the natural consequence of the previous excitement; for the patient often feels unusually well before the headache and spine-ache supervene.

The cold stage is followed by the hot stage, or the period of reaction, or the effort to expel the poison, which is lastly accomplished by the sweating stage. The question may be asked—If agues are produced by a poison, why are they periodic?

1st. Because the poison does not begin to operate till a sufficient quantity has been taken into the stomach.

2nd. Because all diseases affecting the nervous system observe more or less regular periods; or, in other words, it seems to be a law of the nervous system that its sufferings should be periodic.

The next question that may be asked is—What is the origin and nature of this poison? Is it a vegetable, animal, or mineral poison? Can it be detected by chemical analysis? Does it originate in the atmosphere, in the earth, or in the water?

The popular opinion, which is for the most part only an echo of a medical opinion, assigns its origin to an exhalation from the earth mixing with the air; hence the term *malaria*, which is in almost universal use, to designate the cause of intermittent and remittent fever. But if the term *malaria* were exchanged for the term of *malaqua*, it would be much more correct.

That malaqua, and not malaria, is the true cause of intermittent and remittent fever, is proved by the following facts:—

1st. That in all countries and localities where ague prevails, the water is impure, containing clay, and vegetable and animal matters in a state of decomposition.

2nd. That a change in the situation or locality generally soon effects a cure.

3rd. That a change in the water, whether by changing the position of the patient, or by the substitution of distilled water, or fresh rain water which has been boiled and filtered, for the ordinary water of the place, more speedily and effectually prevents the recurrence of the paroxysms even than change of position.

The cure of intermittent and remittent fever, therefore, consists simply in the substitution of distilled or rain water for the water which has been drunk during the previous paroxysms. So immediately is this effect produced, that, without medicine of any kind, I have seen an end put to the disease at once by merely changing the water.

To favour the operation of malaqua, as the cause of simple intermittent and remittent fever, all those circumstances which tend to lower the strength of the constitution, and to lessen the power of resistance, may be considered as predisposing causes; such as excessive evacuations, over-fatigue, watchfulness, intemperance, a cold, damp atmosphere, the want of proper nourishment and clothing, and the depressing passions. The prevention of ague consists in avoiding all these predisposing causes, as well as the proximate cause, *malaqua*.

London, September, 1844.

ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF INSECTS OR FOREIGN BODIES GAINING ADMISSION INTO THE AUDITORY PASSAGES, AND ON THE BEST MODES OF EXTRACTING THEM.

By W. WRIGHT, Esq., London.

THE case mentioned by Mr. Hatfield, in *THE LANCET* of April the 13th, as quoted by Sir B. Brodie, of a child in whose ear there was a pea, the attempts to remove which caused death, is by no means a singular unfortunate instance, and probably had not those attempts been made so injudiciously, the case would not have terminated fatally. I had under my care, in 1818, a young gentleman who had had a pea in his auditory passage four years and a half, which I extracted without pain. I gave the particulars of the treatment in several medical journals: he is now alive, and filling a responsible station abroad.

The case of the boy (see *LANCET*, No. 380, p. 380,) who died, after suffering great agony, through injury inflicted by the endeavours to extract the head of a nail from his left ear, which was not found during his life, or after the most rigid post-mortem examination, is interesting. In that instance, an efficient examination before the cutting and laceration began, would have probably saved the poor boy's life.

A girl, who died at a London hospital, from the operations for extracting a pebble from her ear, was destroyed by gross ignorance. I have pebbles, and even a small shell, which I removed from the ears of patients without pain or inconvenience. It is not necessary to mention more of those cases which have terminated fatally through the *maladroit* endeavours of well-intentioned but incompetent men. The proper method of examining the auditory passage is so little known, that I cannot

but commiserate the poor patients who are the subjects of examination by funnel-shaped spring forceps, as suggested by Kramer, and with equal stolidity imitated by other writers, some of whom give plates of this most absurd contrivance; whereas nothing is more simple or easy to the patient or practitioner than the examination of the ear, or the extraction of any substance from it. The syringe is, however, not always to be depended upon, even in the hands of the most competent operators: hence I use small steel hooks, with the handles marked, and these being passed down flatwise beyond the substance, and then turned, never fail of success; of course I have them of all sizes and shapes.

