

examination by two appointed medical officers than the doubtful possibility of being able to show the Home Secretary that exhumation was advisable.

We cremationists are not mere enthusiasts seeking for some whim of our own to inaugurate a new system for the disposal of the remains of our friends. It is in the interests of the living, and for greater security of life, that we ask for a return to a practice sanctioned, if any practice is, by the authority of the ages, and for the discontinuance of a system which owes its adoption to the prevalence of gross superstition.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

BROOKE LAMBERT,

May 20th, 1884.

Vicar of Greenwich.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have just read Mr. Seymour Haden's letter on Cremation *versus* Burial in your issue of the 17th inst. The statement that the immediate instead of gradual production of gases from the body would cause on any one day a greater quantity of gases is a mistake, and for this reason: At present we bury in great cemeteries, where many funerals take place daily. When we cremate, many cremations will also take place upon one spot. Suppose that the burials and cremations each amount to ten a day, and that while a body is by cremation at once reduced into a quantity of gas, which may be represented by x , it is by burial reduced into the same quantity of gas by gradual equal instalments extending over about 1000 days. Then the quantity of gas daily given off by each buried body will be $\frac{x}{1000}$, and during the 1000 days 10,000 bodies will be buried; so that every day from that cemetery gas amounting to $\frac{x \times 10,000}{1000}$ will arise = $10x$. Each cremated body gives off x on one day, and one day only; and the ten bodies daily cremated give off $10x$, or exactly the same daily quantity as the buried bodies.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Lincoln's-inn-fields, W.C., May 19th, 1884.

A. H. HASTIE.

ASIATIC CHOLERA IN THE PIG.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—*A propos* the intelligence wired a week or ten days ago by the Calcutta correspondent of *The Times* that Mr. Vincent Richard had succeeded in inoculating the pig with the specific virus of cholera, and adding that, in his opinion, it is of a chemical nature, and of the fuller details to hand by the last mail as published in your contemporary, the *Indian Medical Gazette*, I think it as well to recall attention to the report of an epidemic of cholera in cats at Ahmednugghur and Sirrur, published early this year by the Government of Bombay, and which I noticed briefly whilst in India in these columns. That report is of peculiar interest so far as the causation of cholera in the cat went, inasmuch as at the time when this epidemic in the cat was at its height an epidemic of cholera was prevailing (in the human subject) at those places, and from what I could gather from a careful perusal of the report in question, it appeared that the feline epidemic took its origin from that in the human subject or from a common *fons et origo*, whatever that may have been. I would, also, invite special attention at the present juncture to a very interesting report on an epidemic of cholera in cats at Delhi, in, I think, the year 1875, and published in THE LANCET of 1876 by Dr. Fairweather, of Her Majesty's Indian Medical Service at that time civil surgeon of that place. Since that report was published I have several times experimented with cholera evacuations to see if I could produce cholera in dogs, cats, and rats, but with negative results. A fact in obstetrics worthy of mention in this connexion, and which came under my observation in 1877, is the occurrence of some few cases of unmistakable cholera in the new-born, in one of which, I may observe, there was no cholera in the mother, but the infant almost immediately after birth began to purge and vomit; the characteristic rice-water evacuations were observed by me, and it died within a couple of hours collapsed. Assuming that this was a case of cholera, of which I thought there was no doubt, the question is, How was the poison conveyed—immedi-

ately after birth or in utero? From India I sent tolerably full notes of these cases to Dr. Matthews Duncan, who very kindly read my paper before the Obstetrical Society of London, and which will probably be found published in its Transactions of 1877 or 1878. Against the views that are now being advanced by Mr. Richards there is, however, this to be said, that in India it is a notorious fact that village pigs feed on human excreta. At some time or another these are choleraic, but the occurrence of the disease in the pig has never been heard of. I trust that I will not be understood to suggest that the researches of this gentleman, to whom medical science is not a little indebted for his valuable researches in connexion with snake (cobra) poison, are open to question, though seeming to be plausible; but that the subject is of such paramount moment and vital concern that we cannot but scrutinise most cautiously every step and link in the chain of evidence which comes before us. We may therefore welcome what is now before us from the pen of Mr. Richards, and hope that he will continue his researches and observations, and, to use the words of Dr. Wilks (Harveian oration of 1879): "We take the world as we find it, and endeavour to unravel its mysteries, but of the alpha and omega we know not."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Edinburgh, May 10th, 1884.

JOHN C. LUCAS.

SOCIETY OF WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF MEDICAL MEN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is to be regretted that this Society does not obtain the unanimous support of the profession. There are, however, several reasons which interfere to prevent it, and with your permission I will mention two which are not without influence. First, the voting system; secondly, the necessity of obtaining a certificate of health by the proposing subscriber. Five years since I was desirous of subscribing, but found it incumbent upon me to submit to this. Some years before I had a severe illness, contracted during hospital work, and as a result my health escutcheon is not quite clean, and I found myself under the necessity of seeking as a favour permission to join this Society or leave it alone; the latter I have done. There are many others like myself, also engaged in arduous practice, able to work well, but not absolutely sound, and they do not care to expose themselves to a possible refusal. The Society may be quite right, but this accounts for many, besides myself, who are unable to subscribe.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

May 14th, 1884.

J. R. L.

THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS AND REFORM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is quite impossible that the controversy between the Council and the great body of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons can remain where it is. As the mover of the resolutions which were carried at the late meeting, and which have since been so ignominiously ignored by the Council, I feel bound to take further action. I propose, therefore, at once to place myself in communication with the Fellows in order that some united action may be decided upon.

Yours faithfully,

Plymouth, May 17th, 1884.

PAUL SWAIN, F.R.C.S.

"DETERMINATION OF SEX."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A letter appeared in your impression of April 12th on the above subject, signed "Sigma," in which the writer maintains that "the male parent furnishes the male germ and the female the female germ." It is not necessary to waste the time of your readers in arguing against the suggestion until such time as the writer explains the fact, well known to all apiarists, that an unimpregnated queen or female bee lays eggs which produce males only, and that a fertile worker, or imperfectly developed female, that is never impregnated, always lays drone or male producing eggs.

I am, Sir, yours &c.

London, May 21st, 1884.

W. B. TEGETMEIER.