

**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.

### A QUESTION REGARDING CERTIFICATES OF DEATH.

SIR,—Will you or your readers kindly inform me whether I ought to grant a certificate of death in the following case? Early in the morning, I was suddenly called to J. H., aged 67, was driven with all speed by the messenger, and found the man had expired before I arrived. It appears he had been trying to catch a horse in a field, and, after running about some time, went to a house close by to ask someone to help him. While talking, he fell down, and never spoke afterwards. I had never attended him before.—I am, etc.,

INQUIRERS.

\* \* We do not see how it is possible to give a certificate in such a case until the coroner has ordered a *post mortem* examination. The cause of death could only be guessed at, not certified.

### RECESSION OF THE GUMS.

SIR,—Can any of your members inform me how to treat, constitutionally or locally, recession of the gums in a young man aged 30, apparently in good health?—Yours truly,  
AN OLD MEMBER OF THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

### PUBLIC MORTUARIES.

SIR,—Under a heading "Public Mortuaries", in the JOURNAL of the 29th ultimo, there appeared remarks made in error, of occurrences which had recently taken place at Wednesbury. If you will permit me to make a correction, as far as this town is concerned, the facts were these.

Sergeant Bates, of the local volunteers (not police), last September heroically sacrificed his own life while endeavouring to rescue a girl from drowning, who had fallen into the canal. The bodies were subsequently removed to an outhouse at the back of a public-house in the parish of Westbromwich, just on the confines of the Wednesbury parochial limit, and it was here the face of Bates was mutilated by rats.

By Tats. being a Winesbury man, and losing his life in the manner mentioned, it was not surprising that the sanitary authority was indignant, and denounced the conduct of those in another parish who had failed to remove the deceased to his own town, where a most substantial and complete public mortuary has been provided for some time. Out of evil good may come, for the expression of indignation at the above occurrence has led to a correspondence with the Westbromwich authorities, which may result in that town being provided with a public mortuary at no distant date.—I am, yours faithfully,

WEDNESBURY, November 2nd, 1881.

THE AFRICAN TREATMENT OF INSANITY.

**THE** following curious letter was addressed recently to the Medical Superintendent of the Fort Gange Colonial Lunatic Asylum by the wife of an aboriginal African, who had been for twelve months under treatment in that institution.

"I came to the Doctor to let him understand about my husband's sickness. So, Master, he is not a native of this country; the sickness he is troubled with is not a sickness for him to be here; some of his countrymen from Georgetown made me to understand so. They did went up the river to see him, so I tell them he is in charge of the Doctor; they say that this sickness is from their country, it is the gift of God from their country from generation to generation, as far as they know. If they were he wouldn't have been here to-day, because would have know what to do to keep down the sickness from him. Sir, the sickness don't require no noise at all, he must be in a house him alone and those who attended to him, and they does not use him every kind of food, purpose food must be for him, and he must close him in a house for nine days, then you will hear he himself call to go out, and when you hear him call you must not keep him back at all, that will make him cross. So I humbly beg you, Doctor, please to let him out, that countrymen may try with him a little, Sir, because they fully understand what is the sickness, and in their country it takes only three months to get better, and since he is here this now twelvemonths, so please, Doctor, let him out. They are Crumantay nation, nobody don't understand ways excpecting their own country people."

This letter indicates that insanity is not unknown amongst the negroes in Africa, but that it is of such frequent occurrence that its hereditary character has been recognised. It also reveals that African notions of insanity are to-day in that transitional phase, vestiges of which may be detected in the history of most races. A childlike simplicity ascribes the strange phenomena of madness to the inspiration of gods or possession by demons, but a dawning sense of science perceives the necessity of remedial measures. The malady is a divine gift to be regarded with reverential awe, but to be purged away if possible. The treatment suggested by the experience of the Crumantia nation recalls the practices formerly in vogue at the shrines of St. Dymphna and St. Fillan, and betokens, too, some dim appreciation of the value of rest in the cure of disease, and of the importance of quietude, a regulated diet, and the avoidance of all unnecessary thwarting and irritation in securing recovery in certain cases of mental derangement.

### DETERMINATION OF SEX PREVIOUS TO BIRTH.

SIR, I would ask to draw the attention of those of the profession who have large obstetric practices to what I think is worthy of notice, and to ask them to note and verify, or otherwise, the determination of sex previous to birth. I have, unfortunately, not so very many cases or examples to go on, not having had, for the past fifteen years, much to do with obstetrics; but what cases I have had and noticed have singularly turned out correct.

I have come to the conclusion that there is a difference in the figure of a woman in the family-way if the foetus is a girl to what it is if a boy, and that a very marked one. In the former, the contour of the abdomen is more rounded and fuller over the hips; whilst, in the latter, it is more pointed and angular. A patient once remarked to me that "boys show more than girls".—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

T. D'ORVILLE PARTRIDGE.

13, Park Place, N.W.

### SOLUTION OF PILOCARPIN.

SIR,—In reply to "Rusticus," who experiences the usual difficulty in keeping pilocarpin in solution unchanged, I can recommend Savory and Moore's gelatine discs for hypodermic injection. These contain one-twelfth of a grain, and readily dissolve in a few minims of water with the aid of heat, and will keep well in a dry place. In cases where it is desired to produce the full physiological effect of the drug, I am disposed to prefer jabandi, either as infusion or tincture, the former being the more active.—I am, etc.,

W. T. LAW, M.D.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND: EXAMINATION IN DENTAL SURGERY.

The following were the questions submitted to the candidates at this examination.

