straight and narrow way to the laity without indicating for themselves the pathway that every reputable physician ought to take. The Association is a court of final appeal. . . . This is indeed a grave responsibility and invests the profession with a dignity that in certain instances amounts almost to sanctity. . . . The generality of physicians are high-minded men of conscientious sobriety, fidelity to duty and unremitting industry, and this is the type that is most largely represented in the membership of the American Medical Association.

Atlantic City Press, June 4: The American Medical Association has many active enemies. They are relentless in their anxiety to besmirch the name of the organization and falsify the underlying and fundamental motives of organization in medical circles. But the American Medical Association continues to grow and prosper just the same. Even if the Association had done nothing else but expose and eliminate medical quacks who prey on the ills and pocketbooks of the people, it must be admitted that it would accomplish much for humanity.

Wilkes-Barre (Pa.) Record, June 2: The annual convention of the American Medical Association at Atlantic City directs attention to a profession that has advanced more rapidly toward the ultimate goal than any other. Perfection in the healing art will perhaps never be attained, but when one compares the efficiency of medical and surgical treatment of the present with that of half a century ago, there is cause for profound satisfaction. The physician has come into a new sphere of usefulness as praiseworthy in a personal sense as it is beneficial to humanity. He makes his living from the physical distress of human beings, yet everywhere physicians are leading in the effort to control and eradicate disease, thus reducing the opportunities of professional employment. Preventive effort is enlisting the interest of the medical men almost as much as curative effort. . . . Along this line the work of the physician, unremunerative and self-sacrificing, is of the highest value.

New York Herald, June 6: The American Medical Association, the representative organization of the physicians of this country, is in session at Atlantic City. . . . The noteworthy feature of its program is the number of papers on the prevention of disease and on the care for the ailing poor. . . . It is interesting to realize that much of this discussion and consequent development of medical knowledge tends to lessen the number of patients and consequently to diminish the need for physicians' services. Physicians as a profession are actually engaged in minimizing their own usefulness—an example of unselfishness that may well be commended to the emulation of all the professions.

Chicago Journal, June 19: One of the striking and noteworthy features of the proceedings of the Atlantic City convention of the American Medical Association was the attention given to means of preventing disease and to methods of caring for the sick poor. . . . No other men in these modern days manifest so deep and well-directed an interest in the prevention of disease and physical suffering as the doctors. . . . Few persons outside of the profession have any adequate idea of the drafts made on the time and services of doctors for labor and skill for which they never receive any financial consideration. The charity work of physicians amounts to proportions simply enormous. In the great majority of cases they enter on that work with perfect understanding that they can have no expectation or hope of pay. To them it is especially and emphatically true that "the poor ye have always with you." . . . On the whole, medical men constitute a class worthy of special recognition and unmeasured tribute because of their interest in the very matters which must reduce their range of employment and their devotion to the care of the poor.

Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, June 5: The greatest movement the world has ever known toward saving workers of the country from disease and death from dangerous occupations was started toward assured success this morning by coalition of the Public Health Section of the American Medical Association and the American Association for Labor Legislation.

able to read there is little definite knowledge relative to the cause of deformities. The fact remains that prenatal influence has its advocates.

A recent experience has led me to favor the prenatal impression theory, and I give it to you for what it may be worth.

Both parents are healthy and have had very little sickness; their ages respectively are 35 and 32 years. The presentation and delivery were normal, but the child lacked both ears, only a roughening of the skin and a pin-point coveavity being present at the usual site. The inferior maxilla receded an inch and a half, missing the bite that distance. The tongue was bifid, the left portion being adherent to the buccal mucous membrane.

The only light I have to throw on the cause is that last May, 1911, the mother visited her mother, who had at that time a carcinoma of the face, the process extending almost entirely over one side and involving the ear.

The child at this time (June, 1912) is well and healthy, and apparently suffers no inconvenience other than inability to nurse satisfactorily.

J. C. ARNOUT, M.D., Downey, Ida.

An Antiseptic Thermometer Case

To the Editor:—The articles on thermometer disinfection by Drs. Beasley and Gres (THE JOURNAL, Oct. 21, 1911, p. 1357, and June 8, 1912, p. 1756) have been of much interest. Most of us would prefer a clean thermometer, if any, in our own mouths. And this is easily obtained by washing with plain water, immediately after use, to remove the saliva, and then dropping into an ordinary thermometer case filled with alcohol. The action of alcohol is positive, not irritating to the mouth and the device is handy. In regard to the bactericidal action of alcohol on moist organisms, Harrington reported (*Boston Med. and Surg. Jour.*, May 21, 1903) that 90 and 99 per cent. alcohol, i. e., "commercial," is effective against *Staphylococcus pyogenes aureus*, *B. typhosus*, *B. diphtheriae* and *B. coli communis* in five minutes. Few of us can make calls quicker than that.

