

tween reputable and disreputable articles, and the question of remuneration from the manufacturers for such work is not to be taken into consideration as a decisive factor in this respect. It is, however, to be understood that the payment of the fee must not be made in any way dependent on the result of the publication of the article. Inspection of the article by the firm before it is printed is permissible, and also a reservation on the part of the firm that it is not compelled to permit the publication of an article so long as the preparation has not been marketed and so long as a dissenting opinion regarding the preparation has not been published from another source. It is to be specified in the publication that the work was carried out at the request of the firm." [See also abstract 65 on page 1648 in this issue.]

Home for Incurable Consumptives.

It was first advocated by B. Fränkel, and again with repeated emphasis by Robert Koch, that incurable consumptives should be removed from their families and unfavorable surroundings and placed in special hospitals. This requirement is based on the general principle that in the eradication of any infectious disease the first essential is to remove the source of infection. In phthisis this lies in the expectoration, and in spite of all hygienic precautions the contamination of other individuals can not be prevented if the bacilli contained in the sputum gain access to food or are inhaled. It is indeed not to be denied that if individuals harboring tubercle bacilli in their sputum could be completely and permanently isolated, it would prove a most effective measure against the spread of pulmonary tuberculosis. The carrying out of this program in practice is not an easy matter, since patients of this sort dread to enter such homes for incurables, from which no one departs alive, so that they have been named "death houses for consumptives," *Sterbehäuser*. So far the repeated trials of these homes for consumptives have failed for want of patients.

Of late, the erection of such homes for the incurable has been abandoned, and attention turned to building special hospitals for consumptives in which, besides the curable cases (for which alone the public sanatoria are reserved), also incurable cases can be received and permanently cared for. The city of Berlin contemplates the erection of such a special hospital, with 500 beds. Such a hospital would afford the great advantage that it would relieve the general city hospitals of the burden of the incurable consumptives who take up the room needed by other patients and are a continual burden on the physicians and nurses.

Deterioration of the Physical Development of Country People and Their Food.

By a decree of the Prussian minister of education, the medical councils are required to give an opinion on the question whether a deterioration in the physical development of the rural population has been observed, and whether it can be connected with the lessened consumption of milk and buttermilk. The occasion of this is the observation made in several places that, in connection with the increase of dairies, the rural population are suffering in their food and development because, in consequence of the sale of the available whole milk, the demand of their own households for milk is no longer fully supplied, and the use of the less valuable skim milk or inefficient substitutes is favored. From the observations made in Switzerland it is feared that the resisting forces may be reduced in consequence of the lack of the strength-giving milk in the diet. This apprehension has not yet been confirmed so far as Prussia is concerned, but in the meantime further data relating to the subject are to be furnished by the medical councils (*Aerztckammer*).

VIENNA LETTER.

The Thalassotherapeutic Congress.

The International Congress on Thalassotherapy was held at Albazia, an Austrian south coast health resort, September 25-28. It was attended not only by numerous physicians from the different seaside places in Austria, Germany, France, Holland, Belgium and Italy, but also by several eminent men of science, like v. Leyden, who thus indicated their belief in the future of thalassotherapy. From the large number of papers read before the congress, only a few may be mentioned here which appeal more to the general practice. The indications for and the nature of thalassotherapy were explained by Drs. Nussbaum, Gol, Glax, Kurz and Baudouin. Three factors are concurring to bring about the favorable effect of a protracted stay at a suitable seaside place: The fresh pure air, with its abundance of ozone and lack of dust, the sunshine, to which the bather is generally exposed and the chemico-physical action of the sea water. As regards the last-named factor, a dis-

tinctive feature of the various sea places is the temperature and the specific gravity of the water. While in some places, especially on the North Sea, the temperature hardly ever exceeds 68° F., with a specific gravity of the water of 1.05, the Adriatic has a density of the water of 1.12-1.30, sometimes reaching even considerably higher figures. Consequently, a stay of 20 minutes in the water is considered a long one in the North Sea, while in the Adriatic an hour may be safely passed in the water, since its temperature is often more than 77 or 80° F. Papers on the influence of the sea climate on tuberculous affections were read by Drs. Hennig and Mol, as well as Professor von Leyden. The leading points of the papers and of the discussion which ensued showed that all authors thought that patients with incipient tuberculosis of the respiratory organs and surgical tuberculosis, that was not too far advanced, would derive material benefit from a stay in a cool, not too breezy seaside place.

