

those medical men who have given it a fair trial should send you the results of their practice, to be arranged statistically afterwards, according as they have been successful or otherwise. I myself have employed it in four cases, in three of which it was eminently advantageous. In two instances, which were very severe, relapses afterwards occurred, but the patients ultimately recovered? In the fourth case, that of an old lady in collapse, the disease occurring after occasional diarrhoea for three weeks, I have reason to believe the calomel was not exhibited according to my directions; that is to say, it was not given every ten minutes. I prefer prescribing it in the form of powder, as there must be greater difficulty in swallowing a pill during the stage of collapse, or while the patient is writhing under severe general spasm, than in having a powder dropped into the mouth. Many persons cannot take a pill, even when in the enjoyment of good health; with them the taking a calomel pill every ten minutes would amount to an impossibility. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Tavistock-street, Covent-garden,
Oct. 1849.

JOHN FOOTE, M.R.C.S.L.

** We should be glad to find the members of the profession ready to furnish reports of all the cases of cholera attended by each of them, with the results following their different methods of treatment; but we must suggest to our correspondent, that the subsequent classification of these results would be a duty far too laborious for us to attempt. The Board of Health might properly undertake the task, and employ clerks for the purpose, who ought to be young men of the medical profession not yet in practice. Their labours would not be very difficult if practitioners recorded their cases on an uniform plan. A registrar for cholera cases was published last year by Mr. Smith, of Long-acre, and noticed at the time in THE LANCET, which would answer the purpose of registration on an uniform method. That case-book, indeed, admits of material improvement; meanwhile, until superseded by a better and more practical form of registry, it might be used with advantage.—Ed. L.

TREATMENT OF CHOLERA IN INDIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have just received the enclosed from India. The author is unknown to me; but as he wishes to make his supposed discovery as public as possible, I send it to you for insertion in THE LANCET, if you deem it worthy of a place in that journal.

Sackville-street, Oct. 1849.

Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM PROUT.

SIR,—I do myself the pleasure to communicate to you the important fact (in which you will rejoice)—viz., that the carbonate of soda is a speedy and effectual antidote to the poison of cholera. I have just ascertained this in the treatment of cholera here. I give a teaspoonful of it the moment a patient is brought to me, in a cup of very hot gruel or water. It relieves the pain and burning of stomach and bowels, produces sleep, and restores the pulse and heat in a very short space of time. If it should be vomited, I immediately repeat it with a little laudanum, and a full dose of oil, so as that it shall pass speedily down to the small intestines, where the bulk of the poison appears to rest.

When any portion of the oil is passed in the motion, convalescence will already have commenced, and the patient will presently pass urine, and be then out of all danger. I repeat smaller doses morning and evening for a day or so, if necessary.

When great numbers are attacked at the same time, I used boluses of carbonate of soda, twenty grains; gamboge, five to ten grains; croton oil, two to three grains, or more; opium three grains; soap, twenty grains, washed down with a draught of soda. These boluses and soda, sufficient for great numbers, are easily carried in the pocket: I use nothing else.

I will not at present trouble you with details.

Pray be kind enough to make this letter as public as possible, and I remain, with the greatest respect,

Your most obedient servant,

Hydrabad, Deccan,
August, 1849.

W. MAXWELL, M.D.,
Surgeon 3rd Light Cavalry

A NEWLY-PROJECTED MEDICAL BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Knowing the deep interest you take in all matters tending to elevate the medical profession, especially that large

though ill-used branch of it—"the general practitioner," I have much pleasure in informing you that a measure is now on the tapis, and which there is little doubt will early next session of Parliament become law of the land. You well know the mighty stress laid upon a good preliminary education by all parties before the Parliamentary Committee, and that the great bar to this was the five years' clause in the Apothecaries' Act. Now, through the Lord Advocate of Scotland, a Bill is proposed simply repealing this clause, or at all events, curtailing it to two or three years, at the same time declaring all who hold a degree of M.D., together with a surgical diploma from universities and colleges of Great Britain and Ireland, legally entitled to be "general practitioners" throughout her Majesty's dominions: should it be deemed necessary to conciliate the Worshipful Company, it will not be objected to a fee to them by those who so practise in England or Wales; also, that these licentiates, provided they have a surgical diploma, shall have equal scope with the others.

I remain, yours faithfully,

J. M.

Edinburgh, Sept. 1849.

ON THE RATIONALE OF PARTURITION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—More than one inquirer is pursuing the investigation of the rationale of parturition experimentally. To Dr. W. Tyler Smith I proposed such an inquiry some years ago, and I learn from Dr. Simpson, of Edinburgh, that he has recently undertaken a similar investigation. From these researches the truth will eventually arise, and shed its bright light over an important department of medical science.

For my own part, I compare parturition with the act of deglutition, and with the act of vomiting, and especially I regard it as combining,

1. *Reflex Action*,
2. *Peristaltic Action*,
3. *Voluntary*, and
4. *Emotional Influence*, with
5. *Sphincteric Relaxation*.

