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SIR,—In August last, a boy, aged 6 years, returned to his home in the country, from having been to the Moorfields Ophthalmic Hospital and undergone an operation for traumatic cataract. About a week later, he complained of sore-throat, and his mother states that he was ill and troubled with it for over a week. About ten days after his return from London, his eldest sister was attacked; and a few days after the commencement of her illness, the mother, another son, and the baby, were seized with it. The baby was a sickly delicate child at the time, suffering from acute eczema of the head and neck. For two days, however, it became very ill, and could not be got to swallow. The throat was reddened and swollen, but there was no false membrane to be seen. After two or three convulsive fits, it died quietly. The other sick members of the family, viz., the mother, eldest daughter, and one son, were all feeling ill, and complained of their throats; but besides swelling and redness of the tonsils and palate, there was nothing suspicious to be seen. A day or two after the baby died however; the boy, who was at the time ill in bed, became much worse, and false membrane of an unmistakable type appeared on the uvula, palate, and tonsils. Shortly after this, another son was taken ill, but with only the signs of ordinary sore-throat. Up to this time, the only remaining member of the family (besides the husband who had not been ill) was a little boy aged three years. About a week after the baby's death, however, he was said to be poorly and complained of his throat. His symptoms gradually developed; he became hoarse, coughed a little, lost his appetite, and his mother said he seemed at times as if he was going to be choked. There was no membrane visible from the mouth, the throat being merely red and swollen. The child, however, when asleep, breathed noisily, as if there was some obstruction in the larynx. The mother stated he awoke during his sleep, had fits of coughing with a "croupy" noise, and great difficulty to get his breath. He was rather better during the day. The case of this last child corresponds exactly with the disease so-called "croup," whereas that of the other child—his elder brother—exactly corresponds with the ordinary form of diphtheria. The family, although not strong, have previously been in good health. These cases seem all to have occurred through the illness of the boy brought from London. There has been no other case of diphtheria in the neighbourhood. In only one case has actual membrane been discovered; but the prostration, swelling of the glands of the neck, and other symptoms of diphtheria, have been very marked. The boy with so-called "croup" is just the age at which this disease occurs; the others may be said to be too old for "croup."—Yours truly,
T. FREDERICK PEARSE, M.D.

P.S.—Since writing the above, the child with croup has died, apparently from suffocation; and also the boy who had the diphtheria so severely, apparently from paralysis of the heart.

THE ALCOHOL QUESTION IN NEBRASKA.

In the following unfavorable notice of a Society in a remote Western State, the *New York Medical Record* points out an amusing clerical error.

"The State Medical Society of Nebraska has published the proceedings of its ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth annual sessions. At the tenth, the following unique resolution was introduced: 'Resolved: That the Nebraska State Medical Society deprecates the abuse of alcohol in any manner except for medicinal purposes, believing it to be detrimental to health, degrading to nature', etc. In view, however, of certain facts, among others, 'that it would be a committal of the Society, after having accepted of the champagne tendered at the previous evening', the motion to adopt was withdrawn, and we are left to infer that the Nebraska State Medical Society sanctions the abuse of alcohol, even for medicinal purposes."

HARD AND SOFT WATER.

SIR.—Having a patient who has always been of a constipated habit, I recommended her, whilst visiting here, to take the water as soft, to take a tumbler each morning on rising, combining this with a little white toast, malt bread, etc., for breakfast. This was quite sufficient; and I heard no more of it until she returned to her home, where the water is hard. Now she says that, as expected by her, the constipation has returned, although all her old measures are continued as instituted here. Will some member resident at Margate or elsewhere, where the water is proverbially hard, kindly suggest a way out of my difficulty? I still desire very much indeed to continue the water-drinking, for the reason that my patient is of large build and good appetite, and suffers from dyspepsia somewhat; and for other reasons it is essential that a fair amount of water be taken daily.—I am, yours faithfully,

MANCINIUM.

MANCUNIAM.

TOBACCO (H. A.).—We are unable to refer to any trustworthy condensation of reliable evidence concerning the use of tobacco, either for or against. We regard with great distrust a great many of the strong but general statements often made on this subject without detailed evidence or the means of testing the grounds of such statements. The late Professor Parkes, F.R.S., one of the most careful and moderate of investigators and teachers, wrote on this subject: "As to the effect on the young, even, it is curious, in Burmah, to see children smoking in their mothers' arms; and when I was serving in Burmah, many years ago, I often saw a woman walking along smoking her cigar of tobacco rolled up in a plantain-leaf, and carrying on her hip her child of two or three years old, who also had his or her little cigar, which was smoked with the greatest gravity. On talking to the Burmese (who smoke constantly), they would never grow that even children were in the least damaged. When I was in Turkey, I tried to make inquiries of some of the intelligent Turkish gentlemen; but one or two of them said they thought the Turks had learned to smoke from the Europeans, and had been growing apathetic and dull ever since. But others laughed at this; and the rural Turk, who smokes a good deal, is a fine, active, energetic fellow. I have talked to many Germans, who all stand out manfully for tobacco. In conclusion, I confess myself quite uncertain. I can find nothing like good evidence in books; too often a foregone conclusion, without any evidence to back it, is given. I think we must decidedly admit injury from excess; from moderate use, I can see no harm, except it may be in youth."

WHAT NEXT?

