

*Atrato* and other unfortunate ships during the past twelve months should indicate to all colonial authorities the importance of perfecting a system of sanitary supervision afloat, which shall protect the inhabitants of the country, and cause a minimum of obstruction to commerce.

#### FRENCH CHINCHONA CULTIVATION.

BEFORE the Academy of Sciences, Dr. Vinson read at the last sitting a paper on the acclimatisation of the quinine-bearing chinchonas in the island of Réunion. Having a few years ago received from General Morin some chinchona-seeds, which had been procured from Van Gorkum, the superintendent of the Dutch plantations in Java, he sowed them near the coast of La Réunion, and the young trees which grew from them were subsequently conveyed to an altitude ranging from 2000 ft. to 2500 ft. There they thrive so well that in four years' time some of them rose to 21 ft. From the chinchonas thus obtained have been produced flowers and fruitful seeds; while Dr. Vinson exhibited specimens of the bark of eight-year-old trees in illustration of his *communiqué*. The bark contains 14 per cent. of quinine and only one-half per cent. of chinchonine. Still, Dr. Vinson has made a good beginning, and from his plantation of 300 trees growing in the loose, slightly damp soil, so favourable to their propagation by cuttings, an encouraging result may be expected.

#### SCHOOL SHIPS.

MOST of our readers are aware that an influential meeting was held at the Mansion House at the end of last week, to promote the establishment of another training ship on the Thames, and that the London School Board has offered to subscribe £1000 towards the necessary expenses. As, for good or ill, there is a strong tendency to multiply school ships as a means of increasing the number of competent British seamen, it is our duty again to remind the public that on all ships at fixed moorings careful sanitary supervision is required, and that it will be the duty of the Board of Trade to see, in the first place, that all vessels converted into school ships are, as far as possible, planned on sound sanitary principles, and, in the next place, that all these ships are examined periodically, in order to see that the health of the inmates is properly consulted as regards ventilation and other sanitary conditions.

#### THE ASTLEY COOPER PRIZE.

THIS valuable triennial prize, amounting to 300 guineas, has been awarded to Dr. D. J. Hamilton, for his thesis on "Injuries and Diseases of the Spinal Cord." We believe that the thesis was well worthy of the handsome reward. Dr. Hamilton is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, and received his training in practical histology in the Physiological Laboratory of the University.

INDIAN medical officers demonstrate that the practice of vaccination is making considerable progress in the vast country under our care. It is found that the "religious" objections of the natives to the operation can invariably be overcome by a money payment of one anna (1½d.) per child. A system of paying small sums to the parents of children brought up for vaccination is publicly advocated.

THE mortality in London last week amounted to 1947 deaths, including 2 from small-pox, 18 from measles, 76 from scarlet fever, 9 from diphtheria, 50 from whooping-cough, 37 from different forms of fever, and 13 from diarrhoea. The deaths referred to diseases of the respiratory organs and phthisis declined to 814, but were in excess of the corrected weekly average.

DR. BELL FLETCHER, the senior physician of the General Hospital, and Dr. Thomas P. Heslop, senior physician of the Queen's Hospital, Birmingham, have been, on the unanimous recommendation of the magistrates and of the Town Council, appointed Justices of the Peace for the borough. This honour was justly due to the above gentlemen from their high professional and social standing, but it may also be deemed a mark of respect to the medical profession of the town generally.

THE *Scotsman* states that at a meeting of the Senatus Academicus of the Edinburgh University a letter was read from Professor Huxley, stating that the Lords' Committee of the Privy Council on Education had permitted him to accept the proposal of the Senatus that he should undertake the duties of the chair of Natural History in the ensuing summer session, in the place of Professor Wyville Thomson, who is still engaged in the *Challenger* surveying expedition.

THE final report of the committee appointed to take charge of the periodical Sunday collections for local charities in Birmingham shows that this year £5425 15s. 8d. has been collected in 170 different churches and chapels. This amount exceeds the collection last made for the General Hospital by £539, and that of 1871 by £1172. The success of "Hospital Sunday" is thus evidently on the increase.

