

to which it may be advantageously applied. Thus if a solution, containing about twenty per cent. of the salt, be employed in the making of glue or paper-hangings, these will become non-inflammable. Even shavings will thus refuse to flame. Covers for goods trains, and tarpauling soaked in the solution and afterwards painted with a mineral paint, rather than the present oil-dressing, will also become non-inflammable. Last week we read the account of an express train on fire, from the engine sparks falling on the goods truck; the passengers nearest, amongst them a helpless invalid on his way to hospital, feeling the near approach of the flames, but destitute of all means of signalling their distress or causing the arrest of the train. Such accidents may be prevented.

### SICKNESS AT BEYROUT.

THERE is apparently some little difference of opinion at Beyrout as to the nature and extent of the medical assistance required in view of the present sufferings and diseases of the thousands whose homes have been desolated by the Druses. The correspondent of *The Times* has done admirable service in calling attention to the filthy state of Damascus and Beyrout, the absolute necessity for the execution of sanitary repairs and improvements, and the destitution of medical advice and necessities in the presence of starving thousands close huddled in filth, and in view of increasing misery which will be aggravated by the approach of the wet and unhealthy season. These considerations did not apparently occur to the Relief Committee at Beyrout and Damascus. Nevertheless, upon the suggestion of the London committee—born of these representations of the correspondent of *The Times*,—they have willingly appropriated some twenty pounds a week to the employment of refugee labour in cleansing the town. This appropriation will, it may be feared, be in no small degree nullified by the appointment of the eight consulate dragomans—"men who represent nothing save the principle and practice of backsheesh"—as a committee to superintend the sanitary works. It would seem impossible to select a more ineffective board for such purposes; and it must be feared that they have little of the will, and absolutely none of the information, necessary even for the primary task of clearing five thousand loads of filth with which the town is encumbered, not to speak of the further proceedings belonging to such a board—the segregation of the sick, the cleansing of drains, the establishment of a sanitary service, organization of inspection, and other works essential to the suppression of an epidemic. On another point the committee have actually returned a negative answer, under circumstances which clearly call for a precisely opposite course. They have negatived the suggestions coming from the same source, that nurses, surgeons, medicines, and tents should be sent. They decline all except the medicines and medical apparatus, and intimate that they have the means of efficiently organizing the medical staff of the necessary hospitals.

But how can this be justified when we learn that in Damascus, where a Christian population has been installed in Moslem houses, estimated at from six to eight thousand souls, and daily becoming more numerous, not a single European doctor was resident? For two months they have been huddled together in beds, suffering every kind of privation. The dead bodies had encumbered the streets, at the time of the last accounts, since the early part of July. A sickening odour of corruption followed even slight showers, and the rainy season is at hand. With all this, there was not a trustworthy medical man in the city, nor any medicines beyond a few simples. The tender mercies of the native doctors are likely to be worse than neutral in their effects. The statements of the correspondent of the *Times* are well worthy of the special consideration of the London committee. It is the invariable and inevitable tendency of the official to view his own works through a *couleur-de-rose* atmosphere; he will see no short-

coming, no blundering, no misery. Thus, lately in Italy, when our own correspondent forwarded us actual accounts of the mismanagement, the destitution, and the mortality in some of the Neapolitan hospitals, these statements were denounced as calumnious by those who were pleased to fix their regard upon some hospitals personally conducted by Madame Mario, and which were in an improved condition. So here, there is an hospital at Beyrout fairly organized, but at Damascus and elsewhere there is too plainly a state of desolation.

## Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

### THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As some misapprehension is prevalent on the subject, would you have the goodness to inform your readers, that by the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1858, the provisions of which came into operation at Aberdeen on the 15th September last, when the University and King's College of Aberdeen, and the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen, were united into one University, under the title of "The University of Aberdeen," all persons having a degree in any faculty from either of the two former institutions are to be held as having the same degree in the University of Aberdeen, and have equal rights and privileges with those who shall in time coming graduate at this University.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

DAVID THOMSON, M.A., Secretary.

University of Aberdeen, October, 1860.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I venture to offer a few words of remonstrance against the regulations of the University of Aberdeen, as lately re-modeled, concerning degrees in Medicine.

