

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.

VERTIGO AMONG COAL-MINERS.

SIR,—Amongst coal-miners the following distressing symptoms are frequently met with, and, in my experience, are very difficult to get rid of. Vertigo sets in, especially on lifting the head after bending, and with it a glimmering and difficulty of steadying the eyes on any object. The air in which they work is good, and there is no cardiac or stomach disease. Their work necessitates lying on the side, with frequent rising. Aperients and tonics have had little effect. A temporary change of work did good; but on returning to the old work, they were soon as bad as before. Any suggestions as to the treatment of such cases will much oblige.—I am, etc.,
A JUNIOR MEMBER.

MR. WHITWORTH (St. Agnes).—There seems to be strong reason for regarding the case described as one of purpura hemorrhagica; and we cannot see on what ground it was assumed to be of diphtheritic origin. The absence of any other cases of diphtheria in the neighbourhood will have, we should think, been, by this time sufficient to allay any alarm that may have been caused by the registration of the death as the result of diphtheria.

ZOOLOGICAL ALCOHOLISM.

SIR,—Seeing that Jumbo, when he can get it, neither dislikes nor refuses beer or spirits, thereby flatly contradicting the assertion that he is, at least from choice, a staunch teetotaler, can any of your readers say whether, if beer, spirits and water, and pure water be placed in a stable, a horse will of its own accord select the water?—Yours, etc.,
C. L. H.

X. Y. Z.—Will any member who has obtained the M.D. Durham, after fifteen years' standing, communicate with "X. Y. Z.", BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL Office, 161A, Strand, W.C., with a view to correspondence on the subject?

USE OF STEAM FOR HEATING HOSPITAL WARDS.

SIR,—I observe, in your issue of March 11th, a letter asking for information on this subject, and also the opinions of several gentlemen on heating by hot water and heating by steam. I have had several years' practical experience of both; and I have no hesitation in saying that, for heating a large or moderately sized hospital, the value of steam is far beyond that of hot water.

It may possibly be interesting to some of your readers to know that we introduced steam for heating purposes about four or five years ago, and discontinued the hot-water system altogether. Under the hot-water system, we were subjected to various annoyances, such as violent banging and cracking noises in the pipes during the process of heating and cooling of the water, and frequent mishaps in very cold weather. All this has disappeared with the introduction of steam. The disadvantages of heating by hot water are numerous. 1. The system is more expensive than steam in fitting up at first, as larger pipes are necessary, and there must be a return set to the boiler; and the various details are more costly in keeping in repair. 2. In working, the arrangement is more costly than steam, especially when the water is required to travel a moderate distance, for the further the water is removed from the heating point, so in proportion will be the loss of heating power; and the cost will be considerably enhanced by the constant firing necessary day and night in order to obtain a minimum of heating power.

For heating a small hospital of twenty or thirty beds, the hot-water system, worked with a slow combustion stove, I dare say would answer all requirements, and might be found more convenient than heating by steam.

Heating by steam is economical in the first outlay, and also in its working. It is convenient of arrangement, as it can be conveyed in any direction and to any extent from one heating-point; hot water cannot be treated in this manner with a satisfactory result. Equal temperature can be maintained, and it is in every respect preferable to heating by hot water, excepting under the circumstances I have named.

The long corridors at this infirmary, upstairs and down, are heated by steam coils. We have also introduced steam into two of the medical wards, which has greatly contributed to the comfort of the patients, by now rendering it possible to maintain a suitable temperature both day and night during the most inclement weather. The size of each ward is as follows: length, 130 feet; width, 27 feet; height, 16 feet; and the distance from the heating-point is about 400 feet. A single two-inch pipe has been run round each ward, and the arrangements are such that the charge-nurse of each ward can turn the steam on or off in a moment. The condensed water is carried away by steam traps.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,
THOMAS BLAIR, General Manager.

The General Infirmary, Leeds, March 15th, 1882.

LADIES' WAISTS.

