

rary appointment, ninety-nine have been kept in poverty all their lives; and with such experience to guide us, what prospect of good does such an unjust system hold out to warrant its being recommended for adoption in the Medical Departments of either Army or Navy?

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

May, 1857.

ARGUS.

“COMMITTAL OF A SURGEON FOR MAN-SLAUGHTER.”

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following case, with the above heading, having appeared in the daily journals in a garbled form, I think it only my duty to furnish you with a correct summary.

An inquest was held on the 8th, 12th, and 15th inst., at the Prince of Orange, Brewer's-green, Westminster, before C. S. C. Bedford, Esq., on the body of Mary Bingham, aged thirty-eight, who died on the 4th inst., after her seventh confinement.

She sent for a highly respectable midwife at about seven A.M., April 30th, who, finding the pains decrease, gave her some ergot, and the head was born about ten A.M.

No further progress occurring, the midwife sent for Mr. M. Morgan, of Vauxhall-bridge-road, who saw the patient between twelve and one, and recommended “waiting.” He was again sent for between two and three P.M., when he administered *two doses of drops at fifteen minutes' interval* (which he said were narcotic), and called a third time between five and six P.M., with a friend (Mr. Rendall) who has lately retired from practice. This gentleman recommended a glass of brandy-and-water, and thought it better to wait for pains, “*there being great apathy of the uterus, and firm contraction of the cervix!*” Mr. Morgan again called between ten and eleven, and having waited till a quarter past twelve, he left her, advising the midwife to send for the “parish doctor,” as he had a case of his own to attend to. The midwife and another woman sent for an order for medical relief, and in the meantime the husband and a friend came and entreated me to go and attend to the poor woman.

I found her (at half-past twelve at night) in a sinking condition, with a quick weak pulse, 120, an anxious expression of countenance, and incipient clammy perspiration, constant thirst, and bilious vomiting; the abdomen was tumid, tender, and tympanitic, the womb tonically contracted, and the *bladder full and distended*. The child's head and left arm, merely hanging by a narrow strip of integument, and the right arm, also much lacerated, were born, and a portion of the vertebral column, presenting a number of jagged points, were also dislocated.

Having passed a catheter, I detached the head and left arm, and (fearful of this lacerating the woman) I carefully removed the loose portion of the spine; I then perforated the abdomen through the chest, and having eviscerated as well as circumstances would permit, delivered the remains with the blunt hook. Anxious to procure perfect uterine contraction, I then administered half a drachm of ethereal tincture of ergot, and shortly afterwards removed the placenta, which was covered with a thick, firm, dark coagulum, and had evidently been cast off some time.

The poor woman lived exactly three days after her delivery, but, in spite of treatment, never rallied; and six hours before her death, a rigor ushered in delirium, and tetanic convulsions of the thorax and upper extremities (the latter much relieved by the cautious administration of chloroform) closed the painful scene.

The cause of the obstruction was enlargement of the foetal abdomen from multilocular encysted disease of the kidneys, the left weighing twelve ounces and four scruples; and the right, which had been considerably broken up, seven ounces and two scruples and a half. The child also had double hare-lip, cleft-palate, bandy-legs, and symmetrical talipes varus.

Sixteen hours after death, I procured a post-mortem examination of the body of M. B—, and found a gangrenous state of the bladder, upper portion of the vagina and rectum, the lower four inches of the front abdominal wall, and the lower third of the uterus, and the inner layers of this organ were also gangrenous to the depth of about three lines. The spleen and liver were putrifying, and much gorged with blood; the kidneys pale; heart and lungs healthy. Slight peritonitis, with serous and lymphatic effusion, and general tympanitis. The substance of the uterus was thicker than normal.

Unwilling to rise by the fall of another practitioner; thinking it improbable that Mr. Morgan would ever meet with a

similar case; meaning to enlighten him as to his duty whether or no, through the medium of your valuable periodical; and, moreover, deeming that much evil would accrue to the public by a general knowledge of these facts, I advised the husband (contrary to the expressed opinion of another medical man) not to apply for an inquest. Circumstances, however, occurred which rendered an inquiry necessary; and the jury returned an unanimous verdict of manslaughter against Mr. Morgan.

This sketch is, to the best of my knowledge, true to the letter.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

ROBT. KNAGGS, L.M. R.C.S.E., &c.

Horseferry-road, Westminster, May, 1857.

THE ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having been present at the late annual meeting of the Royal Medical Benevolent College, I take the liberty to inform you that the report of the meeting published in your last number is more “harmonious” (?) than strictly correct.

The courteous adoption of an amendment proposed by those who have been designated “dissentient” governors, and the cordial reception of that courtesy by the latter, must not be interpreted as implying a removal of all grounds of complaint by the Council. On the contrary, these still remain; and endeavours are at this moment being made to negotiate with the Council for a return to the original intention of the College.

I doubt not but that it is the determination of the so-called dissentients steadily to pursue, by all legal means, the objects they have announced to the Council. “Harmony” will not, cannot, be restored until a permanent reduction of the charge for the education of exhibitioners to the *maximum* of thirty pounds per annum shall have been secured by the laws of the College.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Upper Holloway,
May 20th, 1857.

