

## MICROSCOPICAL EXAMINATION OF SPUTUM.

Sir,—Thanks to Dr. Heneghe Gibbes, the staining of the bacilli of tubercle is simplicity itself. Obtain from Messrs. Beck, Cornhill, a bottle of his double staining fluid (2s.). The steps in the process are these (I generally make the investigation when arranging my visiting-list for the next day, and so every moment can be occupied). Press between two thin cover-glasses the sputum to be examined, taking care that only the thinnest film is left, which may be accomplished by slipping one glass off the other. Two specimens are thus obtained, which are to be exposed to the air or held some distance over a spirit-lamp to dry. Pour enough of the staining fluid into a watch-glass; warm this over a spirit-lamp until vapour rises; remove it, and float, with the sputum downwards, the glass on it for five minutes; take the slide out, and wash it in methylated spirits until all pink stain is removed. When dry, mount in Canada balsam or Farrant's medium in the usual way. One-eighth or one-tenth object-glass is wanted to demonstrate the bacilli satisfactorily. The staining-fluid must be kept in the dark, as all aniline dyes fade.—Faithfully yours,

D. H. G.

## THE MEDWAY UNION AND MR. BUCHANAN'S REPORT.

Dr. WHITTLE.—Mr. Buchanan's report was noticed in the JOURNAL on March 15th, page 525.

IGNORAMUS.—It is impossible to judge of your case, unless the limb be actually examined. You must place yourself entirely in the hands of a surgical colleague, especially with regard to the question of leaving your bed and wearing a plaster-of-Paris bandage.

## ABOLITION OF DISSECTION.

Sir,—In the recently published *Memorials of John Flint South* (p. 154), I find the following passage: "Mr. South played a prominent part... in the presenting of a memorial from the anatomical teachers to the Privy Council, for the total abolition of dissection." What does this mean?—Your obedient servant,

D.

\* \* On inquiry, we find that the copyist substituted "abolition" for "suspension," Mr. South's handwriting being difficult to read. This memorial from the teachers preceded the letter which the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons addressed to Lord Melbourne in 1831, expressing hopes that some plan might be devised by the legislature calculated to remove the serious evil then existing, by which bodies used for dissection in anatomical schools were frequently procured by illegal means. The Council insisted, in their letter, that the study of anatomy by dissection was the most important part of surgical education. It was the evil to which the Council referred that made the teachers of anatomy desire the suspension of dissection till the law was made more definite and satisfactory. Chiefly in consequence of this agitation, the Anatomy Act of 1832 was passed.

## AN OIL-STOVE.

Sir,—In reply to the inquiry in the JOURNAL concerning stoves, I beg to recommend Gillingham's Radiator. I have used one to warm my consulting-room for some months past with satisfaction. The apparatus consists of a duplex lamp burning colza, the heat from which is collected and radiated from a horizontal iron pipe suspended over it. The lamp consumes a gallon of oil a week, when kept burning twelve hours a day. Properly managed, there should be no smell whatever. The cost is about £2, and I think the only drawback is that they are somewhat unsightly.—Yours faithfully,

G. S. MAHOMED.

## SIZE OF DRAIN-PIPES.

H. D. desires to know what diameter the glazed pipes ought to be to secure good drainage from a house, and if there is any rule laid down on the subject.

\* \* In an ordinary sized house, the rule is that pipes of not less than four inches and not more than six inches diameter should be used; 6-inch pipes are most commonly laid. It is scarcely necessary to add that the correct size of pipes alone will not "secure good drainage."

## PROVIDENT DISPENSARIES.

Sir,—Though one swallow makes not a summer, I agree with Mr. R. Lee, writing in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, March 22nd, 1884, in hoping that "we shall soon see the question of hospital difficulties sensibly settled." I have my doubts, however, whether the matter will be settled in the way he suggests, curiously enough, for the very considerations he most strenuously urges, viz., those stated at the end of his letter with respect to public confidence. The fact is, public confidence is always in a more or less shaky state when things are not in proper order already.—I am, etc.,

J. HUSSEY WILLIAMS.

169, Stanley Road, Bootle, March 31st, 1884.

AN OLD ARMY SURGEON.—No doubt the stricter enforcement of the preliminary testing examinations will tend every year more and more to exclude illiterate and unworthy candidates from entering the medical profession. The instances which our correspondent quotes are striking enough, but are of course by no means singular, and are even, unfortunately, not unusual. We can only look to the progress of medical reform, and to the passage of a satisfactory parliamentary measure for the purpose, for the early and speedy remedy.

## VIOLENT ITCHING IN AN ELDERLY GENTLEMAN.

If M.D., whose question appeared on March 15th, will make inquiry, he will probably find a gouty tendency, either inherited or acquired, and his patient may find relief from a daily morning dose, fasting, of sulphate of soda, sulphate of potash, and sulphate of manganese.

## SPASMODIC CONTRACTION OF UTERUS ON PLACENTA: ITS CAUSES AND TREATMENT.

Sir,—Mr. Alexander Stirling, in his communication (March 22nd), seems to argue that in the case I recorded on March 1st in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, the cause of the spasmodic contraction was traction of the cord. He deprecates (and rightly so) a "vis a fronte," but in this case there was no "vis" at all. My words were, "slight traction of the cord." I merely did what I opine every practitioner must do, unless he means to let the placenta come away "of its own sweet will"—just pulled slightly on the cord; but, directly I felt that the placenta was a fixed point, and that I could not reach the insertion of the umbilical cord into it, I desisted, and adopted the most rational treatment in such cases—had chloroform administered to the patient, and so released the spasm.—Yours faithfully,

W. L'HUREUX BLENKARNE, M.R.C.S.E.

Buckingham, March 24th, 1884.

