

consequent large ventral hernia, which, however, was not strangulated, but easily returned.

As I did not operate myself, I cannot state the length of incision, but there now exists a hernial opening into the abdomen, measuring four inches in a direct line, which would be equivalent to an incision of four and a half or five inches through the abdominal walls of a pluripara.

As this is probably not a solitary case of the kind, I think it a very valid reason why all incisions in abdominal surgery should be as small as possible, consistent with the removal of the tumour without bruising the edges of the wound, as it is quite impossible to devise any mechanical means to effectually replace the support given by a natural condition of the abdominal walls. I should mention that the rupture in the case of Mrs. P— was brought about by her rising from a low chair and reaching above her head with the right hand whilst the left arm and hand were engaged; a distinct tear was heard, followed by immediate pain, sickness, and faintness.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,
Malpas, Aug. 29th, 1883. CHRIS. JORDISON, M.R.C.S., &c.

TRUE BUBONIC PLAGUE IN SOUTH CHINA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It may be of some interest to you to know that the epidemic which swept over this district last year, and which you mentioned in your issue of Aug. 26th, 1882, has not returned this year. Up to date there has not been a case. Copious rain fell during March, and was useful in cleansing the town after the dry winter. If what I saw was true plague, I am, I understand, the first medical observer of it in China.

I have recently learned from the Chinese a rather amusing means they adopt to identify the paternity of a child. A basin, or cup, of clean water is obtained; the supposed father's finger is cut, and then put into the water till some blood trickles; then the child's finger is cut and placed in the water, and if the two bloods immediately unite, the proof is complete. The magistrate is sometimes bribed, and the water is tampered with. As a sample of medico-legal law in China it is interesting.

I am, Sir, yours truly,
Pakhoi, China, July 22nd, 1883. J. H. LOWRY.

THREE CASES OF LABURNUM POISONING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As the recorded cases of poisoning by the seeds of the laburnum are not very numerous, the following notes of three cases seem worth reporting.

John B—, aged seven, William B—, aged four, and F. T—, aged four, the first two brothers, were brought to the Torbay Hospital on 15th August, about two o'clock P.M. They were discovered by a gentleman lying quite insensible—one on his back and the other two on their faces. To use his own words, had they been men he should have thought them dead drunk. They were put into a cab and brought to the hospital. On admission the eldest was able to walk a little, but his gait was slow and unsteady; he had a dazed apathetic appearance, his face was slightly flushed, pupils somewhat dilated, but not markedly so, pulse rapid and very feeble. The two youngest were almost insensible, both very pale and cold, pulse in each case rapid and feeble, almost imperceptible. The only history then given was that they had been eating some berries. A few hours later another boy, who had been with them, brought up some pods of the laburnum, and stated that they had eaten several of the seeds, he did not know how many. He himself had eaten one of the seeds, but disliking the taste had judiciously abstained from eating any more. He also stated that the other three had been sick a short time after taking the seeds. An emetic of sulphate of zinc was given, but no seeds were vomited. The stomach pump was also used for one of them. They all exhibited a strong tendency to sleep. A hot bath was next given, and a strong mustard poultice applied to the chest and abdomen, and they were put to bed. They fell asleep almost directly, breathing heavily, and it was with great difficulty they could be kept awake. The pupils during sleep became very contracted, but dilated again on waking. The face of the

eldest was very flushed, and during sleep became covered with perspiration. This was not observed in the other two. One of the younger had considerable muscular twitchings of the arms during sleep. In each case the temperature was below the normal, being 98.2° in the eldest, and 97.8° and 97.2° in the two younger. Towards evening the pulse in each of them became fuller and more regular, and they all fell into a quiet sleep. Next morning they were all much better. A dose of castor oil was given, which operated during the day. There was still a tendency to sleep in two of them, and in both of these the face was flushed and the temperature slightly above the normal (99.2°). The urine in these two was drawn off. They took their food well, however, and towards evening appeared to have quite got over the effects of the poison. They were discharged next day quite well.

Remarks.—The most marked symptom in each of these cases was the persistent tendency to sleep, strongly resembling in this respect poisoning by opium and other narcotics. The character of the pulse was the same in all, very frequent and feeble. The pupils in each case were somewhat dilated. The temperature was below the normal in all. There was no epigastric pain or purging; all had vomited before admission.

I am, Sir, yours truly,
FRED. T. THISTLE, L.R.C.P. Lond., &c.,
Aug. 18th, 1883. House-Surgeon to the Torbay Hospital, Torquay.

BACILLI IN THE BLOOD OF CHOLERA PATIENTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was somewhat astonished on reading in several of the last medical and political journals that I had discovered bacilli in the blood of cholera patients. Evidently some mistake has arisen and calls for an explanation, for it is clear that I have been misunderstood. The facts are that before knowing of the projected scientific missions of the German and French Governments to Egypt I proceeded to make researches on the cholera germ, but I failed to find any living bacilli in the blood.

I am, Sir, yours truly,
STEPHEN KARTULIS, M.D. Berl.
Greek Hospital, Alexandria, Sept. 3rd, 1883.

THE CASE OF POLICE-CONSTABLE SANSOM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—This has been a great trial to me; even now it seems like a horrible dream. Kindly allow me to thank (though I feel how inadequately I can do so) you, Sir, and the many eminent members of the profession—some my esteemed old masters at St. Thomas's Hospital—for the trouble they have taken to sign the petition to the Home Secretary. The sympathy generally shown to me has been very sweet. Life without the respect of the profession to which I have the honour to belong would be worthless.

I am, Sir, yours very sincerely,
Sept. 1883. C. CORBETT BLADES.

THE MEDICAL BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your able article on the Government and the Medical Bill in THE LANCET of August 25th must meet with the cordial approval of all those who care for the welfare of the profession. Hundreds of students have been anxiously looking forward to the passing of the Bill, and to the advent of the time when one portal and one examination shall qualify them to practise both medicine and surgery.

At present many a man obtains the diploma of one or other of the corporations, and from pecuniary or other circumstances is unable to get a second to fully qualify him. What is his position? A most anomalous one: he can hold no union or other public appointment; he can rise to no standing in his profession, and is altogether in a most unfortunate plight. How different would have been his position had the one-portal system been in force (true, he would have had more subjects to take up, but that would have been but of little moment when a student at the hospital