

and the mixture measured out as required. In giving chloroform alone I start with one ounce of the anæsthetic in the chamber and with the indicator at 0. After a few breaths the indicator is gradually moved to midway between 0 and 1 and then slowly and by regular gradations advanced up to 3. This occupies five or six minutes. The indicator is then kept at 3 until complete anæsthesia is induced, generally in another four or five minutes, and for the rest of the administration it is moved back and kept between 1½ and 2 as may be found necessary. In giving mixtures of chloroform and ether one and a half ounces of the mixture are poured into the chamber and the same method holds good, except that to induce anæsthesia the indicator must be advanced to Full and after production of complete anæsthesia kept between 2 and 3. The greater the proportion of ether in the mixture the nearer will the indicator have to be kept to 3. Mixtures of chloroform and ether require from 10 to 12 minutes for production of complete anæsthesia. Having the anæsthetic in a reservoir which has to be replenished about twice in the hour is very superior to the constant bottle-tilting or ball-squeezing which is inseparable from the open and Junker methods and is very readily appreciated by anyone who has often to administer anæsthetics for three or four hours on end. The same precautions and the same watch on the pulse, respiration, and pupil are necessary in this as in any other method of administration. I have practically given up the dropping on lint method for the Clover's inhaler without the bag, except in those operations on the face or mouth which would foul the interior of the Clover's inhaler with blood. There is a great advantage in a simple apparatus which can be used equally well for nitrous oxide, ether, nitrous oxide and ether, chloroform, and chloroform and ether mixed.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

C HAMILTON WHITEFORD, M.R.C.S.Eng., L.R.C.P.Lond.,
Hon. Anæsthetist to the South Devon and
East Cornwall Hospital.

Plymouth, Feb. 4th, 1901.

"WHAT IS 'COGNAC BRANDY'?"

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—My attention has been directed to a joint letter of Messrs. Hennessy and Martell which appeared in THE LANCET of Feb. 2nd, p. 358, relating to an action in which my company is concerned and to my evidence therein. The report of the case in the Dublin journals upon which Messrs. Hennessy and Martell's letter is based was incomplete and in material respects inaccurate. No shorthand writer was available at the hearing to take a verbatim note. As the case is under appeal I refrain from discussing its merits and will only at present deal with certain facts given in evidence so far as rendered necessary by the letter you have inserted.

It was stated in evidence that my company's predecessors sold and invoiced the brandy in question at 42s., not as "cognac" but merely as "brandy." The plaintiff's counsel, in spite of three distinct suggestions by the Lord Chief Justice, refused to amend his pleadings in this sense and insisted that "brandy" necessarily meant "cognac" (ignoring the existence of Australian, Californian, Spanish, and other brandies), and further insisted that brandy must be exclusively the produce grown in the commune of Cognac. In my evidence I stated that pure cognac should be the produce of the two Charentes, but plaintiff's counsel insisted upon his limitation, and I therefore, in the "lamentable ignorance" referred to by your two correspondents, did state—and I adhere to the statement—that brandy made exclusively from grapes of the commune of Cognac did not exist on the market. Messrs. Hennessy's and Martell's names were not introduced by me into the case, but when asked specifically I did state that at equal prices the brandies of all cognac shippers, including those of the two firms named, were practically made in the same manner. That statement was not intended, and I submit is not calculated, to reflect upon them, and I should be sorry if it were considered otherwise.

Passing from the personal part of the matter to the larger question, namely, the interest of the British public—in which the named firms stated that they addressed you—may I be permitted to state that I visited the two Charentes before and since the destruction of the vineyards by the phylloxera and claim to have, in spite of the suggested "lamentable

ignorance," not only a knowledge of the Cognac district, but also of its products as shipped before and since the stated period. I concur that last year the Charentes have produced—for the first time in 22 years—cognac in appreciable quantities. Your correspondents are silent as to the failure of such production during the preceding 22 years; they point out that there is "now" offered on the market Cognac brandy of the last vintage at prices less than those of the ante-phylloxera period, but do they suggest that the brandy of the last vintage—made a few months ago—is now offered to, or available to, the public for present consumption? Your correspondents are also silent as to the large quantities of brandy shipped from the Charente during the 22 years succeeding 1878—the year of the devastation of the vineyards—until last year's bountiful vintage. I have it on the authority of eminent cognac shippers that the production of wine in the Charente in 1877 was about 15 000 000 hectolitres; that in 1878, when the vineyards were generally attacked, the yield was reduced to about 6,000,000 hectolitres; that in 1879 and 1880 there was a further reduction; and that between and including the years 1881 to 1890 the yield was insignificant. Yet in 1879, the year following the destruction of the vineyards, there was a record exportation of brandy from Charente—viz., some 500,000 hectolitres—which doubtless consisted largely of old stocks; but it is curious that during the years 1881 to 1890 when the yield was insignificant the exportation did not materially decrease, being about 300 000 hectolitres annually. It is significant that during that period and since large quantities of spirits from other parts have been imported into the Charente, and at the trade auction sales in London for a number of years large quantities of brandy shipped from the Charente were sold as to the greater part from 25 to 75 per cent. less than the prices quoted by Messrs. Hennessy and Martell for the new vintage of last year, in fact as low as 1s. 8d. per gallon. Putting aside the new brandy of last year's vintage, are the brandies shipped as stated from the Charente during the last 22 years, even as to a moderate proportion, the "good and pure cognac available at moderate prices" referred to by your correspondents?

I am in complete sympathy with the ostensible objects of the syndicate recently formed in the Charente for the protection of "cognac." It is to be hoped that the syndicate will ensure that what is shipped from the Charentes as "cognac" contains no spirit other than that produced from grapes of the Charente, and that if such is blended with any other spirit the product is not shipped as "cognac." I stated in my evidence that pure cognac of a suitable age for present consumption—not last year's vintage—and without any admixture of other spirit cannot at present be obtained under a comparatively high price, and I consider that it is in the interest of the public as well as in that of shippers of genuine cognac that this fact should be well understood.

In asking you in fairness to my company to insert this letter I apologise for trespassing at such length on your valuable space and—Remain, Sirs, yours faithfully,

F. B. EHRMANN,

Managing Director, Ehrmann Bros., Ltd.

Finsbury-square, London, E.C., Feb. 4th, 1901.

THE RÔLE OF ARSENIC IN THE RECENT EPIDEMIC OF PERIPHERAL NEURITIS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With regard to a paragraph in a leading article in THE LANCET of Feb. 2nd, p. 341, in which you suggest the possibility of the rôle played by arsenic in the recent epidemic of peripheral neuritis being challenged, may we be permitted to draw your attention to our articles in the *British Medical Journal* of Dec. 1st and 8th, to Major Ronald Ross's letter in THE LANCET of Dec. 8th, 1900, p. 1677, and to Dr. Prytherch's remarks at a meeting of the Liverpool Medical Society, as reported by you in THE LANCET of Jan. 5th, 1901, p. 33? We have from the first opposed the idea of the wholesale poisoning by arsenic and our opinions are not modified in the least degree. With apologies for troubling you,

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

W. A. NEWALL

J. R. PRYTHERCH.

Chester, Feb. 5th, 1901.