

EFFECTS OF BLISTERS ON CHILDREN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having seen some remarks in THE LANCET of July 22nd, by Mr. Dendy (page 599), and in the last week's Number a note from Dr. John Hall Davis, upon the use of blisters in the inflammatory diseases of children (page 620), and having paid a good deal of attention to that subject, I am induced to request the favour of a corner in your widely-circulated journal for the record of my observations upon the matter in question. Although deeply impressed with the power and utility of these remedial agents I must say that my experience does not entirely accord with that of either of the above-named gentlemen, as I have found the ravages effected by the application of blisters to the delicate skin of children to be by no means of rare occurrence, although the greatest precautions may have been taken. When I employ them (which I very frequently do) I invariably give strict injunctions to the parent or nurse in regard to the length of time they are to remain; never do I allow them to continue applied longer than *four hours* upon children between the ages of three and seven years; under the former age three hours is the utmost period, and most frequently two hours or two hours and a half suffice, when, should vesication not have occurred, I direct a warm bread and water poultice to be applied, which generally has the effect of producing it. Notwithstanding these precautions (which in many instances, where mischief has resulted, I have known to have been attended to) I have met with many cases where extensive sloughing has followed, and proved in some instances most prejudicial and even fatal. I have never met with the complication of strangury in children where the blister has not been allowed to remain longer than four hours, though I have seen it take place when the blistered surface has been dressed with the plaster of Spanish flies, diluted with simple cerate (this, by-the-by, is a very improper mode of treatment in such cases). I may mention three cases that occurred in my practice two years ago, and made a great impression upon my mind; they were all in one family; their respective ages were five, three, and two years; they had severe attacks of pneumonia (of the sthenic form) as the sequela to measles. After the employment of leeches and the administration of calomel, &c., a small blister was applied to each of their chests, and allowed to remain upon the oldest three hours, and only two hours upon the younger ones, in all most frightful sloughing took place; and I have since seen many cases in which like consequences ensued.

The subjects of these remarks were na-

turally of a strong and healthy constitution, and well nourished, being in a tolerably airy and salubrious situation, not subject to the vicissitudes and hardships which poverty engenders, nor had the treatment adopted reduced the vital powers sufficiently to have accounted for such disastrous results; neither was the skin of so transparent and delicate a texture as to have led a person *à priori* to apprehend any mischief, even supposing the blisters had remained in contact for a longer period.

All I wish to advance in these few remarks is (although I am equally partial to the use, and as much averse to the abuse, of this most powerful and effective agent in the treatment of disease, with Mr. Dendy and Dr. Davis, and as much impressed with the general good results of its employment as they), that the indiscriminate use (which I know to be the practice of some) of blisters amongst children, with every precaution that can possibly be taken, will give rise in many instances to the unfortunate complication of sloughing.

I beg to apologise for occupying so much space in your valuable publication, if you will so far favour me, and to subscribe myself, Mr. Editor, your very obedient servant,

P. L. BURCHELL, M.R.C.S.,
Surgeon-Accoucheur to the Royal
Maternity Charity.
Kingsland-road, July 31, 1843.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

DR. WILLIAM BUDD and Dr. O'Brien, of Bristol, have recently been elected physicians to St. Peter's Hospital, *vice* Drs. Lyon and Bernard, resigned.

DR. G. O. HEMING has been elected physician-accoucheur to the Western General Dispensary.

By order of the minister of public instruction, a concours will take place on the 8th of January next, before the Medical Faculty of Paris, for the appointment of 14 *agregé* professors, viz., 6 to chairs of medicine, 4 to those of surgery, 1 to that of an accoucheur, 2 to chairs of anatomy and physiology, and 1 to a professorship of chemistry.

No wonder that the gullibility of John Bull should lay him open to all sorts of pocket-picking, when foreigners see the shoal of quack advertisements which deface our public journals, with the testimonials thereto appended. The "*Gazette des Hôpitaux*," after quoting some of the advertisements of Holloway's pills, Riga balsam, *et hoc genus*, &c., says,—“Perhaps it may be thought that these stupid announcements can only take in the *cockneys* of London; this is a mistake; they present themselves escorted by an interminable list of testimonials by personages of high rank. The