

Surgeon John Henderson, M.D., of the Madras Medical Establishment to be Deputy Surgeon-General.

ADMIRALTY.—The following appointments have been made:—Surgeon Eli T. Eede, to the *Pembroke*, additional; Surgeon Alfred Cropley, to the *Hector*; Surgeon John Jenkins, to the *Defence*; Surgeon Horace Elliott, M.D., to the *Excellent*, additional; Surgeon Ernest D. Minter, to the *Royal Adelaide*, additional; Surgeon John M. Corbett, M.D., to the *Duncan*, additional; Surgeon Patrick B. Handyside, to the *Canada*; Surgeon Robert F. Bowie, to the *Asia*; and Surgeon F. A. Jeans, to the *Penelope*.

YEOMANRY CAVALRY.—Hampshire: Surgeon William England, M.D., resigns his commission.

ENGINEER VOLUNTEERS.—1st Lancashire: Acting Surgeon Edward Williams, from the 1st Flintshire (Buckley) Engineer Volunteer Corps, to be Acting Surgeon.

RIFLE VOLUNTEERS.—1st Volunteer Battalion, the Lancashire Fusiliers: George Herbert Jameson, Gent., M.D., to be Acting Surgeon.—20th Middlesex (Artists): Acting Surgeon William Pasteur resigns his appointment.—2nd Shropshire: Acting Surgeon John Mulville Thomson resigns his appointment.—22nd Middlesex (Central London Rangers): Henry Robert Heather Bigg, Gent., to be Acting Surgeon.—1st Bucks: Honorary Assistant-Surgeon William U. Buée resigns his commission.—1st Volunteer Battalion, the Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment): Surgeon and Honorary Surgeon-Major William H. Folker resigns his commission; also is permitted to retain his rank, and to continue to wear the uniform of the battalion on his retirement.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

CHOLERA AND CHOLERAIC DIARRHŒA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The time of year is approaching when these diseases often more or less prevail, and from reports of their virulence and epidemic character on the Continent at the present time, it surely behoves those who govern, and all sanitary authorities, as well as the people in general, to consider and make sure how far such an epidemic is preventable and can be limited, and these diseases most successfully treated, if such a visitation awaits our shores. Sanitary authorities and regulations are doubtless now more perfect or active and enforced, and due precautions more strictly and generally taken, than when previous like epidemics have occurred in this country; but it may be that time has not served to enable every stronghold favourable for the development of such diseases to be fully overcome, or which may serve for their more wide distribution, and that due hygienic precautions or individual care in the dwellings of many and their surroundings are apt to be overlooked. With regard to treatment, it may be said that wave after wave succeed one another of such epidemics without any agreed verdict thereon as to what affords the greatest benefit, a like great mortality being the general result. Medical boards, colleges, and hospitals, while laying down excellent sanitary regulations and precautions, seem to add little to the old-fashioned store of remedies of the past, or, when an epidemic occurs, seem to be glad to resort to what is merely experimental or empirical in treatment. The voice of experience in one quarter also assumes that of authority, as to large doses of calomel being most efficient; another asserts the like of dilute acids and opium; others assure us that nothing equals castor oil or salines, &c.; while for milder attacks or sporadic cases there is an endless variety of cretaceous preparations, with vegetable astringents, opium, and aromatics. The general result of the treatment of such diseases seems to reflect little credit upon our art, and fails to assure us that we have fully comprehended or mastered their complex character; and in these remarks the writer more particularly refers to their epidemic type, which must not be confounded with their milder or sporadic form, which may, and often do, result from unsuitable food or drink, the effects of a cold or chill, which may be promptly relieved by a mild aperient or stimulant antacid medicine, or any of the popular medicines. In

treatment diarrhœa is the symptom to which attention is most prominently directed in general, to stop which it would seem to be widely assumed as the first and most rational aim towards a beneficial result; but if the attack is from improper and indigestible food, a mild dose of castor oil or tincture of rhubarb, with or without essence of peppermint, would be the most efficient treatment; and if any relaxation continues, some antacid with astringent and anodyne, and perhaps a tonic, as bark, &c., may be called for, and a regulated diet. If the subject is debilitated, or suffers from chronic relaxation, dilute sulphuric acid, with tincture of bark and opium, in small doses, seem to me most beneficial. So-called summer diarrhœa in infancy and childhood is often most suitably treated by the saccharated solution of lime in milk, in some cases with the addition or alternative of tincture of bark, and after debility by hypophosphite of lime, syrup of carbonate of iron, and a nourishing dietary adapted to digestive power, warm clothing, and due sanitary attention; stimulants only being given in any case as necessity may arise, and not as an essential part of the treatment, with food suited to the case. Some years ago a severe epidemic prevailed where I was then in practice, when the above treatment gave very successful results; it seemed to arise from refuse and manure standing at railway sidings or deposited near a dwelling, among which there was much flesh and offal of cattle which had died from an epidemic disease. On explaining matters to the present Speaker, who was then Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, whose family I was then attending, measures were taken to remove the cause of the malarial influence, and the epidemic passed away.

