

## STATEMENT RELATIVE TO A CASE OF HYDROPHOBIA CURED BY CHLOROFORM.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent of the 9th September, I beg to state that I have made every inquiry touching the questions suggested by him as to the time which had elapsed between the bite of the cat and the manifestation of the disease, and find that it was ten years and a few months; but the labourer in question, being a very illiterate man, is not able to give the exact date.

He states positively that he could not have received the poison in any other way at any subsequent period. The cat had strayed from its home about two miles, and was amongst some gooseberry bushes in a garden where he was working at the time it flew at him; that it was foaming at the mouth, and would not let go its hold until it was killed by his brother, who was at work with him.

The cat had previously bit three children and one dog. The children were all subjected to the actual cautery, and (so far as he knows) all escaped the disease; but he left the country shortly afterwards, and, consequently, knows nothing of them for several years. The dog died of hydrophobia.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

RICH. YATES ACKERLEY.

Prince Edwin-street, Liverpool, Sept. 21st, 1848.

## POULTICES AND PILINE.

"What's in a name."—SHAKESPEARE.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Permit me to make a remark or two on the criticisms of M. Velpeau's use of poultices by a writer in your last number, who informs us that he is the inventor of the "spongio-piline."

M. Velpeau, it may be presumed, prefers poultices to sponges or layers of lint, because he has found them more useful, and otherwise deserving preference. Thin sponges, or sliced sponge covered with oil-cloth, were at one time much used in France; and between these and the "spongio-piline" there is the same difference with respect to heat-retaining power, that exists between a blue coat and a black one; no greater than exists probably between an advertised vessel for cooking potatoes, which its ingenious inventor has called the anhydro hepseterion, and other ordinary means. A hard or ridiculous name, though it may bring pence to the pocket of the patentee, does not change the nature of things.

Poultices are superior to sponges and other similar means, not only by retaining more heat, but, in many cases, by combining an useful support. None of these expedients preserve the heat long, which, as M. Velpeau says, is soon transferred to the body; but it is obvious that by covering the poultice with oil-cloth, the moisture can be retained by it as well as by a sponge.—I am, Sir, yours very obediently,

Sept. 25th, 1848.

COMMON-SENSE AND HONESTY.

## WEIGHT OF THE HUMAN BRAIN.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—I observe in a late number of THE LANCET a reference by a correspondent to a statement contained in my work on Cholera, respecting the weight of the brain of an European soldier, as compared with the weight of Cuvier's brain. My weights are all expressed in avoirdupois, as appears from the letters "Av." inserted opposite this very case. The weights your correspondent cites from Tiedemann are in Troy. If he will take the trouble to reduce the one into the other, he will find that the two weights nearly agree. Thus the Troy ounce contains 480 grains, and the Troy pound 5760. The avoirdupois ounce contains 437.5 grains, and the pound 7000. The grains of both are alike. The weights of the brains (that is to say, the entire encephalon) of Cuvier and Dupuytren, expressed in grains, are respectively 28,590 and 27,840. In my case the weight of the *cerebrum alone* is 27,555, and the weight of the encephalon 29,106.

I have taken the weights cited by your correspondent, without referring to Tiedemann, but of course they are correct. I was, however, under the impression that the weight of Cuvier's brain was sixty-three ounces av., which is exactly equal to that of the cerebrum in my observation.

My case is certainly a very singular one, not merely on account of the large size of the cerebrum, but on account of the small size of the cerebellum, and of the disproportion thence induced in the relative weights of these organs to each other.

If the relative weight of the cerebellum to the cerebrum may be considered as 1 to 7.5 or 8, in the case under discussion the proportion undergoes the extraordinary alteration of 1 to 18.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

Upper Seymour-street, Portman-square, Sept. 30th, 1848.

E. A. PARKES.

## MEDICAL FEES AT ASSURANCE OFFICES.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Deeming it important that the assurance offices which refuse to remunerate medical men for their services should be known to the profession, I send the following facts to you, the well-known advocate of our just rights, and have the honour to subscribe myself, Sir, yours, &c.,

Sept. 23rd, 1848.

ST. JOHN W. LUCAS.

Early in this month, Mr. — applied to the Equitable Assurance Company, to effect an assurance on his life, and referred the directors to me, as the medical man able to give them the information they required; in consequence of which I received the following printed form, which I enclose:—

Equitable Assurance Office,  
Near Blackfriars-bridge, Sept. 7th, 1848.

SIR,—The directors of this Society, having been referred to you for an account of the present and general state of health of Mr. —, will be obliged to you for such information respecting his constitution and general manner of living as shall enable them to determine on the safety and propriety of assuring his life in this office.—I am, with the compliments of the directors, Sir, your obedient servant,

St. John Wells Lucas, Esq.