Pharmacology

MURINE EYE REMEDY.

A Nostrum with an Alleged College of Ophthalmology for a Side Line.

To be all things to all men is the alpha and omega of successful advertising. An address to Bowery toughs in terms of Chesterfieldian elegance not only would fail to carry conviction, but might lead to mob violence on the part of the audience. This principle, which is recognized by all astute advertisers, is beautifully exemplified in what follows.

Murine Eye Remedy is an "eye lotion" advertised in street cars, on bill boards and fences and in the daily press. During the Chicago session of the American Medical Association the promoters of this nostrum conceived the idea that it might as well work the medical profession in a way that has become classic among certain manufacturers. The following appeared in Chicago newspapers:

The Entire Medical Profession

Are cordially invited to visit our Exhibit and our Offices at Michigan Ave. & Randolph St. (Opposite Public Library) while in Chicago, and those unable to do so may send us their address Cards, on receipt of which we will forward by Express ample Supplies of Murine Eye Remedies and Literature

The demand at the Exhibition Hall was so great as to render this notice necessary.

MURINE EYE REMEDY Co.

To lead the public to infer that this company had an exhibit at the American Medical Association meeting was a master-stroke of advertising mendacity. The fact that a large proportion of the laity has confidence in physicians is recognized by the Murine Eye Remedy Company in its advertising to the general public, and the approval which physicians accord their preparation is enlarged on.

To those unstable individuals, however, who embrace the various pathies and isms, and to whom a decent medical man is a *bête noire*, this company appeals through the various freak publications which pander to this class. In one of the best known of this type of periodicals is a three-quarter page advertisement of Murine—the balance of the page being taken up with quotations from Ernst Renan on religion, Wordsworth on nature and Swedenborg on love. The antimetaphysical faddists are told that "a group of business and professional men in Chicago recently banded together to give an ailing public an eye lotion that will further the interests of humanity." How this altruistic spirit does pervade the "patent medicine" fraternity! Everything is done for "humanity"—providing "humanity" will pay the bill! "Of course," continue our eye remedy friends, "many of the Learned Guessers object to this lotion, saying 'things' about it whenever they get the chance—that's natural." Perfectly! "So let the Learned Guessers howl—to howl is an M.D.'s privilege."

WHAT MURINE WAS—AND IS.

Before the advent of that potent influence for commercial veracity, the Food and Drugs Act, the carton in which this "eye water" was sold read as follows:

MURINE
A POSITIVE CURE

FOR SORE EYES, RED, INFLAMED AND ITCHING LIDS.

Since that law has become operative and a lying label has become illegal instead of merely immoral, the carton bears this legend:

MURINE
A RELIABLE RELIEF

FOR SORE EYES, RED, INFLAMED AND ITCHING LIDS.

In the pamphlet which accompanies each bottle of the preparation, we are told that Murine is "compounded by Eye Specialists who have used it successfully in their private practice as Oculists for over twenty years." "Murine is Indicated in Cases of Weak Eyes, Inflamed Eyes, Tired Eyes, Strained Eyes, Children's Eyes, Itching Eyes, Blurring Eyes, Red Eyes" and numerous other kinds of eyes—in fact, Murine is "a Favorite Lotion for those who wear Artificial Eyes."

One is carried back to that delightful character of Mark Twain's, "Colonel Sellers," who was about to put on the market his "Infallible, Imperial, Oriental Optic Liniment and Salvation for Sore Eyes—the Medical Wonder of the Age! Small bottles fifty cents, large ones a dollar."

The composition of such a unique and universal remedy for all the ills the eye is heir to will naturally interest physicians. Analyses made in the Chemical Laboratory of the American Medical Association gave the following results:

CHEMISTS' REPORT ON MURINE.