So far with regard to local, individual, or sporadic cholera and choleraic diarrhœa; but, as before remarked, in their epidemic form and Asiatic type, these diseases present far more important features, and must be treated according to the complex character they present; therein these diseases involve much more than vomiting or diarrhœa; and to afford any reasonable hope of success attention must be directed to the complex constitutional condition which exists. Since the epidemic referred to above, the writer has visited climes where such diseases are more common and severe, and has witnessed and heard of the result of varied treatment by those who have large experience in such epidemics, and he regards these diseases in their epidemic and more severe form as involving a condition of vital depression and perversion of the nervous system, more particularly of the sympathetic, and of the organic functions, most prominently displayed in the organs of circulation, nutrition, and secretion, varying in degree or severity of disturbance; venous stasis; and maybe the presence of specific germs called microbes or bacilli; the blood condition also soon becomes perverted. Certain atmospheric and malarial influences would seem to play an important part in producing such depressed vital conditions, and have been noticed by various careful observers. Medicine, in order to be beneficial, must be adapted to restore vital power to the organic functions and give nervous tone; it must be readily assimilated and diffusible in order to promptly re-energise the sympathetic system and ganglia controlling nutrition and secretion, and seems most calculated to correct such functions where disturbed, and to restore them to a healthy standard. Intractable vomiting is certainly promptly relieved in some cases by five or ten grains of calomel when all other remedies fail; but calomel offers no further aid in general, and some forms of chronic diarrhœa and dysentery are often much benefited by small doses of liquor arsenicalis or hydarg. bichlor., with other suitable treatment.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Tunbridge Wells, July 20th, 1885. JAMES R. GREENWAX, M.D.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The ideas which thrust themselves upon my mind may have occurred to many, and may even have been anticipated by action, but I cannot help thinking that, with cholera devastating Spain, and with the chances of its approach to our shores, we, as a body, are very much unprepared to cope with the disease.

The College of Physicians, during the last epidemic, elected a committee, I believe, to report upon the subject, and to suggest the best means of meeting the dreadful scourge. Since that period new light has been thrown upon the etiology of this disease, and I am of opinion that if a

committees were formed by the College of Physicians or other responsible body, who might invite the co-operation of all those who have had special opportunities of observing and treating cholera—e.g., medical officers from India and elsewhere—much valuable information might be concentrated for the guidance of those who have had no such experience, and for the advantage of those who may be attacked by the disease.—I am, Sir, yours truly.

Hampstead, July 16th, 1885.

H. COOPER ROSE, M.D.

"THE ALLEGED CHILD MURDER AT HALTWHISTLE."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Amongst the annotations in your issue of the 18th inst. reference is made to the above case, which was tried at the Newcastle assizes on the 9th inst. As the chief medical witness, I beg to lay the main facts before you.

At about 12 P.M. on May 7th the child was born on the kitchen floor, the woman being on her knees, and no one with her. Blood was found next day about the coal-house, which is several yards from the dwelling. It is supposed that she must have removed the child to this place as soon as possible to prevent discovery by the cry of the child, and so far succeeded. If so, this will explain why its cry was not heard, and which was a matter of surprise to the judges. At 4 A.M. on May 8th she took the child (as she admitted to me) to the ditch, about one hundred yards further away, where it was found by the police, with its face placed at the side of the ditch, the body being hidden by an apron, which was covered by mud and decayed leaves. The bottom of the ditch consisted of semi-solid mud and decayed vegetable matter, in which the child was partially submerged.