ARTHUR MORGAN, Actuary.

(COPY OF REPLY.)

Louth, Lincolnshire, Sept. 8th, 1848.

SIR,—I shall have great pleasure in giving you the information you require, respecting the health of Mr. —, on receiving from you the usual professional fee of £1 1s.

Of late years it has been too much the habit of assurance offices to expect a medical man to give a professional opinion without remuneration, forgetting that both his time and his talents are concerned in the inquiry.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Arthur Morgan, Esq.

ST. JOHN W. LUCAS.

After the lapse of a few days, the party applying to the Society wrote to inform me that he had received a letter from the Equitable Office, requesting him to furnish the company with the name of some other medical man who knew the state of his health. I therefore despatched the following to the secretary of the office in question.

Louth, Sept. 12th, 1848.

SIR,—Mr. — informs me that you desire to be furnished with the name of some other medical man who knows the state of his health. As the purpose of the Equitable Office is evidently to evade paying a fee for a professional opinion, I have recommended Mr. — to insure in an office which respects the just claim of medical men to remuneration in these cases.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Arthur Morgan, Esq.

ST. JOHN W. LUCAS.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—I take the liberty of forwarding a copy of a correspondence which took place between the secretary of an assurance office and your obedient servant,

Sept. 26th, 1848.

EDWARD GIBSON.

Eagle and Protector Life Association,  
3, Crescent, Bridge-street.

SIR,—A proposal having been made to the directors of this Association to effect an assurance on the life of Mr. —, and reference given to you for information as to his present and general health, I am desired by him to request that you will favour them by answering, at your earliest convenience, the several questions on the annexed half-sheet.

I have also to inform you that your communication will be considered by the directors as strictly confidential.

I am, Sir, your very obedient, humble servant,

CHARLES JELlicoe, Actuary and Secretary.

Mr. — will oblige the directors by answering the following questions respecting the health and constitution—

(Here follow the questions by which the directors are to be obliged.)

1, Hawley-terrace, Camden-town,  
August 31st, 1848.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your circular relative to the assurance of Mr. — life. I never answer such without first receiving the usual fee from the directors, well knowing that any information I possess is for their benefit, and upon the receipt of which I shall give the case the due attention it merits, and reply to your questions.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
EDWARD GIBSON, M.D., M.R.C.S.E.

Charles Jellicoe, Esq., Secretary,  
Eagle and Protector Life Association,  
3, Crescent, Bridge-street.

Medical Notes.

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.—In the first number of an able little periodical which has reached us, entitled the *Anglo-Jewish Magazine*, the middle-age Hebrew philosopher, Maimonides, is represented as having anticipated Sir Charles Bell in showing that the nerves were “the instruments of sense and motion” respectively. No passages from the learned author are, however, quoted. It may be well here to remark—as we have done before—that it was not Sir Charles Bell who first pointed out that the anterior and posterior roots of the spinal nerves have separate functions, but that it was Mr. Alexander Walker; and there is shortly to be published in *THE LANCET* some papers illustrative of Mr. Walker’s views, and of the diversities between his opinions and those of Bell, Majendie, &c.

MEDICAL SCHOOLS IN RUSSIA.—The medical schools of Russia are carried on in a grand and becoming manner, and they are plentifully supplied in every respect. The studies must extend over five years, each year beginning in August, and terminating in June. The whole of May is given up to examinations; all the courses last the full year, and every student is obliged to attend them, irrespectively of the peculiar branch of medical science he may wish to study. There are six *censures*, or examinations. If the candidate do not give satisfaction with the first three, he is put back for one year; but when he has creditably passed five, he obtains his doctor’s degree. The sixth is only attempted by those who are looking for state appointments. The fourth and fifth years are especially dedicated to clinical instruction; after which, the young men may settle in any part of the empire.

BURIAL OF PERSONS APPARENTLY DEAD.—The Medico-Chirurgical Society of Milan has lately expressed a wish that rooms for the reception of corpses (as they exist in some parts of Germany) should be established; likewise that the dead should not be buried until signs of decomposition became manifest. Three medical officers would be appointed to ascertain, both in the above-mentioned rooms and in the deceased persons’ residences, the characteristic signs of dissolution &c.

FRENCH NAVAL MEDICAL SERVICE.—A call for reform in the French naval medical service has issued from the surgeons of the naval school of Toulon; for it would seem that this service, as in England is also the case, has been overlooked in the improvements which have been brought about in the medical service of the army. The first appeal is that the naval be assimilated to the army medical service. At the head of the navy medical department is an inspector-general, whose power is despotic, although under the control of the minister of marine—a control which is but nominal. Instead of this, a central council of three members is proposed, meeting in Paris, and selected from the three chief ports of the country. Other changes are advocated, as in the mode of promotion, and in the *concours*, which is carried on to the injury of the medical officers, &c.

