

gested, but had, on the contrary, a pale appearance; some effusions of serum existed in the cavities of the chest. The contents of the stomach consisted of at least a pint of recently taken food mixed with four or five ounces of liquid; this was poured into a basin, and a dark-coloured fluid floated on the top, an ounce of which was skimmed off, (and was produced at the inquest floating on water in a two ounce bottle.) A light was then applied to the remainder, which burned for some time, producing a thick, black smoke. The coats of the stomach were found to have been very little affected by the presence of the poison.

Adding to the quantity actually exhibited at the inquest, that which had been ignited and destroyed, and that which had been thrown off the stomach at Mr. Jepson's and perhaps elsewhere, it is likely that, altogether, about three ounces of naphtha had been swallowed. How so much of such a nauseous and offensive substance could have been taken unwittingly is somewhat difficult to imagine; yet there was not the least suspicion that it was drunk with any suicidal intention. The probability is that the boy had mistaken the naphtha bottle for the bottle out of which the beer had been poured at dinner-time, (and the naphtha was coloured and not unlike beer in appearance;) that he had been in the act of pouring out some of the fluid into the cup when he was hastily called by his master to see the race; and then that he gulped the liquid down so speedily as not to discover what filthy stuff he was drinking, until after he had swallowed the whole.

Remarks.—Naphtha appears to kill by its narcotic effects; and in its mode of action it would seem to be intermediate between opium, &c., and alcohol. In the instance just narrated, there were not noticed any convulsions, which are considered a distinguishing sign of poisoning by belladonna, tobacco, conium, opium when administered to children, and other narcotics, as contrasted with poisoning by ardent spirits. Naphtha, or pyroxylic spirit, otherwise hydrated oxide of methyle ($C_2H_5O + HO$), is analogous in its chemical constitution to alcohol, or hydrated oxide of ethyle ($C_4H_5O + HO$), as also to aldehyde and some other compounds, but it must be regarded as much more injurious to the animal frame than alcohol. The pyroxylic spirit of commerce, however, is very impure, having intermixed with it various other hydro-carbons, of uncertain composition and disagreeable character.

In the case detailed, the verdict could only be one of "Accidental death," yet the conduct pursued towards the lad was not free from blame or error. It was felt that some censure properly rested on the man who took the lad home, and left him there without at once seeking further medical assistance, as directed; for the delay of every minute in so doing augmented a danger already imminent. So far as medical practitioners are concerned, the case affords ground for the reflection that in instances of poisoning it is best not to remain content with the effect of emetics; nor, in fact, to rest satisfied until, with the stomach-pump, we have wholly emptied the stomach of its contents, and then washed it out thoroughly, so as to prevent any portion of the poisonous agent remaining adherent to, or in contact with, its mucous coat. By such a course, we should not run a risk of postponing the use of the stomach-pump until a period too late for its employment. But, in this case, it was natural enough for the first medical attendant to suppose, from the very disgusting nature and taste of naphtha, that no person could accidentally swallow it without presently discovering his error and ceasing to drink it; and thence to conclude that the quantity which he had seen thrown up, together with what had probably been vomited before, was as much as could well have been swallowed. At all events, he could not have conjectured that so much more still remained in the stomach as was found at the post-mortem examination. In the absence, too, of any recorded death from drinking naphtha, he could not be expected to recognise the great danger attending its presence in the stomach, even supposing that he suspected more to have remained behind.

INDISCRIMINATE POISONING.—A quantity of game, in all about 150 pheasants, has lately been poisoned by strychnine, at Leigh Court, through, it may be said, the indiscriminate use of that poison. It seems that the keepers have been engaged destroying the animals and vermin destructive to the game, and the worms generated by their decaying remains were suffered to have been eaten by the pheasants, which likewise fell victims to that deadly poison. In Somersetshire, some time back, it was found that a quantity of fine game was so killed by means of strychnine.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

FURTHER PARTICULARS OF THE CASE OF DROWNING SUCCESSFULLY TREATED BY POSTURAL RESPIRATION.

By DAVID HADDEN, M.D.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having written to Dr. Hadden for further particulars of his most interesting case, I have great satisfaction in forwarding them for insertion in THE LANCET.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Aug. 16th, 1856.

MARSHALL HALL.

Skibbereen, Aug. 12th, 1856.