L. B. REED, M.D., Plymouth, Mass.

The "Drs. Mixer" Fraud and Congressman Hamilton

To the Editor:—Under the head of "Current Comment," in an article called "Politics and Quackery," you use my name in commenting on the Mixer fraud order case by saying:

"At the time the Post-Office investigated this fraud C. W. Mixer called on his friend, Congressman E. L. Hamilton, to use what influence he could in preventing the postal authorities interfering with this lucrative but villainous business."

I write to request you to correct this misstatement, which I assume to be entirely unintentional.

Mr. Mixer resides in the district which I represent. A fraud order was issued against him and he came to Washington with his attorney to present his defense in the Post-Office Department. He and his attorney asked me to introduce them to Judge Goodwin, the Assistant Attorney General of the Post-Office Department. This I did.

After a hearing the fraud order was continued in force. I was performing only an ordinary act of courtesy in introducing him and his attorney, and was not called on in any way to pass on the merits of the case.

Men who know Mr. Mixer in the community where he lives speak in high terms of him.

E. L. HAMILTON,

Member of Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce.

Correspondence

Prenatal Impressions

To the Editor:—The reason for the absence of any of the extremities or parts of a newly born infant has for a long time been a matter of speculation, and from what I have been

[COMMENT: We are pleased to learn that the interpretation put on Mr. Hamilton's actions in the Mixer case, which was based on official reports, was erroneous and that he does not stand sponsor for Mixer's cruel fraud. The episode should make clear how undesirable it is for members of Congress to appear in their official capacity in cases of this sort. When the public reads in the official records of fraud orders that a certain congressman "made some remarks in behalf of the defendant" it is likely to place a sinister interpretation on

such reports. Mixer, it will be remembered, sold his worthless nostrums under the claim, inferentially made, that he was a physician. Mixer advertised that his father had been cured "over forty years ago and he has never suffered a day since." As Mixer, senior, had been dead for many years, the statement that he was not suffering, while technically correct, was inferentially misleading. In selling his cancer cure, Mixer published an article said to be a reprint "from one of the leading journals of the country." As a matter of fact, the article was written for and sold to Mixer for five or ten dollars, the arrangement being that he was to pay the money for a certain number of copies of the issue containing this write-up. Nor was the Post-Office fraud order the only evidence of Mixer's charlatanism. He was also prosecuted under the Food and Drugs Act and he pleaded guilty to the charge that his claims for the curative effects of his nostrums were false. Those of our readers who are interested in learning how big a fraud Mixer was, are referred to our pamphlet "Drs. Mixer."

As to the claim that Mixer is spoken of "in high terms" by those who live in the same community, the argument leaves us unimpressed. The same thing has been found true of most of the prosperous quacks whose business has been investigated. They make money easily; they spend it freely; they donate liberally to local enterprises; in most cases, they wield no small amount of political influence—in the Mixer case, to the extent of receiving an official appointment to a national convention. Unfortunately, to a large proportion of the public, wealth is a synonym for respectability, and a man's liberality with the money that he may have obtained ever so fraudulently is made to cover a multitude of sins.—Ed.]

Queries and Minor Notes

ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS will not be noticed. Every letter must contain the writer's name and address, but these will be omitted, on request.

MASCOT COPPER COMPANY

To the Editor:—Having read with interest your articles on Propaganda for Reform, I should be pleased to know if you could supply information on other lines. Could you inform me about the Mascot Copper Company? Their agents are particularly active among the profession at present. I. H. E., Chicago.

ANSWER.—The Mascot Copper Company was organized in June, 1907, under the laws of Arizona with a capitalization of \$10,000,000, of which \$1,000,000 is preferred stock and \$9,000,000 common. Its mines are said to be located on thirty-seven claims in Cochise County, Arizona.

The above information is taken from the "Copper Handbook" for 1911, which is said to be a reliable publication. The handbook further says:

"The mine has been estimated to have in sight 500,000 tons of ore, averaging 4.75 per cent. copper, 14 oz. silver and \$3.00 gold per ton, which figures are considered excessive. . . . The company has taken excursion parties of investors to its mines. The methods of promotion employed by this company are not liked and the claims of a large tonnage of rich ore developed would be more impressive if backed by more detailed figures. Is not regarded favorably."

Inquiry of a Chicago firm of stock-brokers elicits the following information: "We know of no market for the stock of this company, nor have we ever heard it mentioned as being in the class of a real investment stock."

