

of the discovery of anæsthesia is given to Morton of Massachusetts—"Morton, to whom belonged the immortal honour of having been the first to demonstrate that prolonged anæsthesia could be safely produced by means of ether." It is simply for the sake of justice and truth that I write to declare that there is strong evidence to show that Dr. Crawford W. Long, practising in the town of Jefferson, in the State of Georgia, deserves the credit of having been the discoverer of prolonged anæsthesia by means of ether. His first operation under ether narcosis was done in March, 1842—four years before the time of the supposed discovery by Morton. The facts of the case are well brought out by Dr. Luther B. Grandy,<sup>1</sup> of Atlanta, Va., in an article in the *Virginia Medical Monthly*, October, 1893, by means of which he was forced into a contest with Dr. W. R. Hayden (of viburnum compound fame), who bitterly urged the counterclaim of Morton. As an evidence of the great amount of doubt in regard to Morton's claims of priority there is a white marble monument in Boston (where Morton publicly made known his supposed discovery) which bears the simple inscription: "To the Discoverer of Anæsthesia." Does that show that it is acknowledged, even by the people who saw what was done, that Morton was the discoverer? On the contrary, there stands in Paris a marble statue of Crawford W. Long, an enduring witness to the truth; and the Georgia Legislature will place his statue in the National Gallery of Statues in Washington as a fitting recognition of the immortal greatness of her son. Marion Sims published a piece on the subject in the *Virginia Medical Monthly*, May, 1877, in which it is demonstrated beyond practical doubt that Long is the true "modern immortal." It is in the interest of all science that the truth be known, and that not the slightest deviation from it be allowed; and I hope that in this case the truth will surely prevail. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*

I am, Sirs, yours very sincerely,

Lynchburg, Va., March 13th, 1895. S. P. PRESTON, M.D.

## "PROVISION FOR YOUNG IMBECILES."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As a guardian of the poor in a country union I ask to be allowed to say a few words in confirmation of the needs of which Dr. Shuttleworth has written. On coming to a country union from the metropolitan district I was astonished to find that no provision was made for idiots or imbeciles beyond the county lunatic asylums for adults. I found idiot children running about in the sick wards of the workhouse without any special care or attempt at training, while in a London union they would at once have been sent off to Darenth. This difference in the mode of treatment between London and the country I am utterly unable to understand; the children can only become worse till they are hopeless and have to be sent to the asylum for adult lunatics. Inquiries at all the county asylums for idiots showed that two or three were willing to take pauper children who were thought to be capable of improvement, and after much trouble I succeeded in getting two sent to the asylum at Star-cross, a journey of great expense, and with accommodation entirely inadequate to the needs of all the southern counties. As the subject has been discussed by Poor-law authorities during many years it is almost incredible that no action has yet been taken; we can only go on stating facts till the county councils are impressed with the need of establishing asylums sufficient for the needs, not only of pauper children, but of others also who by timely training might be saved from becoming life-long burdens on the rates. But in asking for educational asylums I would not limit the demand to the most hopeful of the children in workhouses. I would like to see all idiots and imbeciles removed, for the nurses in those institutions are far too few to be able to take proper care of them, and are already in almost all instances overworked. Let the worst as well as the best among them be removed and classified in an asylum, where each and all could have the best care and not be placed, as I have seen them, in wards with lunatics and adults. I would only add that the opening of many more schools or homes for the feeble-minded, who can hardly be classed with either idiots or imbeciles, is urgently called for, the two or three already existing being utterly inadequate for the number of such to be found in every workhouse and pauper school, and who are

unable to benefit by the instruction given there. I may add that I am convinced the numbers far exceed those given in the recent report of the Local Government Board.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

April 11th, 1895.

LOUISA TWINING.