W. B. KESTEVEN, F.R.C.S.

NOTES OF CURRENT DISEASES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I could wish to see more frequently in your columns some notice of the prevalent diseases or type of diseases of the current time. From the returns of the Registrar-General, we may gather what is the prevailing type of disease which causes death, but there exists no registry or other means of ascertaining, on an extended scale, the prevalent type of disease independent of death. Might not THE LANCET do good service to the science of medicine by supplying a record of this nature, inviting from its readers brief notes of the current disorders prevailing in their practice? If communications of the kind became too numerous, it would be easy to embody their substance in a weekly abstract, which would be of the highest interest to the practising physician or surgeon, while it would constitute a complete history of the “epidemic constitution” of each year, for future reference, affording, also, data for indicating the comparative salubrity of places in different seasons and circumstances. Each practitioner would then have something broader than merely his own personal experience and casual intelligence from his medical neighbours on which to base his estimate of the morbid or salubrious tendency of each particular season, and I am sure that a large proportion of subscribers to THE LANCET would look with increasing interest for such a weekly abstract.

For example: During the past month, there has been a sort of cough epidemic. One medical friend writes me word of the frequency of a low form of bronchitis; another of influenza; and so on. In my own practice here, I have had 1 case of slight croup; 1 of subacute laryngitis; 1 of spasmodic asthma, supervening upon old emphysema; 1 of catarrh; 1 of influenza, with facial neuralgia; 2 of influenza, with bronchial cough and debility; 1 of simple cough, arising from debility; 2 of pulmonary cough; 1 of spasmodic cough, of nervous origin and peculiarly obstinate character; 1 of subacute bronchitis; and several of cough or sore-throat, supervening on other diseases; besides others that did not come under treatment. This coincided with a sudden accession of very mild weather at the beginning of the month, and diminished as the weather again became colder.

Of this *quasi* epidemic, and of the prevalent neuralgia and neuralgic influenza which preceded it in March and January, we know nothing beyond the casual information we may have gathered from our medical friends; whereas it would have been

most interesting to have had some certain account of each—when they first began, in what districts they were observed, and when they ceased. I feel convinced that the advantages of such observations, systematically made upon a large scale, and regularly chronicled in a brief, readable form, would prove greater than we, in the present state of our knowledge, can foresee; and I believe that, for want of them, much valuable knowledge, which might have been easily gathered, has been lost to the profession.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Eltham, May, 1857. WM. E. C. NOURSE.

P.S.—I have just seen, for the first time, in THE LANCET, a notice of the very proceeding I advocate, as intended to be carried on through the medium of the Board of Health. I rejoice that public attention is at last awakened to this very important matter, and sincerely trust that regular and easily accessible records of the kind may be kept, and may receive the full and hearty co-operation of all private practitioners. My letter, though written without cognizance of what was being done, may help to direct attention more fully to the object in view, towards which all who love their profession as a science must surely be anxious to contribute.—W. E. C. N.

CHROMIC ACID AS AN ESCHAROTIC.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your journal of the 9th instant, Dr. Key recalls attention to the introduction of chromic acid to the profession as a new escharotic, by Mr. Marshall, of University College Hospital, in the "Mirror" of January 24th. No doubt both Mr. Marshall and Dr. Key will feel compensated for the loss of novelty which this practice must incur by the gain in authority which it will acquire from reference to a previous communication by Mr. Alexander Ure, of St. Mary's Hospital, to the *Medical Gazette* for 1845, (vol. xxxv. p. 787,) containing details of cases of ulcerated piles, successfully treated with chromic acid, and explaining the manner of its action in a passage which it may be well to quote.

"Chromic acid is a most powerful oxidizing agent, yielding half its oxygen readily to organic substances, and being reduced to sesqui-oxide. On this principle I was led to employ it as an escharotic. It is exceedingly convenient for application, inasmuch as it consists of a thick crystalline pap, which when rightly managed, does not spread beyond the prescribed limits, and so soon as its erosive operation is finished, passes into the state of inert pulverulent sesqui-oxide above-mentioned."

I am sure that you will agree with me, Sir, in regretting that the necessity should so frequently arise for reclamations of this nature, which a competent acquaintance with recent medical literature might avoid.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ERNEST HART,

May, 1856.

House-Surgeon to St. Mary's Hospital.

Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The following gentlemen, having undergone the necessary examinations for the Diploma, were admitted members of the College at the meeting of the Court of Examiners on the 15th inst. :—

CHIPP, JOHN, Shrewsbury.
EICHLER, CHARLES FERDINAND, Sydney, New South Wales.
GRIFFITHS, RICHARD, Machynlleth, Montgomeryshire.
KEAL, JOHN THOMAS, Oakham, Rutlandshire.
KELLY, CHARLES, Ramsay, Isle of Man.
M'INTYRE, JAMES, Coleraine, Co. Derry.
MUSKETT, JOSEPH JAMES, Holt, Norfolk.
PRICE, WILLIAM PRESTON, Margate.
WILKINSON, JOHN SEBASTIAN, Caledonian-road, Islington.

