

"Can Such Things Be?"

ATLANTA, GA., May 12, 1896.

To the Editor:—In an Atlanta daily paper of this date I find the enclosed item, which fully explains itself:

WHAT MISS CLARA BARTON SAYS OF AN AMERICAN INVENTION.

Constantinople, Feb. 21, 1896.—When in London the other day I received two packets from the United States embassy, each containing an Electropoise. To-day I received your kind letter and The Journal.

Allow me to thank you heartily and gratefully for the splendid little machines. As you remember, I am not altogether a stranger to the virtues of the Electropoise (saw its work in Jacksonville, Fla., in 1888), and I will take great pleasure in passing your offering to afflicted humanity through my medical staff. I feel assured the physicians will avail themselves of such valuable aid.

Very sincerely yours,

CLARA BARTON.

In reply to a letter asking permission to publish the above, Miss Barton writes under date of April 23, through her private secretary, the letter given below:

Constantinople, April 23, 1896.—Your letter of request was duly received. Miss Barton has no objections to your publishing her letter, if by so doing the wonderful little instrument will be still more gratefully received by suffering humanity.

Very truly yours, G. H. PULLMAN, Private Sec'y.

The item closes with mentioning the agents' names and office, and with the statement that any information about the "splendid little machines" will be cheerfully given by said agents.

Every one admires Miss Barton for her noble work and life of self-sacrifice which she has been engaged in for many years. Her use and indorsement, however, of the very worst of the patent frauds is, to say the least, a new departure, and not a consummation devoutly to be wished by any means.

Yours very truly, L. B. GRANDY, M.D.

Injection of Antitoxin.

WHEELERSBURG, OHIO, May 19, 1896.

To the Editor:—Referring to Eulenberg's contention, as reported in the last number of the JOURNAL, that the sudden death of a healthy child at Hoechst-on-Main after an injection of antitoxin, could not have been due to the virulence of the serum, but was perhaps the result of embolism, the puncture of a vein, or the introduction of air, may it not be pertinent to inquire whether ordinary hypodermic medication as heretofore practiced by all classes of physicians, has been followed by sudden deaths similar to those reported after the use of antitoxin?

JAMES L. TAYLOR, M.D.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

"Domestic Medicine" Popular in Prisons.—It is recorded that in one of the large English prisons the favorite book in the library for the use of the prisoners, was that of Buchan's "Domestic Medicine." At first the curious fondness of the inmates for such a work was not apparent, but subsequently it transpired that the prisoners, anxious to play the rôle of malingerers and so escape their tasks, laid themselves out, with the help of the volume, to study carefully the symptoms of certain diseases with a view to deceive the prison surgeon.

Something Tangible in Sanitary Administration against Tuberculosis (Bovine).—The French government has decreed that all cattle imported into France from foreign countries must be tested with tuberculin at the frontier before being admitted. In those cases in which the characteristic reactions denoting the existence of a tuberculous process are revealed the animals are, after being marked, refused entrance into the country unless the owner gives his consent to immediate slaughter. The tuberculin test is not applied to cattle which are formally declared to be imported for slaughtering purposes. In these cases, however, proof must be forthcoming within fourteen days that the animals have been killed in the presence of an inspector.

Smallpox on the Isle of Man in the 18th Century.—Dr. Charles Steele, of Clifton, sends to the *British Medical Journal*, certain interesting extracts from the parish register of Ballaugh church, Isle of Man, which gives the deaths in that parish from 1704 to 1799 from smallpox and other causes. Within that period smallpox killed in this small parish 166 persons, while the deaths from all other causes numbered only fifty. In fact, three out of four persons whose burials were registered in the parish met their death from smallpox. And yet there are a substantial number of our population who wish to go back to the eighteenth century for our treatment of the disease.

Amendment of Colorado Pharmacy Law.—Sections 10 and 12 of the pharmacy law passed in Colorado in 1893 were amended in 1895; the former, raising the penalty from \$25 to \$250 for any person other than a registered pharmacist retailing or dispensing drugs; the latter, by incorporating a provision that the pharmacist failing or neglecting to procure his annual registration, or any person making any false representations to procure for himself or for another registration, or any person violating any other provision of this act, shall for each and every offense be liable to a fine of \$100.

Provision for Lost Diplomas in Florida.—Section 806, chapter 4, of the Revised Statutes of the State of Florida, provided for the examination, by the board of examiners, of the applicant for a certificate of qualification to practice medicine, "upon the production of his medical diploma from a recognized college." This the legislature of that State amended in 1895, by adding in this connection, "or in the event said applicant shall have lost his diploma, or the same shall have been destroyed prior to the year 1870, then upon satisfactory evidence to such board of such loss or destruction."

California Coroner to Appoint Physician.—In counties of the first class, it was enacted in California in 1895, the coroner shall appoint a competent physician, whose duties it shall be to perform autopsies upon the bodies of all deceased persons when inquests are held. Such physicians shall, after the performance of such autopsy certify in writing his professional opinion as to the cause of death, which certificate shall be filed with said coroner. The physician so appointed shall receive as compensation for such services \$2,400 per annum, to be paid out of the general fund of the county in monthly installments of \$200 each.

Improved Health Rate of Rome.—The following note from the *Medical News* shows the vast strides of sanitary improvement that have been made at Italy's capital: "Roman fever is almost a thing of the past. From 650 in 1881, the deaths from malaria ran down to 254 in 1891, while for the last five years the average has been 149, the number in 1895 being 125. These figures are all the more significant in that the population of Rome has increased from 300,000 to 467,000 in fifteen years. An equally remarkable diminution has taken place in the death rate from all other infectious diseases, so that Rome, even in the traditional unhealthy season, is one of the most healthy capitals in Europe."

Sewer-Gas Dangers Affecting Tall Buildings.—Sanitary Engineer C. F. Wingate writes to one of the New York City dailies that he has observed a danger from tall buildings, that has not been noted by others, namely the discharge of filthy sewer-gases from soil-pipes of comparatively low houses into the windows and light-shafts of adjacent occupied rooms. He instances one striking instance where "the entire family of the superintendent of a large office building, occupying spacious rooms on the roof, surrounded by lower buildings, but with a magnificent outlook over the harbor, have suffered from severe forms of zymotic disease, including repeated attacks of malarial fever, so that the family have been nearly decimated, and have