

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.

COLONEL TOTTENHAM'S QUESTION AND IRISH LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

SIR.—Dr. Blumer's letter appeared while a previous one of mine was in your hands. I am glad the Irish asylum assistants have at length found somebody to speak for them; but I hope to convince your readers that their advocate is both a prejudiced witness, and has failed to make good his attack on the one position of mine which he ventured to assail. On the strength of your leading article of January 1st, I stated that my doctrine had the full concurrence of the chief American medical superintendents. How does it disprove of this statement to allege that, as a body, they have not supported it? My proposition was, that leading superintendents supported it; and the correctness of this he acknowledges further on in his letter, where he naively confesses that the great American Association does actually contain superintendents among its members; though so imperfectly informed is he, that he does not know the number. It is true that Dr. Blumer insinuates that these gentlemen are not leaders in their calling; but more impartial evidence on this point must be forthcoming before their status can be considered as determined. Dr. Blumer informs us that the Association is a self-constituted body. Might I ask Dr. Blumer if he be aware that all other leagues established for the reform of abuses, past or present, are or were self-constituted bodies? I would be very much surprised indeed if human nature were so different at the other side of the Atlantic from what it is in the Old World, that the cry for reform should come from within, instead of, as it always has done with us, from without, privileged castes and classes.

Dr. Blumer tells us that the merits of the question at issue do not concern American superintendents; and on the strength of this statement he passes over all my other arguments. What right of intervention had Dr. Blumer, if my views had no application to a wider sphere than that of these kingdoms? I am not surprised to hear that the modesty of many of our American cousins is sufficiently pronounced to make them unconscious of the possession of any deficiencies. Even in the more easy-going Old World, the body of similar officials would, if polled, be doubtless found to hold with a like modesty to the belief in their own all-sufficiency, and this though they are selected in Ireland, at all events, without any regard to antecedent medical status.—Yours truly,

THOMAS LAFFAN.

Cashel, April 26th, 1881.

COLLEGE AND HALL should ask the opinion of a solicitor; we think he is entitled to recover.

CARRIAGES FOR MEDICAL MEN.

SIR.—For general country practice, a gig is by far the best for every-day use; and if a close carriage be required, by far the most useful, a waggonette with a movable head. A brougham would be found a very heavy drag, however light it is made. I am now using a gig, very light and comfortable, built by Maythorn, of Biggleswade, near Bedford. It is hung with C-springs, and the body is attached to the shafts under the footboard by a bolt and a cross spring behind. I never had a more comfortable one. It is cheap, strong, and light.—Yours faithfully,

P. H. BANKS.

ERRATUM.—In last week's JOURNAL, page 711, column 2, in the note on "Homoeopathy", with reference to a letter from Dr. Dyce Brown, in line 7, for "Galen" read "Carus".

DICKENS' "FUNNY OLD WOMAN" WHO PICKED HER TEETH WITH A PIN. DR. FRANK H. HAMILTON'S private collection of charred and broken bones, which he calls his bric-a-brac, contains, according to the *New York Medical Gazette*, a curious souvenir of Dickens and of his "American Travels". It is the skull of the "Funny Old Woman" whom he saw in the obscure hotel at the then very small village of Sandusky, Ohio, in 1842, and who, while waiting at the table, occupied herself in the intervals of her more active employment, in picking her teeth with a pin. Probably Mr. Dickens regarded her as a typical American waitress, since, so far as we know, she is the only one mentioned in his "Notes", and it has generally been supposed that in these papers Mr. Dickens intended to give his readers an illustration of American customs and manners. Examination of the skull, however, suggests to the medical man that she may have indulged in this peculiar pastime for other reasons than because this constituted a part of her special training for the duties of waitress. Nearly the entire frontal bone is toughened, eroded, and perforated by disease. Large portions of the parietal bones are in the same condition. All of the teeth are gone, and most of the alveolar sockets are absorbed. No doubt, about the time she fell under the observation of the distinguished traveller, she had pretty bad teeth, and probably had occasion oftener to use a toothpick than most other waiting-maids. Dr. A. N. Read, a distinguished physician of Norwalk, Ohio, attended her some years later, when she was suffering from tertian disease, in the Norwalk almshouse; and after her death, sent the skull to his son, Dr. Ira B. Read, of New York, by whom it was presented to Dr. Hamilton, accompanied with the tibia and fibula of her left leg, which had been broken and united.

CHICAGO GLASS EYES.

