

cases of sunstroke were also treated in camp and in Fort Pitt, and during the same period two accidents occurred—viz., dislocation of the humerus in axilla, and fracture of the fibula during the progress of the earthworks on Chatham Lines. The medical officer in charge during the first week was Surgeon Baines, M.D., 1st Middlesex Engineer Volunteers, who during the second week, the force being divided for the purposes of attack and defence, shared with Surgeon Pigeon, 1st Gloucestershire Administrative Battalion Engineer Volunteers, the divided supervision of the two camps.

AFTER a considerable amount of discussion it has been decided by the Government that the island of Cyprus shall for the present be "administered" by the Foreign Office. This department, the War Office, and the Colonial Office were all, so to speak, competitors for the honour.

YELLOW FEVER is still rife in New Orleans, and twenty-five deaths have occurred since the outbreak, out of a total of fifty-nine cases recorded.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

RECOVERY FROM A POISONOUS DOSE OF CHLORAL HYDRATE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As some attention has lately been directed to the "Extraordinary Tolerance of a Poisonous Dose (165 grs.) of Chloral Hydrate," by Dr. P. E. Bishop, in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* for September, 1877, it may be useful to place on record the following case, in which recovery occurred after about 240 grains of the drug had been swallowed with the intention of committing suicide.

A widow, aged sixty-two years, after spending an apparently pleasant day with some friends last Christmas, returned home accompanied by her father, and went to bed soon after 11 P.M. On the following morning, as she did not come down to breakfast, a servant was sent to her room, who found her quite unconscious in bed. On a table by her bedside were two small bottles, nearly empty, which, from the statements made by the patient herself after recovery, and from other somewhat imperfect sources of information, had apparently contained about three ounces of the now well-known syrup of chloral hydrate (ten grains to one drachm), which had been bought at the shops of two highly respectable chemists, where the family were accustomed to deal. When first seen by myself, and subsequently by my friend, Mr. Meehan, the face of the patient was pale and somewhat livid, the lips having a bluish or leaden hue. The eyelids were closed, and on raising the upper lids with a finger the pupils were observed to be contracted to a small point, and insensible to light or to touch. The limbs were flaccid and powerless, and on attempting to change the position of the patient, her head had to be supported, as it dropped suddenly like that of a corpse. The skin felt soft, but not clammy, and the surface-temperature, so far as could be ascertained without a clinical thermometer, was decidedly lowered. The pulse was 58 per minute, small, weak, and easily compressible, the breath smelt strongly of chloral, and the respiration, which was slow and feeble, showed an alarming tendency to cease on attempting to move, in any way, the patient. As there appeared immediate risk of a cessation of organic function, it was decided, after a not altogether satisfactory attempt to use the stomach-pump, to apply the induced current of galvanism, which was directed from the nape of the neck to the præcordial region; and this had the effect, after having been perseveringly continued at intervals for nearly two hours, of increasing the force of the heart's action, and of

quickening and strengthening the pulsation. Later on, during the period of unconsciousness, it became necessary to have recourse, from time to time, to the galvanism; and the result of its application, as regards the circulation, was decidedly beneficial. Throughout the progress of the case there was no vomiting and no hiccup. The pulse, even during the period of its feeblest action, did not become intermittent, and there was no profuse perspiration. Assuming that the patient, as she subsequently acknowledged was true, had swallowed the chloral within an hour after going to bed, the condition of profound unconsciousness, from which it was impossible by any means to rouse her, continued for about thirty-five or thirty-six hours. During the succeeding twelve hours she could with difficulty be roused, and it became possible to give her a few spoonfuls of milk, which were instinctively swallowed, but not apparently without great risk. As consciousness became more fully restored, the patient began to complain of severe and continued pains in the lower part of her body, especially in the gluteal region and the legs. These pains appear to have troubled her for some days; but the subsequent recovery, though slow, did not, in other respects, present any symptoms requiring special notice.

With reference to the state of the patient's mind in this case, it was subsequently ascertained that about eighteen years previously she had been under restraint for some time during the climacteric change, and that about three weeks before taking the chloral she had attempted suicide with laudanum, and, for the purpose of diverting attention from the act, had cunningly filled up the bottle on that occasion with ink. After this failure to commit suicide with laudanum, she decided to try chloral, and availed herself of the first opportunity she had, which was on Christmas Eve, to purchase, as she thought, a more than sufficient quantity for the purpose. When she had recovered from the effects of the chloral, she openly spoke of her intention to kill herself as soon as she could; and as there was evidently unsoundness of mind, she was removed to a lunatic asylum, where she remained for about two months. Soon after leaving the asylum, and whilst on a visit to some friends in the country, she deliberately walked into a pond in the private grounds, and was drowned. The suicidal monomania in the patient under notice was very strongly marked, and it is the only point of interest to which I would wish to direct attention; for the tolerance of an excessive dose of chloral hydrate in the case recorded by Dr. Bishop was associated with similar unsoundness of mind, and, like the corresponding tolerance of excessive doses of digitalis in cases of alcoholic delirium, it suggests that the mental condition of the patient on these occasions is, to a great extent, antagonistic to the usually poisonous influence of the drug. Both susceptibility to and immunity from certain poisons differ greatly in the lower animals, in consequence of congenital peculiarities in their organisation; and it would appear probable that in the human subject corresponding peculiarities may be at least temporarily acquired through the abnormal and exaggerated influence of the mind over the functions of organic life.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

WILLIAM SEDGWICK.

Park-place, Upper Baker-street, July 29th, 1878.

ON THE USE OF CARBOLIC ACID IN SMALL-POX.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In an interesting and suggestive paper by Dr. Eade, published in THE LANCET, June 29th, 1878, the following passage occurs:—"Not long ago it was stated that the development of the vaccine vesicle could be prevented by the application of carbolic acid. If this is so, it would seem highly probable that the same kind of destructive influence would be exerted upon the small-pox eruption, if the acid were applied to the pustules before or during the process of their maturation. The process of introducing a little of the strong acid solution into the apex of each pimple would be tedious and disagreeable, but if effective, it might not only save much disfigurement, but possibly even life itself."

Having adopted this plan for more than ten years, I am enabled to say that Dr. Eade's supposition is quite correct. The first case in which I used it was that of a young lady with severe confluent small-pox. The method of applica-