

the administration of a narcotic poison in too great quantities ; but the mother, whose act it was, was alone legally responsible, and he could not see how the jury could meet the case otherwise than by a verdict of "chance-medley" against her, which he explained to be only a shade removed from "manslaughter."

The jury, finding they had no power in this case to inflict a penalty, returned a verdict accordingly of "chance medley" against the mother, adding a presentment expressive of their just indignation at the conduct of the druggist. One of the jury said, that if the case could have been legally brought home to the latter, he for one should have stood out for a verdict of manslaughter against him.

Mr. Burrows expressed a wish that something would be legislatively done to put a stop to the practice, inasmuch as he and his professional brethren were frequently called on in the most painful cases arising out of it, and generally found their efforts to restore the sufferers unavailing.

The coroner concurred ; and, after he had addressed a few kindly words to the bereaved mother, who had doubtless acted from ignorance, the parties left the court.

### MR. LISTON'S CASE OF ANEURISM.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—You were the only honest chroniclers of the unfortunate case of aneurism which was operated on by Mr. Liston, at the North London Hospital, and therefore it is I send you this letter for insertion. Much mystification, and some misrepresentation have occurred with respect to it ; it was not, therefore, wonderful that a good deal of desire should be manifested to hear the operator's own account of it, which was read at the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, last night. His statement is this—A boy, about nine years old, who had recently suffered from fever, and was much out of health, was admitted a patient at the above hospital ; he had a tumour in the neck in the direction of the carotid artery ; that tumour was opened by plunging a bistoury into it. Arterial blood escaped so rapidly, that in a few seconds as much as four ounces were lost. The lips of the incision were immediately closed ; hair lip pins were passed through, they were surrounded by ligatures, and there was no further loss of blood. On the succeeding day the common carotid was tied, just after it was given off, but the patient died on the 13th day.

The parts were carefully examined twenty-four hours after death, and it was ascertained that the tumour was beneath the carotid, that there was a free communication between the tumour and the artery, just at its bifurcation, and that there were layers of fibrinous matter in it. Such, substantially, is Mr. Liston's description of this unfortunate case ; and we should think any one justified who regarded the matter as one of carelessness.

The object of the paper is not, however, to admit any such thing, but to patch up the result, as one which could not have been avoided.

In the first place it is alleged, that the case was one of abscess, that the coats of the artery were divided and unsupported, that they were ulcerated or eroded, and that the blood then filled up the sac. How is this attempted to be made out ? Why, in sooth, by stating that, in opening abscesses, there is frequently hæmorrhage, and that this is a proof that abscesses have a strong tendency to perforate arteries ? It is no doubt correct to say, that in opening an abscess there may be a vessel punctured, and that it will give out

blood ; but is not the truth the other way ?—do not arteries resist the action of pus ? Do we not find them stretching across purulent cavities without any support ? and further, has any pathologist ever known an abscess to perforate an artery ? It will not do to take such cases, as were detailed in the paper, to support such a proposition. Every surgeon has known an ill-conditioned ulcer to perforate an artery ; therefore, the Edinburgh case is not in point. The medical student's case is no better—A young man out of health has an abscess over the femoral artery ; he is in a bad state of body ; the abscess is opened ; and after many days hæmorrhage comes on. How does that bear on the former case ? It is a case of bad abscess ; when opened, ulceration went on and opened the femoral artery ; no one doubts that such a case may happen. And, as was asked, in the room, if it were an abscess, what became of the pus ? There was a lame attempt to explain this, but a more lame one could not well have been made. In fact the attempt to make out a recent communication was ridiculous. Why the sac had laminated clots in it ! If the blood pushed out the pus, where did it go to ? Was it mixed up with the circulating blood, and did not the admixture of two ounces of pus with the blood produce mischief ? Odd enough, the communication was just at the bifurcation ; and our school books used to tell us that in the carotid that was the common seat of aneurism.

A few words more as to diagnosis, about which much was said ; first, the occurrence of aneurism in a child of that age was so improbable, that it was quite pardonable to make a mistake ; it may be so, but a gentleman in the room mentioned three cases of aneurism in children ; and if there had never been such, would that be an excuse ? Here was a pulsating tumour in the course of an artery, *with fluctuation*. What could have been easier than to have put a thumb upon the artery below the tumour, and to compress the tumour so as to have expelled most of its contents. Would not that have been a wiser course ?

