

At about the same time the Association was investigating this preparation the chemists of the Health Department of the City of Milwaukee also analyzed it. The analytical data they obtained were sent to us by Dr. George C. Ruhland, Commissioner of Health of the City of Milwaukee, and they agree essentially with the findings of the Association's chemists.

In brief it may be said that Dr. Garbutt's "gift to humanity" is practically a mixture of sulphurous and dilute hydrochloric acids with small quantities of ammonium chlorid in water sweetened with syrup. The preparation is worthless and its method of exploitation is fraudulent.

## Correspondence

### William Withering and Digitalis—The Beginning of Syphilis

*To the Editor:*—It seems that few men look on medical history as of any importance, and a misstatement on that subject may be hardly worth correcting. Still, an editorial on it (*THE JOURNAL*, June 12, 1915, p. 1993) might as well be accurate, if accuracy makes just as good a story.

Withering did not wait ten years. He announced his observation of the properties of the foxglove immediately. Use of the foxglove became an instant fad, and Withering's book of 1786 is a protest against this. Listen to his preface: "Digitalis was in 1783 admitted to the Edinburgh Pharmacopeia, from which it will soon be dismissed if the *present* random use of it and the dosage that is *customary* in London shall continue." I am surprised that Cushny has never read the book. It is well worth while. It is a serious error to say, "Since the time of publication of Withering's book, its action in dropsy and on the heart has been generally recognized." It was given to cause diuresis. Dropsy was looked on as a primary disease for more than a generation following. Withering accounts for some of his failures on the ground that the dropsy was probably secondary, as there were evident signs of diseased viscera. Some of his most striking successes were in the dropsies that followed an epidemic of scarlatina. When digitalis was first used for its action on the heart, it was used as a cardiac sedative—in aneurysm and fevers, particularly the fever of consumptives.

Referring to the article by Dr. Pusey (*THE JOURNAL*, June 12, 1915, p. 1961), it might be well to mention the fact that recent careful study of all extant records of lazar houses and similar foundations fails to show any increase at the end of the fifteenth century of any sickness that could have been syphilis. It seems probable that the epidemic was not one of syphilis but of literary attention to that subject. Perhaps some of our modern epidemics are of this character. Meanwhile the doctrine of "epidemic influence" has been dismissed from medical thought as though there were no unknown factors in epidemiology calling for such a theory.

JOHN W. BOYCE, M.D., Pittsburgh.

### A Pathognomonic Sign of Adherent Urinary Bladder in Inguinal Hernia

*To the Editor:*—In the last three cases of oblique inguinal hernia in which I have found the bladder attached closely to the sac of the hernia, I have found the arched muscular fibers of the internal oblique muscle, which ordinarily forms the floor of the canal (together with the conjoined tendon), closely attached to the sac. In the last case, on seeing this condition, I at once said to the assistants, "We have a portion of the bladder in this hernia."

My reason for calling attention to this is to ask the question, Is this a continuously positive evidence of an oblique inguinal hernia, with the bladder involved in it? Noting this condition in our dissection, we may save ourselves the chagrin of cutting into and through the bladder wall. These arched muscular fibers are very plain and closely adherent.

J. D. GRIFFITH, M.D., Kansas City, Mo.

## Queries and Minor Notes

ANONYMOUS COMMUNICATIONS and queries on postal cards will not be noticed. Every letter must contain the writer's name and address, but these will be omitted, on request.

### ARTICLES ON EUTHANASIA

*To the Editor:*—I have been informed that there has been considerable discussion regarding the termination of the existence of the hopelessly insane, those suffering from painful, incurable diseases, and similar persons. Could you assist me in locating the literature?

D. R. LEWIS, M.D., New York.

ANSWER.—The following is a list of articles on euthanasia:

