

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.

ARUM MACULATUM.

SIR.—As I do not see in any works of reference, inclusive of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL for the last five years, any case quoted showing the poisonous nature of the Arum maculatum, commonly called "lords and ladies", the following account of a fatal case may be of interest to readers.

On Saturday, April 9th, I was called at 6.35 A.M. to attend M. A. M., a girl, four years old. I attended at 7.15 A.M., and found her dead; the skin mottled all over, rigor mortis setting in, and the body nearly cold. She was reported to have died at 5.30 A.M. The history was that she came in from play at 3.30 P.M. on Friday, complaining of being tired. Her mother laid her down, and she slept at once. At 5.30, she awoke, and took some tea with milk; immediately she vomited some thin milky substance, and went to bed, when she slept somewhat restlessly until 10.30 P.M., when she awoke with vomiting and severe purging; this continued with pain until 5 A.M., when she had a slight convulsion, and actually died at 5.30, though her mother thought she had only fallen asleep, and had to be enlightened by a neighbour.

On the coroner's order, I made a *post mortem* examination on Sunday, thirty hours after death. Rigor mortis had nearly passed off. All the organs were healthy and normal, except that the bases of both lungs were congested. The heart was empty in both ventricles, and firmly contracted. The stomach and small intestines were thickly coated with a creamy lining of mucus, with bile; no blood. The stomach further contained half an inch of the fatal leaf; there was also found about as much in one of the stools, and probably more was passed. This, with the firmly contracted heart, constituted the chief confirmatory evidence of the irritant nature of the poison which caused death.

The parents regarded the illness as a bad attack of biliousness, and were not alarmed until the child was actually moribund. The child had been warned by another older girl not to eat the plant, but had persisted.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

A. J. ALLIOTT, M.D. Cantab. and M.R.C.S.E.

St. John's, Sevenoaks, April 14th, 1881.

MR. J. C. PARSONS, Guernsey.—The method of administering protoxide of nitrogen under pressure is that devised by M. Paul Bert. An apartment is constructed for the purpose, of the nature of a diving-bell, and in this are placed the patient and operator. A full account is given in Dr. Rottenstein's treatise, *Sur L'Anesthésie*, especially written by him, as a dentist, for dentistry.

A CLINICAL DIFFICULTY.

SIR.—Will you kindly have the notes of the following case printed in your JOURNAL, as I very much wish to have the opinion of some of the members upon it?

I first saw a little girl, aged five years and three months, on March 11th, 1881, with all the typical signs of jaundice, *viz.*, the conjunctive, and the whole surface of the skin, yellow; high coloured urine (like beer), and a firm white motion. She had been ailing for about a fortnight with a cold, which the parents thought would pass off; became much worse the last four days, with headache and anorexia, etc. She was not subject to worms, and had no cough or tightness of the breath. I ordered sulphate of magnesia, and tincture of rhubarb every four hours, and three grains of hydroxygum cum creta at night.

On the 13th, at 10 A.M., I was sent for, as the child was much worse. She had been very restless and excited during the night, throwing her arms about, drinking eagerly, and biting the spoon, and was with difficulty kept in bed. On my visit, she was in a semicomatose condition, with the pupils widely dilated, and the conjunctive partially sensible to the touch. She could swallow. The bowels had not been opened since the previous morning. I administered a powder of jalapine, calomel, and ipecacuanha. At 4 P.M., she was much worse; pulseless, unconscious, with stertorous breathing. There was no action of the bowels. She died at half-past five.

I should very much like to have the opinion of members on the above case, and the following questions, *viz.*: What were the probable causes of the jaundice, and of the supervention of the comatose condition? And what was the correct treatment?—I am, sir, yours truly,

F. H. THOMPSON.

Cleobury Mortimer, Salop.

SIR.—I have been attending the sister of a clergyman who is taking temporary duty, and has no church preferment of his own. Their father was a medical man, and died some years ago. These two have always lived together; and I know they have some private means of their own. Are they entitled to gratuitous attendance? I enclose my card.—I am, etc.,

RUSTICUS.

** Rusticus would be justified in charging for attendance.

CHRONIC PSORIASIS.

SIR.—In reply to the query of "Cuts", for treatment in a case of chronic psoriasis, I would recommend a trial of ten minims of Fowler's solution in an ounce of decoction of cinchona, three times daily; and externally, chrysophanic acid ointment in the proportions of 1 to 10. It should be well rubbed in night and morning.—I am, etc.,

A. W. WOODMAN-DOWDING, M.B., Clinical Assistant

in the Skin-Disease Department, London Hospital.

