

quently your remarks would have been the more valuable, and have served as a guide to many in cases of difficulty. I am the more tempted to do this on account of some cases which have recently occurred in my own practice, and which, as they may be considered by some to bear on the subject, I will beg leave briefly to relate.

1. A. B. received a severe injury of the foot, crushing two of the metatarsal bones to such an extent that I found it necessary to take them out; the case progressed favourably until the sixth day, when sloughing commenced, with profuse discharge from the wounds. The heat of the weather was now very oppressive, and symptoms of tetanus appeared; medical treatment proving of no avail, amputation of the leg was performed, but the symptoms gradually increased, and the patient died. The coroner held an inquest on the body, and, without the assistance of the surgeon, the jury gave the verdict.

2. C. R., a poor child, caught fire by the road-side, and was conveyed to the work-house; after lingering a few days it died, and was buried: notice of which having been given to the coroner, he caused it to be disinterred, and held an inquest on the body. This time the surgeon received a summons to attend.

3. F. N. was buried under a slip of earth, and received such severe injuries that he was not expected to live an hour after he was taken out; he, however, gradually rallied, and appeared to be getting better until the ninth day, when he became worse, and died. The jury found the verdict in this case without the evidence of the medical attendant.

4. J. B. being ill, was visited by the surgeon in the evening; blood was taken from the arm, and medicines requested to be sent for in the morning, instead of which a message was received that the man died in the night. An inquest was held, but the surgeon was not summoned.

It is not my intention to offer any remarks upon the cases which I have so briefly noted down. I shall feel quite satisfied if they should be the means of again drawing your attention to the subject. I am daily more convinced that no certain rules exist in the practice of coroners with respect to their requiring the attendance of medical men on inquests, for on conversing with my friends from different parts of the same county, I find the custom of the coroners widely at variance. One gentleman tells me that the coroner for the town he resides in rarely holds an inquest without the assistance of the medical attendant. Another informs me that it is quite a novelty for the coroner in his part of the county to require a surgeon at an inquest. The one alleges as his reason for not summoning medical men, the difficulty he has found in getting his accounts sanctioned by the

magistrates, when the fee for the surgeon appears in the said accounts. The other, I presume, has little difficulty in obtaining the magistrate's assent, or otherwise he would not so often require the attendance of the surgeon. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

CHIRURGUS.

October 24, 1842.

## INFLUENCE OF PRUSSIC ACID ON THE EYES.

*To the Editor.*—Sir,—I shall feel obliged to any reader who has, by personal observation, ascertained the truth on the following points, who will publish the results of his inquiries:—

1. Has prussic acid, directed in vapour against the eyes, or used in any other way, external or internal, any influence on the organs of vision, either in health or disease?

2. Has prussic acid any effect on the cornea? Does it aid in clearing the cornea of opacities, such as those which result from corneitis, or from scrofulous ophthalmia?

3. Has it any effect on the motions or on the mobility of the pupil?

4. Has it any effect on the lens? Does it aid in dissipating the opacity either of lenticular or capsular cataract, or in promoting the absorption of lymph effused into the pupil?

5. Has it any effect on the retina? Is it of any avail in the treatment of amaurosis? I am, &c.,

BORUSSUS.

Aberdeen, Nov. 5, 1842.

## COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

*To the Editor.*—Sir,—Can you inform me whether general practitioners of only six months' standing can present themselves at the College of Surgeons, for examination, without producing any certificates of lectures or hospital practice? Or how long ought they to have been in practice so as to qualify themselves for the recent regulations at the College of Surgeons. Yours respectfully,

Nov. 7, 1842. HENRY BURTON.

\* \* We are not aware that the College has published any distinct regulations on the subject; but we have been informed, through indirect channels, that persons have been admitted to an examination who did not produce the certificates which are specified in the published regulations. If the examinations were public, and they offered a fair means of testing the abilities and acquirements of the candidates, we should offer no objection to the course of proceedings which, it is stated, the Court of Examiners

is now pursuing. We believe it is quite true that persons who have been in practice for some years are now admitted to an examination without being required to produce the customary farrago of "certificates." As an act of courtesy to the profession, the Examiners of the College ought to publish a distinct statement on the subject.