SIR,—I had hoped that the matter of the prevalent artificial deformity of the lower part of the female thorax was surely one subject on which doctors could not differ in opinion. I have read with utter astonishment the letter in last week's JOURNAL from Mr. C. Roberts, in which, though he begins by saying he "should be very sorry if anything he said could be looked upon as an encouragement to tight-lacing by ladies", yet goes on to say that he thinks Mr. Treves fell into an important error when he asserted "that a small waist in a draped figure is ugly, and offends our sense of the beautiful in the human form"; and towards the end of his letter cautions the dress reformers to bear in mind that a small waist is the result of a law of nature! But how does Mr. Roberts arrive at this extraordinary conclusion? He asserts that the waist forms the division of the body which gives certain proportions, according to a law discovered by Professor Zeising, which law of proportions is at the bottom of our sense of the beautiful. Presuming this statement to be correct—and I have no reason for disputing it—will Mr. Roberts explain why it should be necessary to constrict the waist to any degree whatever? The law seems to me to be only an argument for indicating a certain portion of the body that is in accordance with these proportionalities by some well marked arrangement of the dress, such as one of the many forms of jacket, or, better still, by a girdle or belt. The law of proportions, as stated in Mr. Roberts's letter, has no reference to the circumference of the waist, but merely to its position; and I cannot think that any law of nature can be found to defend so outrageous a custom as that of permanently altering the shape of the bony framework of the body in order that it may be considered beautiful, no matter whether the figure be draped or nude.

Mr. Roberts remarks that because the custom is so general, it must have some

raison d'être; but if he will read (if he has not already done so) Professor Flower's little work on *Fashion in Deformity*, he will find that the custom of flattening the skull has prevailed over a far larger extent of the earth's surface, and for a much greater period of time, than the custom of producing small waists; and yet I doubt if anyone can be found who will assert that the deformity in question was the result of a law of nature.

Mr. Roberts does not allude to the subject of pointed-toed boots, and the deformity of the feet induced by their use, which prevails in this country to a much greater extent than the deformity of the thorax, inasmuch as it affects both sexes and all classes of the community; but if universality is to be taken as implying *raison d'être*, we may perhaps be told that this fashion also is the result of a law of nature.

It is, I am sure, perfectly useless to talk of taking the ladies into our counsels, and discussing the subject with moderation, if we are to admit that some degree of constriction of the waist is necessary in order that a draped figure may be in accordance with our sense of the beautiful. Who is to say when waists are constricted too much, even from an æsthetic point of view? Certainly not the doctors, for I believe they are all but unanimous in condemning any degree of constriction of a part inclosing important vital organs; and if the matter be left to the *modistes*, we leave the subject where we found it, and have to consign our daughters' conformation to the designers of the hateful models seen in fashion plates. Possibly all our attempts to remedy this pernicious custom may be useless, and, as stated in one of the daily papers, Mr. Treves's lecture might as well have been delivered in the bottom of a coal mine; but before now vast changes in public opinion have been brought about by agitation and the dissemination of knowledge, and I am not without hope that even the stronghold of fashion, supported, as it apparently is, by so-called æstheticism, may be successfully assaulted by long-continued and consistent reasoning, and that the fair sex may not for all time be deluded with the specious argument that a small waist is a "law of nature".—I am, sir, yours, etc.,
R. LEWIS WILLCOX.

Warminster, Wilts, March 13th, 1882.

IRRITABLE BLADDER.

SIR,—A patient of mine, a lady aged 40, and several years married, but never pregnant, is suffering a good deal from irritable bladder. The attacks are becoming more frequent of late, and began nearly three years ago. There is no uterine, vaginal, nor rectal trouble of any kind; and her sexual relations are normal. She has suffered slightly from rheumatism around the right wrist-joint. I fancy there is some connection between this rheumatic trouble and the irritability of the bladder. All, or nearly all, the usual remedies have been tried, including hyoscyamus, which acts very disagreeably on the heart. Relief is quickly and easily enough obtained; but nothing cures. Can any reader suggest anything which offers strong hopes of arresting the annoyance permanently? My patient is gradually losing ground from the frequent recurrence of the attacks. I shall feel extremely indebted for suggestions in this case.—I am, etc.,
Iowa, U. S. A.

MEMBER BRIT. MED. ASSOC.

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