The question is—how far the first two sources of action can be severed, and measured, as it were, in experiment.

For this latter purpose, an instrument, to be designated a dynamometer, and consisting of a long tube attached to a small sphere of India rubber, and partly filled with mercury, may be employed. By means of this instrument we may reduce the reflex and peristaltic powers, in some measure, to numbers.

But first let me premise, that I propose hereafter to designate the Reflex action and acts by the term *Diastaltic*. The functions of all the *tubal orifices* and *exits* of the animal frame will be thus distinguished from all that is *interior*, as *diastaltic*, the latter being *peristaltic*, a term with which we are all perfectly familiar.

These words are very expressive and well contrasted. Others may be added, if this be deemed necessary, from the same root. An incident nerve may be designated *ana-staltic*; a reflex nerve, *cata-staltic*, &c.

The uterine actions are partly, I should think chiefly, *diastaltic*, and partly *peristaltic*; and so of the other acts of ingestion and of expulsion, which are also still further influenced by emotion, modified by volition, and conjoined with sphincteric relaxation.

I formerly performed some interesting experiments on the rabbit and the turtle; which will be found in my volume "On the Diseases and Derangements of the Nervous System," §§ 323, 330. The oesophagus in the former, and the cloaca in the latter, are both *diastaltic* and *peristaltic*. The parturient uterus is doubtless so too. Its action may, we know, be excited through the spinal marrow, even from the mamma; and if detached altogether, and placed on the table, I have no doubt that, like the isolated oesophagus of the rabbit, it would slowly expel its contents. Dr. Tyler Smith actually observed this event, some months ago, in a small bitch which had died without delivery. The abdomen and uterus being opened, the puppies escaped, and the uterus collapsed, or rather contracted, so as almost to disappear.

I need scarcely refer to the observations and experiments of M. Brachet, and to the facts on record of post-mortem parturition in the human subject.

In regard to new experiments, this is what I would beg to propose:—

Having placed the animal under the influence of chloroform, and having introduced the dynamometer, first within the abdomen, and afterwards within the uterus, let us gently irritate

1. *The Mamma.*
2. *The Vagina.*
3. *The Ovarium.*
4. *The Interior of the Uterus, and apply a douche of cold water to*
5. *The General Surface.*

Let us then observe the effect of irritation of the spinal marrow, as we proceed to its division or removal, upon the same instrument, similarly placed.

Let us then remove the uterus entirely, place it on the table, introduce the dynamometer, and observe the effect of

1. *Peristaltic Action.*
2. *Various Irritations.*
3. *Galvanism, &c. &c.*

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Manchester-square, Oct. 16, 1849. MARSHALL HALL.

THE CLERICAL AND MEDICAL LIFE ASSURANCE OFFICE AGAIN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Not having your journal at hand, I cannot say whether you have yet noticed the Clerical, Medical, and General Life Assurance Company amongst those societies which refuse to pay a medical man his fee. I enclose you a reply to my application for my fee of one guinea from the above-named Society, and hand it to you to use it as you deem right, with the exception of not mentioning my patient's name.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

Gateshead, Oct. 1849. FRANCIS BENNETT.

"To Francis Bennett, Esq., Surgeon, Gateshead.

"Clerical, Medical, and General Life Assurance Society,
"90, Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury.

"SIR,—I beg to inform you that it is contrary to the practice of this, and of the old established offices, generally, to give fees to the medical referees of parties assuring. As you act for your patients in all such cases, it is Mr. —'s duty to pay for answering a reference made by him to you, the same as if he had required your medical aid in any other way.

Your obedient servant,

Oct. 1849. G. H. PINCKARD, Secretary.

Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The following gentlemen having undergone the necessary examinations for the diploma, were admitted members of the college at the meeting of the Court of Examiners on the 12th inst.:—

BURCH, SAMPSON KINGSFORD, Canterbury.
BYL, PHILIP JOHN VANDER, Cape of Good Hope.
FRYER, WILLIAM FRANCIS, Kinsale, co. Cork.
GROWSE, ROBERT, Bildeston, Suffolk.
KNIGHT, GEORGE CAMPBELL, Chaquar Hill, co. Galway.
MAYNE, THOMAS HENRY, Templemore, Ireland.
SADD, FREDERICK GEORGE, London.
TASSELL, ROBERT, Wye, near Ashford, Kent.
WALKER, JAMES, Alford, Aberdeenshire.

At the same meeting of the Court, Mr. THOMAS SECCOMBE passed his examination for naval surgeon; this gentleman had previously been admitted a member of the College, his diploma bearing date May 12, 1843.

APOTHECARIES' HALL.—Names of gentlemen who passed their examination in the science and practice of medicine, and received certificates to practise, on

Thursday, Oct. 11th, 1849.