FROM particulars supplied to the reporter of a Chicago paper by a dealer in glass eyes in that city, it appears that there are as many as a thousand wearers of these eyes in Chicago, and that from 600 to 800 eyes are sold there every year. The best eyes are made at Uri, the manufacture being favoured by the occurrence there of fine silicates and other minerals required. These eyes withstand the corrosive action of tears and other secretions better than those of France. At Uri are also made large quantities of eyes used in mounting animals, besides a superior quality of glass marbles, known to boys as agates. The artificial eye is a delicate shell or case, very light and thin, and concave, so as to fit over what is left of the eyeball. The shell is cut from a hollow ball or bubble of glass, the iris is blown in, and then the whole is delicately recoated. The trade in Chicago has undergone a curious change. Twenty years ago there were sold very many more dark eyes than light, but from that period on the sale of dark eyes has been perceptibly dying out. About 20 light eyes are now sold to one dark. In Boston the percentage is even larger—about 35 blue or light eyes to one brown; while, on the other hand, in New Orleans, 50 brown or dark eyes are sold to one light. The change in Chicago is supposed merely to show that the influx of population has been from the East principally and from Northern Europe. Surgical operations on the eye are now performed much more skilfully. Whereas it was once thought necessary to take out the whole eye, various parts are now amputated, and the glass eye fitted on the stump, which moves quite naturally. Some people who have lost an eye keep several substitutes. They will use one for the daytime with a small pupil, and another for night with a large pupil, as a set-off to the dilatation.

FLUKE IN SHEEP.

SIR.—In answer to "M. B.", whose letter appears in the JOURNAL of this week, I may say that fluke in the liver in sheep has been very prevalent here, and I have always condemned the meat of sheep so infested, acting on a rule laid down by Fox in his book on the *Sanitary Examination of Water, Air, and Food*, p. 427. But of late I have made it a practice to examine some portion of the muscular fibre under the microscope, and give my certificate according to results. In bad cases of fluke, where the liver is hard, nodulated, and contracted in patches, a small parasite will be found in the muscular fibre, especially in the abdominal walls and in the muscles corresponding to the psoas and iliacus in man. This parasite is not unlike Rainey's corpuscles; but, unlike those, it is segmented and pointed at both ends. I had a measurement of several, but have lost it; consequently, I am unable to give minute details; but anyone conversant with the examination of muscular fibres under the microscope cannot fail to discover the parasite if it be present. In all cases where the parasite exists, the meat should be condemned as unfit for food. I have found that, in the early stages of fluke in the liver, the parasite does not exist in the muscle. In this town, the butchers destroy the livers of infected sheep, so as to prevent the inspector from seizing the carcass; but the greenish-yellow colour of the meat, its general flabby state and appearance, will, as a rule, lead one to examine the muscle as I have pointed out.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

S. B. MASON, L.R.C.P., etc.,
Medical Officer of Health for Pontypool.

Denham House, Pontypool, Monmouthshire, April 23rd, 1881.

F.R.C.P.—The person whose advertisement is sent is, we fear, beyond the reach of professional remonstrance.

MARTIN'S BANDAGES.

SIR.—May I suggest to horsekeepers a new use for Martin's rubber bandages? Often and often, especially when hard-worked and in hilly countries, my professional brethren must be annoyed to find their horses "cut" behind, or "speedy-cut", and come home bleeding a little, and lame a little; and this sort of chronic small injury, if it go on, necessitates rest, or ends in some such calamity (especially if it be a "speedy-cut") as the horse going down head-first or broadside on. For this, harness-makers devise a boot, which remains on the leg, but slips off the place, and if much used is useless, and in a gravelly state of roads becomes clogged with damp and grit. For this state of things, a carefully adjusted rubber bandage (only a few folds are needed) is infinitely superior to the boot; but at every stage of a long journey, it is as well, when the horse is rested, to take off the bandage and re-adjust it before starting. The only thing that is really necessary is to put the bandage on oneself at first, and to see that the fetlock or joint (whichever it is), is perfectly dry before the bandage is put on.—Your obedient servant,

Shanklin, Isle of Wight, April 25th, 1881.

GEORGE H. R. DABBS.

RAILWAY-CARRIAGES FOR GENTLEMEN.

SIR.—As illustrative of the advisability of having carriages for "gentlemen only", and by so doing supplying a necessity for those suffering from urinary and other affections, I send you the following case, which occurred lately. A gentleman, middle-aged, who had been drinking freely, found himself at Cannon Street, just in time to catch the train for Tunbridge, one hour's journey. Accordingly, he jumped into a smoking-carriage, only to find it occupied by two ladies, among others. He suffered from distension of the bladder for the whole journey; and, on his arrival at Tunbridge Station, found himself totally unable to urinate. He came to me, and I found him suffering intense pain, evidently from spasmotic stricture. Having no bath at hand, I determined to administer chloroform at once, and shortly was able to relieve him by the withdrawal of at least three pints. I think you will agree with me that the smoking-carriages on our lines should be held sacred for the use of men alone.—Yours faithfully,

W. J. LAND.

Bordyke House, Tunbridge, Kent.

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Being the Journal of the British Medical Association.

No. 1062.]

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 1881.

Registered as }
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