SIR.—If "Cuts" will try the mixture of potassa sulphurata and Fowler's solution of arsenic as an internal remedy, and use chrysophanic acid ointment externally, well rubbed in till it causes a tendency to inflammation, and then substitute "huile de Cade", he will, I think, get good results. At all events, it cured a most invertebrate case that came under my care, after having been getting worse and worse under various treatments at a hospital. The sufferer was literally covered from her chin to her insteps. I began by giving three grains of potassa sulphurata, and three minims of liquor potassae arsenitis in an ounce of water, three times a day; and as I found it borne well, increased the dose of potassa sulphurata to eight grains and the arsenic to ten minims; and had the satisfaction of seeing the case perfectly cured in a few months. Two years afterwards, she had a relapse; but by taking it in time, it was soon cured, and this spring she again came with it out rather fully; and again, in two or three weeks, it was cured.—Yours truly,

H. W. PALMER.

P.S.—Chrysophanic acid I have found excellent in eczema marginatum, but I never use it on a patient who is highly strumous, as I have seen it produce impetiginous eczema of scalp and great pain in that class of patients. I always have it made with vaseline.

DR. R. LORD.—Apply to the Secretary, Miss F. Lankester, 44, Berners Street, W.

THE SPELTHORNE SANATORIUM.

SIR.—A short time since, the attention of the committee of the Spelthorne Sanatorium was drawn to a notice in your JOURNAL of the value of the work being done in this institution. In consequence of this notice, the lady superintendent received, and still continues to receive, telegrams and applications for the admission of men. The committee will, therefore, feel greatly obliged if you will kindly insert this letter, explaining that the Spelthorne Sanatorium is for the reformation of women only. The home has been opened two years last January.—I beg to remain, faithfully yours,

EDMUND E. ANTRUBUS, Chairman.

14, Kensington Palace Gardens, April 15th, 1881.

MR. W. J. SQUARE (Plymouth).—Our correspondent's friend would probably be able to obtain a degree in medicine, of excellent repute, at either of the Scottish universities—Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Aberdeen. One year's attendance on the lectures in either of these would be sufficient; and the study at a medical school up to the present time would be recognised. Application should be made to the Secretary at either of these universities for the regulations under which degrees are granted.

NOISELESS COAL-BOXES.

SIR.—Mr. Gillespie's invention is one that will approve itself to many. To those who are not in a position to command the luxuries of the sick-room, a simpler expedient, that I have often resorted to with a similar object, is worth remembering: Wrap about half a scoopful of coal in a piece of newspaper, and repeat this until the scuttle is full. The fire can thus be replenished from time to time without the least noise or rattle, and without soiling the fingers. The little packets may be placed bodily on the fire, or the paper unfolded and the coals gently distributed.—Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR W. EDIS.

THE LATE MR. MERRIMAN.

WITH regard to the obituary on Mr. John Merriman in our last number, Mr. J. Jones Merriman sends the following correction of an error.

"It was Mr. Merriman's brother, Dr. James N. Merriman, who shared with him and their father the appointment to the Queen; and, in 1861, he was joined in the partnership by Mr. Arthur Roberts (cousin of Sir Frederick Roberts, the hero of Candahar), who still remains in the firm."

FLUKE IN SHEEP.

SIR.—As this disease is very prevalent just now, I would be glad to have the opinion of some members as to whether the meat of animals suffering from it should be condemned: 1. in the early stages; 2. after the animal's health has become manifestly impaired. As an example, I may mention a case in which the aggregate weight of three carcasses of sheep exposed for sale was only 6½ stone. The livers were full of "flukes". As the subject is an important one, and, as far as I am aware, not clearly settled in any of the text-books, I am anxious to obtain the opinions of some members whose experience may enable them to throw light on it, especially with regard to the stage of the disease in which the meat ought to be condemned.—Yours faithfully,

M. B.

ERRATA.—In Dr. Bugnion's paper at page 382 of the JOURNAL for March 12th, the following corrections are required. In the heading, for "Geneva", read "Lausanne". In the third paragraph, line 8, for "three pairs", read "two pairs". In the fifth paragraph, line 2, for "12.18", read "12 to 18". In column 2, line 34, for "haematoïd", read "nematoid".

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