

at the time. The internal coats were seen to be divided at the point of deligation, and the canal of the artery immediately above and below that point presented no appearance of coagula.

Mr. Lawrie ignores the presence of the clot in the middle cerebral artery of the same side as the vessel tied, as found and shown at the post-mortem examination in the pathological theatre as a proof of embolism.

You will observe that I make no remarks on Mr. Lawrie's communication beyond stating categorically wherein it is inconsistent with fact.

JAMES SPENCE.

Ainslie-place, Edinburgh, June 28th, 1869.

THE SMITHFIELD TRAGEDY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Most of your readers have probably perused an

account of the tragedy from poisoning by prussic acid which occurred near Smithfield last Monday morning.

I forward you the result of the post-mortem examination made in four cases, so that, if thought of sufficient interest, you may publish it.

In the first three cases the examination was made within twelve to fifteen hours of death; in the fourth case it was made on the ensuing day.

The chief characteristics seemed — (1st) the remarkable fluidity of the blood; and (2nd) the strong odour of the poison in every organ. I do not know if the small extravasations of blood, about the size of a hemp-seed, which studded the surface of the lobes of the lungs, are in any way peculiar to death by this poison.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

FREDK. W. WILSON, M.B. Lond., &c.

Farringdon-street, June 30th, 1869.

NAME.	AGE.	GENERAL CONDITION.	EYES.	MOUTH, ETC.	STOMACH.	LUNGS.	HEART.	GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.
GEO. HENRY DUGGAN (examined at 2 P.M. on June 28th)	3 years	Body well nourished; rigor mortis; lividity of extremities, back, &c.; no feces or urine passed; no contractions of limbs; appearance very placid, as if asleep	Pupils rather dilated; not bright	Teeth clinched, tongue between them; some foam issuing from nostril	Strong odour of prussic acid on opening abdomen; it contained food, which partially concealed the smell of H ₂ Cy; not much congested	Somewhat congested; small black specks of extravasation of blood, about as large as hemp-seeds, all over surface of lobes	Contracted; contained a little fluid blood	Odour of prussic acid perceptible in heart, great vessels, lungs, &c., of each case, more especially in the adults
EMMA DUGGAN (examined at same time)	12 years	Body well nourished; rigor mortis; cadaveric lividity on the extremities, back, &c.; urine and blood passed (probably menstruation)	Brilliant; pupils dilated	Teeth clinched on tongue; no foam	Strong odour of H ₂ Cy. on opening stomach, which was much congested; food in same	Bronchial tubes full of bloody froth; black specks all over surface of the lungs, about the size of a hemp-seed, and consisting of extravasated blood	Full of fluid blood; no contraction	The blood in every case was remarkably fluid; there was no coagulum found
EMMA DUGGAN (examined at same time)	40 years	Body well nourished; rigor mortis; not much cadaveric lividity	Pupils not dilated, nor bright	Not closed	Contained a small quantity of reddish fluid; smelt very powerfully of prussic acid; great congestion	Congested as in the other cases	Contained fluid blood	When seen at 9 A.M., rigor mortis was present in all the children, but not in either parent. The teeth were tightly closed in all the children but the eldest. There was a placid expression, as if asleep, in all the children; the eyes were closed; pupils more or less dilated; eyes brighter in some than in others
WALTER JAS. DUGGAN (exam. at 1.15 P.M. on June 29th)	38 years	Body well nourished; some cadaveric lividity; scar over right eyebrow; wore a truss for left inguinal hernia; surface of brain somewhat cloudy from opacity of arachnoid membrane; in other respects cerebrum healthy; the cerebellum softer than the cerebrum	Open; somewhat dilated	Open; odour of H ₂ Cy.	Intensely congested; contained a small quantity of reddish-brown liquid; a solution of nitrate of silver on a watch-glass suspended over the liquid gave a dense whitish precipitate	Congested, and studded with black specks as in the other cases; bloody mucus in the tubes; some tubercular deposit in upper lobes	Fatty; contained fluid blood	

