

CORRESPONDENTS are particularly requested by the Editor to observe that communications relating to advertisements, changes of address, and other business matters, should be addressed to the Manager, at the Journal Office, 161A, Strand, London, and not to the Editor.

IPECACUANHA IN DYSENTERY.

SIR.—In the Lettsomian Lectures lately given by Sir Joseph Fayrer, he stated that ipecacuanha in large doses was introduced by a surgeon in India, and was found so efficacious that it not only wonderfully reduced the mortality and proved a great boon to our soldiers and others so suffering, but an enormous saving to our Government. He also stated that our Government ultimately gave the sum of £400 to the surgeon for its introduction.

In accidentally looking into Graham's *Domestic Medicine* the other day, I noticed the following: "Helvetius first made known its use (ipecacuanha) in dysentery, and was rewarded by Louis XIV with £1,000 sterling for the discovery." If this be true, does it not seem strange that so valuable a remedy should have fallen out of use, and been so long lost sight of? It also contrasts the liberality of that period with our own.

I send this thinking it may be worthy your notice, as well as interesting to some of your readers.—Yours truly,

C. J. H.

MR. STARTIN.—The difficulty is one of space. We have papers of an important character in hand, for some of which we have vainly endeavoured to find space during the last four months.

A CAUTION.

SIR.—Some time ago, an elderly man called on me, about dusk, to inquire what would be my fee for going to Worthing to examine a friend of his, a candidate for life-insurance. After a long discussion on the subject, he withdrew, promising to return the following day at 4 P.M., with final instructions. During our conversation he made careful notes in writing of various matters about which he appeared to be ignorant. While leaving my room, he suddenly remembered that his brother had gone off to the extreme end of the town with his purse; would I oblige him with two shillings to pay his cab fare? I gave him half-a-crown, and, as in the case of your correspondent in the *Journal* of February 5th, has hitherto failed to "rectify the little debt".—Yours faithfully,

H. MARCUS ALLEN.

38, Regency Square, Brighton.

M. B.—1. The Howard Memorial Medal is open for competition to anyone, provided the essay be written in the English language. The Council of the Statistical Society may, if they see fit, cause the successful essay, or an abridgment thereof, to be read at a meeting of the Society; and have the right of publishing the essay in their *Journal* one month before its appearance in any separate independent form. This right of publication continues till three months after the award of the prize.

2. Our correspondent should charge a fee of one guinea to the Insurance Company for a certificate of death.

A. P. will find very efficient assistance in preparing his young friend for the preliminary examination in Arts by applying to Mr. W. Moore, B.A., 19, Duncan Terrace, N.

THE ETIOLOGY OF DIPHTHERIA.

SIR.—In antithesis to the idea, favoured by some observers, as referred to in the article in the *Journal* of February 10th, that diphtheria is common on clayey and wet soils, and especially on the lias clay, I may mention that a large portion of my district covers this formation, and that diphtheria is very rare in it. Indeed, in the eight years during which I have been attached to the district, only two outbreaks of this disease have occurred, both of them of very limited nature, not more than a dozen cases altogether; and these were in the highest part of the district, on the Cotswold plateau, where the surface-bed is porous lower oolite rock. Even sporadic cases of genuine diphtheria have been very rare, and in scarcely any case have I been able to trace the disease to any sanitary defect. My impressions as to the etiology of the disease very much lean to the theory of Dr. Airy.—I am, etc.,

F. T. BOND, M.D.

Gloucester.

J. J. G.—1. Any really respectable surgeon is competent to advise and treat such a case. We never recommend individuals. 2. Paying wards are now open at St. Thomas's Hospital.

CUI BONO asks: Has thymol, or any preparation of it, been recommended for the treatment of ringworm on the scalp?

* * We do not remember that it has been so recommended.

HYPODERMIC DISCS.

SIR.—A well-known London firm supplies, in a portable and reliable form, discs of different drugs for solution by heat and hypodermic injection. This method of carrying about a valuable stock of important remedies, I, for one, have found exceedingly useful. But there is just one fallacy in their use that requires to be guarded against with all care and caution. The discs, unless ordered in very small quantities, and constantly renewed, have a tendency to stick together after a time; and twice I have very nearly exhibited two discs for one, which involves the possibility of giving a dose which, in subcutaneous dosage, might be awkward. I observed, some time ago, that a correspondent in the *Journal* asked how best to prepare a solution of morphia for hypodermic injection; and, if I remember rightly, Mr. Martindale answered his query. I cannot myself imagine a better way of having morphia constantly ready for use than in possessing and having in one's daily bag a few of these discs; the solution is soon obtained; so far as I have used them, they seem perfectly reliable; and, if ordered in small quantities, the risk I have alluded to will not occur. But, inasmuch as this risk is a possibility, it is, perhaps, as well that it should be thus far stated.—Your obedient servant,

Shanklin, Isle of Wight, February 23rd, 1881.

