element of scientific investigation, of which scepticism is the life and breath, without alarming those who, being theologically interested, look to faith as their polestar. Hence a polemical character is acquired, which deters sober investigators from looking into some very important phenomena of no small psychological interest. It must, however, be said that a distinction should in justice be made between abstract controversial discussion, and the physical examination of corporeal phenomena; and that nothing but good can come of the true interpretation of the symptoms observed. When we published, lately, such a brief analysis of certain indications of hysteria and high mental excitement accompanying the movement, and declared with candour that such phenomena could not be protracted or repeatedly induced in the same individual without probably leading to insanity in the end, this assertion was one evidently without any other than medical and physical significance. When, therefore, it was subjected to theological criticism, we thought it wise to abstain from any further discussion of a subject for which the material of observation was not immediately under our eyes. It is right to remark that the verification of these statements does not in any way touch the religious aspect of the revivals, since it is far from being shown that such bodily excitement is an essential ingredient in the movement. To men of reason, however, facts are always desirable. Hence we would refer to the recent statement of the correspondent of *The Times*, who says:—Taking the period between the 1st of June last and the present time, the numbers committed to the jails of Belfast, Downpatrick, and Monaghan amount to 45; while in 1858 they were only 22. Of this latter number, only one appeared to have had his mind overturned from religious causes; while in the cases occurring in 1859, the religious element largely predominates. Thus, of 19 committed to Belfast jail, no less than 13 were certified by the medical officer to have been insane on the subject of religion, and the remaining six might perhaps be traced to a similar cause.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

ON THE TREATMENT OF TETANUS BY WOURALI POISON.

[LETTER FROM PROFESSOR HARLEY.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In *THE LANCET* of Sept. 17th, I find it stated that—"M. Vella, of Turin, arguing from the fact shown by M. Bernard in 1850, that the woorara poison is a direct sedative of the motor nerves, undertook a series of experiments which clearly showed the antagonism between strychnine and woorara. Being appointed to the French Military Hospital at Turin during the late campaign, and seeing several cases of tetanus which had resisted opiates, ether, &c., M. Vella resolved to try woorara. The first trials were made upon two patients who had been suffering from tetanus for four and five days respectively, in consequence of gun-shot wounds. They were both in a semi-asphyxiated and desperate state. The woorara produced a general relaxation of the muscular system, whereupon the patients felt much relief; but they both died. The same treatment was, however, employed upon a third patient, who recovered. He was a sergeant, thirty-five years old, tetanic from a gun-shot wound of the foot. Two grains of woorara were dissolved in nine drachms of water, and compresses moistened with the solution were applied to the wound; the strength being gradually increased to fifteen grains in fourteen drachms of water. For the first four days the compresses were renewed every third hour; afterwards every fifth hour, up to the twelfth day, when the changes were reduced to three and two in the twenty-four hours. In twenty-two days the patient could leave his bed, and returned to France thirty-six days after the first application of the woorara."

You may, perhaps, remember that in 1856 I pointed out, in the pages of your journal,* the antagonistic action of wourali and strychnine—citing three experiments to show that these two substances have the power of reciprocally neutralizing the effects of each other, according as the one or the other poison is in excess. The conclusion I then drew from my experiments was, that wourali might be used as an antidote for strychnine. Since 1856 I have frequently repeated these experiments, and on several occasions have succeeded, my means of wourali, in saving the lives of animals to which I had administered strychnine in poisonous doses.

Two years ago, through the kindness of Professor Varnell, of the Royal Veterinary College, I had the opportunity of trying the effects of wourali on a horse labouring under a very severe attack of tetanus. Although I did not succeed in saving the life of this animal, I nevertheless saw enough to convince me of the value of the remedy. Indeed, I was so convinced of its beneficial effects that I would have tried it on a boy labouring under traumatic tetanus whom I shortly afterwards saw along with Dr. Madge, had the disease not yielded to other remedies.

Seeing the success that has attended the administration of wourali poison by M. Vella, and the results of my own experiments, I feel anxious that this substance should receive a fair trial at the hands of the profession. No doubt wourali is a dangerous poison, but in hands habituated to its use I believe it is not more to be feared than opium or any of the stronger drugs.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE HARLEY, M.D.

Harley-street, Cavendish-square, Sept. 1859.

LUNATICS IN THE WEST RIDING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to an article in *THE LANCET* of September 10th, p. 270, under the above heading; and as the remarks therein expressed might, without further explanation, be calculated to mislead the professional public with regard to the *present* condition and management of the West Riding Asylum, I beg, as one of the Visiting Magistrates of that institution, and as a member of the medical profession, to forward a few additional particulars, which are at your disposal for publication.

The Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy on the West Riding Asylum, quoted in their Thirteenth Annual Report to the Lord Chancellor just issued, and which forms the subject of animadversions in your article, refers to their visits to the institution in October, 1857, and March, 1858.

On those occasions the Commissioners condemned many of the regulations and arrangements, and made several suggestions, many of which were in accordance with the views of a majority of the Visiting Magistrates. On the death of the late Mr. Alderson, the present medical superintendent was appointed, and he entered on his duties in April, 1858. Since this period the Committee of Visitors, aided by his advice and experience, have sanctioned the carrying out of extensive structural improvements, and of important alterations in the general management, embracing an improvement of the dietary and clothing of the patients, the establishment of infirmaries for the sick and infirm, the addition of workshops, and facilities for a great increase in the amount of out-door exercise and employment; and the establishment of means for regular and systematic recreation and amusement. These alterations and improvements, when completed, are expected to have the effect of remedying the original defects in the building, and of raising the institution to the highest degree of efficiency.

The Commissioners in Lunacy, at their late visit in May last, recorded their signal approval of the changes already made, and their recommendation for the full development of the plans contemplated. (This report is not yet published.) In consequence of the asylum having been constructed upon a plan that was considered excellent in 1818, when restraint and mechanical contrivances of all kinds were regarded as necessary in the treatment of insanity, the "alterations" required to adapt the institution to the advances which have taken place in this department of medical science, are found to be very considerable, and to involve a large outlay and a considerable period of time. Many of the Visitors are, however, strongly impressed with the expediency of fully carrying them out.

They have the advantage of the services of the present medical superintendent, who has previously for five years suc-

* *THE LANCET*, vol. i. 1856, pp. 619, 647. Art., "Notes of Three Lectures on the Physiological Action of Strychnia."