

vanic circle with a capsule of platinum and a piece of zinc; and having, by experiment, found such to be the case, I was, in consequence, led to expect that a similar result would be obtained by employing gold, instead of platina, as the negative metal. Accordingly, I took a small quantity of arsenious acid, about 1-50th of a grain, placed it upon the surface of a sovereign, moistened it with a drop of muriatic acid, then touched it with a narrow strip of sheet zinc, and, after a few seconds, had the satisfaction to observe that a distinct metallic film or deposit had formed upon the part of the gold which had thus been brought in contact with the wire. I found, too, that the metal was precipitated from realgar, when heated in the same manner as arsenious acid; and I have but little doubt that, if thus tested, most of the compounds of arsenic, as well as fluids containing them, would afford precisely similar results.

If, after obtaining the metallic deposit in question, we let fall upon it a drop of nitric acid, it immediately dissolves, and may then be tested by any of the ordinary re-agents, such as the ammoniacal nitrate of silver, ammoniacal sulphate of copper, &c.

Thus, then, we are furnished with a very simple and elegant method for detecting the existence of this important metal; and one which, when employed in conjunction with other tests, will, I trust, be found of value to the medical jurist.

Thanking you for the insertion of my former paper on Marsh's apparatus, I have the honour to remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

W. H. O.

St. George's East, Feb. 23, 1841.

CONGENITAL DEFICIENCY OF THE RIBS.—PROTRUSION OF LUNG.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—If you think the following case worthy of the perusal of your readers, you would much oblige me by giving it a place in your valuable Periodical.

Hannah Barker, aged 7, an inmate of the Chelmsford union-house, was admitted into the hospital the 26th of last month, labouring under a severe cough, attended with great difficulty of expectoration; and, on my making an examination of her chest, the following abnormal appearances presented themselves to me. On desiring her to cough, I saw a round, globular body filling up that space generally occupied by the mammæ in an adult, on the right side of the sternum; which, on closer examination, proved to be a portion of the right lung, which, on coughing or violent inspiration, was protruded, in the manner I described, forwards, owing to the congenital absence of the second, third,

and fourth ribs. The pleura appears much thickened; and, on applying the ear to that side of the chest, you hear the crepitating râle very plainly.

The spine is perfectly natural, having no curvature whatever; but her general appearance denotes a sickly state of habit, with anxious and bilious cast of countenance. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

W. B. M'EGAN, M.D.

Chelmsford, March 9, 1841.

P.S.—I merely send you a very rough draft of the case (taken on the spot), and trust you will make allowances for the imperfect mode of description; my only object being (as I think should be the case with every medical man), of bringing before my professional brethren any case of interest like to occur in my practice.

OPERATION FOR THE CURE OF STAMMERING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In the daily papers of last week and this, various paragraphs occurred on the surgical cure of stammering, of operations made on boys, and lectures delivered on this subject. The discovery, however, of this method of curing stammering is quite new; and it can hardly be supposed that a sound knowledge of it should have reached already this country, whose medical gentlemen are, generally, not acquainted with German. The discovery was only, in the beginning of this winter, made by Professor Dieffenbach, of the University of Berlin, who is highly distinguished in his profession, and made several surgical discoveries, *e. g.*, concerning the cure of squinting. In January last the Hamburg Correspondent mentioned the recent discovery; and, in the same month, I received a letter from a friend, of Berlin, containing the following notice:—"Our Professor Dieffenbach made another useful discovery, viz., to cure stuttering and stammering, by dividing certain muscles of the tongue. He makes no secret of it, but read a paper on his method in the Society of Physicians of Berlin, and operated himself, in presence of a number of medical gentlemen, on a stammering lad. When the wound had healed, the same gentlemen again assembled at the professor's, when the lad read from a book quite easily, and without impediment. As the professor lodges in the house of a friend of mine, I had ample opportunity of satisfying myself of the truth of the statements in our daily papers."