Wishing to take the degree of Bachelor in Medicine at the said University in the spring of 1861, and anticipating that I should come within the limits of the regulation for the admission to examination, *without* residence, of practitioners who had been five years in the profession (having obtained the membership of the Royal College of Surgeons in January, 1856), I was surprised when, in answer to an application I made to the University authorities, I was informed that, by a recent ordinance of the University Commissioners, I could not be admitted to examination for *any* medical degree, without residence for at least one winter session. This requires looking into.

I enclose my card, and have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

October, 1860.

AMATOR JUSTITIÆ.

### EXPERIMENTS ON LIVING ANIMALS— VIVISECTIONS AT ALFORT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—To concurrence in the views enunciated in the article on Vivisections at Alfort in your last issue, I presume to add expression of conviction that, in dealing with the general theme of experiments on living animals, you have correctly estimated the question raised by the strictures on the Alfort cruelties pronounced by Mr. Spooner, the principal Professor of the Royal Veterinary College in London. This institution was founded towards the close of the last century by a number of wealthy and learned men, with whom no less than John Hunter actively co-operated in money and counsel. His master-hand is visible in the original code of regulations, a copy of which will be found, by anyone curious in the matter, in the British Museum. From the copy of these laws, printed in 1791, I quote:—

"Regulation XVII.—There shall be chosen on the day of election in each year two committees—viz., a Medical Experimental Committee, and a Committee of Transaction.

"Regulation XVIII.—The Committee of Transaction shall be charged with the selection, compilation, and arrangement of the matter for the annual volume of Transactions, and the preparation of a prefatory discourse.

"Regulation XIX.—The Medical Experimental Committee shall meet occasionally for the purpose of suggesting and trying experiments, with a view to throw additional light on the animal economy, and to discover the effects of medicines upon different animals, to be procured for that particular purpose; and this Committee shall from time to time make reports of their proceedings to the Council."

Will Mr. Spooner, as Principal of the Veterinary College in London, favour the world with the proceedings of the Committee of Transaction and of the Experimental Committee?

The science of pathology greatly needs comparative illustration. This was the great idea of John Hunter, one of the founders of the London Veterinary College. Certain it is that well-conducted experiments on living animals have been, and must ever be, one of the most fertile sources of original information to the practical medical philosopher. Yet how many of our best experimenters apply at the London Veterinary College, year after year, for the purpose of conducting inquiries, only to be met with refusal.

Would it be unreasonable to call in question the wisdom and high-mindedness of anyone who, being a party to the neglect of such regulations as those inspired by the genius of Hunter, quoted above, strove to make capital of public philanthropy by stigmatizing the *abuse of vivisections on the Continent*?

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,  
J. SAMPSON GAMGEE,  
Broad-street, Birmingham, Surgeon to the Queen's Hospital, &c.  
Oct. 22nd, 1860.

## NEW METHOD OF REDUCING STRANGULATED HERNIA.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—I read with considerable interest in your journal of the 20th inst. a paper on the above subject, and I can testify to the efficacy of the means therein recommended by Mr. Jessop, having during the course of several years had many cases of a similar nature come under my observation, of one of which I send you the following account:—

Some years ago I was summoned one night to a man between fifty and sixty years of age, who was employed upon the estate of Sir H. Meux, at Theobald's park, in Hertfordshire, and whom I found labouring under strangulated hernia in the right inguinal region, of some hours' duration. I endeavoured, but without success, to effect reduction by the usual methods. Wishing to save my patient, if possible, from a painful operation, I then drew him to the foot of the bed, and placed each leg over the shoulders of two of his fellow-workmen who were within call. His body being completely inverted, and supported by the flexion of his head and shoulders, and the fibres of the abdominal muscles having become relaxed by inversion, I succeeded in a few minutes, by careful manipulation, in completely reducing an intensely painful, hard, and strangulated hernia.

Trusting that this method of overcoming this dangerous surgical disease may, by being early resorted to, render more serious operative measures seldom necessary,

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,  
Chandos-street, Strand, Oct. 1860. JOSHUA WATKINS, M.R.C.S.