MEDICAL EDUCATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read with some interest Professor Syme's "Observations on the Reform of Medical Education;" and, though I cannot follow him in all he says, I am delighted at the bold way in which he attacks one of the greatest abuses in the University of Edinburgh—an abuse which, I fancy, is only too general in the universities of Scotland. I will quote the passage in his "Observations" to which I refer, and then make one or two comments on it:—

"In addition to the advantages that would proceed directly from such a plan, there is another of no small importance that may be mentioned, which is the prevention of students being examined mainly by their own teachers, especially by those who let it be known that they will require the answers to their questions to be in strict conformity with the views expressed in their lectures. It is well known that when such is the case students will frequently attend lectures without any expectation of benefit, and merely to propitiate their examiners."

When I went to Edinburgh to complete my studies and take the degrees offered by that University, I was of course anxious to know what were the text-books in use, and to my repeated inquiries I was invariably answered, "Take good notes; I only read my notes." This was rather perplexing for one who, having studied for two years in London, had to pass in subjects on which I could have none of the *special* notes. What was to be done? I found out, on inquiry, that one or two of the professors had written small books, by learning off which by heart, and by taking out a class held by them during the summer months, but not as yet recognised by the Senatus, a tolerably sure prospect of passing was held out. I am a bad hand at taking notes; yet, without them, how is the student to be reminded of the subtle distinction between rheumatic fever and acute rheumatism, which one of the professors invariably examines upon? No treatment but that given in their lectures will cure the patient or be accepted in the examination. One must give Stubins Stubins, and Sprigens Sprigens, or else you cannot pass. I will now try to show another great blemish in this system. Men who pass high in Edinburgh—that is, they who have been able to give almost verbatim the

words of Stubins unto Stubins—come to London to be “ground” for the navy and army examinations. Why is this? They are perfectly ignorant of everything but what has been mentioned in the lectures; thus showing that high position in the University is no criterion of professional knowledge beyond that contained in a five months’ course of lectures.

There is another reform required in the universities of Scotland, which Professor Syme has forgotten to mention. By the statutes of the University there are twelve or fourteen subjects for study, on all of which lectures are given and must be attended. By the same statutes, two years may be spent away from the University, in London or elsewhere, and four courses of lectures accepted. Two years *must* be spent in the University. Thus the London student has to cram into two years the work of four; so that while I was at the University I was attending at least four courses of lectures during the winter, each course consisting of one hundred lectures. On the whole, therefore, during two winter sessions of five months, I attended from eight hundred to a thousand lectures of an hour’s duration each: this was in addition to hospital practice and study at home.

Apologising for intruding on your valuable space,

I am, Sir, &c.,

H. A. HUSBAND, M.B., M.C.,

Dowry-sq., Clifton, June 14th, 1869. Memb. Gen. Coun. Univ. Edin.

THE CASE OF HAMILTON VERSUS PENLINGTON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As you have thought the case of *Hamilton v. Penlington*, tried in the Liverpool County Court last Monday week, of sufficient importance to give an outline of it to your readers, will you allow me to mention the circumstances, which do not appear in the brief report from which you quote, which justify the higher charge claimed?

I do not complain of a guinea for each visit when I attended the patient alone; but when I gave up the case to another medical man, and instead of going daily, only went twice a week, and latterly only once a week, and on those occasions had to fix a time, and make other engagements, often at great inconvenience, to accord with that time, I consider that I was entitled to the same consulting fee that I am in the habit of receiving for similar and even less distances. This opinion was corroborated by all the medical witnesses—indeed, some of them stated that they were in the habit of receiving three guineas for a consultation at that distance. The judge appeared as much surprised as the rest of the Court at the verdict, and said to the jury that he was quite unable to see by what process of reasoning they had come to such a conclusion. It is only justice to the jury to say that they were very divided in opinion. After an hour and a half’s absence, they returned into Court unable to come to a decision, and it was only the fear of being locked up for the night that made them come to a unanimous verdict. I am, Sir, yours &c.,

Prince’s-road, Liverpool, June 21st, 1869. ROBERT HAMILTON.