Put the case in any shape, and say, ought a prudent surgeon to have taken the course followed in this unhappy case ? I say, decidedly, no. I say, further, it was an instance of practice which has swamped many a man. We did not think it so very valiant to bring it on at the Society. A man does not like to get up and find fault in such a case, and it was this feeling alone which deterred us from getting up and making the foregoing observations.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

SCRUTATQR

March 11, 1842.

### HOUSE OF LORDS.

March 10.

#### BURIALS IN CROWDED DISTRICTS.

LORD BROUGHAM presented a petition, to which he was anxious to draw the attention of their lordships, and particularly that of her Majesty's government. It was from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of London. They complained of the practice of the interment of the dead in crowded neighbourhoods as most injurious to the public health. They stated that, from the long period during which this unwholesome practice was continued, the church and churchyards of the city were so filled with the dead as to be incapable of holding any more bodies, and they prayed that some proper place of interment should be provided in the outskirts of the metropolis.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

March 15.

## QUARANTINE.

Dr. BOWRING observed that, he felt how little attraction the subject he had to bring forward possessed; but its importance to commerce and to travellers would perhaps secure attention to it, especially after it had lain in abeyance for eighteen years. In 1815 (in consequence of a controversy on the subject) a committee had been appointed to inquire into the facts regarding plague quarantine; and that committee had found no grounds for dissenting from the prevailing opinions as to the infectiousness of plague. Another committee, however, in 1824, had made this admission, that no case of infection had occurred in England since 1665—a very important fact, since the plague had existed in this country for fifty or sixty years after that period. The subject had been treated with very great attention by that important body the British Association in 1838, and an inquiry had been instituted thereon. Let it be considered that no impediments were offered to the passage of travellers or conveyance of goods from this country to British India; and that no apprehensions had been entertained in India, even when the plague was in Persia, of its infectiousness. Let it be borne in mind, too, that the quarantine regulations in the Mediterranean interposed the most injurious delays to commerce and to travelling, causing an annual loss (as it had been estimated) of between 2,000,000*l.* and 3,000,000*l.* to this country, by increasing the rates of freight, producing loss of cargoes, &c. And let it be observed how absurdly the regulations worked, that a vessel after a two months' voyage had no more length of quarantine to endure than one which had passed through a voyage of four months.

He begged to read an extract or two from a letter written by one who was a high authority—Captain Basil Hall, and written at Malta:—"On the morning of the 7th of this month (September, 1841), we sailed into Valetta harbour in company with the Vanguard, 80, from Candia. As we were from England we got pratique at once, but the poor Vanguard, though fully as healthy as we were, and coming from a place as healthy, was put into quarantine till the 23rd, that is for seventeen days. In the meantime she had to refit, and within two days after she got pratique she was sent to sea in company with the Indus; the officers and crew of one ship having enjoyed all the advantages of the shore, the others having been kept close prisoners. It is much to the credit of both men and officers, the patience with which they submitted to these severe and totally unnecessary privations. I need not speak of the extreme inconvenience of refitting a ship under quarantine, arising out of the difficulty of getting new stores and returning old ones; but every one knows the irksome delays which are caused thereby, and the consequent retardation of the service. It does not signify to say that this is of little moment just now, for it is impossible to say when the time may arrive when it is important to re-equip our ships smartly; and I can assure you it is bad policy to try the patience of the sailors too long when in sight of the good things of the shore, with no better reason for their detention on board than some fantastic fears of an antiquated board of health-office. Rear-Admiral Sir John Ommanney, in command of the Mediterranean fleet, sailed from Corfu on the 19th of last month (August), in company with the Howe and Ganges, and the Cyclops steam-frigate. The steamer being sent on ahead, arrived on the 23rd at Malta, and was put into quarantine for seven days, that is to say she got pratique on Sunday the 29th. The admiral arrived on the 26th, and as a matter of favour, he was subjected to six days' quarantine only. Still it was not till Tuesday, the 31st, that he could