## "THE RESULTS UPON THE TESTICLE OF LIGATURE OR DIVISION OF THE VAS DEFERENS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—At the conclusion of his interesting lecture on the above subject, published in THE LANCET of April 13th, Dr. Joseph Griffiths deals briefly with the matter as affecting man, and sums up as follows: "It would hence seem that mere division, ligature, or occlusion of the vas deferens does not lead to atrophy of the seminal tubules; but if in case of division *there is, in addition, some damage to the other structures of the cord*, destructive changes, followed by atrophy and ultimate disappearance of the seminal cells, are liable to occur." As having a practical bearing upon this question, may I be allowed to call attention to a short communication which I published in THE LANCET of March 7th, 1891, upon "The Effect of the Division of Certain Constituents of the Spermatic Cord" &c. In that communication I recorded three cases in which to my knowledge not only the vas deferens but also the spermatic veins and artery, with the other structures which go to complete the formation of what is commonly designated the spermatic cord, had been completely divided without any apparent damaging effect upon the nutrition of the testicle, a condition of things of which, so far as I am aware, no previous mention had been made in surgical literature. From these cases and from some other evidence which had come under my notice I drew the following deduction: "that division of the vas deferens, spermatic veins, and spermatic artery [i.e., practically the whole spermatic cord] is not necessarily followed by sloughing or even by subsequent wasting of the testicle *provided that a perfectly aseptic condition of the wound is maintained.*" At the date of my communication the time which had elapsed since the division of the structures indicated was not, perhaps, sufficient to permit of a reliable prognosis as to the final condition of the testicle in these cases. I have, however, quite recently had an opportunity for examining one of the patients concerned, and found the testicle (more than four years after the division of the cord) of normal size and consistence, and with its peculiar sensation indistinguishable in character and intensity from that of the opposite organ. The fact that I am unaware of any similar instance having been recorded is my main excuse for troubling you with this letter.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

WILLIAM H. BENNETT.

Chesterfield-street, Mayfair, W., April 15th, 1895.

## "PULEX IRRITANS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your annotation in THE LANCET of April 6th regarding the means of destroying this irritating pest one plan not mentioned upon one occasion gave exceptionally good results. The matting of my bungalow in Java suddenly became infected with myriads of fleas, so numerous that the legs, covered only with loose white trousers, were instantly coated with a living mass. Strong quassia tea was freely used as a wash to the mat-covered floors, and the swarms vanished as by magic.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

April, 1895.

RICHARD NEALE, M.D. Lond.

## "ILLEGAL VACCINATION."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the annotation under the above heading in THE LANCET of April 13th you deplore the increase of irregular and inefficient vaccination. That such an increase is a stern reality and fraught with most pernicious consequences must be the experience of every general practitioner, however limited his experience may be. After pointing out the extreme laxity with which the term "successful" is used in its application to vaccination you further add: "The small-pox statistics of the past decade would have presented a different aspect than they

<sup>1</sup> *Virginia Medical Monthly*, October, 1893, February, 1894, March, 1894, and June, 1894.

do had vaccination been carried out by all practitioners with the efficiency demanded by the Local Government Board," and you express a desire for some definite pronouncement on this subject in the forthcoming report of the Royal Commission. Now, if this august body should advocate the abolition of vaccination as a compulsory measure this decision would be held by many to be distinctly condemnatory of the Jennerian theory. But would the enforcement of such a recommendation be of any material detriment to the cause of vaccination? Probably not. In fact, probabilities point in the opposite direction. If vaccination was purely voluntary, the consequences would be that those who submitted to it would do so from a firm belief and conviction in its efficacy as a protective, and with a view to procure the desired result would use their best endeavours to have it performed thoroughly and efficiently, and not in the perfunctory manner in which it is now so often done simply to meet a Parliamentary requirement. Under present circumstances, from the inefficient way in which the operation is often carried out, it is well nigh impossible for the general public to form any just estimate or in any way appreciate the true protective value of vaccination against small-pox, for there are hosts of individuals going about their daily avocations sincerely believing that they are almost absolutely proof against their dreaded foe, and each one of these individuals who is struck down by small-pox is regarded by the general public as a further proof of the uselessness of vaccination because he has been vaccinated and is yet afflicted, whereas in very many cases the operation performed on him was about as efficacious as in ancient days was the assumption of an amulet with mystic rites. It is obvious, then, that the larger the majority of the efficient cases out of the total of those operated on the less must be the difficulty of the public in recognising the true value of vaccination as a protection from small-pox, for they will be unable to point to vaccinated patients among the sufferers. Hence in years to come the more efficient performance of vaccination—and the more efficient because it is voluntary—must lead to a greater prominence of its real merit, and the general public will learn from living object-lessons to believe in a theory which a beneficent Government has failed to establish by legislation.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Worthing, April 13th, 1895.

