

advantages connected with it, which Dr. Falconer points out as rendering it worthy of attention. "It is an apparatus simple in construction and in its principle of working. No injury can arise from any error in the employment of it. Its adjustment occupies considerably less time than the ordinary stomach-pumps. The contents of the stomach are removed much more quickly than by the ordinary apparatus, and they ascend into the receiver in one steady and continuous stream. The jerking action of the usual stomach-pump is wholly avoided, and the danger of thus injuring the coats of the stomach evaded. The apparatus now proposed for use is infinitely much cleaner than any stomach-pump now in use, inasmuch as the latter frequently, if not always, contain some, if not a large, amount of impurity collected around the piston and valves, the produce of their working or decompositions resulting from the fluids brought into contact with them, and also by the too often filthy state in which they are left after use. So great, indeed," says Dr. Falconer, "as far as I have been able to ascertain, is the amount of impurities to be found in many stomach-pumps in use, that an advocate for the defence of a prisoner charged with an attempt, whether successful or not, to poison, might, I apprehend, very properly demand some information respecting the state of the instrument employed in removing the contents of the stomach, and urge that doubts as to the condition of those contents might be entertained by the court. The materials of which the apparatus now suggested for use in lieu of the ordinary stomach-pumps is made ensures cleanliness, and the fluid removed from the stomach will have its integrity safely preserved. It flows direct from the stomach into the receiver, where, by means of the caps, which can be properly secured by tape and sealing-wax, it can be transmitted to any distance for the purpose of analysis. I am disposed to regard that the analysis of even a small quantity of fluid thus removed from the stomach would be more satisfactory than a larger amount obtained by the usual means. I have endeavoured, and I trust fairly, to point out the advantages of the apparatus I have suggested. Should it prove useful, my object will be gained. I cannot, however, conclude without expressing my thanks to Messrs. Weiss for the care and attention they have paid to the manufacture of the apparatus, and to state that by them only is it made."

THE SERPENTINE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your constant advocacy of sanitary measures, and your powerful support in the Serpentine crusade, as well as the partial success which crowned your efforts, embolden me to crave a column for the same subject. It will be well to premise, that the result of your leading articles on the Serpentine, in 1848, was a partial cleansing of the pond, and a promise of an increased supply of water. In accordance with your suggestion, pipes were laid down from Buckingham Palace to the Gothic bridge. But there seems to be a fatality about the Board of Woods and Forests. If the nation confides to their care property of great value, it suddenly becomes valueless in their hands; if they put down pipes, no water will pass through them. Even Artesian wells (said to be inexhaustible) become dried up under their control, so that, under an improved arrangement, there is actually now less water than ever in the Serpentine. The cascade is still an architectural fiction, and the leg-of-mutton pond a reality of putrefying slush. Perhaps, however, for vanity's sake, they may at last do what ought to have been done from a better motive. Those who have authority in London should speedily proceed to put things to rights, for since the humblest individual sets his house in order to receive visitors, should not the Queen of Nations, and the modern Rome, prepare to receive the strangers who will throng her shores and crowd its thoroughfares at the great gathering of all nations, to celebrate the universal jubilee of Commerce?

In my humble opinion, one of the best preparations that could be made would be, to sweep away the Board which presides over the Woods and Forests, as its incompetency is now

a matter of public notoriety. And in regard to the improvement of the Serpentine, I will draw your attention to a plan furnished to the Commissioners of Sewers by their agricultural surveyor, Mr. Donaldson, and which has lately been published by an esteemed contemporary, *The Builder*.

"I propose to lay down, temporarily, a two-foot pipe from the Ranelagh Sewer into the lower end of the Serpentine, where it is deepest, and to enclose a space of about fifteen yards in length by four in width over the end of the pipe in the river, with strong hoarding up to the level of the water, into which I mean to discharge the mud by means of barges, to be flushed through the pipe into the sewer, and thence into the river Thames, where there being already millions of cubic yards of mud of a much more objectionable quality, the addition of the few thousands of yards of mud we have here is of very little consequence.

"And for taking up the mud I propose to have two barges coupled together side by side about ten feet apart, bearing between them a square wooden tube six feet in width, four feet in depth, and sixty or seventy feet in length, the one end of it resting on pivots upon the two barges, the other being suspended by a crane or windlass, with tackle for raising or lowering it, as may be necessary, according to the depth of the water and mud, both ends of this tube being open; and when one end of the tube is let down into the mud, the barges being propelled forward, the tube will shovel up the mud, which, sliding up the inside of the tube, will drop into a tender at its upper end: by this tender the mud will be carried and discharged into the hoarding over the outlet pipe. Several tenders will be requisite for this purpose." The cost was estimated at about £1100.

Without venturing to affirm that this is the best plan to be adopted, one thing is certain, that any set of men, except those of the Woods and Forests, would contrive to throw sufficient water into the Serpentine to tempt the approach of our friends from foreign climes—so that instead of being nauseated by the offensive smells a summer's sun cannot fail to extract from its foul depths, they may turn from the wonders of industry to gaze on the refreshing, bright, clear, ripple of a pellucid lake, (a London one though it may be.)

Something then ought to be done, and now, while the cold season lasts, is the time for action.

In conclusion: if the welfare of the British constitution depends upon the maintenance of a Board so effete as the Woods and Forests, by all means let it still pursue in peace the injudicious management of all that is confided to it; but Sir, let us hope that as you were successful last year in obtaining from them the pipes, they will now attend to your request if you ask for the water. I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

York-street, Portman-square, Dec. 24, 1850.

E. J. TILT.

THE ANALYTICAL SANITARY COMMISSION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I perceive that you propose introducing a new department into THE LANCET for this year, to consist of reports of an "Analytical Sanitary Commission." It appears to me that this project entitles you to the thanks of the profession and the public. A public journalist who spontaneously adopts and initiates a scheme so peculiarly, so inexpressibly useful, proves his ability for the important office which he undertakes. I consider the apathy hitherto, of the profession, to the notorious and systematic adulterations of the food of the people, and to these adulterations as sources of multifarious disease, is a matter disgraceful to us. And I conceive that as no department of your journal will be more fertile of the best practical fruits than the proposed new one—so none will be more popular.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ROBERT DICK.

Ravenscourt-villas, New-road, Hammersmith, Jan. 1851.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF DR. MERRIMAN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I shall be much obliged by your making the following corrections in the Memoir of Dr. Merriman.

The Memoir of John Callow is in the 23rd vol., new series of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. 1845.

Anecdotes of Julian Clement, of Daniel Turner, M.D., and of Drs. Bathurst and Baylie, in the 24th vol. 1845.

Notice of Gideon de Lawne and his family in the 28th vol. 1847.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Brook-street, Dec. 1850.

S. W. J. MERRIMAN.