It is very injudicious to endeavour to remove any large live insect, because its struggles are so violent as to affect the brain, through the fibres of the portio dura becoming excited, and communicating that excitement to the base of the nerve. Want of attention to this caused the death of a boy in the Bristol Infirmary, several years ago; whereas had the ear been filled with oil, the insect would have been killed, and might easily have been removed. In the case of the man in Ireland, who had a horse-leech in his ear, and died an hour and a half after it was extracted, such a termination might have been prevented by either injecting salt and water, or sprinkling salt, into the ear.

Duke-street, St. James's.

MATICO SUCCESSFULLY USED IN HÆMORRHAGE FROM LEECH-BITES.

By WILLIAM ECCLES, Esq. Surgeon, London.

As the attention of the readers of *THE LANCET* has lately been drawn to the subject of hæmorrhage from leech-bites, I am led to trouble you with the following case, as illustrative of the astringent property of a plant which has but recently been introduced to the notice of the medical public.

I was called, a few months ago, to a very obstinate case of bleeding from leech-bites, and having read an advertisement, in the covers of your journal, lauding the efficacy of matico as a styptic, I immediately procured some from Mr. Keating's, of St. Paul's Church-yard, and used it in the manner recommended by Dr. Jeffrey, of Liverpool—namely, by placing a small piece upon the bleeding spot, taking care that the under surface of the leaf was applied to the bite, and pressing for a moment gently with the finger.

The effect was almost magical; the hæmorrhage—which was profuse, and had continued for eight hours—was completely arrested in a few seconds.

I have since used this remedy in several instances, and have always found it successful.

Old Broad-street, Nov. 11, 1844.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF QUACKERY IN PERTHSHIRE.

By J. THOMPSON, Esq. Surgeon, Aberfeldy.

As I consider it the duty of every member of the profession to endeavour to suppress every kind of quackery in medicine, I send to *THE LANCET* a few instances, out of many, for insertion in that valuable journal, as mere specimens, (should you think them of any service,) to induce some at least of your numerous readers in this kingdom to oppose with *unwonted* energies the greatly increasing evils of quackery, which is evidently treated with renewed respect and indulgence by the Scottish public, though at the expense of much misery thereby inflicted upon themselves.

I was requested to visit a young man, whom I found in the last stage of diseased liver, brought on by intemperance. When I first saw him, he was on his back in bed, in a profuse sweat, and in a state of great prostration of strength. He had been "vomiting a great deal of green stuff;" felt "great pain across his stomach;" pulse small and frequent; tongue loaded; eyes and skin of a dull yellow; urine resembled porter; bowels said to be regular from "physic he had taken." I prescribed some remedies, which "relieved him much," according to his mother's statement next day. The symptoms, however, soon returned with increased severity; when, from my repeated questioning if any previous treatment, or rather maltreatment, which I suspected, had been adopted, I was reluctantly informed that a noted quack residing in the neighbourhood had attended him for several days before I was sent for; "bled him," "put a blister on his breast," "given him some physic," and ordered his drink to consist of "whisky in water gruel;" and I discovered, by dint of inquiry, that the latter part of the prescription had been most perseveringly adopted—to the extent of half a quart of spirits a day, from the commencement of his illness until I saw him, and even afterwards,

