

events, as floodings after delivery, or the entrance of air into the sinuses, &c., and which plan, from its simplicity, I have often been surprised to find should not be more generally adopted by practitioners. I mean the application of a towel or some sort of wide bandage tightly round the abdomen so soon as the os uteri becomes moderately dilated, which not only is declared by the patient to give much delightful "support," but by *concentrating* as it were, (if I may use the expression,) the pains upon the contents of the uterus, appears to me to cause much greater effect to be produced, and as the bandage is tightened in proportion to the progress of the labour, so is there a decided impediment to a flabby state of the uterus occurring; and when the placenta is discharged, the additional application of two or three napkins in the form of a pad or compress over the uterus, in a manner, seems mechanically to prevent anything like an expansion of that viscus, and consequently there is no chance of the mouths of the vessels receiving air or discharging blood.

Should you deem these observations worthy of a place in the *Journal*, they are quite at your service.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

ALBERT OWEN.

Aylesbury, December 2, 1850.

ON ALLOPATHIC DOSES IN HOMŒOPATHY.

To the Editor of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—In answer to a letter from a correspondent, in last week's *Journal*, I beg to suggest the following extract from Mr. Taylor's valuable work on poisons:

"I am not aware that the salts of morphia have been commonly used as poisons in this country, but it is necessary to state that they are sometimes recklessly prescribed in dangerous doses. The following case, referred to me in July, 1847, is instructive in more than one point of view:—A lady of this metropolis consulted a homœopathic physician, who had acquired great repute as an advocate of the system of *infinitesimal* doses. He prepared and gave to her some small white powders, with explicit instructions in writing as to the mode of taking them, and the nights on which they were to be taken. She took, as I was informed, two, and on each occasion she suffered from great stupor, and all the symptoms of narcotic poisoning, followed by diarrhoea. A suspicion arose that the powders contained some very active ingredient, and three of them were sent to me for analysis. It was first ascertained that, although in appearance and from the directions they were intended to pass as equally divided doses of the same medicine, they differed greatly in weight. The first weighed 3.4 grains: it consisted of calomel and morphia; the latter being in the proportion of one grain! The second weighed 1.5 grains: it consisted entirely of sugar of milk, (or some amount of analogous sugar,) and contained no morphia, nor any mineral matter. The third weighed 2 grains: it was composed of calomel and morphia; the latter forming about one-fourth the weight, or half a grain. The cause of the alarming symptoms was at once explained. It will be perceived from the analysis that the powders differed

from each other in weight by more than one half, and that the first contained a dose of *morphia* which might have proved fatal, had it been taken according to the written order; while the second was an innocent powder, of which a person might have swallowed an ounce with impunity, and yet it was less than half the weight of the really poisonous powder. The third contained a full dose of morphia. The quantity of morphia which the patient took cannot be conjectured, as the doses of morphia in the remaining powder followed no regular rule; but it appears to have been sufficient to destroy her confidence for ever in infinitesimal doses. This case, while it shows, in an unsuspected way, the gross deception practised on the public, and the risk of life which must be incurred by such a reckless mode of prescribing, affords a hint of some value to the medical jurist. Let us imagine that the patient had taken the powder containing the grain of morphia and had died from its effects, and that only the second of the powders, with the written directions, had been forwarded to the chemist for analysis. This would have been found to be sugar of milk, a substance which could have been productive of no mischief. Had a charge of manslaughter even arisen, there would have been an admirable ground of defence in the allegation that the unfortunate deceased had died of apoplexy; for it would have been argued,—she could have taken nothing but sugar of milk, with perhaps a harmless decillionth dose of some homœopathic medicine! The prescriber, under these circumstances, would probably have been triumphantly acquitted."

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

R. ARNOLD.

Surgeon's Dresser, Suffolk General Hospital.

Bury St. Edmunds, Nov. 19 1850.

IMPERMEABLE PILINE.

To the Editor of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—Allow me to correct an error which occurs in this week's number, in a quotation from a letter of mine in the *Medical Times* of November 2nd. By referring to that journal you will find that I have recommended the "*Impermeable Piline*" as a means of producing diaphoresis, and not the "*Spongio Piline*," as stated by you. I may, however mention, *en passant*, that this material, used in a similar way, for applying hot water to the entire surface of the body, will be found very useful in cases where the general effect of heat and moisture is required.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

ALFRED MARKWICK.

19, Langham Place, Nov. 28, 1850.

Medical Intelligence.

THE COFFIN DRUGS.

