

LONGEVITY OF THE INSANE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Many assurance offices refuse an assurance on the life of an insane person upon *any* terms, merely because of the insanity, and without any reference to its particular nature, or the general health of the patient. Much loss and inconvenience have occurred from such refusal; and as a proof that so *general* a rule is an error, I may state that in this asylum, averaging 140 patients, under the care of myself and Mr. Lacy, there are now residing forty-one persons (twenty-four males and seventeen females) of the following ages, namely:—

	Widows or Married. Widowers. Single.		
26 from 60 to 70, of whom there are	1	4	21
7 from 70 to 80....	—	5	2
8 above 80	2	5	1
	3	14	24

And all (with one exception) in good bodily health. They may be arranged under the following classes:—

Mania—11, of whom 5 are intermittent.

Melancholia—17, of whom 4 are intermittent.

Dementia—13.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

WILLIAM FINCH, M.D., F.L.S.

Laverstock-House Asylum, Wilts,

Jan. 22, 1839.

PRESERVATION OF BODIES FOR
DISSECTION.

M. GANNAL has recently published a pamphlet on the embalming of bodies and the preparation of specimens of natural history and morbid anatomy. As M. Gannal has obtained a patent for his method of embalming, we shall say nothing on this part of his work; he has, however, freely communicated the results of his experiments on preservative fluids for the purposes of dissection, of preparations of animals, &c.

After numerous trials with the salts of alum, and various other substances, M. Gannal has elected the sulphate of alumina as being at once the most efficacious and the cheapest material which can be employed. Two pounds of the sulphate of alumina dissolved in a quart of water, are sufficient to preserve a dead body in a state of freshness for at least three months. If the weather be very hot it will be necessary to employ the fluid in a greater degree of concentration. The solution of alum is simply injected into the vessels of the subject, and the cost of preservation does not exceed ten pence for each body.

PRESENTATION OF PLATE.—On Wednesday, January 9th, an elegant silver tea-service was presented to Mr. Thomas Watts, surgeon, Frampton-upon-Severn, with the following inscription upon the salver:—"This tea-service was presented to Mr. Thomas Watts, of Frampton-upon-Severn, surgeon, by the inhabitants, of all classes, in that and the surrounding parishes, as a memorial of the skill and punctuality with which he has discharged the duties of his profession, and more especially to mark the high sense they entertained of his uniform kindness to the poor during the twenty-three years he has practised in the neighbourhood."

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.—Dr. SIGMOND has finished an elaborate series of lectures on the medical and physical properties of tea, at the Medico-Botanical Society, and is preparing it for the press.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Stammering Practically Considered, with the Treatment in Detail. By T. Bartlet, Surgeon. Sherwood and Co., London, 1839. 8vo. pp. 82.

An Exposition of Quackery and Imposture in Medicine, by the Author of "The Philosophy of Living." James Hodson, London, 1839. 8vo. pp. 259.

On Diseases of the Bladder. By William Coulson, Surgeon. Longman and Co., London, 1838. 8vo. pp. 153.

A Treatise on Sheep, with the best Means for their Improvement. By Ambrose Blacklock, Surgeon. M'Phun, Glasgow, 1838. 8vo. pp. 228.—[A very useful little work.]

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Will *Humanitas* send us copies of his articles in the "Sun," or the papers containing them, if they are occupied by facts.

We have perused the documents which have been forwarded to us by Mr. Henry Guy, of Dorset-place. We cannot perceive anything in them which could justify the expression said to have escaped from the mouth of a brother practitioner. Scarification of the tonsils is a mode of treatment which has been commonly employed in similar cases by the most eminent practitioners.

J. B. will find abundant information in the pages of the "Veterinarian," edited by Mr. Youatt.

—, Oxford-street. Yes.

Letters have been received from *A General Practitioner*, Mr. Gilbert, and J. T. The latter would, we think, serve both himself and the cause which he advocates, by signing his communications.