portant viscera to say, that the accumulation of blood therein, and consequent oppression, are the result of diminished nervous energy in the heart, which impairs its power to propel the blood into the arteries; in fact, that it arises from a passive state of the ventricles, and not from any "extraordinary rush" from the cavæ and pulmonary veins. I consider it very questionable where oxygenation of the blood is going on so imperfectly as is evident during the stage of collapse in cholera (or Indian asphyxy, as a better term) that we should be justified in taking away any material portion of that fluid from the only class of vessels which are distributing it in a life-sustaining form, and that, if we are to dissect for blood-vessels, it would be safer to open deep-seated veins than arteries of any description, not to say those of a larger size. Dr. Taylor seems to entertain no doubt of the practicability of opening the radial artery, but I must confess myself rather sceptical on this point, as one must suppose an extreme case to reduce us to the necessity of opening an artery, and, in extreme cases of cholera, all the writers I have consulted state, that there is little or no pulsation at the wrist, and of course the calibre of the artery must be reduced to a mere thread, and consequently very difficult of access. If you consider the above remarks worthy a place in your invaluable periodical, I shall feel obliged by your giving them an early insertion.* I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

SAMUEL MITCHELL, Surg.

Kingston, December, 1831.

P.S. As the remedy proposed by Dr. Taylor has more than pretensions to novelty, it would not tend to diminish the faith of your readers in the facts he alludes to, were he to favour the public with the cases in which his opening the radial artery has enabled him to succeed in removing "oppression," instead of merely saying, "its efficacy I have proved in my own practice."

RELIEF OF THE SPASMS IN THE CHOLERA. EFFLUVIUM OF BARK.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

Sir,—Permit me, through the medium of your Journal, to draw the attention of medical men to the use of frictions with tincture of opium, for the purpose of relieving those spasms in cholera which seem to be the chief cause of agony in this disease. I am subject to tonic spasms in the calves of my legs, which I believe arise from the

peculiar condition of my stomach; on one occasion, when that organ was more than usually deranged, they became excessively painful, and so impeded my power of locomotion, that I had great difficulty in getting across the room with the help of two sticks. This affection was completely removed by rubbing into my legs about four ounces of tincture of opium, surcharged, however, with double the usual quantity of that substance, and did not recur again, though the state of my stomach continued unaltered for a long time afterwards. I may observe, that I dare not take the smallest quantity of opium internally, from an idiosyncrasy in my constitution relative to it.

I cannot help thinking, that if the quantity of a quart of the hot supersaturated tincture of opium was well rubbed into a cholera patient, it would at least have the effect of making him die easy. It is moreover well known, that in many cases the stomach will retain nothing. I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES R. GORING, M.D.

P.S. I once read in a book of travels (the title of which has escaped my memory) that in some very aguish district of South America, where it chanced that a large magazine of cinchona was accumulated, the persons who inhabited the building were observed to enjoy a complete exemption from intermittent and remittent fever; the odour of the bark, it seems, was sufficient to protect them.

LETTER FROM MR. H. HOLMES, ON THE CASE OF WILLIAM SPROAT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As I am not at present a subscriber to THE LANCET, it was by chance that to-day I saw a report of the case of William Sproat in the Number for Jan. 14th, to which is appended your remark, that "the treatment does not appear to have been very vigorous." Now, when I look over the case as it appears in your Journal, I must confess that you have *reason* to come to such a conclusion. How you have obtained possession of the cholera cases, I do not know, but they are most inaccurately reported;* a more garbled and incorrect transcript of a case than that of William Sproat I never met with. In justice to myself, I have resolved to give you an outline of the treatment pursued in this, the *first* case of the present epidemic, as it

* This letter was mislaid, or it should have been inserted long since.—ED. L.

* The cases were taken verbatim from copy, for the inaccuracies of which the "transcriber" of the Central Board of Health was responsible.

will perhaps be some time before the work of Dr. Clanny on Cholera appears, in which will be found a correct account of all the circumstances relating to this disease, as far as Sunderland is concerned.

When I first saw my patient he was simply afflicted with diarrhoea and great irritability of the stomach, for which I prescribed the following:—

R. *Sodæ carbonat.*, ʒ iss;
Tr. opii, gtt. lx;
Aquæ puræ, ʒvj; M. ut fiat mistura;
 ʒj to be taken every hour and a half with lemon juice.