MY DEAR SIR,—I must rely altogether on the statements of others as to the exact time during which my patient was under water; but, from a variety of circumstances, I believe he could not have been less than from fifteen to twenty minutes completely submerged after he had risen to the surface for the last time. The account is, that he breakfasted at nine o'clock, and immediately afterwards went to bathe, in company with another boy, about his own age. He had not been long in the water when he complained of cramp in his leg, and called for help to his companion, who immediately went to him, but had not strength to render him effectual assistance, and with difficulty escaped being dragged to the bottom by him. The alarm was then given, and assistance procured from a distance of at least an eighth of a mile, but when this arrived, the body could not be seen. A man undressed, and dived in the place where the boy was last observed, and after much trouble, succeeded in bringing him to the surface.

I was driving near the place at ten o'clock, and saw the body taken out of the water, and so completely was animation suspended, that even his own father, with other bystanders, thought it quite useless to adopt any remedial measures. However, I immediately spread a woollen cloak on the ground, placed the body in the prone position, and commenced the rotatory movements, having given directions that a careful person should support the head, while others were employed drying and rubbing the legs and entire surface. The sun was very hot at the time, and I left the body uncovered, to facilitate the rubbing. I also held liquor ammonia under the nostrils, and rubbed it over the region of the heart.

For fifteen minutes, every exertion appeared useless. There was then a kind of respiration established. The breathing soon became loud, and accompanied by a kind of moan, which continued for several hours. At eleven o'clock, there was an attempt at vomiting, which was near frustrating all our exertions, as a portion of food got into the larynx, and had almost produced suffocation. At half-past eleven, he was taken home. From that time, there was some return of consciousness, but during the entire day he had considerable pulmonary and cerebral congestion, and this was followed by a severe attack of fever, which continued for ten days.

I am happy to say, he is now completely recovered.

I am, dear Sir, very truly yours,

To Marshall Hall, Esq., M.D., &c. &c.

DAVID HADDEN.

PRIVATE ASYLUMS AND PUBLIC INTEREST.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you, with your customary courtesy, allow me to call the attention of your readers to a subject of considerable import both to the profession and the public at large? In the usual course of things, a man afflicted with any bodily disease is placed under the care of one to whom is delegated, by consent of the sick man or his friends, the responsible charge of conducting the sufferer through the tergiversations of disease, either to recovery or death. A wise and considerate legislation has empowered certain corporate bodies to prejudge and examine those who administer to their fellow-creatures in sickness, that they be fitly prepared by proper instruction for the eminently grave duties of their profession; hence the confidence bestowed by the public on licensed practitioners of the healing art, is seldom entrusted in vain. But while this safeguard is upheld for preserving the bodies of the community from the

terrible onslaught of disease, what provision is made for a like defence of that sublime yet fragile element, alas, too easily assailed, the mind? Can any one doubt that as the world rolls on, and civilization, with its attendant luxuries and vices, increases around us, while the fabric which sustains this moral universe, resplendent though it be, is constantly hastening to decay; that amidst the conflicting strife of party feeling and the clash of rival interests, whilst competition treads down with remorseless step the tender and the weak, and un pitying selfishness elbows them aside, the mind, far above the body, claims all that human nature can give of compassion and regard. It is in the great "battle of life" that the mind is too often destroyed; and when was that battle fought more fiercely than now? What provisions for its succour and relief have our legislators made? Here methinks hath poverty its reward. In any, or every public asylum, the poor are cared for; but are these the sole representatives of the weak and broken minded? Do not the rich suffer too? Then let us behold what provisions they receive. Since we have seen how a parental government has legislated for the bodily afflictions of her children, it is in reason that for the mentally afflicted she has provided some similar enactment. But what is mental disease? What, in short, is insanity? Something which every writer has attempted to define, and attempted, but that is all. It would, therefore, appear, since before we can judiciously treat a disease we must understand its nature, that some preliminary education in mental diseases should be pursued by those to whose care the mentally afflicted are consigned; and further, that for a right treatment of diseases of the mind, some knowledge of the diseases of the body is needful; in fine, since an acknowledged relation exists between mind and matter, a right perception of the condition of the former can hardly be expected without a corresponding intuition as to the state, both normal and abnormal, of the latter. These premises being granted, as by every *disinterested* person they undoubtedly will, it is easy to foresee the comparative enviable lot of the inmates of public asylums, when contrasted with the condition of those who are confined under the lock and key of a non-professional, as his own exclusive property. In such cases—and would there were none!—where the private speculator is either a woman, as occurs in ten of forty metropolitan houses, and in twelve out of eighty-two provincial establishments, or a man, as obtains in seven of the forty, thus throwing the balance of lay power in favour of the female sex, and in twenty-four of the eighty-two provincials, showing that a considerable number of lunatics are placed under the control of persons for whose education and professional knowledge, society has no guarantee. This is a serious matter, and assuredly calls for reform. The time has come in these "latter days," when such things must be done away with.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Gate Helmsby, August, 1856.