## LAW PROCEEDINGS AT DUDLEY.

*To the Editor.*—Sir,—I think it due, in common justice, to the Apothecaries' Company to state, that on the morning of publication of *THE LANCET* for October 22nd ult., a letter was received by one of "the Seven" (as the medical practitioners of Dudley are facetiously styled by Mr. Lloyd), intimating that the Society had resolved upon prosecuting Mr. Lloyd, and giving instructions on the subject to a highly respectable and talented solicitor. This proceeding, on the part of the Society, has been voluntary, and not forced upon them by the paper published *simultaneously with their address* to the "one of the Seven;" and my object is to disabuse the opinions of the public, who may conceive the measure to have been compulsory, and not the consequence of the free judgment of the Apothecaries' Company. Moreover, you must be aware that owing to the long (law) vacation, and the tedious interval that would, under ordinary circumstances, have elapsed previous to the county assize for Worcester, any steps adopted by the Society would have been nugatory at an earlier period. Apologising for trespassing upon your pages a second time, and authenticating my communication in a separate note, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A SUBSCRIBER.

Dudley, Nov. 1, 1842.

## THE FUNDS OF THE APOTHECARIES' COMPANY.

*To the Editor.*—Sir,—Your correspondent, who wishes to know the appropriation of the money received for the examinations at Apothecaries' Hall, will find, on consulting the report of the Society, printed by order of Parliament, in 1834, that the Court of Examiners does not receive one half of the amount, and that the remainder is applied to the public service. Moreover, he will learn that the Court has no compensation whatever for the examination of unsuccessful candidates, who so frequently shelter themselves under the broader banners of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons: another proof, if such were wanting, of the insufficiency of either of the examinations

of the latter institutions for the purposes of general practice. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

AN OLD APOTHECARY.

9th Nov., 1842.

## LATIN SYMBOLS IN CHEMISTRY.

THE question of the disadvantage to "practical chemists" of employing symbols and a dead language in papers and works relating to chemistry and its processes, being frequently raised by persons who are more engaged in the manufacturing department than that of discovery and instruction, those points have been discussed by Berzelius in the 5th vol. of his "Treatise on Chemistry," in the following manner, and in favour of a resort to the Latin; "and," says the editor of the "Annals of Chemistry" (Oct. 7th), "we earnestly urge chemists of all classes to practise the use of these symbols, whose principal advantage is that they compel writers to think closely, and express their views accurately."—

We choose for these symbols (or chemical signs) the initials of the Latin names of the bodies they are intended to represent. Thus, for instance, we take C=carbon, Cl=chlorine, Cr=chromium, Cu=copper, Co=cobalt.

These initials have been chosen from the Latin nomenclature because that language is recognised by natural philosophers of all countries, and is accessible to all, without requiring to be changed to suit the idioms of different languages. It cannot be disputed that this is an essential advantage, and most of those who have used it acknowledge the same. A French author (Beudant, *Essai d'un Sciences Physiques, Minéralogie*), has had the national vanity to substitute for these initials others, taken from the French language. Should the English, German, and Italian writers pursue a similar course, much of the distinctness and comprehensibility of these formulæ would be lost, without yielding the least advantage: it is, however, to be expected, from the enlightened views of the majority of true philosophers, that they will not sacrifice the advantages enumerated, to such childish vanity. "Science," as Sir Humphry Davy observed, at the presentation of the Copley Medal to Arago, for his discovery of the magnetic state of copper during rotation, "science, like that nature to which it belongs, is limited by neither time nor space; it belongs to the world, and is of no country and of no age."

DANGER and FLANDIN have found, that in poisoning by *antimony*, that metal is not to be found in the lungs, nerves, muscles, or bones, but chiefly in the liver. The antimony may be separated in the same manner as arsenic.—*Chem. Gaz.*