THE CHOLERA IN CONSTANTINOPLE AND ALEXANDRIA; EFFECT OF LOCALITY ON ITS APPEARANCE.—That errors of diet have a great deal to do with the attacks of cholera, when the disease is epidemic, is shown by the increase of mortality which the advent of the Ramazan produced at Constantinople. It is well known that at this period great excesses follow very severe fasting. The Ramazan began on the 31st of July, and the first week’s return then gave 113 deaths from cholera. From the 31st to the 9th of August, the number rose to 197; and from the 10th to the 17th of the same month, it reached 201; but from the 17th to the 24th, it again fell to 165. And to show that the Ramazan really augmented the mischief, it may be noticed that in casting up the deaths of these three weeks, we shall have a total of 563, which were thus divided:—

Mussulmen 226, Greeks 151, Armenians 153, Jews 30. The first in the list, being strict observers of the Ramazan, are the most numerous. Another remarkable episode of the history of the disease may here be mentioned. At Koubeli, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, there are cavalry barracks which can accommodate from 1200 to 1500 men. Hard by is an hospital which had formerly been used as a lazaretto. As several cases of cholera broke out in the barracks, the soldiers there were ordered to leave them, and pitch a camp on a neighbouring hill. The attacks of the disease became very rare; when suddenly, in the night between the 14th and 15th of August, the cholera broke out with such intensity, that above 100 men were seized in the space of a few hours. The next day, 16th, 102 cases were reported; on the 17th, 75; on the 18th, 26; on the 19th, 15; on the 20th, 13; on the 21st, none; on the 22nd, none; in fact, the disease had disappeared. In six days the disease had attacked 331 men, who were conveyed to the above-mentioned hospital; from whom, up to the 22nd of August 170—viz., more than half—had already died. Now, how is this sudden inroad of the epidemic, and, not less wonderful, its sudden disappearance, to be explained? Investigations relative to the peculiarities of the locality have led to no definite solution of this puzzling problem. This incident ought certainly to hold a prominent place in the history of the cholera, and will be rather a hard nut for contagionists to crack. We will close these few remarks by giving our readers a table, by which the rate of mortality by cholera in large cities may pretty accurately be measured. The disease broke out at Alexandria on the 25th of July; the population is about 80,000. The mortality up to the 8th of August was as follows:—

July 25th .....	1	August 1st .....	103
” 26th .....	1	” 2nd .....	123
” 27th .....	7	” 3rd .....	133
” 28th .....	12	” 4th .....	193
” 29th .....	17	” 5th .....	252
” 30th .....	90	” 6th .....	247
” 31st .....	105	” 7th .....	210
		” 8th .....	203

At Cairo, however, where the population is treble, the mortality reached only 296. On the 5th of August, it had fallen to 150.

*L’Union Médicale* has published several private communications which that journal received from the various places where the cholera has broken out. From these we perceive that at Stettin the disease reigned with the greatest intensity in a certain district called *Lastadie*, which is thickly inhabited by labouring people, penned up in high houses and small rooms. This part of the town is made still more unhealthy by containing a large slaughter-house, which spreads around the most offensive effluvia. The cholera here made more victims in August 1848, in the short space of three weeks—viz., 275—than in seventeen weeks, when the disease reigned in 1831 and 1837. Let this be a lesson to the authorities of this country; we know of several parts of London where slaughter-houses, if we are visited by the disease, will be as fatal to human beings as they are to cattle.

A MEDICAL MAN IN TROUBLE.—Dr. Pinel Grandchamp, who, unfortunately for him, was Mayor of the twelfth district of Paris in June last, and who, in spite of many kind acts by which his period of office was marked, allowed himself to be involved in the insurrection, of which his district was the chief focus, has just been condemned to transportation, to the great regret of his professional brethren, by whom he was much esteemed.

GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF THE MEDICAL MEN OF ITALY.—The project of a general association of all the medical men of Italy seems to be gaining ground. On the 25th of last July, a large meeting was held at Turin, Dr. Trompeo, the great promoter of the association, in the chair. Resolutions were passed, to the effect that the Piedmontese Association should take the name of Piedmontese Section, and that it should act in unison with the Lombardian section. The sections will be divided into provincial committees &c. The same agitation is prevailing in Tuscany, and in the papal states. The aim is to put everywhere extensive and far-spread associations in the place of petty and jealous corporations.

PROFESSIONAL LOYALTY.—Sir Philip Crampton, Bart., with several noblemen and gentlemen, waited on his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, at the Viceregal Lodge, last week, with an address, or declaration, against repeal, signed by upwards of 80,000 persons, determined to maintain the union between Great Britain and Ireland. The address in question was signed by upwards of 260 physicians and surgeons.