

There is little or no positive evidence in its favour; but enough of positive assertion and probable virtue to make it worth the attention of experimental pharmacologists. It may be used not only as an article of *materia medica*, but has the advantage of being an agreeable item in the *materia alimentaria*.

POISONING NO CRIME.

A CURIOUS blot in the criminal law, to which we pointed attention some months since, has again been hit by a country coachman. This man, Thomas Spowage, has, for some reason not explained, indulged in the amiable eccentricity of wilfully administering large and injurious doses of cantharides, a vegetable irritant poison, to a number of the inmates of Staffinwood Hall, near Chesterfield. Symptoms of irritant poisoning followed: vomiting, gastrodynia, dysentery, and so forth. Surely these are palpable inconveniences, not to say injuries. The legislative body may have their own notions on the subject, but most persons would as lieve be struck or cut, as beguiled into taking poison, although its effects should stop short of death. In the case of Heppenstall, on which we lately commented, a large dose of croton oil was administered, from motives of revenge, and a long and severe illness resulted, inflicting permanent injury. Nevertheless, the law provided no penalty in either case. If a man be tapped on the shoulder, he has his remedy by action for assault; if he be stabbed, by trial for cutting and wounding, with or without deadly intent: but his stomach may be ruined for ever; he may be consigned to the perpetual pains of dyspepsia or gastrodynia; his mucous membrane may be flayed, and all his internal organs chemically and physiologically outraged, and the law will not step in to avenge or to relieve his wrongs. In the present state of criminal justice, the most cruel and subtle injuries may be inflicted with impunity. The cowardly ruffian who throws vitriol into the face of his enemy is justly open to severe punishment; but the very same substance may be administered internally, and inflict horribly scathing torture, but, so that it does not kill, the crime is not one of which the judges can take cognizance. It is an inconceivable and dangerous anomaly: no time should be lost in introducing an Act to remedy this defect in the criminal law.

SPECIAL CONVEYANCE FOR SMALL-POX PATIENTS.

WE have often regretted and reprehended the prevalent practice of employing street cabs for the taking to London hospitals of persons infected with small-pox, fever, and similar diseases. We learn with pleasure that at a recent meeting the Rev. Dr. Carlisle, of Woolwich, called the attention of the Board to the injustice and possible injuries incidental to this custom. He proposed that the guardians should have a conveyance of their own—a practice which is now, we believe, pretty generally adopted in the metropolitan parishes. The motion was unanimously carried, and henceforth the guardians of this large Union will have one for their own use. Were this good example universally followed, it might be well to forbid the use of common cabs for the conveyance of persons suffering from contagious disease, under a penalty to be levied upon the hirer, and upon the driver when knowledge could be proved on his part.

MR. JACOB BELL'S SCHOLARSHIP.—The following resolution was passed by the College of Physicians of London on the 21st ultimo:—"That the President of the College be requested to address to the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society a letter expressive of the high sense which this College entertains of the character of the late Jacob Bell, and of their cordial approval of the proposed scheme to promote the advancement of pharmaceutical science by establishing a scholarship, to be named after the distinguished founder of the Pharmaceutical Society."

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

SMALL-POX AND VACCINATION.

(LETTER FROM MR. NOURSE.)

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—All parties agree that a revision of our vaccination, either as to the practice of it, or the organization regulating it, or both, is imperatively required. All, likewise, must admit that there is something wrong. No improvement can be arrived at without a full discussion of the subject; and it is, therefore, with great satisfaction that I have noted one or two editorial articles having reference to this question in THE LANCET a short time since, and in your number of the 26th ult., two letters from correspondents.

The letter signed "A Parochial Public Vaccinator" only proves, what we already know, that many of the public vaccinators conduct their business in a conscientious and efficient manner. But, according all honour and credit to those who do so, it must be acknowledged that there are very many more who do not, and very often cannot. The fact must be admitted, and ought not to give rise to any acrimonious discussion. Some better organization should be adopted—a more equal division of the work, and better pay for the same. This, and such other improvements in vaccination as we may originate in full and fair discussion amongst ourselves, will obviate all necessity for "Government inspection."

Dr. Gore's letter contains some suggestions well worthy of consideration. One is, to "extend the time of vaccination from three months to five." With regard to this, I can only say that fully half the children vaccinated by me for some time past have been over three months old, and that the parents generally prefer their children vaccinated at about four months. Most likely, other practitioners' experience is the same. So that, if Dr. Gore's alteration were made, one cause of the unpopularity of vaccination would be removed.

