centres of respiration sets in.

I remain, Sirs, most faithfully yours,

C. RUATA,

July 2nd, 1890.

Prof. of Materia Medica to Perugia University.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Surgeon-Major Lawrie, in his interesting article published in THE LANCET of June 21st, evidently contends that the sudden fall in blood pressure during the administration of chloroform is invariably due to a condition of asphyxia, though he admits a gradual fall in blood pressure, unattended with danger, during the administration of this anæsthetic. I would call the attention of your readers to the fact that the condition which often ensues on the administration of chloroform is a condition of which the most apparent visible sign is pallor; asphyxia is not, however, accompanied with pallor, but with distension of systemic veins consequent on contraction of small arteries, and increase of arterial tension (blood pressure raised), which condition again is consequent on stimulation of the vaso-motor centre due to circulation of blood deficient in oxygen. Now, this sequence of events in asphyxia produces a visible condition of lividity quite different from the pallor which is the danger signal in chloroform administration. In fact, to recapitulate, we have in asphyxia increased blood pressure with lividity; in fatal chloroform narcosis we have the opposite condition—viz., diminished blood pressure with pallor. It appears to me the contention of Surgeon-Major Lawrie—that the danger is due to asphyxia, and not to the direct action of the chloroform vapour—is quite erroneous.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

JOHN HOPE POTTER.

Cullompton, Devon, June 30th, 1890.

TREATMENT OF OBSTRUCTIVE DYSMENORRHOEA.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. More Madden, in a clinical note under the above heading which appears in your issue of July 5th draws attention to a new instrument devised by him for “the rapid and permanent dilatation of the cervical canal in the treatment of stenosis.” Now, I am sure that the failure to relieve sterility and dysmenorrhœa due to stenosis constantly arises from dilatation only of the canal being carried out. In these cases all that is usually done is to dilate the cervical canal, when, owing to the nature of the uterine contractile tissue, it sooner or later returns to its condition of stricture. A method which is more surely to be followed by success is to combine the dilatation with a certain amount of tearing of the muscular fibres, so rendering the canal less liable to return to its constricted state. The best way of proceeding is to place the patient in the semi-prone position, introduce a Sims’ speculum (or my modification with a short blade), hook down the uterus, pass three or four graduated sounds—say, up to No. 11 or 12,—then with a small, straight knife make a *slight* bilateral incision up to and including the inner os, then introduce Sims’ uterine dilator (like a three-bladed glove-stretcher), and dilate with hand pressure until the fibres are felt to give way (the screw pressure should not be used, as a screw is insensate); after which see that a large sound (as No. 15) will pass easily; then introduce a straight glass stem, to be kept in for a few days. If it is thought undesirable to leave a stem in the cervical canal, a thick sound can be passed daily for a short time to prevent the canal from closing. This method, with proper precautions, I have found very successful.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, July 5th, 1890.

HEYWOOD SMITH.

THE REFORM OF OUR MEDICAL CHARITIES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It may interest those who are working on behalf of our valuable charities to know that the Medical Society of Victoria, Australia, has passed the following resolutions: “This Society is of opinion that (a) great imposition on the part of well-to-do people is practised at the public hospitals, which is contrary to the principle on which these

institutions were founded, and on which they should be conducted; (b) all hospitals receiving Government aid annually should be devoted solely to the treatment of the destitute poor; (c) paying patients should not be admitted into hospitals receiving Government aid granted for the benefit of the destitute poor; (d) a ‘wage limit’ should be fixed for all hospitals (i.e., all those earning more than a certain amount should be excluded); (e) the circumstances of each applicant for admission should be investigated by an officer of the hospital, appointed for the purpose, who should use wide discretionary power in special cases.”

I may just add that at the Royal Hospital, Belfast, and at the Southport Infirmary, the “wage limit” has been put into force. Glasgow and Liverpool have thrown open their Corporation Fever Hospitals for the instruction of students, while the Poor-law authorities at Belfast, recognising the vast mine of teaching material contained in their work-house infirmary, have opened this also for the use of students. Manchester, Chorley, Portsmouth, Stafford, Bristol, Coventry, Hull, Oldham, Preston, Warrington, Wigan, Salford, have all affixed a “wage limit,” and so the important question, For whose use do our medical charities exist? is being answered in a practical manner, and in a way which will soon restore the public confidence in hospital management and administration, and encourage them to give more liberally.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Liverpool, July, 1890.

