

paid after death, as incitements to the living, the recipients being then alike insensible to praise or censure; but Mr. Syme's is an exceptional case,—struck down, as he has been, by a distressing malady while in the active discharge of his duties.

If the suggestion I have ventured to make be acted on, I shall be happy to forward my mite of £5 5s. to you, or any Committee formed for that purpose.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Kensington, May 25th, 1869. D. FRASER, M.D.

THE VACCINATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is evidently the Marquis Townshend's intention to put a stop to vaccination in country districts altogether by his proposed Amendment to the Vaccination Acts, or else he knows but little of the subject with which he proposes to deal.

It appears to me an absurd thing to suppose that any public vaccinator would continue to hold his appointment, nor could fit persons be found to accept appointment as public vaccinators, under such conditions as he proposes.

The trouble and difficulty which would be experienced in getting two medical friends to accompany you to every case of vaccination in a wide country district, to see that each child was vaccinated with virus taken from the arm of another healthy child (for this is what would in reality be the case, as no one can pretend to say, from merely examining the virus in a capillary tube or on the ivory point, whether it is from a healthy child or not), would be quite sufficient to deter anyone from accepting such an appointment. Then comes the question of remuneration. I should be glad to know who would hold an office which perhaps yields him, under the present rate of payment, from £5 to £10 per annum, and become liable to any number of £5 penalties in the event of his being unable to comply with the Act, should it become law. And, as your correspondent of last week (Mr. Monckton) suggests, what provision is made for the remuneration of the medical men certifying, even supposing they could do so?

Then, again, what is to become of our National Vaccine Establishment, which supplies vaccine gratis to those who choose to apply? It must either be altogether abolished, or its value be so impaired that it will be useless except in London, and we country practitioners will be deprived of the only source from which we can procure vaccine when our stock runs short.

The noble marquis seems, in his zeal to confer all the benefits in his power on suffering humanity, not to have perceived that the mere certificate informing the anxious parents that the vaccine wherewith their child is to be vaccinated is taken from a healthy child, would go a very short way towards lessening the evils which he supposes result from vaccination with uncertified virus. Medical men and public vaccinators generally have too much regard for their own good name, and are too conscientious, to promote the growth of disease when they can avoid it. I can only hope that the noble marquis will withdraw his Amendment to the Vaccination Acts.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Settle, Yorks, May 25th, 1869. EDWIN S. GREEN.

TREATMENT OF FRACTURES OF THE LEG.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I find, on looking over some of the late numbers of your journal, a report of a very interesting clinical lecture delivered by Mr. Paget on the above subject (THE LANCET, Feb. 27th and March 6th). He therein refers to a "cradle" for suspending a fractured leg, and then endeavours to prove its value. Now, it is impossible that, in a limb simply suspended by four straps from a similar number of trucks (for I presume there are trucks) placed on two longitudinal rails on the same plane, the important condition can be fulfilled,—namely, "that the broken parts should be kept at rest, and the remainder of the body should be com-

paratively free to move." I am at a loss to know how "the patient's leg is kept completely at rest in the splint; but, being slung in this cradle, he can move the rest of the body," unless it be longitudinally, without any motion taking place at the seat of fracture; for if the trunk and the limb are not both lying longitudinally, in the natural direction of the splint, thus slung more or less strain must take place. To prevent motion in a limb, there must be no obstacle to the voluntary or involuntary movement of the limb, horizontally, in any direction; and this condition cannot be fulfilled by the apparatus in question. I do not doubt for a moment that the majority of fractured legs, if treated in the manner described by Mr. Paget, would eventually turn out well; but not on account of the perfection of the "cradle," which would be evident if the side-splints were removed, or an inflamed and highly sensitive joint were used as a test. I believe I am correct in saying that the only suspender which will allow a patient to move his body longitudinally, laterally, and on its short axis, so as to lie across the bed diagonally, or to adduct or abduct his limb, and at the same time ensure absolute rest in the diseased or injured part, is the one I invented a few years since, and described in THE LANCET of Feb. 24th, 1866, and which I had the honour of showing and explaining to Mr. Paget in 1867. A few minor alterations and additions have since been made, but the apparatus remains substantially the same. Mr. Paget places suspension as second in importance in the treatment of fractured legs. When using my suspender, I regard it as equal, if not superior, in importance to the splint; for I can dispense with side-splints, and yet there will be no motion at the seat of fracture during movements of the limb or body. Apart from its use in mechanical treatment, I need scarcely add that this appliance is also a luxury to the patient.

I should not have ventured to make these few remarks but for the amount of thought I have bestowed on the subject for several years.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Plymouth, April 24th, 1869. HENRY GREENWAY.

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INFANT BEING POISONED BY STRYCHNINE THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF ITS MOTHER'S MILK.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your annotation on the cases of poisoning by strychnia at Lynn, and Dr. Letheby's evidence before the coroner, you mention that the question had arisen whether strychnia can, after ingestion by the mother, be transmitted to the infant. If I rightly understand the circumstances of the cases referred to (and I have read an account of them in a local paper), Dr. Lowe, the medical attendant, was sent for to see the husband, and it was during his visit to him that the wife was for the first time seized with convulsions, and she did not suckle her baby afterwards; so that in this case there could be no ground for the expression of any doubt in the matter.

It is, I believe, the generally received opinion that as soon as strychnia is absorbed into the blood in sufficient quantity, it produces its physiological effects. If the phenomena of a case of poisoning with strychnia be looked upon from a medico-legal point of view, no comparison can be drawn between it and other vegetable alkaloids, with regard to its presence in the milk glands and its withdrawal therefrom by an infant; the immediate and abrupt manifestation of its symptoms on being absorbed into the blood renders it impossible that the poison can be conveyed to the lacteal system before convulsions are produced, and when convulsions commence it is highly improbable that a mother could suckle her infant during a paroxysm, or, unaided, during the intervals of exhaustion.

It seems to me therefore impossible, for the reasons I have given, for a child to imbibe sufficient strychnia from its mother's breast to produce symptoms of poisoning.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
J. WILLIAMS, M.D. Edin.

Sudbury, Suffolk, May 17th, 1869.