

sub judice—namely, the identity of parasitic fungi, Dr. Lowe's observations being altogether passed by unnoticed.

Dr. Anderson's book belongs to the catalogue of compilations—not originalities; and I would call attention to the fact, that Bazin's view (that herpes circinatus, herpes or tinea tonsurans, and sycosis, are but varieties of one affection—*vide* "Leçons sur les Affections Cutanées Parasitaires") has been adopted without acknowledgment.

Dr. Anderson, too, fails to touch the question—What is the real parasitic disease? Is it that of the hairs and epithelium, or an eruptive one? Nothing but a parasite can produce the changes which we meet with in the hairs of tinea; whereas any irritant may give rise to eruption.

Surely when such an authority as Mr. Berkeley accepts the doctrine of identity, it ought not to be disregarded by other writers.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

WM. TILBURY FOX, M.D. Lond.

Kensington-gardens-square, Nov. 1861.

DUGONG OIL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Many members of my profession and others in the United Kingdom have been anxiously awaiting information from me relative to importation of the above oil. I am now in a position to state that a small case, the first exported from Ceylon, has arrived, and of decidedly superior quality to Australian dugong oil.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Colonies, has afforded me assistance in prosecuting the fishing for the dugong at Ceylon, and my agent promises continuous and large quantities at a reasonable price. In the course of a few months I shall notify to the public, through proper agents, when and where the pure oil may be obtained and "relied on," as spurious specimens have already found their way here.

I will take a future opportunity of describing the dugong, the nature of the oil, and its efficacy; also the various localities of the world where the animal may be discovered in large numbers, and when "whalers" would profit by taking them. The oil is unmistakably superior to cod-liver oil in its results, being also comparatively tasteless and inodorous.

Being the first person to bring the dugong oil into notice and use in this country for consumptive cases, I shall feel it my duty to exhibit the same, with other valuable products of Ceylon, at the Exhibition of 1862.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

J. M'GRIGOR CROFT, M.D.,

Late Her Majesty's Ceylon Rifles, and Staff Surgeon.

Mandarin Villa, St. John's-wood, Nov. 1861.

THE MEDICAL ASSISTANTS' BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Through the kindness of a friend in town, I have been supplied with a copy of the registered rules of the above Association; and allow me to say that I think these rules are eminently calculated to carry out the laudable objects for which the Association was originated. As one who has encountered and passed through not a few of the difficulties which beset medical assistants, I look upon the formation of this Society as a step in the right direction, and as a probable means of removing many of these difficulties, and of raising their self-respect and position in society. But it is evident that, if the Association is to succeed in a degree commensurate with the wants for the supply of which it was established, the basis for its operations should be as extended as practicable, so as to bear upon and draw into its membership a fair proportion of the assistants throughout the provinces. I think the experience of all mutual benefit societies will bear me out in the propriety of suggesting the speedy formation of local committees in most of the large towns, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Newcastle, &c., to co-operate with the executive council in London, and to generally further and promote the prosperity and stability of the Association.

I hope I have not occupied your space unprofitably in making this suggestion, or in calling upon my brother practitioners to encourage this Association, which must tend to their supply with sober, provident, and gentlemanly assistants; and wishing the infant Association may soon progress to lusty youth and vigorous manhood,

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Newcastle-on-Tyne, Nov. 1861.

A SURGEON.

THE SANITARY STATE OF WINCHESTER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—“The Groans of Brighton” have reached us, and as certainly will the wails of Winchester be heard, unless effective action be taken, and at once, to remedy the evils which have now for some time been loudly complained of. I have forwarded you some local papers, which will make you acquainted with its defective sanitary arrangements. The district I believe naturally healthy, but certain soon to rank as one of our insalubrious localities through the ignorance and stolidity of its inhabitants, unless quickly roused to action. Report states that low fever, and other diseases dependent on poisoned blood, are rife in the place—so much so that a strong agitation is afloat favouring the necessity of pulling down and removing the hospital from its present low and populous site. If bad for the hospital, surely it cannot be otherwise than bad for the poor inhabitants.

Nothing but hard hitting and home thrusts seem to move people on the question of health. I am afraid that Winchester is but an ordinary specimen of a large proportion of our towns, which, as a rule, can only be induced to carry out correct principles when influenced by the alarm of some dire calamity.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Southampton, Nov. 1861.

EDWIN HEARNE, M.B. Lond.

PARISIAN MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

THE winter session of the Paris Faculty of Medicine opened on Friday last. The event, as was also the case last year, was inaugurated by an introductory discourse embodying an *éloge*—on this occasion that of M. Duméril, who for the space of fifty-nine years had occupied one or other of the professorial chairs in connexion with this school. M. Moquin-Tandon, on whom the office of panegyrist devolved, acquitted himself with skill and honour, contriving, without either suppression or exaggeration, to tell the truth and yet satisfy everybody. Few tasks are more difficult than such retrospects, in which the one essential condition is “*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*.” To shed the softening influence of a Claude Lorraine glass over a page of the *Biographie des Contemporains*, or to intone an “*in memoriam*,” exaggerating qualities, merits, and virtues, in a *crescendo* which culminates in apotheosis, are alternatives equally erroneous—the one falling beside, the other beyond, the mark of credibility. To give more than a bare outline of M. Moquin-Tandon's discourse would be to ask you for as many pages as you will allow me lines, so I will endeavour to furnish your readers with a reproduction of the smallest possible size.

André Marie Constance Duméril was born at Amiens on the 1st of January, 1774, his father being judge at the tribunal of that town. At a very early age he evinced a decided taste for the natural sciences, and more especially for botany and entomology. As the *res angusta domi*, however, did not permit the exclusive cultivation of either branch, he was sent to Rouen (and bound apprentice, no doubt), to a druggist of that town. His master being a somewhat scientific man, encouraged his pupil's desire for knowledge, procured him books, and otherwise facilitated his studies; so much so, indeed, that young Duméril presently carried off the botanical prize given by the Rouen Academy of Sciences. He subsequently studied anatomy under Laumonier in that town, and became “*prévot*” of anatomy and house-surgeon at the local infirmary, obtaining considerable success, in spite of his extreme youth, by his method of demonstration. In 1795, he was nominated by his native district to a foundation scholarship (or something like it) in the Paris school of medicine, and consequently quitted home for the great capital. Here, after the lapse of a twelve-month, he obtained the office of Prosector of Anatomy; and later still, the higher office—that of Demonstrator—falling vacant, Duméril offered himself as a candidate, and, in a contest in which he was successful, defeated no less a rival competitor than Dupuytren. His subsequent rise was rapid. After assisting Cuvier in the arrangement and publication of the first two volumes of his “*Anatomie Comparée*,” he was named Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the Faculty of Medicine, on this occasion again defeating his former opponent. In 1818, seventeen years afterwards, he was translated to the chair of