ROBERT R. RENTOUL, M.D.

“HISTORY OF URIC ACID IN THE URINE.”

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Referring to Sir Wm. Roberts’s paper on the above subject, read before the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society on March 25th last, I notice that an interesting point arose as to the presence or absence of salt in the food of natives of Southern China. Dr. Jas. Johnson, in reply to Mr. Reginald Harrison, is reported to have said that there was a marked deficiency in the amount of salt in the food in Southern China (THE LANCET, March 29th, 1890, p. 704). I have practised for twelve years in “South China,” and been in intimate relation with the natives, but I am bound to say that I have never noticed or heard of the deficiency to which Dr. Johnson alludes. It is true that the production and sale of salt all over the empire is a strict Government monopoly, but I am not aware that anyone finds difficulty in procuring, at reasonable price, all they require. I may add that the consumption of salted fruits and other articles of diet is peculiarly common in South China. By “South China,” I should mention, is generally meant those provinces bordering on the sea, and which lie south of Shanghai; at least this is the sense in which the term is used by resident Westerners, though inquiries lead me to believe that, in so far as the question under discussion is concerned, what I now state will apply equally well to those inland parts coming under the designation in its full geographical sense. Save in Canton, where cases are very numerous, vesical calculi are wonderfully rare in China as a whole, and, as Dr. Dudgeon puts it, the conditions governing the prevalence of stone in China are in marked contrast to those observed in western countries. None of my colleagues, the surgeons to the Imperial Customs, mention in their various reports salt deficiency, although the food supply generally has been fully dealt with; I am led to think therefore that Dr. Johnson has been misinformed.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Takow, Formosa, May 10th, 1890.

W. WYKEHAM MYERS.

“THE VULGARISATION OF MEDICAL SCIENCE.”

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reference to your annotation (with the main principle of which I cordially agree) under this title, will you in fairness permit me briefly to point out: (1) That my paper in the *National Review* involves no pathological problem whatever, abstruse or otherwise; (2) that the very small modicum of technical pathology contained in my *Nineteenth Century* article—such as that instanced in your note—is introduced but incidentally, and that it could not well have been omitted without breaking the thread of the argument, which is here compelled

to sift those cases of malignant disease owing a recognised mechanical causation from the remainder, and also the relative proportion of the two sexes among cancer sufferers; (3) that the practical purpose subserved by such an essay (dealing mainly with general causes) is simply that elementary instruction in the general laws of health, which I imagine no medical scientist, however exclusive, would deny to the laity as their simple right, which it would be absurd to expect them to seek in the columns of medical journals, and from the utter want of which in this particular department of the *ars medica* (as I have had constant occasion for years past to notice) many valuable lives are annually sacrificed.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,
Gloucester-place, W., July 13th, 1890. HERBERT SNOW.

BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Ingleby Lectures.

THE Ingleby Lectures, two in number, were delivered this year by Mr. Whitcombe, the superintendent of the Borough Asylum, the subject being the Etiology and Prevention of Insanity in Females. The chair on each occasion was taken by the Dean of the Faculty of Queen's College, Professor Windle. Mr. Whitcombe stated in the course of his lectures that during the twenty years he had been connected with the asylum 2460 women suffering from insanity had been admitted into the institution, the causes on analysis being attributed to heredity, intemperance, and the vicissitudes of female life. As regards the popular estimation of religious excitement as a factor in insanity, he was inclined to believe that religion rather coloured the aberrations of a mind already disordered, than gave rise to them. The frequent association of heart disease with insanity was pointed out as being evidenced by 60 per cent. of the cases. Some interesting observations on prevention were made in the second lecture, and listened to by an appreciative audience.

Over-pressure in Infant Schools.

An inquest was lately held on a child seven years old, who had died of meningitis just after examination. The mother stated that the child was troubled because he could not do his sums, and that while he was delirious he had talked of hardly anything else. The medical witness could not say definitely that over-pressure had brought on the brain inflammation, although he believed that it might have such an effect. Under these circumstances, a verdict of death from natural causes was returned.

