

practitioner than if he were ignorant of the results of physiological experiments, as performed by himself.

To such experiments, in the hands of Sir Charles Bell and Mr. Shaw, we owe the distinction between mere facial and cerebral paralysis—a distinction which has lightened many a heart and replaced gloom by consolation.

Now, the experiments of Sir C. Bell and of Mr. Shaw (see "The Nervous System," third edition, p. 24, 81, 85, &c.) were tenfold more severe than that by Dr. Marshall Hall, on which the reviewer in the *Medico-Chirurgical Review* has commented. What shall we say then? Shall we regret their performance? Shall we not, rather, in the spirit of a true and real humanity, regret that it is only in this way that the knowledge of certain points in physiology, pathology, and the administration of remedies, can be certainly and rapidly advanced.

Now, I will not believe that there was anything cruel in the nature of Sir B. C. Brodie, or of Sir C. Bell and Mr. Shaw, any more than I can believe there was any such thing in the breast of Professor Alison, when he suggested and witnessed some of the experiments of Dr. J. Reid. The *idea* is a calamity.

And yet, how difficult is it to lay bare a nerve deeply seated in the tissues of the neck—how much more difficult and inflictive of pain and suffering than to denude the cerebrum!—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A FELLOW OF THE ROYAL MEDICO-
CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

London, Feb. 1847.

PROPOSAL FOR TREATING PULMONARY DISEASE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The cases recorded in your valuable journal, of the inhalation of ether to prevent bodily suffering during the performance of surgical operations, induce me to believe that the apparatus used for that purpose might also be applied to the cure of consumption, and other diseases of the lungs, and thus be the means of conferring a permanent blessing on mankind.

Let the medical substance—say iodine, dissolved in ether, sufficiently diluted with water to prevent its intoxicating effects, ammonia, chlorine, or other of the many appropriate ingredients to be found in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms—be placed in the apparatus, in a fluid or other state, so that the air inspired through the tube by the patient may become impregnated with the substance, and thus at once be applied to the diseased surface. And I see no reason why consumption—the opprobrium of our art—which generally selects for its victims the fairest portion of the creation—may not be arrested in its fatal course.

Let draughts of medicated air be inspired every few hours, and those general remedies administered which are necessary to give strength &c. to the constitution, and I feel certain, if my medical brethren, particularly those whose professional pursuits are more especially directed to diseases of the lungs, will fairly try its effects, that ere many months have elapsed, numerous cases will be recorded of its vast power in controlling and curing pulmonary diseases.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

RICHARD GRIFFIN, M.R.C.S., &c.

Weymouth, Feb. 1847.

PLAIN QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO DR. FORBES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If you think the following plain questions likely to advance physiological science, I shall be obliged by a little space for them in THE LANCET—that advocate of every good cause.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JUSTITIA.

Query 1.—Your friend Prochaska has designated certain parts of the cerebrum, extending to the spinal marrow, by the term "sensorium commune." Can you inform me—why? Is it because it is *in-sensorial*, this being your version of his doctrine; as a grove is called *lucus*—a non lucendo; or, as if I were to apply to you the epithets, good, wise, able, generous, benevolent?

Query 2.—Prochaska also speaks of certain *sensorial* nerves, and "nerves appropriated to *sense*," and instances the *olfactory* and the *optic*, as connected with his insentient sensorium. Is this for the same reason? And do you find instances of this "surprising accuracy," and of this "complete anticipation of Dr. Marshall Hall's doctrines," in Dr. Hall's own works?

Query 3.—Prochaska speaks of his "sensorium commune" as not including *the whole* of the cerebrum, but only certain parts of it, as the *crura cerebri*, and *cerebelli*, and *part of the*

thalamus optici, and as *EXTENDING* to the medulla oblongata and spinal marrow. Is this the opinion of Dr. Marshall Hall? Is it of "surprising accuracy," and a "complete anticipation" of his views?

Query 4.—Prochaska speaks of sneezing, of cough, of vomiting, giving them as instances of sensorial impressions reflected into motory; and *you* call these actions *physiological*. Is this idea of yours *physiological*? Or is it, rather, an instance of a *pathological* condition of intellect?

Query 5.—Prochaska adds to these instances, the case of winking on the sudden approach of a finger to the eye, though he is persuaded it is a feint. Is this, in your physiological idea, an event of the same *nature* as the others? Would Dr. Marshall Hall so view it? Is it anticipatory of his doctrines? Would he not, rather, consider this as an action induced by a sensation, a perception, an emotion?

Query 6.—Next, Prochaska enumerates the action of the heart, (really ganglionic;) the movements of *respiration*, (really true-spinal;) the *raising of the hand* of an apoplectic patient to the head, (really cerebral;) as acts of the *same* kind. Does this appear to *you* to be of "surprising accuracy"? Especially is it "complete" as an "anticipation" of Dr. Marshall Hall? Does Dr. Marshall Hall entertain or promulgate such absurd confusion of things so different.