NAVAL STAFF APPOINTMENTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The changes in the naval medical service lately announced in THE LANCET are now about to be effected; and although, as well-wishers to the service, we regard a frequent rotation in staff appointments as desirable, yet we know that much personal hardship must be inflicted by a summary removal of officers appointed under a different system.

The *Army and Navy Gazette* deserves thanks for its remarks on this matter, and many must concur in its opinion that the only cure for the dead lock now existing will be found in equal chances of promotion with the army, where the inspectorial list is not a fictitious one.

The officers about to be dispossessed and baulked in their prospects, may take courage from the assurances and promises given in Parliament on Tuesday night by the First Lord of the Admiralty touching the reduction of Admiralty clerks, “that no one was more anxious than himself

that no personal interests should suffer; and if any such case should come to his knowledge, he would do his best to prevent any injustice.”

For my own part, I think it quite certain that the same consideration awaits officers who have deserved well in war and in foreign service.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

June 24th, 1869.

R. N.

THE MEDICAL CLUB.

THE usual monthly dinner took place at the Club on Wednesday last, Dr. Brady, M.P., in the chair. Amongst the members present were Sir John Gray, M.P., Dr. Lush, M.P., Dr. Brewer, M.P., Mr. Clement, M.P., Dr. Tuke, Mr. Erasmus Wilson, Dr. Evanson, Mr. W. Adams, Dr. Richardson, Dr. Aquilla Smith, Mr. Woolcott, Dr. Rogers, Dr. Forbes Winslow, Dr. Andrew Wood, Dr. Allen, Dr. Wakley, Dr. Stannus Hughes, Mr. Teevan, Dr. Leet, Dr. Lory Marsh, &c.

The dinner was of a most satisfactory character, and the members expressed themselves highly pleased and gratified with the arrangements of the Club.

The Chairman, in proposing the toast of Success to the Medical Club, referred to the great advantage it possessed as a means of social reunion. Through its instrumentality members and friends who would otherwise remain separated, had an opportunity of renewing and strengthening old friendships, while they were continually forming fresh ones. He spoke of the advantage of the Club in a political point of view, and the influence it was capable of exerting upon the Government on all questions relating to medical policy, as well as those of a sanitary and scientific character. In illustration, he stated that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had expressed himself pleased to receive a deputation from the Club upon the sanitary arrangements for the new Law Courts. Dr. Brady expressed his great regret at the apathy evinced by the leading members of the profession in London towards the success of the Club. He said its advantages were so manifold and apparent, that now it was safely established he hoped that apathy would give place to enthusiasm, that its numbers would shortly be largely increased, and the Club become domiciled in a building worthy of the profession, and that its influence would be felt, not only upon the State, but upon the public at large.

THE ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS, EARLSWOOD.

THE first stone of the enlargement of this asylum was laid on Monday last, the 28th ult., by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, accompanied by her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, and suite. The ceremony took place in a handsome marquée, in the presence of a brilliant assemblage, numbering about 3000 persons. The stone having been duly laid, and prayer offered by the Archbishop of Canterbury, upwards of 400 purses were presented by ladies, none of which contained less than five guineas. His Royal Highness was also graciously pleased to lay upon the stone a cheque for one hundred guineas. The royal visitors then partook of a *déjeuner* with a small and select party, and afterwards planted each a tree in the asylum grounds in commemoration of their visit. The numerous questions asked of Dr. Grabham, the medical superintendent, and Mrs. Grabham, by the Prince and Princess, regarding the inmates of the institution, their treatment, employment, and progress, and the deep interest which they took in inspecting various specimens of their work, showed how much they sympathised with the welfare of the institution. After the departure of the Royal party, the annual *fête* for the amusement of the patients took place in the grounds of the asylum, and not less than 4000 visitors were present. The proposed additions comprise an extension of the dining-hall to nearly double its present length; the erection of two blocks containing kitchen and domestic