land, two days after the junior officer, who had sailed with him at the same hour, was walking about on shore. On Saturday, the 28th of August last, her Majesty's steam-ship Stromboli sailed from Beyrout, and reached Malta on the 2nd of September. She was placed in quarantine, which lasted eighteen days, including the day of arrival and that on which she got pratique—viz., the 19th instant. Her Majesty's ship Powerful sailed from the same port (Beyrout) within twenty-four hours after the Stromboli, but not having steam to help her, she did not arrive till the 18th at Malta, that is, the day before the Stromboli got pratique. The Powerful's eighteen days then commenced, and they will not expire till the 5th of next month (October)! The Powerful had no sick on board, had touched nowhere, and was in all respects as healthy as the Stromboli, and yet, although she sailed within one day of the other ship, she is 'tabooed' for nearly three weeks' time after her consort was let out of this terrestrial purgatory! At any time this would have been irksome, but just at the period when it occurred it was attended with great inconvenience to the public service. The Britannia, bearing the admiral's flag, being ordered home, it was necessary to shift the flag into some other ship; for various reasons the Powerful had been assigned for this purpose. Had the admiral himself gone into the new ship, however, he would have been imprisoned, of course; so he went on shore while his captain went on board, in exchange with the captain of the Powerful, who, by going into the Britannia necessarily put that ship into quarantine, while the secretary, clerks, and other persons attached to the admiral's staff had to repair on board a steamer, the Gorgon, till the embarrassment caused by all these restrictions should be over. There surely is much tomfoolery in all this, for there seems to be no good reason why a ship of war might not work out her quarantine time at sea as well as in port. It is stated by some, that there are many families supported at Naples, Leghorn, Marseilles, and elsewhere, solely by the salaries derived from the quarantine, and paid for by the unfortunate ships forcibly subjected to its tyranny. If this be true, as I really believe it is, I am convinced it would be money cheaply spent to pension off every soul of these functionaries and their children to the third and fourth generation; for the delays, loss of markets, and the numerous other evils to commerce which attend the system—to say nothing of the intolerable personal annoyance, the absolute imprisonment, the inquisitorial discipline, the smoking, and other mockeries, called, forsooth, purification, are of such number and extent as to render the whole utterly inconsistent with, and even quite repugnant to, the sentiments of the age; and I do earnestly hope that, by patience and perseverance, you will get it done away with. A very intelligent Maltese, high in office here, remarked dryly enough to me the other day—"One of two things must happen—either the quarantine laws must be done away with, or the march of intellect must be stopped."

The hon. member then proceeded to read a communication from Sir J. Ommanney, stating many particulars illustrative of the irregularity of the practice respecting quarantine in the ports of the Mediterranean, showing the injury to commerce, the great inconvenience to merchants and other persons frequenting those ports, and proving the tyranny and the frauds which were perpetrated under the pretence of enforcing those laws. The information which he had received upon the subject entitled him to say that a prodigious number of individuals were employed to carry into effect the laws relating to quarantine, and that their sinister interests operated most materially in maintaining a system which ought long since to have been abolished. Considerable salaries were paid to the persons so employed, but he must be allowed to say, that he thought exemption from the

annoyance of quarantine regulations would be cheaply purchased if the persons to whom he referred were pensioned off to the third and fourth generation. For any purposes of protection against the plague, those people were wholly useless, and there could not be a greater mockery than the modes of purification which they adopted. It was worthy of observation, that in those ports of the Mediterranean which were not under the government of Austria the regulations were more strict; while in those which were, those regulations had been considerably relaxed; yet there was no reason to believe that the people in the latter class of ports had found any cause to regret the less stringent practice of their rulers. Amongst the mischievous absurdities of the system he might notice this, that if a man wanted to proceed from Algiers to Malta, the easiest mode of accomplishing his object would be to go in the first instance to Toulon, and thence take his passage for Malta. From the correspondence which he held in his hand, were he to read the whole of it, the house would see that even the government of this country was interested in putting an end to a system clearly interfering with the intercourse subsisting between them and their agents and allies. The correspondence of the government was opened, perforated with awls, incised by chisels, dipped in vinegar, and subjected to a variety of absurd modes of purification, and at length transmitted to its destination in a mutilated, and scarcely legible condition.

