

afterwards, drinking at the same time some sudorific tisane, and observing a strict diet. If after this the symptoms have not entirely thrown off their syphilitic character, a second course of the same treatment must be adopted, but in the majority of cases, ten or twelve days are sufficient to remove the symptom, or at least to modify them so that they require no further treatment.

INFANTICIDE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The ready admission and extensive circulation which you gave to my paper on simple and contaminated puncture, induces me to request admission at your discretion to some remarks on the crime of infanticide, the perpetrators of which now almost always escape conviction from the very erroneous impression made on the minds of judges, and those legally concerned, by a very excellent paper of the late Dr. William Hunter, in the medical transactions of the College of Physicians.

My remarks were originally intended for one of the numbers of the Medical Spectator, if health and spirits had enabled me to continue that publication with due regularity. I am, Sir, with best wishes for the continued success of the very useful and popular work, THE LANCET,

Your obedient servant,
JOHN SHERWIN, M.D.

Bath, June 27.

The long suspension of the Medical Spectator having put a stop to the favours of my old and numerous correspondents, it is with great pleasure that I acknowledge and subjoin the following, from one with whose communications I have, on former occasions, many years ago, been often indulged.

SIR,—In the character of Medical Spectator which you have formerly well supported, I trust you will not be averse to receive and publish the following

Remonstrance.

The public papers have lately informed us Sir, that a learned judge, upon a bench of criminal justice, has asserted that the lungs of a new-born infant floating on the surface of water, is no longer

deemed a proof that the child had been born alive. Nay more, that this test is now completely exploded as a vulgar error. Permit me, Sir, to remonstrate with the learned judge, for the vulgar error is now, most assuredly, on the contrary side. Ever since the publication of the late Dr. William Hunter's excellent paper in the Medical Transactions, it has been the fashion, even with medical witnesses, to decry this old and excellent criterion. Yet all that Dr. Hunter's observations have established is, that in consequence of putrefaction, the lungs of a still-born infant will float, and consequently that the criterion is not always to be received as demonstration, without proper caution.

Let any one, Sir, try the experiment and he will find the following to be the real facts: A portion from the lungs of a still-born child, or any other animal that has not breathed, will sink in water; but if the animal have breathed vigorously, a similar portion will float lighter than a cork or a feather; and no mechanical compression will afterwards deprive it of this property. Such a portion taken from the lungs of a still-born child must be in high state of putrefaction before it will float; and the floating, even in the highest state of putrefaction, will be very imperfect, when compared with the buoyancy of the lung of an infant that had enjoyed respiration. The difference is such, Sir, that it will scarcely be necessary for the medical examiner to make use of his nose; which may always tell him to what cause the floating of the lung of a still born babe ought to be ascribed.

In every case of this kind that may come before a jury, a well informed judge or councillor will undoubtedly ask the question whether or no any attempts have been made to restore or to excite animation, by artificial respiration? Because in that case, a portion of the lung of a still-born infant will, most certainly, float as light as a feather; exactly in the same manner as it would have done if the child had been born in the most healthy state of animal existence.

I conceive, Sir, this to be a fair case for the animadversion of the Medical Spectator, and remain, with the best wishes for the success of his resumed lucubrations,

Sir, your obedient servant,
E. R.