On hearsay information, no surgeon should undertake the operation on so delicate a part of the human body as the tongue. It is not enough to know the names of the muscles to be divided, but much depends

on the place and deepness of the incision. An unskilful operation may bring on inflammation and death, or cure but imperfectly, stammering. It will be recollected that death ensued when, some time ago, a London surgeon undertook to cure deafness, on the plan recently discovered, and ever since successfully practised in Germany. Another London surgeon undertook to cure squinting on the German plan, but destroyed the eye-sight entirely. Surgeons should procure one of the various able publications, already published in Germany, on Dieffenbach's system of curing stammering; and apply, if they do not understand German, to some person competent to explain it. I should myself be ready to assist respectable surgeons in getting a sound knowledge of this system; at the same time, regretting that they are not more generally acquainted with German. With a view to diffuse medical knowledge by the study of German, a university of that country last year passed the resolution, that to any foreign gentleman, combining with knowledge in medicine and surgery an acquaintance of German, the doctor's diploma should be granted.

JOHN VON HORN, D. D., of the
University of Göttingen, Hanover.
8, Catherine-street, Strand.

WINDOW-TAX ON HOSPITALS.

The following is the case referred to in the letter on the window-tax on hospitals, published in *THE LANCET* on the 27th of February:—

No. 1154.

At a meeting of the Commissioners of Assessed Taxes, for the district of St. Margaret and St. John the Evangelist, Westminster, held on the 6th day of July, 1836, at the Swan Tavern, in Bridge-street, Westminster.

(48 Geo. III., c. 55, Sch. A. Exemptions, Case 2.)

John Frederick Wilson, secretary to the Westminster Hospital, appealed against the surveyor's charge of 5*l.* 15*s.* for two quarter's window-tax, for the year 1834, upon thirty-four windows.

It appeared that this was a charge upon Mr. Wilson, in his character of secretary to the said hospital, for thirty-four windows, in divers rooms in the hospital, occupied by officers, servants, and the general business of the governors of the hospital, taken upon an aggregate, and charged upon the progressive duty for six months, ended at Lady-day, 1835.

It further appeared, upon the examina-

tion of Mr. Wilson, that the only apartments occupied by him consisted of two rooms, comprising together only three windows.

As the hospital is entirely supported by voluntary contributions, the commissioners were of opinion that the appellant, as secretary, was not liable to be charged for more than the said three windows in the said two rooms occupied by him, and reduced the assessment upon him accordingly, charging him at the rate of 1*s.* 9*d.* for each window.

The surveyor being dissatisfied with the commissioners' opinion, requested a case for the judges' opinion, upon the following grounds:—

The premises in question have been erected from funds obtained by charitable bequests and voluntary contributions. They are used solely for the reception and treatment of invalids gratuitously. The charge has been made for windows in the rooms (forming a part of the building) occupied by the officers attached to the institution, as follows, viz.:—

	No. of Windows.
Officers' dining-room	3
Porter, surgery-man, and bath rooms	2
Apothecary's sitting and sleeping rooms.....	3
House - surgeon's sitting and sleeping rooms	2
Chemical assistants' ditto.....	2
Secretary's ditto	3
Board-room.....	5
Matron's sitting and sleeping rooms	5
Cook and housemaids' ditto ..	1
Nurses' ditto	8
	31

We have, therefore, signed this case accordingly.

GEORGE R. MALME, } Commis-
H. FREEMAN, } sioners.

Dec. 2, 1836. We are of opinion that the determination of the commissioners is right.

J. A. PARK.
S. GASELEE.
W. BOLLAND.
J. WILLIAMS.

CONGENITAL DISLOCATION OF THE HIP.

M. BOUVIER presented two specimens of this interesting disease to the Academy of Medicine. In the one, from a woman, 76 years of age, the head of the femur had formed a new socket upon the dorsum of the ilium, the acetabulum being almost obliterated; in the other, the head of the femur is connected with the ilium, by means of the fibrous capsule, only without immediate contact. The displacement had occurred on both sides.