SIR,—Can the Council of the Metropolitan Hospital Sunday Fund be aware that one of its members advertises himself in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, the *Weekly Dispatch*, and other similar publications, in the following terms:

"*Eye Hospital for the Working Classes.—Self-supporting.*—Surgeon, Mr. Jabez Hogg. For the treatment of diseases and injuries of the eye. Patients seen daily at 1, Bedford Square, W.C., from 9 to 11 every morning; and from 1 to 4 on Saturdays."

In any case, will you allow me to call their attention, and the attention of the profession, to so exceptional and undesirable a practice with a view to obtaining a remedy?—Your obedient servant,
A HOSPITAL MANAGER.

A HOSPITAL MANAGER.

ERRATA.—In the description of Dr. Ward Cousins' new elastic cord tourniquet, page 461 of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of September 10th, for "A ring fitted with a crossbar for the purpose of connecting the cord in any position with an elastic pad", read "3. A ring fitted with a crossbar for the purpose of converting the cord in any position into an elastic pad".—At page 557 of the last number of the JOURNAL, line 7 from the top of the second column, the name of Dr. Caton was printed by mistake for that of Dr. Carter of Liverpool.

L. H. R. (Nunhead).—The question is purely a legal one; at the same time we can not see how there should be any illegality in such contract: but apart from illegality, it is one open to obvious objections.

G. F. MASTERMAN.—Duly received.

SIR,—I should like to hear opinions as to what would be a fair charge for fifty-seven visits, many of them of hours' duration, to a wealthy patient sixteen miles distant.
—I am, etc.,
PROBITAS.

A STUDENT.—After November next, *all* candidates for the diploma of membership of the College will have to undergo an examination in midwifery, in addition to medicine, unless holding a recognised medical degree.

H.M.—The Museum and Library of the Royal College of Surgeons were reopened on Monday last.

COMMUNICATIONS have been received from numerous correspondents in reply to the letter signed "Orphan" in our last week's issue.

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

Mr. J. Taylor, Buxton; Dr. Allichin, London; Mr. E. Skinner, Sheffield; Mr. T. Porter, Maida Vale; Dr. Douglas Powell, London; Mr. Fink, London; Our Aberdeen Correspondent; Mr. O. Pemberton, Birmingham; Probitas; Dr. A. Bernays, London; Our Glasgow Correspondent; Dr. G. V. Poore, London; Professor O. Lodge, Liverpool; Dr. Shepherd, London; Mr. G. Eastes, London; Our Birmingham Correspondent; Dr. J. Rogers, London; Sir J. Lubbock, Bart., London; Dr. W. Murrell, London; Dr. Thin, London; Mrs. Kate Gordon, Upton; Dr. Norman Kerr, London; Mr. Nelson Hardy, London; Mr. R. Holman Peck, Penge Lane; Mr. D. Rogers, Shanklin; Mr. C. P. Graham, Pendlebury; Professor Longmore, Netley; Our Edinburgh Correspondent; Mr. E. Nettleship, London; Dr. Fitzgerald; Dr. James Murphy, Sunderland; Mr. W. H. Torbuck, Polruan; Mr. J. Groves, Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight; Mr. Walter W. Reeves; Dr. Dreschfeld, Manchester; Mr. Vere G. Webb, Coleshill, Birmingham; Dr. Thorne Thorne, London; Dr. Jacob, Dublin; Dr. Broadbent, London; Mr. W. F. Phillips, London; Mr. Lawson Tait, Birmingham; Mr. A. H. Boys, Bristol; Mr. G. St. George, Lisburn; Dr. Peart, North Shields; Dr. Kelly, Taunton; Dr. J. Herbert Stowers, London; Dr. Radcliffe; Dr. Sawyer, Birmingham; Dr. Palmer, Northampton; Dr. A. Sheen, Cardiff; Mr. George Brown, Honorary Secretary Medical Defence Association; Dr. Christie, Glasgow; Mr. W. Jelly, Madrid; Dr. W. W. Millard, Dunbar; Mr. N. W. Alt, Wittersham; Dr. Main, Birkenhead; Mr. E. Sunderland, Bolton; Mr. Jordan Lloyd, Birmingham; Mr. J. P. Jamieson, Hayward's Heath; Brigade-Surgeon R. J. Orton; Mr. George Lowe, Middleton-on-Teesdale; Mr. W. Prouse, Cambridge; Mr. G. A. Brown, Tredegar; Delta; Dr. G. F. Bodington, Kingswinford; Dr. R. Caton, Liverpool; Dr. Pietra Santa, Paris; Mr. F. Heeley, Devonport; Mr. James Startin, London; Dr. W. Philson, Cheltenham; Our Dublin Correspondent; Dr. Ewart; Mr. C. Kingzett; Mr. K. Cornwall; Mr. Fletcher Beach; etc.

BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

A Treatise on Orthopædic Surgery. By J. W. Hayward, F.R.C.S. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1881.

Health-Resorts for Topical Invalids. By W. J. Moore, Esq. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1881.

Epilepsy and other Chronic Convulsive Diseases. By W. R. Gowers, M.D. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1881.

Parkes Museum International Exhibition Official Catalogue. 1881.

Suicide. By H. Morselli, M.D. London: Kegan Paul and Co. 1881.

Girls' Own Annual. London: Leisure Hour Office.

Boys' Own Annual. London: Leisure Hour Office.

Rabies, or Hydrophobia. By T. M. Dolan, Esq. Landon: Baillière, Tindall, and Cox. 1881.

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