W. T. WYATT.

## MANCHESTER.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

### *The Manchester Chamber of Commerce on Lead Poisoning.*

ON Jan. 5th attention was directed to a case of lead poisoning at Newton Heath, where evidence was given at the inquest as to the conditions under which work was carried on. At the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce on the 10th inst. the question of dyeing with chromic lead colours was brought up. The Chemical Sectional Committee laid certain resolutions before the Board, illustrated by a number of sample hanks of yarn which had been dyed by the chairman of the committee—some with chrome lead colours, the rest with other colouring materials—for purposes of comparison. The Board substantially adopted the resolutions of the Sectional Committee as follows: 1. "That the dyeing of goods with chrome lead colours, and especially the handling of goods dyed with these colours, is injurious to the people employed, unless special provisions are made and due precautions taken, and unless the workpeople heartily coöperate in making use of the appliances provided for their protection." 2. "That in view of the fact that the wearing of goods next to the skin coloured wholly or partially with chrome lead dyes under certain conditions may be injurious to health, it is desirable to substitute these dyes by others derived from innocuous colouring matters of similar colouring properties." 3. "That it would be an injustice to the dyeing trade to place any restrictions upon the colouring of goods by chrome lead colours unless such restrictions are also extended at the same time and to the same degree to the importation to this country and its colonies of such coloured goods, also to the dyeing trade of India, in which country very considerable quantities of goods are so dyed, one dyeworks alone being stated to turn out 20,000 lb. of yarn per day dyed with chrome lead colours." 4. "That the attention of merchants and their clients be called to the injurious effect of chrome

lead colouring materials, and to the existence of others less injurious to health, producing similar colour effects, of which there are several." Commenting on this discovery of a fresh Indian trouble the *Manchester Courier* says: "The dyeing of cotton goods with chrome lead colours appears to be fraught with a double share of the evils of lead poisoning." It not only injures the health of the workpeople employed, but "it is capable of slowly poisoning people who wear cloth thus dyed next their skin." These facts have evidently impressed the mind of the Chamber, and "the directors warn merchants and their clients of the baneful influences which lurk in tissues displaying the gaudy colours derived from chrome-lead," and call their attention to the existence of other less injurious colouring matters which might be substituted. As the *Manchester Courier* says: "Lancashire manufacturers might be depended on to make the change if the matters rested with them alone." But the compliment is a somewhat doubtful one, for it is equivalent to saying that they would do right if there were no temptation to do wrong. Unluckily, India is a formidable competitor, *ergo* the third resolution, that it would be an injustice to restrict the use of these chrome-lead dyes unless it was done all round; and the paper asks: "What would it profit this country for its merchants to sacrifice the profits of chrome-lead dyeing if Indian and other competitors only took advantage of their conscientiousness to make a greater use of the poisonous colours than ever?" It does not believe the Anglo-Indian Government will "surrender all at once to this challenge of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on the subject of this free trade in lead-poisoning," so the poor manufacturers, it is to be feared, must let their conscientiousness go. When commercial interests are in conflict with ethics and morals the latter run much risk of defeat; but it is a sorry doctrine that because you poison your neighbour I will do likewise.

### *A Publican's Responsibilities.*

In my last communication a conversation was mentioned that took place at an inquest between Mr. Smelt, the deputy coroner, and a juryman as to supplying drink to a drunken man, in which some strong remarks were made by the former on the responsibility of the publican if the man came to his death as a result. Since then the publican has had to appear at the City Police-court, charged with selling beer to a man already drunk and with permitting drunkenness. According to the evidence the man Flanagan and his wife had some drink together in a beerhouse. The wife then went home, but he adjourned to the defendant's, where he had a further quantity of drink, and by eleven o'clock was very drunk. In spite of this the publican's wife served him with some porter in a bottle, and suggested to another customer, who was also drunk, that he should see Flanagan home. It was stated at the inquest that as the men were going up the steps at the Jersey-street workmen's dwellings Flanagan fell back and received injuries to the head from which he died. At the court the widow said he had suffered from heart disease, and had been upset by the recent death of his father. It was said also that he was a good deal excited at the last public-house he visited, and in the court the story of the fall was somewhat modified, as his guide said he sank down or collapsed instead of falling backwards, as stated at the inquest; but at any rate he fell down the steps and fatally injured his head. The defendant's solicitor contended that heart disease and not drink was the cause of the fall, and that it was the existence of the former that led the landlady to send a man home with him. How she ascertained the condition of his heart is not stated. The publican said he was sober, but nothing seems so difficult for a publican as to make out the diagnosis of drunkenness. The summons was dismissed, the presiding magistrate saying there was a doubt in the case, and they had decided to give the benefit of it to the defendant.

### *Paupers' Tea.*

In February last the *City News* published a new and improved dietary table which had been prepared for the Salford Workhouse. The weekly cost of food for old men was to be raised from 1s. 6½d. to 1s. 11½d., that of old women from 1s. 4½d. to 1s. 9½d., and of children up to sixteen years of age from 1s. 9½d. to 2s. 3½d. This amounts to an increase of about 20 per cent. on the old expenditure, but, as the editor says, "no one would charge the guardians with extravagance even under the increased scale." In the issue of the 6th inst. it is stated that the improved dietary