

parenthetically on the common practice after sudden death of endeavouring to excite the action of the enfeebled heart by passing through it an electrical current. Some practitioners, he said, had gone so far as to introduce a needle into the heart itself, and to make the needle act as one of the conductors from a battery. Such experimentalists, before they undertook this operation on the human subject, should at least observe the effect of the agency they were employing on the exposed heart of an inferior animal recently and suddenly killed by drowning or by a narcotic vapour. They would learn then with what infinite facility the muscular irritability of the heart, in all its parts, was excited for a moment only to be permanently destroyed. They would learn that if blood be not passing through the muscular structure concurrently with their exciting current they could not more effectually arrest function than by the very method they had adopted to sustain it. On the subject of abstraction and supply of blood, it was shown that in all the cases of restored animation after apparent death, the condition of the heart was that of a muscle acting under the lower degree of tension. In this intermediate stage, between syncope and death, the most striking results were obtainable, but beyond this stage the methods so successful during it were practically useless for restoration. Among the effects of chemical agents, it was stated that the nitrite of amyl was of great service. Frogs had been kept in it for nine days, and yet their muscular irritability and life had been subsequently restored. In one instance this restoration took place after the commencement of decomposition in the web of the foot of the animal. In the whole series of his inquiries on the action of nervous matter, no fact had impressed him more forcibly than this, that the muscular irritability, in so far as it belonged to the muscle, might be sustained for hours after the nervous excitation which called it into spontaneous action had ceased.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

THE Royal and Imperial Society of Medical Men of Vienna has decided to open its library and hall to medical men visiting Vienna during the whole time of the Exhibition. This decision has been taken in a "confraternal" spirit, with the object of bringing together the medical men of the city and their foreign *confrères*, and offering a place of resort and meeting to the latter.

Advice from Posen, dated May 24th, states that a first case of Asiatic cholera was observed there on that date.

Dr. Pezibram has been appointed Professor of Clinical Medicine at the University of Prague.

Professor Zimmermans, Rector of the University of Turin and Professor of Clinical Medicine, died a few days ago at the early age of forty-nine. He had been eleven years Professor at the Turin University, and his reputation as a teacher always attracted a great number of students to his clinique, which he had rendered one of the most perfect in Italy. He was one of the most ardent opponents of the practice of bleeding, still so prevalent in Italy.

The first operation for ovariectomy ever performed in Spain took place in Madrid in February last. It was performed by Dr. Manrique, amidst a numerous attendance of all the surgical notabilities of the city. The cyst was a multilocular one with numerous adhesions, and the woman died fifty-six hours after the operation.

The study of Histology is in progress in Spain. The Academy of Medicine of Madrid has just bestowed honours on the authors of two prize essays on a Comparative Study of Histology in Germany and France. A chair of Normal and Pathological Histology has also just been founded at the School of Medicine of Madrid.

Dr. Guépin, a medical celebrity of Nantes, in France, died suddenly a few days ago in a railway carriage as he was going from St. Nazaire to Nantes.

Dr. Bazin, the well-known Professor of Dermatology at the Hospital of St. Louis, was recently made an Officer of the Legion of Honour on retiring from his hospital office.

The medical and scientific corporations of France have elected the members who are to represent them in the General Council of Education, recently appointed to decide on all questions of educational reform. Professor Wurtz

has been elected by the three Schools of Medicine, M. Milne Edwards by the Faculties of Sciences, and Dr. Barth by the Paris Academy of Medicine.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

CLINICAL THERMOMETERS AND THEIR DEVIATIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me, through your columns, to draw attention to an important practical point in the use of the clinical thermometer.