The next day he was better, and I gave him the *creta mixture with tinct. opii*, gtt. xl., ʒj to be taken every two hours. In the evening he had a bolus with calomel, gr. v, and opium, gr. ss, and on the following morning ʒss of castor oil. Under this treatment my patient was convalescent, and I have reason to believe he would have recovered but for his own imprudence.

The next morning, fifteen hours after the commencement of the attack of cholera, I was called to him, when I ordered him immediately *tinct. opii*, gtt. xi, and *pulv. opii*, gr. iss every two hours, brandy and wine *ad libitum*, a blister to the epigastrium (a mustard cataplasm to the abdomen was prescribed, but owing to the prejudices of his family, this was not applied), hot bricks to the soles of the feet, to be wrapped in warm blankets, and frictions to be diligently used to the cramped parts. Having continued these remedies for some time, I gave him an enema composed of *tinct. opii*, ʒ ij; starch, ʒ xij, which was repeated (as great benefit was derived from it) four hours afterwards. On the following morning he had *tinct. opii*, gtt. xl, in a glass of brandy; all the stimulants being continued; he also had a pill of calomel, gr. ij, and *pulv. opii*, gr. j, every three hours.

The case was seen by Dr. Clanny and Mr. Kill, surgeon of the 82d regiment now in our barracks, who had witnessed the cholera in the Mauritius, and neither of these gentlemen recommended a change of treatment in any particular. In conclusion, I may observe, that I visited my patient every two hours till his death; and nothing that I could suggest or procure to alleviate his sufferings did I allow to be wanted.

I have marked the omissions in the treatment as reported in THE LANCET in italics, and I confidently rely on your candour and love of justice for the insertion of this communication. I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY HOLMES.

82, High Street, Sunderland,
 Feb. 11th, 1832.

NON-MEDICAL CORONERS.

THE LIVERPOOL CORONERS OUTDONE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have copied the following from the *Liverpool Albion* newspaper of this day:

“**SUPPOSED SUICIDE**—About a month ago a young woman, about eighteen years of age, named Smith, who was servant to Mr. Nathan of Upper Newington, went to visit her mother, who lives in Primrose Hill, and did not return to her situation. Nothing was subsequently heard of her until Friday morning, when her body was found floating in the canal, near Lee's Bridge. As she had been for some time in a desponding state of mind, it is supposed that she must have drowned herself—(‘*chronicle*.) Mr. Nathan, in whose service the deceased had lived, has requested us to publish the following remarks on this case.”—*Albion*.

“The Inquest held on the body of Ann Smith at Kirkdale, has so far excited a suspicion in my mind that the evidence necessary on such an investigation was disregarded, that I am urged to offer one or two conjectures upon which that suspicion is founded. This girl had lived a servant in my house up to the period of her demise, when she disappeared in a most singular manner. Having been sent on an errand early in the evening, she was never heard of until she was picked up drowned at Kirkdale. An inquest was then held without the testimony of a physician or a surgeon, although apparent marks of strangulation appeared on her neck, and a wound on her head. The prominently legal question, where she lived last, was never asked, and on such information being offered to the coroner, it was disregarded. I feel it a duty to my conscience and the public to avail myself of the earliest opportunity to make this communication, which I trust will meet the eye of those authorities who are the legitimate guardians of the lives and property of the public.”

The coroner in this case, I am informed, advised the jury to return a verdict of “*found drowned*,” which was accordingly recorded, and that too after the examination of only one witness! The jury dispersed, and the coroner went home, in love probably with his conduct, having forsooth well and truly fulfilled the obligations of his office! What a wonderful man is an attorney!

The public is much indebted to Mr. Nathan. Were the ignorance and remissness of coroners, in every instance of their occurrence, so spiritedly and so properly exposed as in this case, a more rational mode of disposing of coronerships must inevitably follow. These appointments would then generally be filled, because indeed they could only be maintained by individuals who were fully competent to discharge the very responsible and all-important duties of the office. Amidst the monstrous blunders and ignorance exhibited in coroners' courts, the above, considered as an inquest, stands almost without a parallel. The body was found lifeless, certainly, and floating I am told on the waters of the canal, but whether death was caused by drowning, by hanging, or by a blow on the head, or on