## POISONING BY "DR. LOCOCK'S PULMONIC WAFERS."

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—On the 18th ultimo, at eight o'clock A.M., I was called to see William —, aged four years and a half, who was represented as very ill from having eaten nearly a whole box of Dr. Locock's pulmonic wafers, containing about twenty-four lozenges. I saw him twenty minutes after; he was then suffering from great giddiness; unable to walk or even stand without assistance; drowsiness and stupor, verging upon coma. The eyelids were half closed; the pupils contracted to the size of a pin's head; the breathing slow; the circulation depressed; the skin covered with sweat; the extremities cold; and there was urgent thirst;—in short, the little fellow was suffering from narcotic poisoning. Fortunately, he had vomited freely very soon after having eaten the lozenges. Stimulating emetics, with copious draughts of warm water, were at once administered, which acted well. Hot applications to the feet and legs, with friction, were had recourse to. Streams of cold water were also poured upon the head, which had a powerful effect in arousing the patient and restoring him to consciousness. Strong coffee, with diffusible stimulants, were freely

given; also small quantities of tincture of belladonna. But at last it was found necessary to have him removed to the garden, and there walked up and down, and amused by his companions. From this time the symptoms began to assume a more favourable aspect. Towards evening he seemed out of danger, slept well during the night, and in the morning all traces of poisoning had disappeared.

These wafers evidently contain some powerful narcotic ingredient, injurious if taken in large quantities, and highly dangerous to children. Such a hint is not given in the printed directions attached to each box of these lozenges. Why?

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,  
Stranraer, Wigtonshire, Oct. 1860. DAVID EASTON, M.D.

\* \* Our correspondent might also ask, Why do the proprietors of this quack medicine abuse the name of an honourable and distinguished member of the medical profession?—Ed. L.

## MORTALITY IN CHURCH-LANE, ST. GILES'S.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—A paragraph in your journal of the 13th inst. quotes some statistics of the mortality in Church-lane, St. Giles's. Will you oblige me by stating that the mortality there referred to is that of the years 1838–44, the figures being extracted from a paper by Mr. Horace Mann, communicated to the Statistical Society in 1848. Since that period very great improvement has been effected in this locality by the operation of the Common Lodging-houses Act, and of the Metropolis Local Management Act, under which medical officers of health and sanitary inspectors hold their powers. The statistics of twenty years ago have, therefore, only an historical bearing upon present facts. Indeed, at this moment, Church-lane and its environs are in an unprecedentedly healthy condition. The extent and cause of the improvement are indicated in the following extract from my last annual report:—

"In none of the ten sub-divisions of St. Giles's was the improvement in the public health during 1859 so striking as in the locality which includes Church-lane. In 1857 and 1858 the deaths here were steady, at 251 and 283 per ten thousand residents; in 1859 they sank to 222. This amendment affected all the diseases which are most characteristic of St. Giles's: fewer children died; there was less zymotic mortality; consumption and lung-diseases had fewer victims. In Church-lane and its courts alone the actual deaths in 1859 were but twenty-nine against forty-eight in the year that went before. Who can doubt the cause? In 1858 and the beginning of 1859 vigorous steps were taken to improve this locality, by securing better ventilation to the houses and rooms, cleaner privies and ampler water-supply: over-crowding was carefully prevented. One of the courts most affected by these measures was Kennedy-court. In 1858 six people died here; two from fever, one from erysipelas, another from consumption, and two were children under two years of age. In 1859 there was not a single death. In 1858 thirteen people from Church-lane and its purlieus died in the workhouse; in 1859, five only. Who will calculate for the economist the money-value of these sanitary measures?"

I trust that these facts may be of some comfort to your readers, who have no doubt been sighing for some days over an interesting bit of antiquarian statistics.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
GEORGE BUCHANAN,  
Medical Officer of Health for St. Giles's District.  
Gower-street, October, 1860.

## THE DELUSION OF SPIRITUALISM.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—I have with much pleasure read your admirable article on Spiritualism. While maintaining the same views, I have often met with the assertion that Sir D. Brewster and the Bishop of Oxford are believers, and therefore there must be something more than humbug in it. Can this be true?

I am, Sir, faithfully yours,  
Hastings, Oct. 1860. D. H. G.

WANTED, AN EDITOR.—The difficulties in the way of conducting the *British Medical Journal* in such a manner as to please two thousand proprietors, have culminated in the resignation of the Editorship by Dr. Wynter. The Association advertizes for an Editor to supply the vacancy.