SWIMMERS' CRAMP

To the Editor:—What is meant by the term "cramp" as popularly used relative to swimming persons? What are the causes of their production and in what way are they able to produce death? I am unable to find any explanation in what literature I have access to. I. G. W.

ANSWER.—"Cramp" is a name popularly applied to a painful spasm of a muscle or part of a muscle. Death from drowning, of course, is the result of the individual's inability to move his limbs properly. It has been suggested that the spasm of the muscle may be due to ischemia produced by the cold water and the exercise. Another explanation of many drownings on account of alleged cramps is that the person has what is called water-choke, a reflex spasm of the larynx caused by water accidentally entering between the true and the false vocal

cords, interfering with breathing, frightening the person and rendering him unable to call for assistance. As the choking person makes no outcry, it is not noticed by his companions, if he has any, that he is in distress. In case spasm attacks the swimmer's legs, the suggestion to sit in the water, making a "tub" as it is called, and supporting oneself by the use of the hands, is a good one. In view of the scanty literature on the subject and of the practical importance of the matter, especially as the swimming season is now at hand, we invite experiences or suggestions from our readers with reference to the nature of the affection and its prevention.

THE DIRECTORY: SHALL IT CONTAIN TWO ADDRESSES AND OFFICE HOURS?

To the Editor:—After a careful examination of the 1912 (third edition) Directory, I wish to compliment you on the publication of this exceedingly valuable and instructive book. In my opinion, however, there is one criticism that may be made—as many others have—namely, the bulky and unwieldy form. To remedy this objection I should suggest the elimination, in the fourth and succeeding editions, of (a) the residence address and (b) the office hours. These two items, recorded in the tabulation of each physician, add greatly to the space used, at the same time being of practically no value whatever in such a work. The first is of no value whatever; the second of very little. Sound the profession at large and see if the majority do not agree with these views. This letter is confidential. A. C.

[COMMENT.—While the above letter is confidential, we publish it for the reason that possibly others feel the same as does our correspondent. We shall be glad to hear from others on the subject.—Ed.]

ALBUMINURIA: A CASE FOR DIAGNOSIS

To the Editor:—I have a patient for whom I would like some suggestion as to treatment. He is white, aged 18, born of healthy parents. He had measles and diphtheria without complication several years ago. At present he is healthy, has a good appetite, and the excretions are normal in amount. About three months ago I made an examination for life-insurance and found the specific gravity of the urine 1020. The urine constantly shows albumin, except that it has been absent once from first urine in the morning. Very few casts (hyaline and fine granular). I tried him on the fluidextract ergot and alkaline waters about two months. I saw him again a few days ago. The pulse was 100 (previously 72), albumin was present and the specific gravity 1014. The patient smokes a great deal. The heart sounds are normal as well as the lungs. I gave him elix. buchu, juniper and potassium acetate and digitalis as an experiment. What would you advise doing with the patient? Please omit my name and address. X. Y. Z.

ANSWER.—Our first advice would be to make a diagnosis. It is not scientific to make therapeutic experiments, as our correspondent has done, until it is fairly well known what is the matter. It is in just such cases as this that drugs should not be given, unless to meet definite indications; faithful, earnest endeavors should first be made to arrive at the diagnosis. The main question that arises is, is there an organic affection of the kidney, or is the disease due to general conditions which affect the functions of that organ? One of the functional conditions that has attracted considerable attention is orthostatic albuminuria. In this condition the albumin is absent from the urine while the patient is in a recumbent position, but appears after rising. The statement that albumin has been absent once from the first urine in the morning would indicate the possibility that this condition is present. The urine should be repeatedly tested while the patient is in a recumbent position and if albumin is found only in the upright position we may assume that there is no organic disease of the kidneys. The occurrence of casts in the urine used to be taken as evidence of nephritis, but recent investigations have shown that they may occur in some normal cases. Their presence, however, if in any way constant, indicates an irritated condition of the kidneys and it must be admitted that casts and albumin usually justify the diagnosis of nephritis. In such cases the condition of the cardiovascular apparatus should be very carefully determined. The blood-pressure should be estimated and the attempt made to determine the functional power of the heart. Also the urine should be examined for indican, the presence of which may point to putrefactive processes in the intestines as the source of a toxemia which causes the albuminuria. If there is any indication of disease of the bladder it would be well also to examine that organ with the cystoscope, although this usually will not be necessary.

In case indican is found in the urine, a diet which will prevent putrefaction in the intestines should at once be instituted. Such a diet involves the exclusion of eggs and meat and the use of a considerable amount of carbohydrate food. Fortunately this is the diet that is advisable for most cases of nephritis. Other hygienic measures such as proper clothing, avoidance of colds, care of the skin, etc., which are calculated to shield the kidneys from irritation, should be carried out.