Another of his suggestions is also valuable—namely, to "have the virus taken frequently from its natural source." Vaccination from the cow would be a most important means both of restoring confidence in the process, and of insuring its efficacy and safety. Our present supply is taken from exactly the wrong source—the towns. Whether, with Dr. Gore, we obtain vaccine virus from the cow, or whether by some organization (I care very little what) we can ensure a constant supply of good recent lymph, taken from healthy children living in the pure air of the country, one thing is certain, that the country, not the town, is the proper source from which a supply of vaccine should be offered to the public.

This I endeavoured to point out in THE LANCET of Oct. 29th (page 447); insisting, also, on the necessity of affording means for every student to be specially instructed in the selection of a proper subject and vesicle to vaccinate from, the different modes of operating, and due inspection of the results.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Old Steine, Brighton, Dec. 1859.

W. E. C. NOURSE, F.R.C.S.

THE CASE OF MR. HALLOWS, AND PROPOSAL TO DEFRAY HIS COSTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As one of your oldest subscribers to THE LANCET, I ask permission to use its pages for the advocacy of the cause of an injured and persecuted medical brother, who has, by the tortuosity and perversion of the 21st and 22nd Vict., cap. 90, been made the victim of that law which was designed to protect him. I refer to the case of Mr. John Sharpers Hallows, of Liverpool, who was recently, though illegally, convicted for using the word, and exercising the functions of, a "surgeon," he being a licentiate of the Hall only. Now, Sir, common sense, common justice, and common law were never more outraged than in this persecution, by which the Act has been made, or attempted to be made, perfectly antagonistic to itself. The 15th section provides, "that every person now or hereafter becoming possessed of any one or more of the qualifications described in Schedule A to this Act

annexed shall be entitled to registration under the said Act." Amongst the qualifications in Schedule A is that of "Licentiate of Apothecaries' Hall," and for this qualification Mr. Hallows was duly registered. He was therefore, according to the letter and spirit of the law, a duly qualified medical practitioner, and call himself by what name he might, he was duly protected by the 40th section, which makes it penal *only* for "*falsely pretending*" (by the use or employment of any of the terms therein set forth) that he is a duly registered person. Mr. Hallows was duly registered, and therefore it was utterly *impossible* for him to violate this section, because he could not so "*pretend*." It is a contradiction in terms, a monstrous absurdity, contrary to all reason and all logic, and I am confident that had he moved the Court of Queen's Bench for a writ of *certiorari*, to bring the conviction into that Court, it would have been instantly quashed, with costs. He did not avail himself of this, but, submitting to the expenses of the case, foiled his persecutor by becoming a member of the College of Surgeons.

Mr. Hallows is an entire stranger to me; I never heard his name till brought before the public in this case; but I have now evidence that he is a highly respectable and honourable man, though not in a position to be oblivious of the expense to which he has been put in defending himself in this prosecution. I would therefore most earnestly solicit the sympathy of his medical brethren in the tangible form of subscriptions to the amount of about *fifty pounds*, to cover his costs. I shall most cheerfully contribute *one guinea*, and hope some kind brother, more centrally situated than I am, will kindly undertake the treasurership, to whom I will instantly remit my subscription, such contributions to be published in THE LANCET, and the list to be open for one month.

I remain, Sir, yours very truly,

Ilfracombe, Devon, Nov. 25th, 1859.

JOHN JONES.

HEAT OF STOKE-HOLES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—An article appeared in THE LANCET of Nov. 19th, relative to the excessive heat in stoke-holes. Now this is a matter with which I am well acquainted, having had extensive experience in it. In one sense, it is to be lamented that the scientific literature of the present day increases to so great and overpowering an extent, because it causes that which is now deemed old to be neglected, and thus enables the dishonest to palm off the old for the new; while, on the other hand, it allows a great deal of what is really valuable to fall into oblivion. I have not the "Philosophical Transactions" under my hand, but I may refer to a paper therein, which may be easily found, where there is a narrative of some experiments instituted by Dr. Birkbeck, and I think Sir Joseph Banks and others, to determine the amount of heat which can be conveniently borne by the human frame. The temperature was something greatly above 130° Fahr., which is so much complained of by the advertisers and humanity-mongers, and tended to show the admirable provision made by nature to maintain a uniform temperature in the body by means of perspiration and consequent evaporation from the surface.