Amongst the other evils of the system was the extreme ignorance which prevailed in all that related to the quarantine regulations. The ignorance and superstition exceeded all belief. In many countries of the South it was thought that phthisis was a contagious disease—that cholera was contagious; yet in this part of the world no one supposed that consumption was communicated by contagion, and certainly the predominant opinion was, that cholera ought not to be considered a contagious malady. It was satisfactory to think that many of the errors which prevailed on these subjects had in the more civilised districts of the world given way to enlightened and rational views, but in other portions of the globe, he regretted to say, that opinions as ridiculous as they were mischievous too generally prevailed—opinions as childish as the doctrines of the older physicians, who held that the plague was connected with earthquakes, with celestial menaces, and with circumstances equally remote in their nature from any human malady. In some places it was thought that the matter of contagion had been communicated along the length of the string attached to a paper knife: in other cases it was said to have been conveyed into houses, supposed to be secure, by dogs, cats, and even flies obtaining admission. It was said that the Turks on the Austrian frontier were in the habit of inoculating pigs with the plague, and sending them amongst their enemies. The hon. member then begged to call the attention of the house to a letter which he had received from a medical gentleman at Alexandria, and which he thought would show pretty clearly some of the prevalent errors upon this subject. "Within the walls of Alexandria, in 1841, the total of deaths was 7,017; there were 1,570 cases of plague, of which 405 recovered, and 1,165 died. Of the 1,570 cases of plague which occurred during the year, 1,080 were males, and 490 females. Of these there recovered—males, 375; females, 30; 778 cases were bodies found dead in their dwellings, and consequently had no sort of treatment whatever; and of the 792 remaining, who had some sort of care and attendance bestowed upon them, no less than 407 recovered. There is no return of the proportion of deaths to cases during the different months which can be depended on, but the average rate of mortality may be fairly calculated as two-thirds of those attacked; so that the real mortality of the city, during the month of May, when the

plague was at its height, may be calculated thus—Ordinary deaths, 433; deaths by plague, 353—total, 786. Cases of plague, 515. The inferences to be drawn from these data are, that the season when the plague exists is not necessarily either the most unhealthy, or the most fatal season; it will be seen by the table that the months of October, November, and December, are productive of as many deaths nearly as the most fatal plague month, and that their average mortality far exceeds that of the other months, when the plague raged with a more limited intensity, while during the last three months of the year only six cases of plague could be detected." He could not pass from this part of the subject without observing that Dr. Laidlaw, an extract from whose letter he had read, was a man who had conferred a great benefit upon society by his steady resistance to the injurious and ignorant prejudices which prevailed on this subject. If the disease were so subtle as it was represented to be, how would it be possible for us and other countries to escape from its perils, considering the manner in which the quarantine system was managed? He had evidence to show that the plague was actually on board ships which were, being laden with cotton, coming to this country, yet no infection had ever been brought by it. If it was found that all the vexations, the inconveniences, and the delays consequent upon the system could be got rid of without any danger to the public health, he trusted that the government would exert itself in so good a cause. He moved a resolution, to the effect, "That her Majesty may be graciously pleased to continue the inquiries made in foreign countries as to the efficacy of the quarantine system, and to carry out any negotiations which may have for their object such modifications as are consistent with the public safety and the interests of commerce; also, to lay on the table of the house any correspondence, or extracts of correspondence, which has taken place since the last papers were ordered for presentation."

Sir R. PEEL had no objection to offer to the motion. He was prepared to lay the papers desired by him on the table of the house. He suggested the proper form in which to shape the motion would be an address to her Majesty.

The suggestion of the right hon. baronet was adopted, and the motion agreed to.—*Times*.

#### INTRAMURAL SEPULTURE.

On the motion of Mr. Mackinnon, the following gentlemen were nominated a committee to inquire into the expediency of improving the health of towns, by preventing internments within their precincts:—Mr. Mackinnon, Mr. D'Eyncourt, Lord Ashley, Colonel Fox, Mr. T. Duncombe, Mr. Evelyn Denison, Sir W. Clay, Sir R. H. Inglis, Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. Beckett, Viscount Mahon, Mr. Cowper, Colonel Acton, Mr. Kemble, and Mr. Vernon.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED.

Prayers for the Use of the Medical Profession. London: Rivingtons, Churchill, 1842. [The profits, if any, will be given to some medical charity. Any medical student who is unable to buy a copy of these Prayers may obtain one gratis by applying to either of the publishers.]

Principles of Human Physiology, with their chief Applications to Pathology, Therapeutics, Hygiene, and Forensic Medicine; especially designed for the use of Students. By W. B. Carpenter, M.D. London: Churchill, 1842. pp. 680.

Printed by SAMUEL TAYLOR, of 6, Chandos-street, in the Parish of St. Paul's, Covent-garden, at his Office, No. 6, Chandos-street, aforesaid; and published by JOHN CHURCHILL, at his residence, No. 16, Princes-street, in the Parish of St. Anne, Westminster.—Friday, March 18, 1842.