Murine as found on the market to-day is an amber-colored liquid, practically odorless, having a slightly bitter taste, and giving an alkaline reaction to litmus. From the examination detailed below, we conclude that Murine is essentially an aqueous solution of borax (2.6 gm. per 100 c.c. or 12 grains to the fluid ounce), containing a trace of berberin or some golden seal preparation.

It is interesting to note that Murine is variable in composition. A sample examined Nov. 30, 1907, contained a carbonate and responded to alkaloidal tests very feebly; while the product to-day contains no carbonate and shows definite traces of alkaloids.

One wonders to what extent the therapeutic action of Murine is due to the price charged for it. If instead of paying \$1.00 an ounce—the price charged—the public could buy it for 5 cents a gallon—the estimated cost—would the removal of such a potent psychic influence have any effect on the virtues of the preparation? The question is not one to be lightly disposed of or settled off-hand.

In all seriousness, however, the law which permits men engaged in such a business to continue the practice of medicine seems lamentably weak. It would seem that the medical profession, if not for its own self-respect, at least for the protection of the public, should have some means of making

1. Qualitative tests of murine showed the presence of borax and some organic substance, responding to the general alkaloidal tests. Estimation by the method of Thomson (*Jour. Soc. Chem. Indust.*, xii, p. 432), in which the agreement between acidimetric and alkali-metric titrations showed that the solution contained borax as such, demonstrated the presence of 12 grs. to the fluid ounce, or 2.50 gm. per 100 c.c. of crystallized borax.

The color of the preparation suggested the possible presence of golden seal, which was tested for as follows: Twenty-five c.c. of Murine was acidified and then extracted with chloroform; it was then made alkaline and again extracted with chloroform. The second extraction, evaporated to dryness, left a yellow residue weighing 0.0046 gm. or 0.0183 gm. per 100 c.c. This residue was soluble in acidulated water, and the addition of an aqueous solution of potassium iodid to the solution a yellow flocculent precipitate was formed, a reaction very characteristic of berberin. The filtrate from this precipitate yielded a dark-brown precipitate with iodine, demonstrating the presence of an alkaloid. The precipitate was decomposed with sodium sulphite and again extracted with chloroform, and the chloroform extract evaporated to dryness. The residue thus left was slightly yellow and responded to alkaloidal tests. The reactions thus obtained indicate that Murine contains berberin or a preparation of golden seal.

clear to that public the difference between ethical practitioners of medicine and those who, posing as such, conduct a business whose success lies in humbugging and deluding the innocent.

ITS PROMOTERS AND THEIR "COLLEGE."

The president of the Murine Eye Remedy Company is James B. McFatrigh, M.S., M.D., an eclectic physician of Chicago; the treasurer is George W. McFatrigh, M.D., also an eclectic practicing in Chicago. O. F. Hall is the secretary. These three men are also said to be the directors of the company. The McFatrighs are the originators and practical owners of the business.

In addition to their "patent-medicine" interests, the McFatrighs are, respectively, the president and secretary of a school of spectacle fitters rejoicing in the sonorous title of the "Northern Illinois College of Ophthalmology and Otology." This seat of learning confers no fewer than seven degrees, to-wit:

FELLOW OF OPTICS
BACHELOR OF OPTICS
DOCTOR OF OPTICS
BACHELOR OF OPHTHALMOLOGY
MASTER OF OPHTHALMOLOGY
DOCTOR OF OPHTHALMOLOGY
HONORARY DEGREE

The diplomas issued are, it is needless to say, most ornate, and are well calculated to inspire the mere "layman" with a healthy respect for the erudition of their possessors. As the "college" catalogue states, most of the diplomas "frame handsomely 28 x 28 inches."

Why the term "otology" is added to the title of the "college" has not yet been determined. As far as can be learned, the eye is the only organ which is even supposed to be studied. Possibly "otology" is thrown in for good measure. Incidentally, we would suggest that as fitting of glasses is taught instead of ophthalmology, the latter term would seem to constitute misbranding—but, then, the Food and Drugs Act doesn't apply here.

