was answered in the affirmative, and that, in consequence of a disturbance in one of the Borough schools, arising from an unwillingness on the part of the students to pay the disputed fee, the lecturer at that school proceeded to the Hall for instruction, and eventually compromised the difficulty by altering the diction of his prospectus.

Now, if pupils be burdened with the payment of a fee of three or four guineas *by mistake*, surely such a mistake should be corrected. Having received a verbal assurance from the Hall authorities to the effect that pupils on entering to their chemical lectures were entitled to instruction in practical chemistry, without the payment of any additional fee, I wished to have the same assurance *in writing*, that I might publish it for the benefit of parties concerned. Under this impression, and believing the course which I was pursuing to be such as would be acquiesced in by any party anxious to correct an error, I addressed a letter (dated Oct. 12) to the solicitor of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries. But I have received no answer, and such being the case, it only remains for me to afford that information on my own credit, which I hoped to have been able to transmit in the form of a letter written at the source of error. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN SCOFFERN.

10, President-street, West,
Nov. 17, 1838.

FURTHER TESTIMONY OF THE REMEDIAL
VALUE OF THE
CARBONATE OF SODA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In common with Dr. C. Selwyn and Mr. Carter, I hope you will allow me, in the next number of THE LANCET, to enter my caveat against the reception of M. Magendie's opinions with respect to the action of the carbonate of soda on the blood.

I have long prescribed it,—frequently in large doses; and without enumerating its very beneficial action in typhus fever, in dyspepsia, certain states of anemia, &c., I will content myself with pointing out its great value in the treatment of phthisis. Some of the numerous cases in which I have prescribed it are on record in my recently published work on consumption and scrofula; and, so far from its having caused liquefaction of the blood, infiltration of the lungs, or pneumonia, I think I have great reason to laud its tonic effects in removing crude tubercles, as well as in obviating that state of superabundant carbon in the blood, and that sluggish condition of it, which I believe to obtain in phthisis, in some of its stages, and the existence of which I have,

in that work, endeavoured to show. It has been especially useful in threatened cases of tubercular infiltration. It has not even appeared to increase the frequency of that intercurrent pneumonia which is so often observed to occur in phthisis, still less to give rise to it; indeed, my experience would incline me to support the very reverse propositions.

The direct injection of the carbonate of soda into the blood is one thing; but the introducing it into the stomach is another; and whether or not it there meets with free hydrochloric acid, or is otherwise changed, the ultimate effect, as regards the blood, must be very different from that of direct injection; at all events, similarity or identity of effect must not be hastily assumed.

The name of M. Magendie, as a physiologist, is so high, and some of his experiments are so brilliant, that every one who has experience ought the more readily to come forward to show any falsity in his facts or error in his theories, that may bear upon practice; and as I highly applaud his distinguished experimental efforts, this motive forms the best apology for this intrusion on your pages from, Sir, yours most obediently,

J. J. FURNIVALL, M.D.

Hertford, Nov. 18, 1838.

ON THE

DIVISION OF THE PROSTATE IN
LITHOTOMY.

By H. M. PHILLIPPS, Esq., Assistant-Surgeon to the Royal Cornwall Infirmary.

A SENSE of duty induces me to communicate to the profession, through THE LANCET, a fact of some practical importance, which I hope will tend to diminish the risk of life usually attending the lateral operation of lithotomy, the dangers to be apprehended from which are, hæmorrhage, puncture of the rectum, peritoneal inflammation, with purulent deposition about the neck of the bladder, and infiltration of urine with its consequences. All these may be avoided, I consider, by adopting the following *modification* of the operation, which I strenuously recommend to all operating surgeons:—

Having introduced a straight-grooved staff into the bladder, and having reached the membranous portion of the urethra, by the usual incisions on the left side of the perineum, I cut into the groove of the staff. The staff being still firmly held by an assistant, I introduce the nail of the forefinger of the left hand into the groove, then insert the point of the knife also into the groove, in advance of the finger, its flat surface resting on, and being parallel to, the plane of the nail. Both are then carried steadily onward, until the knife enters the

bladder, indicated by the gush of water. It is then withdrawn, and *the finger* alone is pushed firmly and fairly into the bladder. The forceps is then introduced, upon the finger (the best director in all operations), and the stone is embraced.