- Tonic Effect of Sympathy with Others, Current Comment, *THE JOURNAL*, July 25, 1914, p. 237.
- Supplicant for Euthanasia Recovers, Current Comment, *THE JOURNAL*, Feb. 28, 1914, p. 705.
- The Problem of Euthanasia, Vienna Letter, *THE JOURNAL*, June 14, 1913, p. 1897.
- Euthanasia as a Romantic Motive, editorial, *THE JOURNAL*, Nov. 9, 1907, p. 1609.
- Physicians Do Not Approve of Chloroforming the Helpless, Minor Comments, *THE JOURNAL*, Feb. 24, 1906, p. 590.
- Euthanasia for the Defective and Incurable, editorial, *THE JOURNAL*, Sept. 24, 1904, p. 896.
- Euthanasia, Minor Comments, *THE JOURNAL*, Oct. 31, 1903, p. 1904.
- Judicial Euthanasia, Minor Comments, *THE JOURNAL*, Feb. 2, 1901, p. 329.
- Rosenberg, L. J., and Aronstam, N. E.: Euthanasia—A Medicolegal Study, *THE JOURNAL*, Jan. 12, 1901, p. 108.
- Euphoria vs. Euthanasia, Minor Comments, *THE JOURNAL*, March 25, 1899, p. 674.
- Euthanasia for Condemned Criminals, editorial, *THE JOURNAL*, July 23, 1898, p. 189.

### WHAT IS A CALORY?

*To the Editor:*—In *THE JOURNAL*, May 22, 1915, p. 1719, Lusk says, "The calory is that quantity of heat required to raise 1 liter of water 1° C."

Alphonse Berget in his work, "The Earth: Its Life and Death," translated by Barlow, 1915, page 262, says, "A calory is the amount of heat required to raise 1 gram of water 1° centigrade," and as this definition is repeated on page 323, it can hardly be a misprint.

The Standard Dictionary defines calory as the "amount of heat necessary to raise the temperature of one kilogram of water one degree centigrade," and the Century Dictionary gives about the same definition.

May I ask the explanation of the discrepancy noted above? H.

ANSWER.—The original calory was the quantity of heat required to raise 1 gram of water 1 degree centigrade. On account of the inconvenience of this measure, there came to be the differentiation between the small calory, based on the gram, and the large calory, based on the kilogram, just as there is a differentiation between grammeters of work and kilogrammeters of work. In the majority of textbooks, the difference between the large calory and the small calory is defined, but in most articles on nutrition the large calory has for a long time been the standard of computation, and a careful distinction between the two values is usually neglected.

### LITERATURE ON URTICARIA

*To the Editor:*—Please give me a list of the recent articles on urticaria.

M. S. DAVIE, M.D., Dothan, Ala.

ANSWER.—The following is a list of articles on this subject:

- Jacob, F. H.: Care of Urticaria Pigmentosa Treated with Roentgen Ray, *Brit. Med. Jour.*, June 1, 1907.
- Ravitch, M. L.: Thyroid as Factor in Chronic Urticaria, *Jour. Cutan. Dis.*, November, 1907.
- Vorner: Urticaria Solitaria, *Dermatol. Ztschr.*, January, 1913.
- Ochs, B. F.: Urticaria Caused by the Sun's Rays, *Med. Rec.*, New York, July 30, 1910.
- Wolff, W.: Quinin Effectual in Urticaria, *Deutsch. med. Wchnschr.*, Sept. 21, 1911.
- Hardaway, W. A.: Notes, Chiefly Therapeutic, on Various Diseases of Skin, *Jour. Missouri State Med. Assn.*, May, 1912; abstr., *THE JOURNAL*, June 1, 1912, p. 1721.
- Swann, A. W.: Urticaria Treated with Epinephrin, *Am. Jour. Med. Sc.*, March, 1913; abstr., *THE JOURNAL*, March 29, 1913, p. 1026.
- Snow, I. M.: Purpura, Urticaria and Angioneurotic Edema of Hands and Feet in a Nursing Baby, *THE JOURNAL*, July 5, 1913, p. 18.
- Calcium Lactate in Hay-Fever and Urticaria, *Queries and Minor Notes*, *THE JOURNAL*, Aug. 9, 1913, p. 428.
- Salomon, H.: Dietetic Treatment of Urticaria, *Wien. klin. Wchnschr.*, Aug. 28, 1913; abstr., *THE JOURNAL*, Oct. 4, 1913, p. 1337.
- Protein Poisoning — Anaphylaxis — Urticaria, *Therapeutics*, *THE JOURNAL*, Feb. 7, 1914, p. 456.
- Amins and Urticaria, Current Comment, *THE JOURNAL*, Nov. 21, 1914, p. 1861.
- Swann, A. W.: Human Serum in Urticaria, *THE JOURNAL*, Feb. 27, 1915, p. 737.