The catalogue is profusely illustrated with reproductions of the diplomas, and full-page half-tones of the "professors" and of the class-rooms. The pictures show large advertisements of "Murine" on the walls of the class-rooms, the general office being particularly well supplied with these works of art.

The "college" itself is hardly as imposing as its name might indicate. The illustrated cover of the catalogue and the catalogue itself convey the impression that the "Northern Illinois College—", etc., is located in the Masonic Temple, one of the largest office buildings in Chicago. As a matter of fact, it is on the third floor of an old building in the wholesale grocery district, and the Murine Eye Remedy Company occupies the same floor. The "college," in fact, appears to be a sort of annex to the "patent-medicine" concern. The only apparent connection between the college and the Masonic Temple is that its "President and Professor of the Principles of Ophthalmology and Otology"—James B. McFatrigh, M.S., M.D.—and its "Secretary and Professor of Clinical and Didactic Ophthalmology and Otology"—George W. McFatrigh, M.D.—have their offices in the latter building.

These gentlemen evidently believe that not only "to howl is an M.D.'s privilege," but also that to commercialize the profession of medicine is equally his privilege. Whether selling a "course" in optics with a "diploma" thrown in for \$25.00, or dispensing Murine Eye Remedy at \$1.00 an ounce, or treating patients professionally—all is grist to their mill.

And the public? Well, P. T. Barnum is authority for the statement that it likes to be humbugged. The danger in the indiscriminate use of this eye water is probably a negative one in most cases. It may, however, by lulling the patient into a false sense of security, and by causing him to temporize, be a very real one. This is realized when we see its use recommended in ophthalmia neonatorum and other conditions equally serious. But "the law allows it," and, as our old friend Colonel Sellers remarked, "There's millions in it."

A German Opinion of the Antinostrum Work.

In a letter from the United States in the *Deutsche medizinische Wochenschrift*, September 10, after describing the Chi-

ago session of the American Medical Association the writer says:

"THE JOURNAL of the A. M. A. has over 50,000 subscribers. This will make a peculiar impression on the editors of your medical journals. The enormous influence of THE JOURNAL is clear, especially when one realizes that every week several pages are devoted to the campaign against quackery and nostrums. On account of its large circulation, THE JOURNAL is able to reject the advertisements of secret medicines, and the more reputable competing journals are compelled to follow its lead to a greater or less extent. Dozens of the minor medical journals are, of course, obliged to accept advertisements of this kind: many, in fact, draw their subsistence from this source, and some are actually merely what are called 'house organs'—just the same as in Germany, including medical write-ups to order for pay."

Correspondence

Dr. Hamill Not Dead.

GUTHRIE, OKLA., Oct. 27, 1908.

To the Editor:—In THE JOURNAL, October 10, page 1275, appears the death notice of Dr. John Ransom Hamill of this place. I am happy to state that this is a mistake. While Dr. Hamill has been very ill for a long time, he is now convalescing nicely and hopes to be out again soon.

The report got out here in Guthrie that Dr. Hamill had died on September 25, but how it became circulated no one seems to be able to tell.

E. O. BARKER.

A Courteous Critic.

NEW YORK, Oct. 29, 1908.

To the Editor:—Your remarks on the death of Prof. Dr. v. Poehl are both indecent and offensive. I do not intend to employ servants to circulate scurrilous statements, nor do I care to receive them through the mails.

REYNOLD WEBB WILCOX.

[COMMENT: We publish the above as a model of the decent and inoffensive in correspondence. The matter referred to appeared two weeks ago in the letter of our Berlin correspondent, a man who stands high in the profession in Germany, and who is in a position to know whereof he writes. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* is a rule that should ordinarily be observed. Probably, however, when our Berlin correspondent saw Spermin (Poehl) advertised in illustrated weeklies along with lost manhood restorers and bust developers, he felt that this rule did not apply. Professional nostrum promoters can hardly expect to receive obituary notices which will be altogether comforting to their friends and sympathizers.—ED.]

Epilepsy Affected by Intercurrent Disease.