It will be seen that the principle acted upon here, is the same as that which proved so successful in the hands of Cheselden, and was so warmly commended by Sir Astley Cooper, namely, the partial separation of the upper from the lower portion of the prostate gland with the knife, completing the separation to the necessary extent without a cutting instrument. Cheselden used for this purpose the blunt curved gorget. I use *the finger*, and having tried this method on the adult, I have found no difficulty whatever in enlarging the opening sufficiently by simply protruding the finger into the bladder, which is accompanied with the sensation of a slight tearing.

The advantages of this mode of operating are, the certainty of avoiding hæmorrhage, or of puncturing the rectum, and the equal certainty of being able to make the opening into the bladder large enough to extract the stone, and no larger. I may add, that I never yet found any perineum too deep to prevent my enlarging the section of the prostate with the finger, and I am quite satisfied that any lithotomist who may adopt this method will not readily abandon it.

Truro, Nov. 22, 1838.

CHEMICAL EXAMINATION OF THE LIQUOR AMNII.

BY G. O. REES, M.D., F.G.S., &c.

THIS secretion has been examined by several continental chemists, with a great diversity of result, not only as to the quantities, but likewise the quality of its constituents. Buniva and Vauquelin make its specific gravity 1004; and its solid contents, 11 to 12 parts in 1000. Frommhertz's experiments differ from the late observations of Dr. Vogt, of Bern; who attempts to explain the discrepancy, by supposing that the fluid, as examined by Frommhertz, was not obtained pure.

In a Paper on Albuminous Fluids, by Dr. Bostock, published in the fourth volume of the "Medico-Chirurgical Transactions," the solid content of a specimen of liquor amnii is given as 16.6 in 1000 parts; which would make the specific gravity of the fluid to be about 1008.6. This observation is in close accordance with that of Dr. Rees; the four specimens which he examined vary-

ing in specific gravity between 1007 and 1008.6. The analyses were performed on specimens of liquor amnii with which no extraneous matter was admixed, the liquor being drawn off either by a canula or a female catheter.

C. W. has been delivered of three children. In the two first labours, the perforator was employed to effect delivery. The third labour was brought on at 7½ months; the child born dead. On examination, the brim and outlet of the pelvis were found to be contracted; labour was, therefore, induced at 7½ months, by passing a female catheter into the os uteri, and drawing off the liquor amnii. Labour pains came on twenty-four hours after the operation, and in forty-one hours a female child was born alive; it lived only half an hour.

EXAMINATION OF LIQUOR AMNII.

Strongly alkaline.—Sp. grav. 1008.6.
Contained in 1000 parts:

Water	983.4
Albumen (traces of fatty matter)	5.9
Albuminate of soda }	
Chloride of sodium }	6.1
Animal extractive soluble in water and alcohol, urea, chloride of so- dium	4.6
Traces of alkaline sulphate.	

The examination of a second specimen gave in 1000 parts:

Water	984.98
Albumen (traces of fatty matter)	1.80
Extract soluble in water—Salts, 2.80; Organic matter, principally albu- men, from albuminate of soda, 3.22, 6.02	
Extract soluble in water and alco- hol—Salts, 2.80; Organic matter, principally lactic acid and urea, 4.4	7.20

The third specimen examined was taken from the same patient as specimen 1. The liquor was abstracted in the same manner, and at the same period of utero-gestation (7½ months). The foetus was a female, and still-born. Contained in 1000 parts:

Water	986.8
Albumen (traces of fatty matter)	3.2
Aqueous extract—Salts, 3.2; Orga- nic matter, viz., albumen, from al- buminate of soda, 1.2	4.4
Alcoholic extract—Salts, 3.8; Orga- nic matter, viz., lactic acid and urea, 1.8	5.6

In the fourth specimen were:

Water	986.8
Albumen (traces of fatty matter) ..	2.4
Aqueous extract—Salts, 4.2; Or- ganic matter, viz., albumen, from albuminate of soda, 2.0	6.2
Alcoholic extract—Salts, 3.0; Orga- nic matter, viz., lactic acid, and urea, 1.6	4.6