

A CORRECTION.

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to the fact, that in the report on the discussion of Mr. Makins's case of obstruction of the trachea, which took place at the last meeting of the Pathological Society, I am made to say the following: "Dr. Gerhardt had pointed out that, where the obstruction to respiration occurred below the glottis, the respiratory movements of the larynx were very limited, whereas, when the obstruction was above the glottis, the respiratory excursions of the larynx were wide; this symptom, however, had been misleading in this case."

The latter part of this report rests on a misunderstanding of my words; I said, on the contrary, that though I did not arrive at a correct diagnosis of the nature of the tracheal obstruction, yet the course of events entirely proved the correctness of Professor Gerhardt's statement, so far as the differential diagnosis between laryngeal and tracheal obstruction was concerned.

Considering the great importance of this differential diagnosis with regard to the propriety of performing tracheotomy, and with regard to the prospects of this operation, I should be very sorry if the erroneous report of my statement led to disregarding Professor Gerhardt's axiom, the value of which will be found greatest just in the most difficult cases. I therefore hope you will find space for the insertion of this correction.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

March 23rd, 1884.

FELIX SEMON.

SECRETION OF MILK IN THE MALE.

SIR,—I have remarked with much interest the record of a case of "secretion of milk in the male," by Mr. Mitchell, in the JOURNAL for March 5th; and I welcome the publication of so well authenticated and recently observed an instance of a rare and singular aberration in the usual dormancy of function in the mammary glands of man.

With your permission, I shall be glad to be allowed to avail myself of this opportunity to invite members of the profession who have met with similar cases, to favour me with any facts they may have observed respecting them, as I am seeking examples of gynecomastia in the male, whether of mankind, in the apes or monkeys, or in creatures yet lower in the scale of being.

In an essay already prepared for publication upon the custom of the "lying-in of husbands," or, as the French call it, "la couvade," I have considered the origin of this strange custom—a custom, I may add, not yet extinct—by the light of evolution; and there are grounds for believing that the facts I have gleaned justify the inference deducible from them as to the origin of this widely spread and singular practice. Corroborative facts in evidence of functional activity in the breasts of males, not being infants or young children, will be gratefully appreciated by me.

A case I have met with during the past two years in the person of a distinguished naturalist well illustrates the kind of evidence desired. This gentleman informed me that, at the age of puberty, he observed activity in his breasts, accompanied by a secretion of milky fluid, and that the same phenomena have recurred every spring since it was first remarked, lasting on each occasion for a period of about six weeks. I have also abundant evidence of a comparative kind of illustration of my hypothesis.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

ALFRED WILTSHIRE, M.D., F.R.C.P. Lond.

57, Wimpole Street, Cavendish Square, W.

ELECTRICAL INSTRUMENTS.

SPECS.—It is difficult to give "the name of the instrument or instruments that would suit" our correspondent without his going into more details as to the conditions to be fulfilled by the battery and coil in his case. He will, however, find these matters discussed, and every information given, in the second edition of Dr. de Watteville's *Medical Electricity*, just published by H. K. Lewis, 136, Gower Street. The use of a "current combiner" is preferable to having the galvanic and faradic apparatus immovably united in one box.

EXCISION OF THE PATELLA: RECOVERY WITH MOVABLE JOINT.

SIR,—May I call Mr. T. A. Dodd's attention to the following cases of excision of the patella "on record," followed by an useful joint "without antiseptic precautions?"

One is related in Professor Gross's work on surgery; another is to be met with in an analogous work of Professor Eve; and a third by Dr. Knöde, in May 1860, related in the *North American Medico-Chirurgical Review*.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

ARTHUR JACKSON.

Sheffield.

ASSOCIATE B.M.A.—The death-rate during 1882 from the principal zymotic diseases was equal to 2.73 per 1,000 in England and Wales, to 2.76 in the twenty-eight great towns dealt with in the Registrar-General's weekly return, and to 2.84 per 1,000 in fifty other large town-districts.

THE TREATMENT OF ABORTION.

SIR,—I would wish to direct "A Member's" attention to the use of "Thomas's dull wire curette" in cases of abortion, where he apprehends that the uterus is not entirely cleared of its contents (see JOURNAL, March 15th, p. 541). This extremely useful little instrument may be employed both for diagnosis and treatment. You can ascertain by its use whether the endometrium is smooth or rough; and, if rough, you can scrape away the rough places. The instrument is so flexible, and of so peculiar construction, that it cannot perforate the uterine wall.

In cases of hæmorrhage after abortion, I introduce Reid's speculum, and scrape out all the *débris* from the uterine cavity (with the curette); then apply thoroughly Churchill's tincture of iodine to the interior. The iodine acts as a styptic and antiseptic, and destroys what the curette fails to remove. The after-treatment should include warm antiseptic vaginal injections, repeated as often as is necessary. By following this line of treatment, I fear no abortion.

I attended a lady the other day who had distinct symptoms of septicæmia, following abortion: high temperature, foul lochia, etc. I removed from her uterus about an eggcupful of stinking shreds of placenta and membranes; and applied the iodine to the endometrium, with the result of immediate defervescence and a rapid recovery.

The curette may be obtained, in three sizes, from Archibald Young, of Edinburgh, with Mundé's pamphlet on the use of the same.—Yours, etc.,

80, Broad Street, Pendleton, Manchester.

W. WILSON, M.D.

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BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

Injuries and Diseases of the Jaw. By Christopher Heath, F.R.C.S. Third Edition. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1884.

Postnasal Catarrh and Diseases of the Nose. By Edward Woakes, M.D. London: H. K. Lewis. 1884.

Physiological Cruelty; or, Fact v. Fancy. An Inquiry into the Vivisection Question. By Philanthropos. London: Tinley Brothers, 8, Catherine Street, Strand. 1883.

On Formation of Uric Acid in Animals; Its Relation to Gout and Gravel. By P. W. Latham, M.A., M.D. Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co. London: George Bell and Son. 1884.

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