STAFF-SURGEON DR. JOHN PETER BOILEAU, B.A., F.R.C.S.I., late Assistant-Surgeon 29th Regiment, has been admitted a Diplomate in State Medicine of the University of Dublin. At the recent examination for the diploma Dr. Boileau obtained first place.

THE members of the Dublin Pathological Society are about to erect a bust or other suitable memorial to the memory of the late Mr. Robert W. Smith, who for a considerable number of years acted as secretary and treasurer to the Society.

THE town of Madras, which for many years had cholera so domesticated in it that a week seldom went by without deaths being recorded from this cause, has for the last two years been almost entirely free from the disease.

### Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

#### THE DANGER OF ANÆSTHETICS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I read in THE LANCET of last week (19th Dec.) of a death from the administration of bichloride of methylene, for a very simple operation at the Royal Ophthalmic Hospital. I also read in the last number of a contemporary of a death from the administration of chloroform at the Royal Free Hospital.

Is it not time, Sir, that the profession should determine to discountenance and discontinue the use of chloroform and other dangerous anæsthetics, and have recourse alone to the administration of ether in operations of any duration? I do not include in these remarks the use of nitrous oxide. I know little practically of its effects; but for short operations, such as extraction of teeth, it is apparently comparatively safe when administered by experienced hands.

I cannot forget, however, that chloroform has constantly, and much too frequently, destroyed the lives of patients intended to be benefited by operation. Bichloride of methylene appears also to be occasionally precarious and fatal in its results.

In all operations performed by me in private ether has been for some time past the sole anæsthetic administered, and

since its adoption no cause of anxiety has ever arisen. At St. George's Hospital the administration of chloroform, I may say, has been practically long discontinued, and ether has been substituted. Ether in its effects as an anæsthetic is certain; its administration is attended by no risk, or at any rate a minimum risk to life; it is constantly applicable when chloroform would not be desirable. In no case need its administration be looked on with dread as to consequences. Others may speak more positively from larger practical experience than I can as to its advantages; but administered as it is by Mr. Clover combined with nitrous oxide, or by Mr. Haward without such dilution or mixture, it has proved, I may say, not only perfectly safe, but often a good stimulus in serious operations and in patients with feeble hearts.

If chloroform often kills, if bichloride of methylene is occasionally fatal, if the inhalation of ether is safe, is it not almost criminal to have recourse to the use of anæsthetics known to be attended by risk, in preference to one in which there is comparatively no element of danger?

Believe me, Sir, I attach not the slightest blame to those who have been placed in the dreadful position of having administered an anæsthetic in any fatal case. Such sad and painful experiences should surely make all who undertake the responsibility of using anæsthetics rejoice that they can avail themselves of one which in its administration is certain, safe, and simple.

I am Sir, yours obediently,

Grosvenor-street, W., Dec. 22nd, 1874.

GEORGE POLLOCK.

### UNUSUAL SEQUELÆ TO SCARLET FEVER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following case may interest your readers:—Mrs. T—, a patient suffering from melancholia following her confinement, went home for a day to see her friends. There was no scarlet fever in her house. A week after her return she had the early symptoms of scarlet fever; rash and sore-throat followed. The attack proved to be only a mild one. Everything went on well and regularly. She peeled very freely, and it is noteworthy that though she had not menstruated freely since her confinement in March, during the period of desquamation her menstruation came on freely, though it was of short duration. Three weeks after the onset of the fever she complained of great pain and tenderness in both axillæ. On examination the axillary glands were found swollen. Poultices were applied and both axillæ suppurated freely. The suppuration lasted three or four days, and then the wounds healed, leaving some hardness, which is gradually passing off. There has been no mental change during the fever or convalescence. The temperature was never over 102°, and there has been no albuminuria.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

GEO. H. SAVAGE, M.D.,

Dec. 8th.

Assistant-Physician, Bethlem Royal Hospital.

### LACTATION IN THE INFANT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The cases in which this condition *apparently* exists are not infrequent, but they can scarcely be said to be *bonâ fide* cases of lactation.