An inquest has been recently held at Haggerstone, before Mr. Baker, the Coroner, on the body of Mr. Bedwell. The jury found a verdict, "That the

deceased died a natural death, but that his death may have been accelerated by certain herbs improperly administered to him, and which, in the opinion of many medical gentlemen were opposed to the cure of the disease under which he was labouring, and they condemn the reckless and inconsiderate use of such materials, without a regular and proper attendance on the deceased." The Coroner said, "that the jury had taken a very merciful view of the case, which he would bear in mind, and in case any death in future occurred under similar circumstances, where it could be shown clearly to arise from an improper administration of a medicine, he should advise a verdict of manslaughter." The newspapers in different parts of the country have already recorded so many instances of death following the use of the deleterious drug recommended by Coffin, and exhibited most rashly and ignorantly by uneducated impostors, that it is quite time that Government should interfere. Quacks destroy more lives than actual warfare. Printers, journeyman shoemakers, bricklayers, labourers, &c., who purchase Coffin's quackeries and his pamphlet, fancy they have found a royal road to medicine, and practise accordingly.—*Medical Times*.

THE CENSUS OF 1851.

In the general instructions issued by the Registrar-General, with the return to be made for taking the census of the population in 1851, we find the following notification:—"Members of the medical profession to state the university, college, or hall, of which they are graduates, fellows, or licentiates—also whether they practise as physicians, surgeons, or general practitioners, or are '*not practising*.'" This will prove an important and efficient mode of ascertaining the number of legally qualified practitioners in this country. The table will also, by this means, exhibit the relative number of the different classes of the profession. We regret to observe that the word "apothecary" has been omitted; we hope, even now, that it will be introduced. There are many apothecaries who practise as such in London, and who do not practise as surgeons, and who therefore cannot be correctly styled general practitioners.—*Lancet*.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

Gentlemen admitted Members on Friday, November 29th, 1850:—Robert Batty, Liverpool; Andrew Musckett Blomfield, Barton Bendish, Norfolk; George Alfred Galland, Leeds; Adam Hampson, Bolton-le-Moors, Lancashire; William Dickenson Lacy, Newark, Nottinghamshire; Henry Lawrence, Bath; Edward Humphrey Paget, Leicester; John Ringland, Belfast.

SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES.

Gentlemen admitted Members on Thursday, November 21st, 1850:—Edward Adolphus Brown, Chelmsford; Joseph Wilson Beamont, Sheffield, York; James Stocate, Bristol; Thomas Young Thompson, Sherburn.

Gentlemen admitted Members on Thursday, November 28th, 1850:—William Frederick Bassett; Mark Rowland Day, Oxford; George Frederick Gwyn, Long-Stratton, Norfolk; Charles William Hammond, Ipswich.

OBITUARY.

November 11th, at Demarara, John M'Lagan, M.D.
November 12th, by suicide, John George Simes, late surgeon at Hungerford, aged 33.

November 22nd, at 72, Upper Berkeley Street, Portman Square, Dr. John Taylor, late surgeon in the army, in the 80th year of his age.

BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW.

Address to a Medical Student. Second edition. Oxford: Parker. London: Churchill. 1850. 12mo.

The Profession of Medicine: its Study, Practice, Duties, and Rewards. An Address delivered at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. By Charles West, M.D. London: Longmans and Co. 1850.

Identity or Non-Identity of the Specific Cause of Typhoid, Typhus, and Relapsing Fevers. By W. Jenner, M.D. (Reprint.)

Report of the Proceedings of the Pathological Society of London. Fourth Session. 1849-50.

Notice of an Unpublished MS. of Harvey. By Dr. Paget.

PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ASSOCIATION.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

Gentlemen who have not yet paid their subscriptions for the current year, or who are in arrears, are requested to forward the amount due either to the Secretary of the district in which they reside, or to the Treasurer or Secretary of the Association at Worcester.

The attention of Members is particularly requested to the following resolution, unanimously agreed to at the late Anniversary Meeting, held at Hull on the 7th and 8th of August, 1850:—

"But if any Member's subscription remain unpaid twelve months after it shall become due, the *Medical Journal*, and other publications of the Society, shall be withheld from such Member till his arrears be paid; and when any Member has been in arrears of subscription for the *space of three years*, application shall be made for the same by the General Secretary, and if the arrears be not paid in *three months* the name of that Member shall be omitted from the list of Subscribers; but the omission shall not be deemed, either in honour or equity, as releasing any gentleman from the subscription owing during his Membership."

JAMES P. SHEPPARD.

Secretary.

Worcester, Sept. 17th, 1850.

ERRATA.

In our number for November 13, p. 519, we have inadvertently substituted the words "puerperal fever" for "danger" and "death" in childbed.

In Mr. Berry's "Case of Sudden Death seven hours after delivery, &c." in the second line, for June 16th, 1830, read June 16th, "1850."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications have been received from Mr. Prichard, Mr. Cooksey, Mr. White, Mr. Growse, Dr. Duncan.

It is requested that all letters and communications connected with the *Editorial department* be sent to J. H. Walsh, Esq., Foregate Street, Worcester. Parcels and books for review may be addressed to the care of Mr. Churchill, Princes Street, Soho.