in spite of all my remonstrances, until his death, which took place on the fourth day from my first visit, the bilious vomiting having continued throughout. I afterwards ascertained that a second medical man had been called in the day preceding his death, and that the quack had visited him regularly during my absence, and animadverted on my treatment; persuaded the patient's friends not to give him "the doctor's pills," (calomel and opium,) as "they were very dangerous," said the case was "nothing but jaundice," and "if it had been left to his sole treatment he would soon have cured it with a single bunch of herbs from the road-side," and that "the doctor's interference was the cause of his death;" adding, that "doctors cannot cure jaundice." The friends of the young man believed these arrogant assertions, and expressed their regret that they "had ever sent for the doctors." It is most humiliating and unjust that any medical man should be obliged, innocently, to bear the odium in such cases as this, and that no legal redress can be obtained against such ignorant pretenders; and it is still worse that the health and lives of the public should be left to the mercy of so many unqualified and unprincipled adventurers, who are allowed to *victimize* the pockets and persons of hundreds and thousands every year, to uphold the present abominable system of quackery.

The following are copies of the "*prescriptions*" and "*directions*" of another celebrated quack, of the name of Ferguson, who resides at or near Stirling: they are given *verbatim et literatim*, and I trust you will insert them, notwithstanding their length, as specimens of the literary knowledge and medical skill of Sir James Graham's future guardians of the public health, many of whom are already at work in this country, and, what is most surprising, are tamely submitted to by the profession in Scotland. No. 1, was given to the parents of a little boy, four years of age, who had carried him to Crieff, thirty miles from their home, to obtain "that skilful doctor's advice" for him: the father brought "the line" to me "to make up," but my remarks upon it soon convinced the dupe of that mountebank that "fools and their money are soon parted," and that the "medicines as prescribed," if given to the boy, would prove more injurious than the disease, which "the doctor had at once pronounced to be jaundice."

"No. 1, Antimonial wine 3i; give a half a tea spoonful of the wine every ten minutes till he throw then give warm water Profusely to carry it off & give a Dose of Senna Rhubarb & Black Shugar Boiled 6 hours after the vomit & give a Dose of salts and Senna or Senna & Black Shugar every Second night till he get, Better at the Same time give a Dram glassful of the Juice of Barr Berry Bark Boiled with water & treacle to sweeten it you can after four Days usng the Barr Berry give a Jalap Powder for Physic Still usng the Barr Berry Juice if he inclines to vomit after usng the above Some time give him another vomit & continue the other medenes as Prescribed above give light diet let him go about in the free air. When you se the Colour going away give up the Barr Berry Juice by Degrees. D. F. Give half a tea spoonful spirits niter into a little cold water at bed time every second night till the water Change."

A farm servant called upon me lately "for some medicines for his wife." From his statements I thought the case dyspepsia, and asked if he had already used any treatment. "Yes, she has got medicines from the doctor who comes to Crieff every month, but they made her worse instead of better," was the reply, at the same time pulling two parcels and an ounce phial out of his pockets, "and I have brought them with me to see what you think of them." One of the parcels contained about an ounce of "Gregory's mixture," the other two ounces "of wormwood," and the phial was about half full of tincture of digitalis!! the rest having been taken by the poor woman, who "always felt sick and faintish after taking it." No. 2 are the "directions."

No. 2.—"Take a tea spoonful of Gregory's mixture at bed time and take a dram glass of the herbs three times a day and take ten drops of the Bottle into a glass of cold water three times a day live on Milk diet as much as possible bathe the legs and Chest with Strong Whisky once a week. D. F."

No. 3, accompanied, as "directions," a parcel which a respectable woman residing in this neighbourhood obtained from the same source. Having been affected for a year or two with spinal irritation and hysteria, and hearing of the far-famed pretender, she also must needs consult him, and accordingly went to Crieff with her husband, last year, for that purpose, and returned with "an advice" and supply of "medicines," which were assiduously applied, not merely without benefit, but to the enduring detriment of her general health, her strength having been exhausted, and the original symptoms greatly aggravated, in consequence of the extensive blistering of her back—"Repeated" "on Wher every The Pain shifts to."