BALTIMORE, Oct. 30, 1908.

To the Editor:—THE JOURNAL, October 24, refers to Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's request for information concerning the effect of certain diseases on epilepsy.

In "Epilepsy and Its Treatment" (W. B. Saunders Co., 925 Walnut St., Philadelphia), pages 387-388, will be found data on this point under the heading, "The Influence of Concurrent Diseases on Epilepsy." Mention is made of several diseases, including malarial fever, typhoid fever, erysipelas and diphtheria, the influence of which on epileptic attacks was apparently marked. Since that book was issued, other instances have come to my attention in which an internal disease arising in an epileptic checked the manifestations of that disease completely for longer or shorter periods. In some cases, when pulmonary tuberculosis arose, and the disease was active from the outset, the attacks of epilepsy did not recur at all for more than three years. Scarlet fever will have the same effect and so will pneumonia.

The study of this question is interesting in that it may

indicate a method of treating epilepsy, which is but little cultivated or understood to this time.

WILLIAM P. SPRATLING.

Dilatation or Volvulus of the Stomach.

DENVER, Oct. 27, 1908.

To the Editor:—I have read with much interest a clinical note by Dr. W. R. Houston entitled "Acute Dilatation of the Stomach, Report of an Unusual Case," in THE JOURNAL, October 24, page 1424.

Taking it for granted that Dr. Houston recorded every symptom of importance—namely, that the woman was taken with sudden abdominal pain which was referred to the upper quadrant, that the distention was at first more marked on the right side and later became universal, and that the heart and liver were considerably displaced upward—I beg to submit my opinion that the case was not one of dilatation of the stomach, but of volvulus of the stomach. The differential diagnosis between dilatation of the stomach and that of volvulus of the stomach is the absence of vomiting in the latter, and the presence of copious vomiting in the former. The facts that vomiting is not recorded, that ineffectual attempts were made to introduce a stomach-tube, that water administered by the mouth was regurgitated after ten or fifteen minutes, that when the wall of the stomach was punctured there was a loud explosion of gas, and that only half a pint of dark acid contents was found in the stomach, conclusively prove that Dr. Houston unknowingly recorded the first case of volvulus of the stomach in this country. The symptom-complex of Dr. Houston's case comprises every detail characteristic of volvulus of the stomach as recorded in an article under the same title published in *American Medicine*, Oct. 31, 1903, vi, 709.

C. D. SPIVAK.

The Work of the National Commission on Country Life.

ITHACA, N. Y., Oct. 28, 1908.

To the Editor:—I am much interested in the editorial in THE JOURNAL, August 22, on the work of the Commission on Country Life. This commission is appointed, not for the purpose of investigating the farmer or technical agricultural questions, but to study the general social, sanitary and economic conditions of country life. The commission will not be able in its brief existence to make any thorough investigations into any of these questions, but it will be possible for it to arrive at a good estimate of rural conditions, and to secure the opinions of the best men as to what needs to be done in respect to the larger questions of country life. The commission is specially anxious to secure the cooperation of those persons who are competent to give opinions in regard to the sanitary conditions of the rural country. In this respect THE JOURNAL could render the commission great aid by suggesting how such opinions could be secured and by itself securing them through correspondence with its subscribers. We should like to have these questions discussed also in the various medical societies. Possibly you can suggest the best way whereby discussions of this kind could be set in motion. Perhaps these discussions could best be started through the medical journals themselves.

The commission will be very glad to be put in the way of receiving such information as the medical journals may collect in regard to the sanitary and dietary condition of the open country. The commission will soon begin to hold hearings in different parts of the country. We shall hope that practitioners who have had special touch with country conditions will be present at the hearings and give us the benefit of their opinions.

We should also be glad if physicians and sanitarians would care to join the commission on any part of its journey. We are hoping, for example, that Dr. Stiles will be with us in the southeastern country, in order to point out the effect of the hookworm on the people in certain communities.

We shall be glad to receive any suggestions from the medical profession in regard to the general subjects on which the commission is to make inquiries.

L. H. BAILEY,

Chairman Commission on Country Life.