Query 7.—Prochaska next speaks, as of events of the same class, of the movements in chorea, and of the rigor in ague. Do you find such things in the works of Dr. Marshall Hall.

Query 8.—Then the effects of *fright*, the *movements of the intestines*, are associated together in like manner! And these things, too, are viewed with wonder, as of "surprising accuracy," and as part of a "complete anticipation" of one of the most careful and cautious writings in physiological science!

Not one word will I add of vituperation or epithet. But, assuredly, the system of the distinct spinal marrow, and its own peculiar incident and reflex nerves, in essential connexion with it, the exclusion of *all* that is *cerebral* in substance or nerve, of *all* that is *sensorial*, of *all* that is *ganglionic*, &c., &c., is very *different* from all this, and of a different kind of "accuracy," and not quite "anticipated."

If a bright torch ever were given into the hands of the practical physician, to aid him in his diagnosis of a class of diseases, formerly obscure, it is that afforded by the distinction of the true spinal system, its functions and its symptoms, from the cerebral and the ganglionic.

Why, Sir, if Dr. Marshall Hall had done nothing more than detect and assign the proper function of the *pneumogastric*, that single and sole achievement ought to protect him for ever from such mean and vulgar attacks as those which have crowded your imbecile Review.

I can make one excuse for you. I verily believe you do not, to this day, understand the thing you are talking, or rather writing, about. It requires accuracy of mind to comprehend it distinctly,—how much more to have hunted it out? But why, if indeed they yet understand it, does not Professor Alison, or Dr. Carpenter, come forward and show as much readiness to defend, as they did at the first to attack it and its laborious author?

Query 9.—You speak of Dr. Marshall Hall's "bitter nature," &c. Has Dr. Marshall Hall a Review? Has he attacked *you*, journal after journal, writer after writer? Whose, then, is the "bitter nature"? Take my parting advice: let Dr. Marshall Hall alone, and he will let you alone. You say, speaking of his immortal work, "it is grievous to write it down." Doubtless the viper said, or thought, "it is a grievous task to devour a file!"

Query 10.—And lastly, may I ask you, what you have done, especially for physiology, that you should set yourself up as a great critic and judge in these matters? Did you ever bring forth one new idea, or add one new fact to our store? Be warned then. Try to know yourself. Give up this puppyism of authorship and judgeship. Be advised!

February, 1847.

ETHERIZATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Suffer me to occupy a corner in your journal, that, through the medium of it, I may offer a few words of caution to the profession on the all-engrossing subject—narcotism by ether. It is devoutly to be hoped that an agent so undoubtedly valuable in suspending sensation, and lessening the sufferings of the afflicted, may not be brought into disrepute and consigned to oblivion by its incautious and injudicious use; and my object in these brief remarks is to state that I have known great cerebral derangement produced in a highly

talented and intellectual individual, by too freely inhaling ether. The gentleman had a strange delusion that he could expand the powers of his mind *ad infinitum*, if he could obtain a free supply of ether, and he pursued this delusion so earnestly that his mind became disordered, and, in fact, he suffered paroxysms very nearly allied to delirium tremens. At first he was speedily restored by being deprived of the ether, but as often as he was set at large, his unhappy delusion returned, he flew to the chemist for his admired drug, and again became deranged, and requiring to be placed under surveillance; the attacks increased in violence and duration, until his mind was so impaired that it was necessary to place him under permanent restraint.

This solitary case may suffice to prove the necessity of circumspection in administering the ether, especially to subjects predisposed to mental excitement.

I am, Sir, your obliged servant,

FRED. THOS. WINTLE,
Resident Physician, Warneford Hospital,
near Oxford.

January, 1847.

PATENT FOR INHALATION!

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The idea of trading, bartering, and speculating, on the "ills that flesh is heir to," is to me a most revolting thought; it bespeaks a condition of mind unworthy of our noble profession.

Years since, I gave the process of inhalation to produce unconsciousness to the world, without the most remote idea of remuneration, which I thought was amply afforded me in the knowledge that I had contributed towards the alleviating of suffering humanity. The process of inhalation to produce unconsciousness, so that all kinds of surgical operations might be performed without pain to the patient, I have publicly advocated since 1842, and published in 1843. I am not responsible for the apathy manifested from that time to the present moment, when it seems to have flashed on the profession as if by magic, and is now generally adopted.

I now distinctly give to all who may choose to use it, "the process of inhalation for the production of unconsciousness, so that surgical operation can be performed without pain to the patient." I do this without fear or compromise, knowing that I can substantiate my claim to priority. And if any patent is taken out, I will take measures to render it null and void.—I remain, yours respectfully, R. H. COLLYER, M.D.

St. Helier's, Jersey, Jan. 1847.

* * Dr. Collyer should produce something like proof of his liberality. In the first instance, proof should be given that the discovery of the production of insensibility by ether, and its application to surgery, were *his* to give. As yet, nothing of this kind has been supplied, and until it is, the writer must be content to belong to the class of jump-up-behinders.—[Ed. L.]