Allow me now, Sir, to give you the result of my experience, extending over a period of nearly seven years. In large ocean steamers, the stoke-hole is situated at the bottom of the ship; it is capacious and kept clean; there is plenty of hatchway above through which the heated air ascends without opposition, and there is, consequently a return rush of fresh air, whether by an ample supply of windsails, or by the hatches themselves. There are always on watch two engineers (officers) on the platform, and a certain number of men: these latter consist of two classes, viz: firemen, whose duty it is to tend the furnaces, and coal-trimmers, who bring the coals to the stoke-hole, keep them properly trimmed, so as to preserve the trim of the ship, and remove the ashes at the termination of each watch. The temperature of the stoke-hole, within the tropics, is from 120° to 130° Fahr.; but be it specially remarked, the air is perfectly dry, so that the perspiration evaporates with the greatest facility. The men, moreover, are clothed in flannel. The temperature increases as we ascend, as might be expected, for the windsails conduct the cooler and moister air into the stoke-hole. On board these ships there are as many seamen as there are firemen and trimmers, but there is more sickness among the seamen than among the others; and it is most prevalent of all with the waiters and other servants. Those in the stoke-hole are not more frequently taken ill on watch than are the

sailors; and what does occur in such cases is that a man is brought up complaining of cramps, and then we may be sure he has been drinking copious draughts of cold water without having oatmeal infused in it, with which, however, he is amply supplied, and which effectually preserves him from these cramps. I should have mentioned that the furnaces are furnished with double doors, having a current of air between them; and I may add that often as I have tested the bodily temperature of men coming out of the stoke-hole, I have never found it to exceed what is natural—namely, 98° Fahr. As far as the Royal Mail Steam Packet Service is concerned, I am bound to say that, at whatever cost, nothing is omitted that may conduce to the well-being and comfort of all on board; and that my suggestions have always been listened to, and there is no doubt on my mind that were the apparatus really necessary it would be had. The Government do well to wait and see if the Royal Mail Service adopt an alleged improvement, for the public is notoriously the worst served, and but too frequently made the victim of jobs.

Allow me to add that the *Odin* does not belong to the Royal Mail Service, properly so called, where no such circumstance as that alluded to could by any possibility have happened.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

London, Nov. 1859.

VIATOR.

CYSTIC DISEASE OF THE LIVER IN A FŒTUS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I attended Mrs. B—, aged twenty-seven, in her fourth accouchement on the 21st October. She previously had pains of a very severe character for three weeks. On making my first examination, I detected a vertex presentation. As the os was fully dilated, I ruptured the membranes, when a very large quantity of liquor amnii escaped. The head proceeded slowly to the os externum, which it passed with some difficulty; the shoulders were very slowly expelled. At this stage I was somewhat surprised that the abdomen did not follow so quickly as usual. I examined for the cause of the delay, and found a large tumour occupying the abdomen of the fœtus. During its passage it distended the perinæum much more than the head, and required my serious attention for a few moments, but eventually passed without rupture. The child expelled, my first object was to obtain a view of the abnormal growth. I thought it was a placenta implanted on the abdomen, it having very much the appearance of that body, the surface being covered with tortuous veins, and the umbilical cord inserted at its lower portion. I, however, found a placenta in utero. I divided the cord and made a careful examination, and found it to be a cyst containing fluid, of the size of two clenched fists, extending from the ensiform cartilage to a little below the umbilicus; a line drawn from the nipple to the anterior superior spinous process of ilium on either side formed its boundaries laterally. The integuments and muscular structures of abdomen seemed to terminate by rounded edges at the circumference of the cyst, to which they were adherent. The child (a female) was remarkably well developed, but had œdema of face, neck, and scalp. She was born alive, but only lived ten minutes. I consequently made an examination of the body. I divided the cyst vertically, when upwards of a pint of serum escaped. Its walls were very thick, of an azure tint. The liver was very large and congested, and the cyst was formed in the parenchyma of that organ; there was total absence of abdominal walls underneath it. All the other organs were healthy and normal.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Willingham, Nov. 1859.

J. C. B. SMALLMAN, M.D.

THE EVILS OF LITTLE HOSPITALS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Much attention has justly been attracted to the numerous infringements upon the emoluments of legitimate medical practice, and measures, more or less effectual, are, from time to time, taken to mitigate the evil. We, notwithstanding, fondly cherish an intramural thief which preys upon us mercilessly.

I believe it may be stated, without fear of contradiction, that the greatest enemy the general practitioner, and more especially the Poor-law medical officer, has to contend with, is the third-class hospitals of small towns. These institutions