A few months since a well-marked instance of considerable enlargement of both mammæ in a female infant occurred in my practice. The breasts were fuller and more prominent than natural from the first; a thin watery secretion could readily be expressed from both nipples. The breasts became hard, more swollen, and were tender when touched, their colour being dusky red. A constant oozing of fluid from the nipples occurred, and it was feared that an abscess would form in either breast. Fomentations and poultices were resorted to, and not until the end of a week did the swelling subside and resolution take place.

In another instance the left breast became very inflamed, no assignable cause being discovered. A secretion, more like whey than milk, exuded from the nipple. An abscess formed, and was opened, a small quantity of thick purulent matter being discharged with marked relief to the patient. The case ultimately did well.

In a third case, some years since, both mammæ became very inflamed about the third day, a well-marked oozing

from the nipples of a thin serous fluid taking place for several consecutive days. Notwithstanding repeated fomentation and continuous poulticing, abscesses formed in both breasts, and before I was allowed to open them, matter to the extent of nearly an eggcupful (measured) had accumulated, the child apparently suffering considerably. A free incision, radiating from the nipple, was made in each breast, and the case treated as one of ordinary mammary abscess. Convalescence was tedious, but satisfactory. The oozing of serous fluid from the nipples persisted for nearly a week. In this case the mother was syphilitic, and had previously given birth to four still-born children. I had reason to suspect that the grandmother had sucked the breasts with the idea of developing them, this being still a custom in some parts of the country.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

ARTHUR W. EDIS, M.D.

Wimpole-street, W., December 14th, 1874.

### CARLISLE.

(From an occasional Correspondent.)

#### THE FEVER EPIDEMIC.

THE continued prevalence of epidemic typhus in Carlisle has on several occasions been commented upon in the columns of the medical and general press; and in THE LANCET for Nov. 28th it was stated that upwards of 500 persons had been attacked since the beginning of April last, that Mr. Power had been sent down by the Local Government Board to investigate into the causes of the outbreak, and had presented a report upon which no action had been taken. This statement, having been copied in the local papers, has been impugned at a recent meeting of the Town Council, called a "very viewy" and "unwarranted" paragraph, and alleged to contain two or three entirely untrue statements; it appears, however, that the only mistake in the paragraph was the one referring to the fact of the report having been presented. Mr. Power made his investigation in the early part of August, and when he had completed it he added a written memorandum of the recommendations he should make to the medical officer of health, and also to another member of the Town Council (now Mayor). It is probably this which is referred to in your columns, and therefore the error of which you are accused is a mistake in description and not in fact. Having made his recommendations and placed them in the hands of those who undertook to see them carried out, Mr. Power seems to have thought there was no special urgency about preparing his report, and, although it bears date Nov. 16th, it was not until Dec. 5th that it reached Carlisle. This delay has been most unfortunate, as the gentlemen to whom the recommendations were given looked upon them in the light of a confidential communication, and, afraid of committing Mr. Power in the eyes of his London board, have refrained from bringing forward any of his recommendations in a formal manner. They allege, however, that they have been doing in a quiet manner all that was recommended, but with so little success that the fever has continued to prevail with undiminished violence and mortality—to such an extent, in fact, that Carlisle, according to the last quarterly report of the Registrar-General, holds the highest place in the mortality returns of any town in the kingdom. And, judging from the returns of the cemetery, this unenviable position is likely to be maintained, as the number of burials during the past week has been 23, against 11 in the corresponding week of last year. That more urgent measures for dealing with the epidemic were necessary may be inferred from the fact that five weeks ago a meeting of the medical men of Carlisle was held, at which three-fourths of those resident in the city attended, and a series of resolutions were unanimously passed urging upon the sanitary authorities more active measures, and giving them a practical scheme for dealing with the emergency. Although the sanitary authorities had not the courtesy to acknowledge or thank the medical profession for their proffered advice, it yet seems that it stimulated them to a show of greater activity, and steps were taken which resulted in their obtaining uncontrolled possession of one of the fever