

parently well ligated artery allowing the blood to take its former course.

During the first operation doubt was expressed as to the durability of a catgut ligature, as to its power of withstanding the action of the tissue fluids long enough to enable a thrombus to form.

Dr. Baxter quieted these fears by the following remarks: "During my long experience as surgeon to the Cook County Hospital, I never applied silk ligatures, but always used catgut, and never knew it to give way if tied sufficiently firm. Neither were the catgut ligatures destroyed by absorption before the eighth or twelfth day, and it does not require a longer time than this for the formation of a thrombus." After proving by a critical analysis of the clinical history that neither a thrombus had formed nor an extensive rupture of the interna and muscularis had followed the application of the ligature, the following conclusions were arrived at:

The artery had never been completely closed. Catgut is comparatively stiff and cannot be drawn together so tightly as silk. A thin, perhaps, thread-like stream of blood constantly flowed through the vessel, the pressure of the blood current, assisted by the process of absorption, gradually weakened the ligature, until at last it suddenly gave way.

A question of importance which arose during the second operation was the justifiableness of again employing catgut as a ligature, in the face of the first mishap.

An occurrence which often threatens the life of patients after an operation is secondary hæmorrhage. This peril, according to the essayist, is increased by the use of a silk ligature, provided a thrombus does not form or does not possess sufficient power of resistance, for silk usually cuts through the arterial coats. In view of a contravention of this statement, that such a possibility does not exist, since a thrombus capable of withstanding any pressure usually forms before silk could produce such an action, a case was cited of fatal secondary hæmorrhage, occurring 35 days after the operation, when the wound had healed perfectly. An autopsy revealed a necrotic degeneration of the interna and muscularis, and two non-obturator thrombi below the place of ligation. In order to avoid secondary hæmorrhage, Sattler says: "It is of great importance, when isolating the artery, not to tear more of the arterial sheath than is absolutely necessary to apply a ligature. In this manner the danger of necrosis of the artery is avoided. The danger of hæmorrhage is furthermore diminished by closely following the laws of antiseptics and employing a carbolized catgut ligature." If a No. 3 catgut ligature be applied double, or two adjoin each other, we secure the best chances for the healing of the wound per primam and avoid the danger of secondary hæmorrhage. **BERNE BETTMAN, M.D., Secretary.**

THE PROPOSED SIMS MONUMENT.—A committee has been formed, representing the profession in various parts of the country, to obtain funds for the erection of a monument to the late Dr. Sims in New York. Dr. Fordyce Barker is the chairman, and Dr. George F. Shradley is secretary.

BOOK REVIEWS.

A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON MATERIA MEDICA AND THERAPEUTICS. BY ROBERTS BARTHOLOW, M.A., M.D., LL.D. Fifth edition. Publisher, D. Appleton & Co., 1884.

This is deservedly one of the most popular works upon this subject that the profession has. Prof. Bartholow's style is clear and pleasing. He is known to be an authority upon the matters treated. He gives with assurance his own views, and the practitioner can at once tell what has been used with benefit by the author.

The new edition is somewhat enlarged and has been thoroughly revised, so that it now agrees with the new pharmacopœia.

The work from its first appearance has been so popular and so widely read that an extended notice in regard to its scope and methods would now be superfluous.

DOMESTIC CORRESPONDENCE.

"BAKING POWDER."

FOR THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

Mr. Editor:—I send you the following comments on a very common but important subject, and hope they will attract attention:

There have been many newspaper wars pending about this article, but they have not at all enlightened the public on the subject. Dr. Hammond, of New York City, waged a war against the old time institution of the "country pie," demonstrating its indigestibility, and its consequent bad effect on the stomach; and I cannot understand why some medical authority has not agitated the baking powder question, and explained to the public its injurious effects, about which there is no doubt. To make the matter clear, it may be stated that the average baking powder is composed of bi-carbonate of soda, cream tartar, and starch, with a possible admixture of other things. The continued use of even this purest baking powder will affect the system seriously, commencing with only a slight derangement of the digestive organs, which gradually becomes chronic, changing the secretions of the stomach necessary for digestion (muriatic acid), in fact, altering the whole chemistry of the human stomach.

The continued use of alkalis in any form injures the health. Look at the alkali country west of us, where the alkali is found in the *drinking water*. The same dangers will arise from the persistent alkaline medication of our *daily bread*. The various forms of dyspepsia, bladder troubles, Bright's Disease, consumption—the newest researches speak about a wrong proportion of the alkalis in this disease—are only too often caused by this modern substitute for the old time-honored, common sense practice of using yeast.