*Anatomy and Physiology.*—Describe the Course and Branches of the Internal Maxillary Artery. 1. Describe the Functions of the Tongue, and the Nerves concerned in each. 2. *Surgery and Pathology.*—1. What do you understand by "Ranula"? Give its symptoms, pathology, and treatment. 2. Give an account of the process of Healing (1) of a simple Incised Wound; (2) of a Lacerated and Contused Wound. 3. *Dental Anatomy and Physiology.*—1. State the Periods of Eruption of the several Temporary Teeth. Into what groups do they, in this respect, admit of being divided? and what pauses occur in the process? 2. Describe the Structures met with in a complete Vertical Section through the Sac of a developing Tooth at the period of commencing calcification. 3. Mention the various methods of Attachment of the Teeth to the Jaws. Give examples of each variety. 4. *Dental Surgery and Pathology.*—1. What are the most frequent causes of Death of the Pulp? By what structures are so-called Dead Teeth in relation with surrounding living tissues? and what morbid conditions may lead to their ultimate loss? 2. State the conditions under which you would consider the following materials the most suitable for filling Teeth, viz., Gutta-percha, Zinc Oxide, Zinc Phosphate, and Copper Amalgam. 3. Describe the Morbid Appearances and ordinary Causes of the different conditions known by the terms Gingivitis, Riege's Disease, and Blue Gum.

## CORNS.

SIR,—I have derived very great comfort from putting a poultice or wet pad—if the latter, covering it with oiled silk—on the hard corn during the night, and the following morning picking out with the finger-nail every bit of the hard part which is then made soft; then rub over two or three times with a stick of nitrate of silver. This must be repeated again and again when required, in two, four, or more weeks.

—I am, etc., A MEMBER.

### OPIMUM-SMOKING.

SIR,—Can any member of the profession inform me what is the exact preparation of opium as smoked by the Chinese, etc.? also, where it may be obtained?—Yours truly,  
L.R.C.P.  
Liverpool, October 24th, 1881.

### CHANGE OF NAME.

THE editor of the *Crichton Royal Institution Literary Register*, with an openness of mind and moral courage that are rare in editors who are not inmates of lunatic asylums, has promptly acknowledged the blunder he had made, and in deference to the representations of the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* has reverted to the old and well-worn name of his periodical, which this month appears again as the *New Moon*. We trust that the *New Moon* may never again suffer eclipse.

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

Dr. W. S. Greenfield, Edinburgh; Mr. W. Bates, Birmingham; Mr. A. R. Turnbull, Edinburgh; Mr. R. S. Ellis, Willingham; Mr. H. Freeman, Bath: An Old Subscriber; Mr. F. W. Barry, Cyprus; Dr. Clifford Allbutt, Leeds; R. A. P.; Mr. J. B. Fry, Swindon; Country Practitioner; Mr. A. Jackson, Sheffield; Dr. A. H. Bampton, Plymouth; Dr. E. H. Darwin, Manchester; Mr. Lawson Tait, Birmingham; Mr. S. P. Anderson Stuart, Edinburgh; Dr. E. D. Mapother, Dublin; Mr. R. M. Wyckoff, Brooklyn; Mr. C. Low, Errol; Dr. H. Donkin, London; Dr. R. Neale, London; Mr. M. Greenwood, London; Mr. William H. Platt, London; Our Aberdeen Correspondent; Mr. W. Whitehead, Manchester; Inquiring Candidate; A Member B. M. A.; Mr. J. Edwards, Portsmouth; Dr. C. Medlicott, High Oakham; Mr. A. T. Norton, London; Mr. J. N. Porter, London; Dr. Bryan, Northampton; M.B., M.A.; Mr. R. Clement Lucas, London; Mr. W. D. Husband, Bournemouth; Our Paris Correspondent; Mr. Joseph Hirst, Huddersfield; Dr. C. Parsons, Dover; Dr. Edward Seaton, Nottingham; Mr. W. Washington David, Pontypridd; Mr. J. Martin, Portlaw; Dr. Watson, Sheffield; Hard Case; Sanitas; Mr. Vincent Jackson, Wolverhampton; Dr. W. Snow, Bournemouth; Mr. H. Lewis Jones, London; Dr. F. P. Atkinson, Kingston-on-Thames; Mr. Lewis Lewis, Plymouth; W. S. L.; Mr. T. W. Hubbard, Tunbridge Wells; Mr. J. P. Stallard, Worcester; Mr. F. B. J. Baldwin, Rotherham; A Member; Dr. Stephen Mackenzie, London; Dr. Hamilton, Edinburgh; Mr. I. Cooper Garman, Wednesbury; etc.

## BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

**Tropical Diseases.** By Joseph Fayrer, K.C.S.I., LL.D., F.R.S. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1881.

Syphilis and Local Contagious Disorders. By Berkeley Hill, M.B.Lond., F.R.C.S.  
London: Smith, Elder, and Co. 1881.

### Scale of Charges for Advertisements in the "British Medical Journal".

Seven lines and under	..	..	..	..	..	£	3	6
Each additional line	..	..	..	..	..	0	0	4
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Advertisements should be delivered, addressed to the Manager, at the Office, not later than Twelve o'Clock on the Wednesday preceding publication; and, if not paid for at the time, should be accompanied by a reference.

Post-Office Orders should be made payable to the British Medical Association, at the West Central Post-Office, High Holborn. Small amounts may be sent in postage stamps.