

## WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL.

## LITHOTOMY.

Saturday, Feb. 25, 1837. All the surgeons attended to-day in order to consult on a case of stone, in which lithotomy was deemed requisite. The patient was George Poole, aged between seven and eight years. Little of his previous history could be collected, his mother being an abandoned woman, who had left him to the casual care of strangers. He had been admitted several months before, under Mr. White, who treated him with sodaïe and mucilaginous remedies, and supplied him with a nutritious diet. After the lapse of a month he was taken away by his mother, who for a couple of months subjected him to the operations of starvation and cold. He was re-admitted about a month ago, and has since been kept warm, and regularly fed. During his absence the accretion of the stone proceeded rapidly, but in the hospital not so quickly. He is a spare, leucophlegmatic subject. The operation was performed by Mr. Hale Thompson, who, after introducing the staff, took great care to ascertain the situation of the calculus. Some little difficulty was encountered in making the incision into the urethra, in consequence of the rectum protruding forward, and opposing itself to the edge of the scalpel, the child having a large prolapsus ani. The final cystotomy was made by the bistouri caché, and *two* calculi were extracted, one about as large as a thrush's egg, and the other of about the size of a skylark's. The outside layer of each was composed of phosphate of ammonia and magnesia. The patient having had a little wine and water, was carried to his bed.

During the progress of this operation, Sir ANTHONY observed, that lithotomy always would be a serious operation, even in the hands of the most skilful surgeon, for no two cases were found to be alike, and in some instances the anomalies were most remarkable. He had seen John Hunter and Mr. Cline both thrust the gorget between the rectum and the bladder, instead of penetrating the latter; and he thought, that when those two great men had committed such flagrant errors, those of less gifted practitioners might, therefore, occasionally be winked at. He (Sir Anthony) was the first surgeon in this country who employed the bistouri caché. Seeing the accidents which frequently occur from thrusting "a spade" into the bladder, he had a shielded bistoury made, and, though an hospital surgeon of only twenty-two years of age, he had the boldness to be the first to construct and apply a new instrument in the performance of this important operation.

In the evening the boy was tranquil, and having had ten drops of laudanum administered in tea, slept well.

26. Has had a good night, but slight feverishness; the urine flows freely through the wound.

27. Slept well, without the aid of opium; very cheerful, and plays with another calculus patient of his own age.

28. Slept well without narcotics; his bowels act spontaneously.

*Vespere.* No signs of infiltration.

March 10. Fast improving.

## DIABETES CURED.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—On the 10th of last December you were kind enough to insert in THE LANCET a case of diabetes, wherein Thomas Graham, Esq., of Kiverstone, after having suffered during some years under this awful complaint, was restored to health, with, sometimes a little change in the strength, or mode of mixing, the following formula, the variation consisting in mixing a little powdered gum acacia with it at the time:—

*Powdered nux vomica*, 5 grains; *precipitate of iron*, 1 scruple: *prepared chalk*, 1 drachm; *powdered opium*, 1 grain. Mix. Make a powder, one such to be taken three times a day in water.

I said that if he continued well I would say so. I am now happy to state that Mr. Graham has become stout, strong, and fresh-looking, and he can bear as much exercise as most men. Your obliged servant,

J. PEACOCK, M.D.

Darlington, Feb. 27th, 1837.

To the Editor.—SIR:—Will you allow me to inquire of you, if I can in law make a demand upon an unprincipled patient for the amount of the following bill, viz.:—

"Medicine and attendance. 20 visits, at 5s., £5. 7s. 6d."

The case was one of varicose ulcerated leg, and it was mutually agreed, though not before a witness, that I should see the patient four times a week, and charge 5s. a visit, the distance being above two miles. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A SURGEON.

13th March, 1837.

\* \* "A Surgeon" can recover the charges he has made, if he be a legally-qualified practitioner, and can support his case by testimony. The evidence of the servant of the patient would be sufficient for the purpose.—ED. L.

**PERIODICAL RENEWAL OF THE VACCINE VIRUS.**—The frequent occurrence of varioloid eruptions in persons who have already had the small-pox, together with some observations made on vaccinated individuals, have led many physicians to adopt the idea that it is prudent to renew vaccination on some day after an interval of seven years; others propose its renewal after the expiration of ten or fourteen years. The re-vaccination may be prudent, but we believe that the preservative force of the vaccine matter is as powerful at the present day as when it was first discovered by Jenner, and we know of no reason for supposing that its influence over the constitution becomes modified by the lapse of time. During the course of ten years, passed at the *Vaccine Institution* at Berlin, Dr. EBERMAIER has vaccinated more than 6,000 children, and never saw any reason for supposing that the virus, which was constantly taken from arm to arm, had lost any of the qualities which are usually attributed to it. His report is recorded in the *Berlin Medical Gazette*, No. 14.

**TOBACCO IN GOUT.**—A correspondent, who thinks that the medicinal qualities of tobacco have not yet been sufficiently tested, recommends its employment “for the relief and cure of gout, and neuralgic affections, for which it has,” he says, “been tried in many places, and in America with decided success. I have known it to give,” he adds, “relief in a most obstinate case. Its best form in gout is that of infusion, to be used for the legs as a pediluvium, or, for any other part, in the manner which is most agreeable to the patient, as a bath, or fomentation.”

**PATHOLOGICAL ANATOMY.**—At a late meeting of the *Westminster Medical Society*, Mr. STREETER exhibited a healthy specimen of the medulla oblongata, which was remarkable for having only three bands of decussation, two on the right side, and one on the left. He said that he knew but of one other such cases, which was mentioned by Spurzheim. He thought it would be highly desirable in case of paralysis, whether of the same or of the opposite side, that the state of decussation should be noticed with greater accuracy than generally marks examinations of its structure.

## CORRESPONDENTS.

The lines to *Eliza* are not calculated for our pages. Probably, her gratitude to Dr. C\*\*\*, and his “young friend,” can be communicated in a more agreeable manner than that which she has chosen.

*A Constant Reader.* The fact stated can be ascertained more readily by *viva voce* evidence than by procuring the return specified. The names of persons who supply statements of abuses may be communicated confidentially.

*A Reader in the Country.*—We believe that a new edition of the Dictionary has lately been published.

*H. J. P., Liverpool,* must believe that we are well disposed to discuss the topics in *THE LANCET*, but we reluctantly say in reply to his last note, that he defeats his own purpose, and almost quenches our inclination, by over-taxing our means. For instance, —Monday brings his first long letter; Wednesday another; and the next Monday one more, and Tuesday, another. Want of space excludes the first two in that week's Number. The excess of four letters confounds us, and then, through the operation, perhaps, of some such feeling as that which influenced the diamond-merchant, who was unexpectedly told that a thousand precious stones like that which he was about to purchase, were ready for the bazaar, we pause, and the object of our correspondent undesignedly fails. Now, how to avoid this result. Dilute not with excessive repetition of sentences, having each precisely the same meaning; reduce the number of adjectives; and let details of facts supply the place of mere variations of one argument, or the assertion of palpable truths. “What think you of my essays?” said Erasmus. “I would they had been longer,” said his friend. “Had I time, they should be shorter.” Erasmus was wise.—We cut short our lecture. The advice might easily be lengthened,—with *disadvantage*.

*Multum in parvo.*—The notice was meant for another person. We cannot undertake to recommend particular books from among the immense mass, or we would be glad to aid our correspondent.

*Censor.*—We have not the means of drawing up the list, which would, however, be too invidious for publication.