

appeared any cardialgia, or acid taste, in the mouth, I gave carbonate of magnesia instead of the rhubarb. By this method vitiated bile was carried off, colic, diarrhoea, and dysentery, were prevented; and on the third day the patients were able to resume their usual avocations. Only in one instance did there appear a case of a second attack, and in this instance the only proof of the first attack was in the relation of the patient himself."

Reports of 23 of the cases were added in an appendix.

The paper was heard with great attention, and the thanks of the Society were voted to Mr. Hall.

#### WESTMINSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY.

*Saturday, January 14th and 21st, 1832.*

Dr. STEWART in the Chair.

A paper on the application of phrenology, to the purposes of medicine, was read on the 14th, by Mr. FORBES WINSLOW, but we can only find space to advert to it at present.

Dr. WILSON PHILIP.

Dr. FERGUSON commenced the business of the 21st, by calling the attention of the members to a pamphlet on cholera, lately published by Dr. Wilson Philip, who he considered had made a most unwarrantable use of the name of the Westminster Medical Society, in advertising his pamphlet as "a paper which had been drawn up at the request of that institution," although, as was well known, the paper in question had encountered opposition, as the production of one who was not a member. He thought the name of the Society ought not to be made use of in the puffing of any man's works. Dr. Ferguson then proposed a resolution expressive of this opinion.

Dr. CRANE seconded the motion,

But after some remarks, condemnatory and exculpatory, from different members, an amendment was substituted, complaining of the unauthorised statement in the advertisement alluded to, and leaving further proceedings on the subject in the hands of the Committee.

The anatomy question was deferred to next Saturday.

A paper on the rhinoplastic operation was then read by Mr. COSTELLO, but we have not room for a report of it this week.

#### NEW METHOD OF DIVIDING

THE

#### FACIAL NERVE.

By E. B. SHERRIFFS, Esq., Surgeon, Brechin.

DURING the past summer my advice has been requested in several very distressing cases of neuralgic affections in the face, the most of which the attending surgeons have considered as seated in the portio dura of the seventh pair of cerebral nerves. In such cases I have been very unwilling to hazard my opinion as to the nerve affected, more particularly when I considered Bell's experiments on the nervous system with a view to prove that certain nerves have certain faculties, and that pain can only be felt in nerves of sensation. Should this be considered as conclusive proof, then dividing this nerve could be of no use. He considers it a respiratory nerve, and I now entertain little doubt as to the accuracy of his assertion; hence I never would divide the portio dura, unless with a view to assist in weaning the sceptic from his unbelief.

With the above intention, and to assist in confirming the opinions of this deserving surgeon, the rules given for performing the operation are so intricate and so pregnant with danger to the patient, that I never yet saw any one who would attempt the operation; and it is well known, and deeply to be lamented, that anatomical knowledge is too scanty among the generality of countryp surgeons in Britain, to exculpate them in undertaking any such operation, without having at the time intentionally studied the parts on the dead.

I shall just now give a brief account of the operation for dividing the nerve as formerly recommended, and as it passes from the foramen stylo-mastoideum; and I am sure no man in his sound senses, however skilled in anatomy, will undertake it on the patient. "The patient's head being turned to the side opposite that on which the operation is to be performed, introduce a narrow, spear-pointed, bistoury, close by the mastoid process of the temporal bone, with the back downwards or sacrad, and the cutting edge upwards or coronad, and the point looking also upwards or coronad obliquely to the base of the cranium; this should be pushed onwards to the bone, and afterwards carried upwards in the direction of the ear between the styloid and mastoid processes, so as to divide the nerve!!!" The rules are good, but put them in practice.

To show that this cannot be so easily done, I have, both in Scotland and Ireland, seen this operation gone through in a surgical class-room, and that very gravely, be-

fore two or three hundred students, and have afterwards traced the same nerve on the same subject, and on the same side the operation was performed, through its whole extent, undivided or untouched! This, then, is enough, I should suppose, for that operation.

I am now then to submit to the profession the operation I deem prudent, as being safe, sure, and easy, and one which I have regularly taught, while it was my duty to superintend the dissections of students.

I never attempt its division till such time as it has passed into the substance of parotid, and then having placed the subject, I make an incision through skin, cervical fascia, and parotid, deepening gradually, immediately anterior to the lobe of the ear, or half way betwixt zygoma and angle of inferior maxilla, until such time as I expose the nerve. I then trace it back, to make sure of having got it, before its division into tempo-ro-facial and cervico-facial branches, and then having done so I remove part of the nerve altogether, as, after simple division, the cut extremities soon unite.

In this operation we cut no important part, and we command all the branches of the nerve, unless two or three given off before, and immediately on escaping from the stylo-mastoid foramen. Great care must be taken of the external carotid artery, or it may be wounded, and require a ligature.

Brechin, Dec. 1831.

## INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHOLERA AT SUNDERLAND.

LETTER FROM DR. CLANNY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me to return you my best thanks for the readiness with which you inserted my last communication. I feel much reluctance, after having showed up a certain editor, to resume the, to me, painful task of setting him and his readers right in the few points to which he even now adheres.

Every man in our very respectable, though poor profession, who takes any interest in the subject of epidemic cholera, must know the trying and delicate position in which the present writer was placed during the first days of the visitation of that disease at Sunderland. It was, and still is, to him a subject of felicitation, that his professional brethren voluntarily expressed their full approbation of his conduct, in a most flattering address, at a time when the zeal of commercial enterprise displayed itself in a manner that did no credit to his fellow towns-

men. However, the eyes of the people, by the spread of this disease to the neighbouring towns, are now sufficiently opened.

I was highly gratified by the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council having been pleased, by letter dated Council Office, White Hall, 18th November, to express to me their sense of the value of my services as connected with the recent appearance of disease at Sunderland.

It was not to be supposed that I communicated to such distinguished personages the discoveries I had made upon that very disease, nor did their Lordships, I believe, intend any cutting reply to a person they had, so recently, so highly honoured. I could say much more upon this subject, but shall reserve the particulars for a more suitable season.

"The editor" remarks "that he could not have animadverted on the doctor from any private or sinister motive." I believe it is an axiom in law, that an accredited agent, or publisher, is held equally responsible with the principal. When "the editor" or his friends take the trouble to refute me by direct experiments, or by an honest statement of facts, we shall be on a footing, but not till then.

"The editor," not the present writer, was the first to mention Dr. Jenner; and for the purpose of drawing a most invidious distinction between the two physicians. Again; he mentions Dr. Jenner's "discovery." Now what is the fact? Nearly fifty years ago the cow-pox having affected the hands of the milkers in the county of Dorset, they found that having passed through such disease, they were, *ipso facto*, rendered safe from the attacks of small-pox; and one individual had the sagacity and courage to try the experiment of vaccination on himself, and succeeded, it is said, completely. Thus the first vaccinator was a rustic. Many facts were upon this subject communicated to the late Sir George Baker, and Dr. Jenner, residing in another dairy county, having witnessed the diseases with similar consequences, pursued the hint with distinguished talents and success. The "discovery" was with the first inoculator most certainly.

As to our disease, all the world now knows that as every medical man in the town of Sunderland considered himself competent to the administration of salt and water, laudanum and brandy, heat and frictions, blood-letting and blistering, ice or hot irons, as directed *ex cathedra*. How could I, or any other "country physician," *a l'instant*, expect that anything I had to say would, after such authority, be attended to in treating the new disease? There is one thing we all know, viz., the facility with which we may accuse, and the difficulty of rebut-