No 3.—"Put as much as you Can lift on a tea spoon of Dry Mustard into half a much can of Strong Whisky let it infuse 12

hours bath all whire you feell Pain twice a Day after two Days apply affly Blister over The Center of The Back or over whire you feell most Pain Keep The bowels open with a tea spoonfull gregorys mixture at bed time, & Drink a Cup of Camomil & worm wood tea twice a Day. Repeat The blister if necessary on wher every The Pain shifts to, still Bathing The legs & wher you feell Pain with the whisky and mustard twice a Day Keep The Body Dry and Warm. D. F."

A word or two regarding the history of "that famous doctor." It is said that, until a few years ago, he was a sawyer or common labourer, but "was *always skilled* in setting bones" and "curing various diseases;" so much so, that "several *ladies* subscribed and procured a fine house for him," "where he could be more conveniently consulted, and give his whole time and attention to those requiring his aid," and where "great numbers of people flock to him from all directions for his advice." "He kept no medicines at first, but gave advice and a line to a shop," "for which the common people paid 1s.," "and the better sort 2s. 6d." "Now he keeps medicines himself, especially those which cannot be got in any other place." By this system "he is making money fast," and has withal "a grand house, waiting-room, and consulting-room," "a sofa to place patients on when setting their bones," and a servant to attend and introduce, in turn, those who want his advice. Moreover he makes monthly professional visits to the towns and villages within thirty miles of his residence, remains for a few days, and on these occasions carries away "large sums of money," amounting sometimes, it is said, to "40l.," and yet "he was never at the college."

Quackery does not end with a few solitary instances, but exists throughout the length and breadth of the land, and goes on increasing every year in this country, and is suffered to advance, without let or hindrance. With abundant and multiplying evidences before us, then, of the sufferings inflicted and the lasting injuries entailed upon so many of our countrymen, through the malpractices of ignorant and presumptuous empyrics, well may we ask—Where is medical reform? Is it ever thought of by the profession in Scotland? Where are our medical councils and corporations hid; or are they conservative as to the present state of things? Great improvements have taken place in the *principles* of late; but away with the system which tolerates a degeneracy in the *practice* of medicine, and, alas! for the *interests* of the profession, in the nineteenth century, unless a *practical* and salutary change be speedily effected.

It was recommended, a century ago, to "let quackery alone, and it will die of itself." Has the experience of years realized that expectation? As well might we let any other nuisance alone, in order to its removal; or let garden-weeds alone, to prevent their growth. Quackery has been let alone, and it has gone on growing and luxuriating, and will continue to extend its ravages as long as deceivers and public gullibility exists. Hence the reasons why some more powerful checks and restraints ought to be resorted to by the civil magistrate, as in other cases of fraud, than have hitherto been adopted, and laid upon the one class in order to prevent their impositions upon the other.

I fear I have trespassed too much upon your valuable space; but as I wish the prosperity of our profession, I trust you will excuse me.

Aberfeldy, Perthshire, Oct. 17, 1844.

CHEMISTRY, PHARMACY, AND MATERIA MEDICA.

MAGNESIA.

M. MIALHE, in the "*Journal de Pharmacie*," June, 1844, has a paper on the different varieties of magnesia, which presents some points worthy of attention. Calcined magnesia is imported into France from this country, and the French practitioners find a very marked difference in the therapeutic effects of the imported and home-made magnesia, for which M. Mialhe undertakes to account. He says that the calcined magnesia which comes from London has been exposed, after calcination, either intentionally or accidentally, to a moist atmosphere, and has absorbed water to the extent of from 12 to 20 per cent. This he regards as an imperfect hydrate of magnesia. When the French calcined magnesia is made into a draught, it solidifies into a paste; the English remains permanently fluid. There is between the two magnesias the same difference as exists between lime spontaneously slaked in the air, and lime suddenly slaked by the affusion of water. The latter only is capable of forming a solid mortar, and is therefore exclusively employed in masonry.

There is a very close analogy between lime and magnesia; there is a caustic or quick magnesia, as there is a caustic or quick lime; and there is a slaked magnesia, as there is a slaked lime.