BROWN, SAMUEL, Bradford, Yorkshire.
GROWSE, ROBERT, Bildeston, Suffolk.
LILLEY, JAMES HARVEY, Wisbeach.
PARRY, WILLIAM, Montgomeryshire.
SEYMOUR, JOHN, London.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE MEDICAL SOCIETY.—The introductory address at the opening of the present session was delivered by Dr. Routh, President of the Society, on Thursday, Oct. 11th, at eight o'clock p.m., in the new theatre of physiology in the College. Dr. Routh sketched the history of medical and other scientific associations in modern times, and dwelt on the advantages accruing to students from belonging to medical societies. He recommended the students who were attending the practice of the hospital, to take memoranda of the interesting cases they might witness there, and bring them under

notice and discussion at the weekly meetings of the Society—very judicious advice, the objects of which we would willingly foster. Our metropolitan hospitals abound with valuable and constantly recurring means for storing up information, much of which is, however, lost for want of being recorded and published. In an art like ours, which is "tota in observatione," reports of cases form the most useful and sound basis of knowledge and advancement. Professors Sharpey, Walshe, and Arnott were present at Dr. Routh's address; they, like the other professors of the College, being honorary members of the Society. After the address, tea and coffee were served, and we observed that Dr. Sharpey remained present for a long time, apparently pleased to remain to the last amongst his pupils. This Society, which seems to be thriving, and has a good library, herbarium, and osteological collection, now comprises amongst its members many graduates of the University of London, and holders of other diplomas, who were formerly students of the College and Hospital.

WHOLESALE MURDERS OF INFANTS.—*Handsworth, Saturday.*—For the last four or five years, this town and neighbourhood have obtained an unenviable notoriety for the number of newly-born children, bearing marks of their having been deprived of life by violent means soon after being brought into the world, that have been found in the by-lanes and other remote places. During the past week, a farmer's labourer, named Ellis, was proceeding along Cramp-lane, near the Birmingham-road, when he observed a brown-paper parcel in a holly-bush in the hedgerow. On opening it, the contents were discovered to be the bodies of two newly-born children. The coroner of the district, Mr. Hinchliffe, held an inquiry upon them, and Mr. Hammond, a surgeon, who had carefully examined them, expressed an opinion that they were born alive, and that strangulation was evidently the mode by which they had come by their deaths. Other facts showed that the innocents had been murdered as soon as they were born, and the coroner's jury found as their verdict—"Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown." The coroner, however, with a view of doing all he could in the matter, waited upon the Hon. F. Gough and Mr. Piercy, county magistrates, and was at length determined to seek the aid of the Secretary of State. The result has been, that Sir G. Grey has authorized a reward of £50 being offered for the capture of the perpetrators of this atrocious crime, and a free pardon to any one giving information, provided they be not the actual offenders.—*Globe.*

CURIOUS AFFAIR. DEATH AND EXPERIMENT.—A case supposed to be one of catalepsy has, it is stated, recently occurred at Bristol. A young man seized with cholera on Friday, the 12th inst., died, as was believed, at half-past two on the next morning; but on Sunday morning, the 14th, the body remained still warm, and Dr. Green, (who had attended the patient,) Dr. Wallis, Mr. Kelson, and Dr. Gillow, of Clifton, met at the house. Mr. Gore, the galvanist, was likewise present. "The body was still warm, and they accordingly resolved to make some experiments upon it. They first injected the veins with warm salt-and-water, but without producing any effect. They then subjected the body to powerful galvanic shocks, which had the effect of changing the colour, and rendering the hands more supple. It likewise produced a frothing at the mouth, but there were no other perceptible signs of life. The body was then ordered to be laid out in the usual manner, out of a coffin. After lying the whole of the night, up to five p.m. on Monday, the extraordinary appearance of warmth still remained, and, contrary to the ordinary appearance of a body deceased of cholera, there are not, as yet, any signs of decomposition."—*Times*, Oct. 16. (Of course the body is now decomposing.)

DEATH OF A SURGEON IN THE ATTEMPT TO RESCUE PERSONS IN A SEWER.—A lamentable occurrence took place last week in Pimlico, and Mr. Wells, surgeon, of Warwick-street, in that suburb of the metropolis, fell a victim, with four other persons, to his endeavours to rescue three of them from a foul sewer, where they had been suffocated by mephitic vapours. The inquest was held on Monday last, and the circumstances are narrated in the daily papers of Tuesday, the 16th instant. *The Times* of the 17th properly characterizes the lamented deceased as "a member of that profession which is always foremost when dangers are to be encountered." Yet the interests of this profession are wholly neglected by the state! We shall probably soon comment on this unfortunate event.

CHAIR OF MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREW'S.—At a meeting of the senatus of the University of St. Andrew's, held on the 9th inst., Dr. George E. Day was unanimously elected to the Chandos professorship of medicine, vacant by the death of the distinguished physiologist, Dr. John Reid.