A short time since my son and I, being in attendance upon the same case—one of puerperal peritonitis,—found that our notes of the patient's temperature differed from time to time. We were led to make exact observation of the readings of several thermometers, with this present result, that of six obtained from three different sources, not one exactly corresponds with another. The variation in three of these, from the same maker, ranged as follows:—

	At 90° F.		At 100°.		At 110°.
1. ...	+·6	.....	+·8	.....	+·8
2. ...	—·6	.....	—·7	.....	—·6
3. ...	+·2	.....	+·2	.....	+·2

These thermometers had been purchased of a maker of the highest character and reliability. Nos. 1 and 2 were bought several years ago, No. 3 only a few weeks since. The three other thermometers having been obtained from three different sources, their readings varied greatly; but, not to extend my remarks, they are here intentionally omitted.

The cause of the above errors is that, even in thermometers made by the most accurate and skilful makers, a gradual but unequal contraction of the glass takes place up to a certain point, during an uncertain period. Corrections, therefore, by comparison with a standard thermometer, become necessary with lapse of time. The observed amount of error should be noted and borne in mind at the bedside.

It is, perhaps, too much to expect that the makers should keep these instruments unmarked until contraction of the glass has ceased; it therefore becomes advisable that medical practitioners should ascertain the amount of error in each at the time of purchasing their clinical thermometers.

That the value of our observations of temperature in our patients must depend upon the correctness of our thermometers is self-evident, while the importance of this point must plead my apology for thus occupying a portion of your space.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
Holloway-road, May 24th, 1873. W. B. KESTIVEN.

VIENNA UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION OF 1873.

MEMORANDUM PAPER.

4th day of June, 1873.

From the Secretary, Royal British Commission, Vienna Exhibition, 1873, to the Editor of THE LANCET, 423, Strand, W.C.

MR. OWEN presents his compliments to the Editor of THE LANCET, and begs to forward, by direction of her Majesty's Commissioners, the enclosed copy of a letter received from the Director-General of the Vienna Exhibition. He will be glad if the editor will kindly allow the same to be inserted in an early number of his journal.

COPY.

General Direction. Vienna, 20th May, 1873.

SIR,—I hasten to inform you that the Committee of the Imperial Royal Society of Physicians in Vienna have given notice that during the continuance of the Exhibition the Society will have much pleasure in receiving foreign members of the profession as guests at their rooms, Universitäts-platz 2 Stadt, both at their scientific as-

semblies, which are held every Friday, at seven in the evening, and in their reading-rooms, where a large number of scientific journals lie upon the tables.

In making this communication, I can only express the wish that the gentlemen alluded to will make a liberal use of the invitation given them.

With highest esteem, &c.,
(Signed) SCHWARZ SEUBORN.

P. Cunliffe Owen, Esq.,
Secretary-General of the Royal British Commission.

THE WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—While thanking you for your kindly notice of my promotion at Westminster Hospital, I would beg to correct a mistake into which you have fallen.

It is true that the out-patient rooms at Westminster Hospital are in the basement, but it is not just to call them "cellars," for they are fairly light, and certainly not at all "damp." There is no greater grievance in attending the out-patients at Westminster than there is at any other hospital where the present objectionable system of unlimited admission of fresh cases is in force.

I should be sorry that any injustice should be done to our hospital at a time when the committee has just been taking so important a step in advance as the late excellent change in the system of nursing, which has not been effected without much labour and difficulty.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

F. E. ANSTIE.

* * We regret that our use of the word "cellars" in describing the out-patient rooms at Westminster Hospital should have given any offence, but it was not our intention to insinuate that no effort had been made to render them moderately comfortable. Our opinion has not, however, been modified by another examination of the rooms, and Dr. Anstie may be congratulated on having undergone such prolonged subterranean labour with so little permanent injury to his health.—ED. L.

FATAL ACCIDENT TO A MEDICAL MAN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—On Sunday, the 25th of May, Mr. John Serjeant, M.R.C.S., who has for some years past practised at St. Martyn's Green, near Helston, was thrown from his horse, and was so severely injured that he died almost immediately afterwards. Mr. Serjeant, who was a highly respectable gentleman, with a limited practice, has left a widow and six children (the youngest of whom is now only eight years old) in straitened circumstances.