The Kyrle Society.

This Society has a Boys' Club and School of Handicraft which does a good work in the slums. Some forty or fifty boys, many of them derived from the roughest class, had attended during the winter months, and leather work and wood carving had been taught with much interest. It was proposed to establish a guild of handicraft, with classes for the teaching of carpentry, wood work, leather work, and brass work. A committee was formed for this object with every prospect of success.

Hospital Reform Inquiry.

Another stage has been reached in this inquiry. At a meeting held on the 2nd inst, his Honour Judge Chalmers in the chair, the replies were submitted to the questions addressed to the various hospitals. The committee decided that witnesses should be invited to attend the succeeding meetings to give evidence on the subject. The replies to the seventeen questions issued embrace a variety of interesting and useful information.

Birmingham, July 15th.

NORTHERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Newcastle and Gateshead.

THE Cathedral Nurse and Loan Society of Newcastle has held its annual meeting, and has, as before, presented a record of good work and satisfactory progress in all its branches, 1670 cases having been visited and 17,533 visits paid. The large amount of sickness in the spring of the present year has taxed the resources of the institution

and the health of the superintendent (Miss Coleman) and the staff of nurses severely, while ninety convalescents have been benefited by a stay of a few weeks at the Cottage Home at Shotley Bridge.

Manslaughter by a Parent.

At the summer assizes now going on, two prisoners were tried for the manslaughter of their infant son, aged two months. The evidence showed the most gross neglect on the part of the mother, the child at death only weighing four pounds and a half, the result of inattention and starvation, the wretched woman being given to drinking. The jury only took seven minutes to bring in their verdict of "Guilty" against the mother, and she was sentenced to five years' penal servitude. The male prisoner was found "Not guilty." The child was insured, but not having lived three months the policy becomes void. Yet some of our local papers write very severely on the fact of the agent of an insurance company calling weekly (this being given in evidence) and receiving payments on the life of this starving infant.

Sunderland: the Ryhope Accident.

The secretary of the Sunderland Infirmary has received a cheque for £250 from the directors of the North-Eastern Railway as a special donation to the funds, in consideration of the extra expense the institution was put to, and the additional labour and anxiety caused to the staff, by the cases arising out of the Ryhope accident. The directors have also tendered their thanks to the committee and staff for what was done by them in the matter.

New Baths at Gateshead.

The Corporation of Gateshead have erected most commodious new baths for the use of the public, including a swimming bath, 80ft. by 30ft. The baths are to be open at a very small charge, and boys under sixteen may use them for a penny. Most efficient means have been taken for the lighting, warming, and ventilation of these baths which are a credit to the town.

A Park for Stockton.

Stockton-on-Tees has at last acquired a public park. There has been much discussion in the Town Council about the propriety of purchasing some eligible fields for the purpose; but Mr. Ropner, a large ship-owner and ship-builder at Hartlepool and Stockton, has most generously stepped in, and offered to purchase the estate and present it to the town, at a cost of £8000.

West Hartlepool Hospital Sunday.

The Hospital Sunday demonstration at West Hartlepool in aid of the Hartlepool Hospital took an imposing form. About twenty-three orders of friendly societies were represented, forming a procession, with a dozen bands, of about a mile in length to the Armoury grounds, where two great meetings were held within and one without the grounds, while an overflow meeting was held in the Parade ground, attended by about 1000 persons.

Tees Port Sanitary Authority.

At the last meeting of the Tees Port Sanitary Authority reference was made to the receipt of a letter from the Local Government Board with regard to the outbreak of smallpox on the screw steamer *Romola*, which had been caused by a stowaway. The central authorities had been in communication with the Board of Trade, and they approved of the suggestion of the Tees Port Sanitary Authority that the law which now requires captains of vessels to enter in their logbook reports of sickness among the crew or passengers should be extended to stowaways, and intimated that when a fitting opportunity occurred steps would be taken to secure the necessary alteration of the Act.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, July 16th.

EDINBURGH.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

The Final Examinations at the University.

THESE examinations finished last week. Out of 303 candidates, only 143 have passed in all the subjects; some of those who have failed only in part have been granted a special examination in October.

The Second Professional Examination.

The written examination was held on Friday and Saturday, and the orals began on Monday.