APOTHECARIES' HALL. — Names of gentlemen who passed their examination in the science and practice of Medicine, and received certificates to practise, on

Thursday, May 7th.

BATESON, JOHN MOSES, Kirkby Lonsdale, Westmoreland.
CLARK, JOHN MARSHALL, London.
GIRDLESTONE, WM. THEOPHILUS, Wordsley, Staffordshire.
INMAN, ROBERT MATTHEWS, Carlisle, Cumberland.
STILWELL, HENRY, Uxbridge.
WOOD, WILLIAM, Siddington, Gloucestershire.

Thursday, May 14th.

ASSLIN, WILLIAM JOHN, Army.
CHAMBERLAINE, JOSEPH RICHARD, Wolverhampton.
COX, HENRY, London.
FITZGERALD, CHARLES EGERTON.
HICKS, CHARLES CYRIE, Toddington, Beds.
HOPSON, STEPHEN MOULTON, Tittleshall, Norfolk.
SPOFFORTH, WILLIAM FAIRFAX, Lichfield.
STORRS, ROBERT, York.
WILLIAMS, CHARLES, Dolgelly, North Wales.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, EDINBURGH.—The following is a list of the gentlemen who have obtained the diploma since Candlemas last:—Robert Affleck, Edinburgh; John Anderson, Hawick; John Anderson, Aberdeen; John Henry Beath, Stirling; Peter Campbell, Crieff; John Carland, Glasgow; Robert Clews, Govan, Glasgow; John Dickie, Stirlingshire; James Donald, Elderlie; Hugh Dow, Inverness-shire; Andrew Fergusson, Dumfriesshire; Hugh Ronaldson Handyside, Edinburgh; James Inkson, Banffshire; James Jameson, Kilbernie; James Laign, Kincardineshire; William Loftus, Glasgow; Andrew Miller, Greenock; George Davidson Milne, Huntly; Edward M'Millan, Glasgow; Robert Purves, Kelso; Charles Morland Ross, Portpatrick; Hugh Stewart, Edinburgh; James Stirton, Coupar Angus; Robert Sutherland, Thurso; Kennett Urquhart, Dingwall; John Wade, Glasgow; William Watson, Dunfermline.—*England*: Owen Jeffries Llewellyn, Monmouthshire; Roger Parker, Ulverstone; James Paxton, Northumberland; Archdeacon Fullarton Richmond, London; James Rumney, Ullswater; Oswald George Rumney, Ullswater; Frederick Taylor, Hampshire.—*Ireland*: John Brittan, co. Tyrone; Alexander Neill, Coleraine; Robert Stewart, co. Antrim.—*Abroad*: James Doran, Quebec; Byng Thomas Giraud, Aurangabad, East Indies.

MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.—This evening a paper will be read by Mr. J. S. Gamgee, of which the following is the subject: "William Harvey and Carlo Ruini—the Blood and its Two Circles; the History of their Discovery."

GUY'S HOSPITAL.—Mr. Thomas Bryant has been elected assistant-surgeon in the place of Mr. Callaway, who has resigned. The appointment has given general satisfaction.

MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL.—The 112th anniversary festival of the above charity was celebrated on Friday evening, the 15th inst., at the Albion Tavern; Mr. Hugh Adair presided. The chairman was supported by the Bishop of Chichester, Sir Walter Stirling, Admiral Sir Thomas Herbert, Admiral Smythe, Mr. Capel, Mr. Michael Smith, the Rev. Mr. Rogers, Dr. Hawkins, and the various medical officers of the institution. It appeared, from the balance-sheet, that the expenditure amounted to £11,511. The chairman, in proposing "Prosperity to the Charity," said the Middlesex Hospital had been in existence for upwards of 112 years. In-patients were received into it at any hour, and might present themselves, without a letter of recommendation, from any part of the metropolis. One of its great recommendations was the attention paid to cases of virulent fever. He alluded also, at some length, to the cancer ward, which had been founded, and largely endowed, by the late Samuel Whitbread. Mr. Michael Smith said that there were 310 beds in the different wards, but rarely more than 270 of these were, from shortness of means, filled at the same time. During last year, 2268 in-patients were received, and relief was given to as many as 16,844 out-patients. The hospital, for a period of much more than a century, had ministered to the wants of four of the most populous parishes in London, Marylebone, St. Pancras, St. James's, and St. Giles's. With the wealth abounding in these parishes, it was sad that something more was not given in support of this excellent institution. Their income was a trifle more than £7000 a year, and their necessary expenditure exceeded £11,000, and they had been compelled to summon a meeting of governors to sanction the sale of £4500 stock, to clear off a large accumulating debt. They had made inquiries whether patients are not frequently admitted who could well afford to pay a certain portion of the expense of their maintenance. In fact, it was a question whether a ward could not be put apart especially for the reception of such patients. Amongst the subscriptions announced at the meeting were those of her Majesty for £105; his Grace the Duke of Northumberland for £100; John Pepys, Esq., 50 guineas; anonymous, £20; and the names of several ladies for large and small sums. They amounted ultimately to £1500.—*Daily News*.