## VALIDITY OF AGREEMENTS NOT TO PRACTISE.

In reply to "W. E. T." (Pontypridd), who inquires whether an agreement between a registered medical practitioner and an unqualified assistant, by which the assistant (still unqualified) is prevented from acting as an assistant to any practitioner within a given distance, is legal, we may say that an agreement not to practise a trade or profession within a given district is not illegal. We cannot see that the fact of one of the parties being unqualified makes any difference. If there are any special circumstances which he thinks alter the case, he had better state them.

## COMMUNICATIONS, LETTERS, etc., have been received from:

Our Birmingham Correspondent; Miss Shillington, London; Mr. Thomas Wilson, Wallsend; Mr. H. Skaife, Alfriston; Dr. Creswell Rich, Liverpool; Dr. R. S. Archer, Liverpool; Mr. James Clark, Lichfield; Dr. J. B. Clarkson, Lytham; Mr. F. J. Burman, Wath-on-Dearne; Mr. A. W. Nankivell, Chatham; Mr. Boyd Joll, Liverpool; Dr. Cantlie, London; Dr. J. Campbell Brown, Liverpool; Mr. E. Davies, Liverpool; Dr. Sturge, Nice; Our Aberdeen Correspondent; Dr. Goodridge, Bath; Mr. T. M. Stone, London; Mr. T. Smalles, Honley, near Huddersfield; Dr. Waters, Chester; Mr. C. Matthews, Redditch; Mr. W. C. Beatty, Wells; Dr. Tripe, London; Mr. J. Wickham Barnes, London; Mr. G. A. Humble, Buenos Ayres; Mr. Alexander Hay, Salford; Mr. Berkeley Hill, London; Surgeon-Major Evatt, Woolwich; Dr. J. Ridge, Enfield; The Cyanite Company; Dr. Parsons, Dover; Dr. Muscraft, Pontefract; Dr. R. E. Burgess, Kettering; Dr. Menzies, Cannes; Mr. John Slane, Allahabad; Our Paris Correspondent; Mr. A. H. Young, Manchester; Mr. C. Solomon, Skirlaugh; Messrs. E. Bing and Son, Canterbury; Mr. T. Jones, Manchester; Mr. Chapman, Oxford; Dr. Coleman, Surbiton; Dr. O'Connor, London; Mr. H. Horton, Bromyard; Dr. Glascott, Manchester; Our Cairo Correspondent; Mr. James West, London; Sir E. Lechmere, London; Dr. R. O'Brien, Clonmel; Mr. J. Hussey Williams, Bootle; Dr. Gray, Castlewelling; Dr. G. H. Smith, Southsea; Mr. J. Brydon, Hawick; Mr. T. J. Withers, Comber, co. Down; Dr. Saundby, Birmingham; Messrs. Leofund and Co., London; Dr. J. H. Bridges, Wimbledon; Dr. Alfred Eddowes, Market Drayton; Dr. Emrys-Jones, Manchester; Mr. Charles Shears, Liverpool; Mr. C. Biddle, Merthyr Tydfil; Mr. C. P. Crouch, London; Mr. J. Macgregor Robertson, Glasgow; Mr. Arthur Wiglesworth, Liverpool; Dr. Clark Bell, New York; Mr. H. C. Lea, Philadelphia; Our Glasgow Correspondent; Dr. J. Maunsell, Bath; Dr. H. F. Winslow, London; Mr. M. D. Makuna, Pontypridd; Mr. Hutchinson, London; Mr. George Pollock, London; Mr. N. H. Faber, London; Dr. A. Wilson, Leytonstone; Mr. T. Blair, Leeds; Mr. Purnell, Streatham; Dr. S. Hamill, Leicester; Dr. Ball, Paris; Dr. Fairlie Clarke, Southborough; Mr. T. H. Smith, Redditch; Dr. O. W. Wight, Detroit; Mr. J. Erskine, Glasgow; Our Dublin Correspondent; Our Edinburgh Correspondent; Messrs. Fletcher, Fletcher, and Stevenson, London; Mr. St. Vincent Mercier, London; Dr. McCall Anderson, Glasgow; Mr. R. Jones, London; Mr. R. Mansell-Jones, London; Dr. Robertson, Kimberley; Mr. C. H. Mayhew, London; Sir T. Spencer Wells, London; Dr. Mouncey, Hanley; Dr. Joseph Rogers, London; Mr. James Oliver, London; Mr. H. W. Gell, London; Mr. W. H. Day, Norwich; Mr. William Cox, Winchcomb; Mr. W. J. Shore, Great Marlow; Mr. Newton H. Nixon, London; Dr. Thin, London; Mr. T. H. Smith, Alcester; Mr. H. T. Whitting, Croydon; Dr. Routh, London; Mr. Heywood, Leeds; The Secretary of the Social Science Association; Mr. F. W. H. Davie Harris, Dartmoor; Dr. Kerr, London; Dr. P. M. Deas, Macclesfield; Mr. C. E. Abbott, Braintree; Our Belfast Correspondent, etc.

## BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

A New Simplified Method of Medical Book-keeping. By A Medical Book-keeper of Ten Years' Practice. Liverpool: G. and T. Carlyle. 1884.

Aids to Practical Physiology. By J. Brindley James, M.R.C.S. London: Baillière, Tindall, and Cox. 1884.

The Influence of Heredity and Contagion on the Propagation of Tuberculosis, and the Prevention of Injurious Effects from Consumption of the Flesh and Milk of Tuberculous Animals. By Herr A. Lyddin; C. Fleming, LL.D., F.R.C.V.S., and M. Van Hertsen. London: Baillière, Tindall, and Cox. 1884.

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