NEW METEOROLOGICAL INSTRUMENTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

1. Every one admires the hygrometer of Daniell, and regrets that it should be so complicated. I would suggest that the thermometer be placed in the bulb containing ether, as in that instrument; and that that fluid be reduced in temperature to the dew point, by the action of an accurate little pump, adjusted at the top of the tube.

2. It is well known that the temperature of boiling water is taken as a measure of the height of mountains: a ball containing pure spirit of turpentine, attached to a tube in which a thermometer is placed, as in Daniell's hygrometer, the tube being drawn at the top to a rather small orifice, would, for many reasons, I imagine, be very preferable for this purpose. The boiling point of the fluid would be lower, and less heat would consequently be required, and the apparatus would occupy little space.

VIATOR.

Feb. 1847.

PLAN TO PREVENT COUGHING WHILE INHALING THE VAPOUR OF SULPHUROUS ETHER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having taken great interest in the reports, in the English newspapers, of surgical operations performed upon patients under the effects produced by the vapour of ether, I have observed that in several of the cases there seemed to be considerable difficulty with the process of inhalation, the patients being seized with coughing, more or less violent.

Now as I have not seen the different modifications of apparatus made use of in England, I do not consider myself qualified to pronounce upon them, but the extreme simplicity of the apparatus which I have used, in a few experiments that I have made upon this subject, induces me to recommend it to your notice. I take a common glass flask, such as we employ for chemical operations, of a tolerable size, and with a well-turned lip; I remove the bottom as neatly as possible, and, by that opening, I introduce into the body of the flask, a large sponge wet with ether, and then the apparatus is ready. In order to use it, the mouth of the flask is applied to the patient's mouth, the turned lip covering his lips, somewhat in the manner of the mouth-piece of a trumpet; the nose is held shut, and, consequently, the air which the patient breathes passes through the sponge, and carries the ether vapour with it into the lungs. I have employed this apparatus several times, and in all cases have found it answer perfectly.

I have myself, by the use of it, been thrown, five distinct times, into a state of insensibility so perfect that during the last time I had a large tooth extracted without even being aware that the operation had taken place. Every other modification of apparatus which I have tried, (where there was less admission of air,) produced violent coughing, as did also the attempt to breathe the vapour of ether, as pure as I could collect it, in an air-tight bag. The flask which I have used would hold about a quart, and is somewhat of the form of the ancient wine bottles, the neck being about as long as the bulbous portion of the bottle is deep.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Giessen, Jan. 1847.

JAMES ALLAN, Ph. D., &c.

ALLEGED DISCOVERY OF THE INFLUENCE OF SULPHUROUS ETHER IN 1824.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me to make a few observations in your journal respecting the system of inhaling the sulphuretted ether for the purpose of causing insensibility during surgical operations. It is, I believe, considered to be an entirely new invention, and the authorship of "the discovery" will no doubt be claimed by various parties; but I am in a position to prove that a similar system was brought before the public nearly twenty years ago, by a Dr. Hickman, then residing at Shiffnal, and previously at Ludlow, where he successfully performed various experiments with it upon animals. I am not prepared to state whether the inhaling system discovered by him was identical with the one now exciting such universal attention, but he most assuredly was the propounder of a system to produce insensibility to pain under operations by the inhalation of some species of gas. So far as I am aware, no discovery has been claimed by others until within the last few weeks. Dr. H. commenced his experiments at Ludlow previous to the year 1824; after which he resided at Shiffnal for three years, and went to Paris in 1828, in which year he presented a memorial to the King of France, Charles X., praying for permission to perform his experiment before the medical officers or that metropolis. A copy of his memorial is now before me, and also a letter from the widow of the memorialist, which was supplied to me with the above memoranda.

I am by no means prepared to dispute that some one of the present claimants may have discovered this medical agent to be a new method to *him*, inasmuch as it is quite possible for two philosophical minds to fall upon a hidden truth, but unless they can prove that their discoveries were made anterior to the year 1828, the claim of priority must be awarded to the late Dr. Hickman.

I have never heard the result of the memorial, but the prosecution of his inquiries was cut short soon after by his decease, previous to which he published an account of his invention either in a pamphlet, or in the form of an essay in the medical publications of the day. I well remember that the system was treated with very great severity in the medical reviews, and was generally condemned as a wild and visionary theory, which was deemed practically useless, if not dangerous and impossible.

I am making inquiries in Ludlow and Shiffnal, and may very probably be able to procure further evidences of his claims. A reference to the medical periodicals of 1828-1829, or perhaps a few years earlier, as I am not sure of the date of his publication, will no doubt afford a satisfactory corroboration of what I have here stated.—I am, Sir, yours,

Kingswinford, near Dudley, Jan. 1847.

THOMAS DUDLEY.

P.S. The widow of Dr. Hickman is now living at Tenbury, Herefordshire.