cause a reflex in cases of gonorrhea," a "green light will cause a reflex in cases of liver or gallbladder trouble," while the color for carcinoma is orange red! During the height of the influenza epidemic White took a flier in nostrum exploitation, putting on the market "Valens Essential Oil Tablets," which were for "Gripping the Flu out of Influenza," and were also said greatly to benefit or cure incipient tuberculosis, hay-fever, asthma, and "catar" (White affects simplified spelling). The letters "F.S.Sc., Lond.," after Dr. White's name carry with them an air of erudition and mystery that is well worth what they cost. They mean "Fellow of the Incorporated Society of Science, Letters and Arts of London, Ltd." The "Fellowship" is held by not a few "patent medicine" exploiters in the United States. It costs one guinea!

Here, then, we have brief sketches of those individuals who were mainly instrumental in bringing into existence the "American Medical Liberty League." The facts brought out are sufficient to permit the physician and the intelligent layman properly to evaluate the activities of this organization, which professes to have for its main object the protection of the public. The "American Medical Liberty League," like its prototype, the "National League for Medical Freedom," will flare, sputter—and go out!

Correspondence

THE CASE OF WILLETTA HUGGINS

To the Editor:—Now that Professor Jastrow has so ably disposed of the case of Willetta Huggins by stating that the medical profession has the "will to believe," there remain a few other questions to be disposed of.

How does it happen that her case was diagnosed by the psychologic department of Wisconsin as "almost a moron"? Do any of the physicians who saw her in Chicago or Evanston think her a moron?

How does it happen that the psychologic department of Northwestern University has no instrument fine enough to determine her threshold of feeling?

How does it happen that she distinguished blue, yellow and green in a mixture of blue and yellow that to a normal eye appeared green only?

How does it happen that she distinguished between the streaks of pink and green feldspar? Her vision would seem to be abnormally acute instead of being, as every one admits, much below par since early childhood, if Professor Jastrow's explanation is correct.

If she distinguishes light rays of different wave length by the sense of smell, how can she be expected to distinguish between light rays in the dark where there are no light rays?

Lastly, has not Professor Jastrow heard how the psychologic department of Cornell, and the rest of the faculty for that matter, were so taken in by an exposition of Freud and his theories, given by an agricultural student who had not heard of Freud a week before, that they kept him talking an hour and answering questions for a longer time, and were so enthusiastic over his exposition that they had him repeat the lecture? It really seems as if the medical profession had no monopoly of "the will to believe."

G. W. Boor, M.D., Evanston, Ill.

THE DEATH OF JOHN SHELL

To the Editor:—Fakes die hard, especially a fake which a veracious press is interested in keeping alive. I exposed the John Shell "the oldest man in the world" fake, in a magazine article, in the New York Sun two years ago. I showed then, through the census records, that Shell was less than 100. According to these records, which I obtained through the courtesy of Hon. S. L. Rogers, director of the census,

Shell's age in 1860 was given as 37. In 1870 his age was 48. In 1880, 58; in 1890, 67. In 1900 his age was 78, his birthday being given as May, 1822. I visited him in November, 1919. At that time I tried to verify the age, and saw his oldest son, his great-grandson, his father-in-law, who was his nearest neighbor and knew him for more than fifty years, his lawyer of thirty years ago, an ex-judge who stopped at Shell's house in the early eighties, a physician who treated him the preceding winter, and the present circuit judge. All agreed that Shell was about 100. His son and great-grandson said he was less than 100. The details of the scheme by which the exploiters of the old man made several thousand dollars by exhibiting the senile dement as the oldest man in the world have no medical interest aside from the production of an obsession through suggestion.

I. L. NASCHER, M.D., New York.

DO AMERICAN INDIANS HAVE CANCER?

To the Editor:—In THE JOURNAL, July 8, Dr. Joseph Rilus Eastman discusses interestingly the subject of malignant growths. I wish, however, to comment on his statement that our American Indians do not have cancer. Here in the Southwest I have known fairly well one tribe of Indians. They number about 500. During my residence of three years among them, three full-blood Indian men died of cancer, respectively, of the lips and mouth, of the throat and of the penis. For the last eighteen months at Tucson I have had charge of another group of about 500 Indians. During this time one of them, a woman of pure Indian extraction, died of cancer which destroyed the right orbit and adjacent tissues. It seems to be the custom not to perform necropsies on Indians, and I believe that few, if any, have been performed. If any considerable number of necropsies were performed, perhaps there would be disclosed occasionally a deep seated cancer.

C. G. ANDREWS, M.D., Tucson, Ariz.

LETTER ON THE DEATH OF KEATS

To the Editor:—The following extract from the letter of Joseph Severn, dated Rome, Jan. 11, 1821, written in the sick-room of John Keats (whom Severn was nursing in his last illness) may prove of interest as showing how the Italian medical authorities viewed tuberculosis a hundred years ago:

News was brought me the other day that our gentle landlady had reported to the police that my friend was dying of consumption. Now their law is—that every individual thing, even to the paper on the walls in each room the patient has been in, shall, without reserve, be destroyed by fire, the loss to be made good by his friends. This startled me not a little, for in our sitting room where I wanted to bring him, there is property worth about £150, besides all our books, etc.—invaluable.

J. R. CLEMENS, M.D., St. Louis.

Mosquito Destruction by a Plant.—According to investigations carried out by Dr. Arturo Caballero, professor of botany in the University of Barcelona, in the summers of 1919-1920, *Stegomyia*, *Culex* and *Anopheles* larvae die in any water where the plant known as *Chara foetida* is found. The larvae die quicker if they are young and those fresh from the egg do not last over an hour. These laboratory experiments were later tried out in the field with the species *Chara foetida*, *Chara contraria* and *Chara hispida*. Caballero suggested at first that the larvae died because of the film formed on the surface of the water by the plant in question, but further experiments showed that they also died if the film was removed. He suggested, therefore, that the death of the larvae is produced by some toxic substance segregated by the *Chara* plants. The plant spreads rapidly in the water and seems to last indefinitely. Dr. Caballero has published several articles on this subject, one of them in the *Revista de Higiene y Tuberculosis*. One of his early papers was recently reprinted by the Mexican Health Department.