I removed the windpipe, lungs, and heart entire. Laying open the trachea and bronchi, I found a complete lining of muddy matter throughout, and on squeezing the lungs a dirty-looking frothy matter exuded, as though the moisture of the mud had been removed by aspiration. The lungs were of a bright-red colour, and had well filled the chest cavity; they were very crepitant, and, when placed in water with the heart attached, floated very perfectly; cut into several pieces, they floated well both before and after strong pressure had been employed repeatedly. The stomach contained two pellets of solid mud, each of the size of an ordinary pea. The heart cavities were empty, as they sometimes are in asphyxia. Both hands were clenched, the ends of the fingers resting in the palms, and contained as much mud as they well could. I had opened the hands before my friend's arrival, when they presented a different appearance; hence the apparent discrepancy of evidence, and which was not explained at the trial. The body was well preserved, its weight being 8½ lb. and length 20 in. The remains of the umbilical cord, which, from its frayed look, must have been torn asunder, measured 17 in. With the above details in view, in the absence of the slightest external appearance of injury, and with none suggestive of death from hæmorrhage, I think there can be no doubt as to the cause of death. I am very glad the poor woman has escaped the graver sentence of the law, and she may be thankful that legal ingenuity has prevailed in the face of facts which are something more than merely suggestive.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

E. B. PELLEW, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. Ed.

Hawthorn House, Haltwhistle, July 21st, 1885.

THE ACCUMULATED FUNDS OF THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL: A SUGGESTION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The enormous accumulated fund of £38,000 in the hands of the General Medical Council, strictly speaking, belongs to the members of the profession, as it is money they have paid for the questionable benefit of having their names appear in the Medical Register, a copy of which is presented to them *gratis*! What other good do we receive for our five guineas? As the Council do not know what to do with the money, some members suggesting one thing and some another, I would suggest that they should send to each registered practitioner in the United Kingdom a copy of the new Pharmacopœia, *free of expense*. What matter the cost;

at least it would be spending the money to some advantage, and would be a benefit to the profession. If it is not legal to spend the money in this way I should make it so.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Burton-on-Trent, July 20th, 1885.

HAROLD RUGG.

A PROBABLE CAUSE OF SWINE FEVER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The widely-spread existence of swine fever at the present time, and its great similarity to typhoid in the human subject, have led me to the conclusion that the food on which the animals are fed, in the neighbourhood of large towns, may have something to do with engendering this disease. It has broken out smartly in this borough, and in the course of my official duties, whilst examining the knackers' yards, I found that the flesh of every animal, "diseased or healthy," brought to the yards, is boiled down into "soup," then put into tubs or barrels, and sold to pig-keepers to feed pigs upon. I am told it is sent all over the country. The meat is chiefly sent to London to feed cats and dogs. What effect soup prepared from the putrid abominations of a knacker's yard may have on the economy of a pig I am not prepared to say; but of its effect on the human economy, if such a compound were swallowed, I should say there could not be two opinions. Swine fever has broken out at one knacker's yard here, where pigs are kept and fed on this soup, and I understand that all through the country, where knackers' yards exist, this soup is made and sold to pig-feeders. I hope that by calling the attention of my brother health officers to this disgusting practice, through the medium of your widely-read and influential journal, public attention may also be directed to it, and steps taken to put it down.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Gateshead, July 18th, 1885.

WILLIAM ROBINSON, M.D.

"FEAR OF FALLING" DISEASE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In regard to the letter on the "Falling Sickness," contributed by a correspondent (Mr. Curran), detailing its occurrence to travellers in India, I may note the case of a gentleman from Bolton who some years since visited York Cathedral. His party had gone round all the lower parts of the edifice, and was then directed up the winding staircase on to the roof and tower, to see the view from the top. Notwithstanding the presence of ample balustrades and space to walk, he soon became affected with falling sensations, inclining him to tumble over, and declined to proceed further, and so had to be carried to the nearest stairs and assisted to descend. The desire and the ability to practise mountaineering, or to scale heights and descend declivities, would seem to be a distinct faculty of the mind, which may be impaired or extinguished by bodily sickness. I may adduce the case of another person, in whom tropical fever had the effect of injuring the ability to climb heights, which had been previously a source of gratification. People, therefore, who find they have lost this power should avoid all "devil's corners," such as is well illustrated in the *London News* of last Saturday, in a view in New Zealand.

I remain, Sir, yours sincerely,

London, July, 1885.

VIATOR.

LUNACY LAW AMENDMENT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is satisfactory to find that the Government intend to introduce into the House of Commons, and it possible to pass a measure, during the present session of Parliament, for the purpose of legalising the temporary care of lunatics in workhouses. It is due to the public, and it is to be hoped that advantage will be taken of the opportunity thus offered by the partial reopening of the question of Lunacy Law Amendment, to deal at the same time with the question of giving medical certificates in cases of insanity. Daily experience gives further proof that the subject is a burning one, and does not admit of delay. Recently two cases have come within the immediate cogni-