It is a well known fact that the American nation is dyspeptically inclined, and that the New England race especially has physically deteriorated since bak-

ing powder is so generally used. The amount of baking powder made every year is enormous.

YEAST.

ST. PAUL, MINN., Jan. 7, 1884.

CRAWFORDSVILLE, Ind., Jan. 15, 1884.

EDITOR JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION :

In my letter, so kindly published in your issue of January 5, an unimportant error crept in, where you say "his coat" instead of "*the cord*," in the sentence "The doctor pulled his coat off."

In reading *The Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery*, of March 1, 1847, edited by Drs. Daniel Drake, L. P. Yandell, and T. W. Colescott, I was interested to see what was expected of our Association as set forth in the following extracts: "Provided its members shall consult together with a fixed determination not to part till they have laid the foundation of an American profession. It is quite time that this was at least attempted. At present there is as little intercourse and sympathy between the physicians of the different States of the *Union*, so-called, as between those of the different kingdoms of Europe. All this is wrong, and should, if possible, be corrected. The medical profession is one throughout the world, and especially should its members, in the same confederacy of States, compose one brotherhood. As a means of promoting this interesting object, and, at the same time, giving an impulse to medical inquiry and improvement, it is to be hoped that the convention will not adjourn without taking measures to bring about, in some central city, a yearly meeting of physicians, surgeons, obstetricians, druggists, and dentists, open to all who legitimately belong to these respective departments of the profession. Such meetings could not fail to call forth many valuable papers and reports of committees, the reading and discussion of which would be a source of both pleasure and improvement; while our physicians generally would acquire a new impulse to observation and experimental research, and the publications of the association would elevate the character of our profession. Our readers will recollect that the meeting in Philadelphia will be an adjournment of that held in New York in the month of May, 1846. The minutes of that meeting are now before us, and we observe that several committees were appointed to make reports on the organization of a national association; on the primary education of students of medicine; on a higher standard of graduation; on State boards of examiners for the degree of M.D., instead of its being done by the professors; finally, on a uniform system of medical ethics. All those are important topics, which it is hoped the committees will thoroughly investigate."

In the June number I find: "The convention before adjourning resolved itself into an association, to be called the American Medical Association, and Prof. Chapman, being presented as its President, said he was greatly impressed with the honor conferred upon him, and unable to express in adequate terms

the feelings which then animated his breast. It had been his good fortune, in the course of his long life, sometimes to have been complimented in the same manner, though not in the same degree. He confessed his incompetency to serve them in conformity with his wishes. He loved his profession, and should be very ungrateful did he not. Whatever he possessed in this life of any value had been bestowed by her great favors. Whenever he deserted her or any of her disciples, might Almighty God desert him! It would always be his aim to promote as far as he could the principles of the science, and do everything in his power to elevate still higher the medical profession." Yours,

T. F. LEECH, M.D.

STATE MEDICINE.

MEETING OF THE ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

We copy the following special report from the *Daily Times* of this city:

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Jan. 18.—The State Board of Health is holding its annual meeting for the election of officers and other business, in its rooms, in the Dapitol building. There are present Newton Bateman, of Galesburg; R. Ludlam, of Chicago; A. L. Clark, of Elgin; W. A. Haskell, of Alton; W. R. Mackenzie, of Chester; A. W. Reen, of Peoria (recently appointed to fill a vacancy), and the Secretary, John H. Rauch, of Chicago.

Dr. A. L. Clark, the Treasurer, presented his annual statement for the year 1883, accounting for the receipts through the Secretary's office of \$904.91, and the expenditure of \$715.85, leaving a balance in his hands of \$189.06, independent of the regular appropriations.

The Secretary, Dr. Rauch, presented his quarterly report, in which is also included an annual summary. The following are the more important points:

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

Scarlet fever has continued during the quarter in many localities, but without, in any case, assuming a serious epidemic form, while the death-rate from it remained unusually low. The German edition of the Board's circular on scarlet fever, alluded to in the last quarterly report as in preparation has been published and distributed to many points. Diphtheria has been reported from several places.

Small-pox has appeared at Stone Fort, Saline county; Farina, Fayette county; McLeansboro, Hamilton county; and Alton, Madison county. The disease was also reported October 31, from Paris, Edgar county, but the case was subsequently ascertained to have been chicken-pox. At Stone Fort the disease was introduced by a woman who had been attending the St. Louis fair; took sick a few days after her return, and died on the thirteenth day of an attack of unmodified confluent small-pox. Of seven other members of her family four contracted the disease, the remaining three escaping through successful vaccination after exposure. A relative's family, liv-