

gotten the important fact, that if a meat pie is made without a hole in the crust to let out certain emanations from the meat, colic, vomiting, and other symptoms of slight poisoning will occur. I have known of two instances of large parties being affected in this manner from eating meat pies that had no hole in them. I believe that many of the cases I have mentioned may be accounted for in this way; but by experiments upon the lower animals I hope soon to decide this matter.

I have in this treatise spoken of all the effects I believe produced by the poison of the lower animals upon the body of man, and I hazard the subjoined conclusions (I should have added besides those already recorded). The tables from which the conclusions are drawn consist of 5 cases of hornet sting, 5 of wasp sting, 6 of bee sting, 15 of scorpion sting, 16 of spider bite, 3 by leeches. 38 of viper bite, 61 of serpent bite (Asiatic and American); 15 of poisoning by cantharides, 5 by oysters, 27 by mussels, 21 by fish, 110 by glandered matter, 8 by blood and flesh, 11 by ammonia, and 7 by phosphorus. The cases of internal poisoning by meat (last recorded) not tabulated, nor are the bites of enraged animals and of the smaller insects.

Conclusions.

1. That nearly all animal poisons act first upon the blood, and secondly upon the nervous system.

2. That putrefactive exhalations from the bodies of the lower animals are not so injurious as is generally supposed.

3. That in wounds occasioned during the dissection and preparation of the lower animals, the effects are not so severe as in those received in the dissection of human bodies.

4. That in the mollusca, fishes, and in some animals of a higher grade, a poison is generated in the body of the animal (occasioned by food or locality) of the nature of which we are at present in entire ignorance.

5. That the effects of cantharides, phosphorus, and ammonia are inflammatory and irritant, besides the introduction into the system of a specific poison. (It should have been locally inflammatory and irritant.)

6. That in poisonous sausages, and in some other kinds of meat, the poison is generated in consequence of want of exposure to the air, and the confinement of a deleterious principle.

(In my next communication I will supply further evidence respecting the last conclusion, and report the result of the experiments alluded to.)

AFTER-DEATH TEMPERATURE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A very interesting communication from Dr. Maclean, in your last number, reminds me of a case that came under my observation some time ago. Edwin A—, storekeeper, of the Royal Mail Steamer *Clyde*, died on the 17th of October, 1853, at half past three A.M., of Chagres or Panama fever, as it is indifferently called. The death took place on board the ship whilst she was lying at Grey Town, on the Spanish Main, West Indies. He was under my professional care, and I was present at the moment of his dissolution, and for some time prior to it. I observed that the surface of the body was very hot, and this condition continued to increase till death took place. This was so marked, that I felt great curiosity as to what length of time must elapse before the body would cool, and I therefore frequently visited it at short intervals; but my surprise was very great when I perceived that, instead of cooling, the temperature continued very markedly to increase for the space of about three hours, when it had become excessive. Now, it will, doubtless, be expected that I should give some account of what the progressive temperatures were; but, unfortunately, I am unable to do this, for I had no thermometer, at that time, that could be used for such a purpose. I am prepared for the objection that, as I could only test with my hand, I might be mistaken; but this I am certain I was not, for the heightening temperature was too great to admit of fallacy, and the point obtained was greater than I had ever, till then, felt in an animal body. Having reached a maximum in about three hours, the cooling then commenced, and proceeded in the usual manner. This may probably be nothing new to some of your readers; it was so to me, at any rate, then, and I do not remember to have seen this phenomenon mentioned by any author that I have read. It is not, however, an unique case, for I have since found the same thing to occur after death in some cases of yellow fever, though, perhaps, less exaggerated; but still, unfortunately, without the presence of a proper thermometer. I afterwards provided myself

with a suitable instrument, and have since had many cases of yellow fever under my care; but, fortunately for the patients, my success in their treatment afforded me no opportunity of offering you a detailed record, and it is not very probable that I shall again come in contact with that formidable disease.

I remain, Sir, faithfully yours,

Kensington, Jan. 1863.

JNO. CHIPPENDALE, F.R.C.S.

REDUCTION OF STRANGULATED HERNIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—After having had recourse to the taxis, and every other means of reducing hernia, and failing, I procure a board, some five or six feet long and about fifteen inches wide, on which, when well padded with a folded blanket, pillows, &c., I place my patient, flex his knees over one end of the board, making fast (by means of a strap or handkerchief) the leg on the opposite side to which the rupture is situated. I then raise this end of the board gradually, to some considerable height, this position being maintained for some few minutes. In several instances I have found the tumour spontaneously disappear, from the force caused by the weight or retraction of the intestines; should this not occur, I have then recourse to further manipulation; and, as stated before, very, very seldom fail. When I have met with great difficulty, I have caused the board to be raised almost to the perpendicular, and really without much inconvenience to the patient.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

January, 1863.

A COUNTRY PRACTITIONER.

THE LATE DR. ROBERT KNOX.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Allow me to correct an error in THE LANCET of last week, respecting the date of marriage of the late celebrated Scottish anatomist, Dr. Robert Knox.

The Doctor's contract of marriage took place in 1824, not 1832. His beloved and eldest daughter, Mary, my late wife, was born in 1825. The Doctor never got over the shock of her melancholy death, four years ago, which seemed to have preyed very much on his mind and health. As expressed to Mr. Renshaw, his publisher, at the time, that he then, and only then, saw that he was mortal.

I assisted the Doctor in his Lectures on the Musical Illustrations of the Races of Men; and we had arranged to take a trip to America, to deliver these lectures, in 1850, but some unforeseen circumstances prevented the Doctor carrying out his plans. The Doctor leaves a son, aged twenty-four, and three grandchildren, to lament his death.

Trusting you will give this a place in your valuable journal, I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

W. SYME WILSON.

Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury, Jan. 1863.

OPIUM AN ANTIDOTE TO STRYCHNINE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If I am not communicating what is already known, you will, perhaps, publish the following remarks:—

As strychnine is so commonly used in Natal for the poisoning of wild animals, it frequently happens that our dogs, either from accident or design, get destroyed by this agent. Several months since a large dog of mine picked up some strychnine, and showed the usual and unmistakable symptoms of having taken a large and destructive dose—curving of the back, rigid extension of the limbs, &c. In order to save pain, and with a view to kill in an easier way, I immediately gave him a good dose of tincture of opium. I was surprised and gratified to find that the paroxysms appeared to subside. This encouraged me to give more opium; and in the whole he got about five drachms of the liquid opiate, seemed a little drowsy, was left to sleep, and found in an hour afterwards quite well.

Shortly after this another dog of mine was heard at night knocking himself violently about amongst buckets, boxes, &c. He was secured by the Kafirs, and being evidently suffering from the same active poison, I administered the like remedy to him. In this case there was more difficulty to get the animal to swallow the opium; but sufficient was from time to time got down his throat, and after four hours of dreadful suffering he likewise recovered.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JAMES W. WINTER, M.R.C.V.S. Lond.

Pietermaritzburg, Natal, Oct. 1862.