GEORGE H. R. DABBS.

* * We heard of this complaint when the vulcanite cases were used, which were not quite air-tight; but, since the small glass-tubes have been adopted, similar to those in which the ophthalmic discs have always been supplied. Since they were first brought into use by Mr. Ernest Hart, there has not been, we are informed by Messrs. Savory and Moore, a single complaint.

SIR.—I am a candidate for the office of physician to an institution. A rule of the institution says: "That no physician be eligible who is not legally qualified to practise as a physician in England and Wales." Please say, in your next issue, if I am qualified according to the wording of the above quoted rule.—I am, sir, yours obediently,

M. D. ABERD., F.R.C.S.LOND. (REGISTERED).

* * Certainly; every registered doctor of medicine is legally qualified to practise as a physician; and there is no other legal qualification to practise for gain than that conferred by registration under the Medical Act.

THE ANTIQUITY OF DRAINAGE-TUBES.

SIR.—If the gentleman who writes on this subject in the *Journal* of December 25th will turn to the *Lancet* of May 3rd, 1879, p. 650, he will find the very identical passage about drainage-tubes he quotes from the *Memoirs* of Captain Crichton reproduced by me, *totidem verbis*, in this same connection. If he will read on further, he will further find that a drainage-tube, or something so like as to be indistinguishable from it, was used, three hundred years ago, by his physicians during the last illness of Philip the Second, King of Spain. The words describing this contrivance occur in a very rare book, entitled *De Felici Excessu Philippi Austriaci, Hispanarum Regis...* Scriptis Hispanice Cervara Turrianus, Capell Reg., etc. They run as follows: "Deinceps ciendo puri quo Mane et Vespre Scutellaris duas replebantur, ut testatur Garcias de Onante, Chirurgica fistula operatur, qua exadmodum locis remotis saniem educere". This, being translated for the benefit of such as have forgotten, or never mastered, the intricacies of a dead language, stands thus (and I hope I will be excused for expressing a hope that no Irishman of the professional standing of your correspondent desires or deserves to be placed in either of these categories): "Subsequently, for the purpose of withdrawing the pus, with which two porringer were filled morning and evening, his (Philip's) attendants required or employed, as Onante testifies, a surgical tube or pipe, which would convey the discharge from the remote parts." If the classic tongue of Cicero, and of Horace, of Thomas à Kempis, and Father Prout—a knowledge of which has ever been to me a source of pride and pleasure—has not altered its complexion since I was at school, these words mean a drainage-tube, and nothing else. Their etymology necessarily implies as much, especially so the words "ciendo" and "educere", and that the pipe or tube they indicate was used with this view cannot be doubted. If this be so, as it unquestionably is, Why, I ask, all the fuss that is made in these days about its discovery? In my humble opinion, many, if not all, of the so-called surgical discoveries of modern times were known ages ago—before the great-great-grandmothers of their respective votaries were born.

Will you allow me to substitute the word "Bâber" for "baby" in the postscript of my note on Ancient Egyptian Dentistry, in the issue referred to above? This personage hunted the rhinoceros on the Noward plains of Peshawur about the year 1525, and subsequently founded the Mogul Empire. He played, in short, a greater part in the drama of Indian history than did either Frederick or Napoleon, Charles the Fifth, or Henry the Eighth in Europe, for he founded a far wider empire than either of these; and his influence on the civilisation and policy of his age endured even unto our own days. Had he not been rescued from the jaws of death in his cradle by the process mentioned by Ferishta, the world might have never heard of the East India Company, or of the Black Hole of Calcutta, of the Mutiny, or *parva componere magnis*, of your humble servant, Warrington.

WM. CURRAN.

ANXIOUS INQUIRER will find a good deal of literature in recent works on Diet by Chambers, Pavly, and Fothergill on the subject of dietetic reduction of corpulence. Medical treatment is usually of little avail, but any respectable medical man will put "Inquirer" into the right path in this matter.

DR. T. B. MORIARTY (Cork).—The paragraph was inserted in the *Journal* of February 19th.

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No. 1053.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1881.

{ Registered as } 6d.
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