J. HAWKES.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION BILL AND THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your number of the 9th instant, you have published a letter from a person, dated Birmingham, July, 1856, and signed "A Doctor and Member of the Association."

I am delighted to find the Association confers degrees, but as I confess that I am an ignorant man, and that I do not shine brightly (as the writer of the said letter does) either as a letter-writer or in any other way, perhaps he will enlighten us as to the branch of science in which the degree is granted.

I presume he is one of the nest of hornets promised me in a letter which I received from Birmingham, dated July 19th, and signed "M.R.C.S."

The writers of both letters are evidently ashamed of their names, and consequently will excuse me, if, in my ignorance, I hit them rather hard. At the same time, I beg them to have some mercy upon "The poor old Navy Surgeon," the best days of whose life were passed in foreign countries, where he had no opportunities of increasing his small store of knowledge, except by diligently reading THE LANCET, and "Johnston's Journal," and carefully studying "yellow Jack" and a few other diseases too often in the dead-room.

No man who reads my letter of the 14th of July will for one moment believe that I intended any disrespect to the Doctors of Medicine; and although I admit that I am ignorant, and by no means a "brilliant writer," yet I have established one

fact, namely—that a large number of Graduates in Medicine are practising as Physicians in England illegally.

If the College of Physicians has no power to prevent this, where is the necessity for a class of physicians styled "Extra-Licentiate" of the Royal College of Physicians, approved for practising as physicians, and now practising as such out of the City of London, and seven miles thereof, pursuant to statute 14th and 15th Henry VIII., chap. 5, sec. 3? Or why are Oxford, Cambridge, and the University of London, empowered to grant licences to their Graduates in Medicine to practise as physicians in England, but not in London?

In the fourth paragraph, it is attempted to be shown what noblemen and others have done, as a proof that Graduates in Medicine are the alumni, and true or legally-qualified physicians. I believe they did this in ignorance of the law; at least, I could point out a few elections to hospitals where such was the case.

No Graduate in Medicine, be he whom he may, and however highly he may be esteemed, can suffer from enrolling his name amongst the Members, or Extra Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians; quite the reverse. All that I have recommended is, that they should "prove themselves men," by so doing, and then try to alter the law. Perhaps to obtain this "minimum qualification" the examination of six days' duration may prove a maximum not expected by the candidate.

I shall take no notice of any more letters upon this subject, but will "continue to pursue my avocations in peace," being legally qualified to practise as a physician in London and England. I am, Sir, always yours greatly obliged,

JOS. STEVENSON, M.R.C.P.,
(Not of the College of Preceptors.)

Hastings, August 12th, 1856.

THE ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE.—THE LATE RETROGRADE MOVEMENT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have been induced to address the following letters to the Visitor of the Royal Medical Benevolent College, not out of any factious opposition to the Council, who, doubtless, are entitled to respect; but because it appears to me that an important law has been hastily and improperly altered at a public meeting, convened by advertisement only, the Governors not possessing the usual appeal to a second meeting. A large number of those most interested were in perfect ignorance of the proceedings, and a still larger number unable to attend; yet, although several Governors desired that the resolution proposed by the Council should be postponed for further consideration, it was, as I think, ungenerously pressed and carried. It will be well that the profession should cautiously avoid any step which might retard the progress of this noble institution; nevertheless, it appears just that public attention should be called to the important change which has taken place, that the Governors may, if they think fit, either petition the Visitor not to sanction the alteration in Rule 30, or else to call an extraordinary general meeting to re-establish it. Trusting to your impartiality for the insertion of the letters alluded to,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WM. A. N. CATTLIN, F.R.C.S. Eng.

Sebbon's-buildings, Islington, August 14th, 1856.

To the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Winchester.

MY LORD,—At a meeting of the Governors of the Royal Medical Benevolent College, held on the 11th instant, convened by advertisement only, the following resolution, seriously altering a fundamental rule of the above-named Institution was carried:—

"That the annual amount charged for each exhibitor, exclusive of any payment in respect of remaining at the College during the vacation, shall for the future be the sum of £40, payable in advance by three equal payments of £13 6s. 8d., on or before the commencement of each term,—viz., Hilary, Easter, and Michaelmas."

In the early prospectuses of the College, a good education was offered to the sons of the less wealthy members of the Medical profession, at the cost of £25 per annum, and a large amount of public money was raised, upon the faith that such intention would be carried out. Subsequently it was made a law of the College that the annual payment for such advantage should be £30. By the resolution just passed, this sum has been raised to £40, and the public has no guarantee that it will not be greatly increased. Thus the parents of upwards of 120