I feel the delicacy of making a general appeal to the public on their behalf, but it occurs to me that I may with propriety state the above facts to my professional brethren through your journal, and I trust that there will be many amongst them who will be ready to assist in the good work which I have in view for the benefit of the fatherless and widow.

Any donations will be thankfully received and acknowledged by me, or Messrs. Vivian, Grylls, and Kendall, bankers, Helston, Cornwall.

Requesting the favour of your inserting this in your next number of THE LANCET,

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

WALTER WEARNE, M.R.C.S. and L.S.A.

Helston, June 2nd, 1873.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE HOSPITAL.—Between three and four hundred persons were present at a ball held at Willis's Rooms on Thursday, the 29th ult., in aid of the funds of this hospital.

WEST KENT MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.—The annual dinner of this Society will take place on Friday, June 27, at the Ship Hotel, Greenwich, at 6 for 6.30 P.M. precisely. A former announcement erroneously stated the 20th inst. as the day of meeting.

Obituary.

DR. WILLIAM TYLER SMITH.

It is our sad duty to record the death of Dr. William Tyler Smith. This took place suddenly at Richmond on Whit-Monday, exactly forty years from the day on which he entered the profession in which he rose to such a distinguished position. Never robust, he had been failing in health for some years. Several severe attacks of epistaxis had prostrated him at no very long intervals. For more than a year he had been known to have albuminuria, his heart was weak, and he had been subject to purpura. Some months ago he had an attack of uræmia, under which he was insensible for some hours. Conscious of the necessity for rest, he had lately spent from Friday to Monday in the country, and he was staying at Richmond when the end came. He had gone down to the river-side, where he was found at half-past five in the afternoon sitting on a garden-step insensible. Mr. Hills, of Richmond, who was on the bridge, was called, and had him removed to the Infirmary, where he was seen almost immediately after by Dr. Withcombe. It is needless to say every attention that skill and kindness could prompt was given. He never rallied, but sank soon after eight the same evening. Dr. Gustavus Murray, who had seen him in the uræmic attack already mentioned, believes that the fatal attack was of the same nature. At a coroner's inquest held next day, a verdict of "Died from natural causes" was returned.

Such was the end of a man whose remarkable abilities had earned for him eminent success in practice and a name which can never be dis severed from the history of obstetric medicine.

He was born in the neighbourhood of Bristol on the 10th of April, 1815. He entered the medical school of that city, and became prosector and post-mortem clerk. He was a zealous student, and was a member of a debating society.

Tyler Smith, like so many others who have shed lustre upon their vocation, was, in the most absolute sense of the word, a self-made man. Of feeble health, his early education had been necessarily neglected. This circumstance, which to most men would have been an irreparable misfortune, was to him, always self-reliant and ambitious, the spur to the attainment of the noblest and best education for work, that which a strong mind achieves for itself. He entered the medical school at Bristol; and when it is told that no other door to the Temple of Medicine was open to the poor scholar, the provincial schools have more than justified their existence. The great metropolitan and university schools have in our day produced few greater men. We believe his medical education was entirely carried out in Bristol; but he sought a career in London. He took the degree of M.B. at the University of London in 1840, and that of M.D. in 1848. He passed the examination for the Licence of the College of Physicians in 1850, and was made a Fellow in 1859. He held the office of Examiner in Obstetrics at the University of London for the usual term of five years.

For several years he was greatly dependent upon literary work. He was long engaged upon the editorial staff of THE LANCET. He then contributed a series of biographies of the leading physicians and surgeons of the metropolis. As the materials for these were drawn from the most authentic sources, their value as historical records must be acknowledged. And howsoever justly some might dispute the propriety of contemporary biography, all must acknowledge the literary skill with which they were composed.

He first practised in Bolton-street, removed to No. 7, Upper Grosvenor-street, and afterwards to No. 21 in the same street. He became intimate with Marshall Hall, and was