

## THE RULING PASSION.

THE following paragraph recently appeared in an American paper. "A patent medicine manufacturer died in New York last week. Before he died his friends asked him how he would like to be buried. He had just strength left to say—'Insert me top column, next to reading matter, fifty-two times, electro by mail,' and then he closed his eyes, and passed away to that bourne where there are no omissions nor wrong insertions."

J. M.—The subject in question is, we believe, under consideration.

## BORO-GLYCERIDE IN SURGERY.

SIR,—In reply to "P. R.," the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL for August 26th, 1882, contains, at p. 362 (*et seq.*), Mr. Barwell's paper on "boro-glyceride in operative surgery." Professor Barff introduced this antiseptic (of which I can speak highly) to the notice of the profession in April 1882. It is of special manufacture, and can be obtained of any wholesale house. Barff's preparation is an opaque semi-solid, and resembles condensed milk. As a rapid healer of wounds, Mr. Barwell speaks highly of it as a reliable non-irritating antiseptic; his opinion of it is based on its use in the major operation, after which, in the absence of septic pyrexia, healing followed between the sixth and seventh days (mean).

Mr. Barwell's directions for using it are then given. "I generally cleanse my hands and instruments, also the patient's skin, with carbolic acid; I then operate in the open without any spray. The operation completed, the wound is thoroughly mopped and sponged with a 5 per cent. solution of boro-glyceride in water (that is one ounce to a pint); or, in case of a cup-shaped wound, I fill it with the solution. After this, the wound is stitched and covered with eight or ten layers of lint, and, where necessary, as in amputations, also with a light bandage similarly soaked. The whole is then enveloped in thin mackintosh; if no oozing takes place, there is no need for dressing for three or four days. When the dressing is removed, all parts of the wound where the lips have been adjusted are found united or uniting according to time elapsed, the surrounding skin being entirely free from redness or irritation; it is, on the contrary, soft and white, like that of a baby."—I am, faithfully yours, H. A. SMITH.

## CONTRADICTION MEDICAL EVIDENCE.

SIR,—Would you allow me to bring under your notice a conversation which occurred some days ago with a gentleman whose family I have been attending; he is a man of ability, whose opinion carries weight. He said, "I do not believe in you doctors, yours is not a science. When one takes any of your medicine one is never sure whether it will have the effect you say it will." I was beginning to point out how untrue this was, when he interrupted me, saying, "It's no use trying to convince me, I have been on a jury—where two medical men, of high standing in your profession, have, on their oath, given different opinions. I say that one of these men was either a fool or a liar." This recalled a case which occurred here many years ago when I was house-surgeon to the hospital. We had a case of death due to peritonitis, and the patient had confessed that she had taken some mixture to procure abortion. The coroner advised that I should have a second medical man, as the case was serious. I said that I should like it, but that if the *post mortem* examination disclosed the cause of death, there would be no question about it. "My dear sir," he said, "if you get three medical men, in any case, to swear one way, I could get three medical men to swear the other." Now this is a terrible imputation to lie upon a noble profession, and the worst of it is, that it is true. Can nothing be done to prevent this; is it possible that one of two men of high professional standing, whose word at any other time it would be an insult to doubt, can be either a liar or a fool, or if not, should lay himself open to the imputation?

We have been trying lately, in many ways, to raise the status of the profession. We have tried to get rid of the unqualified assistant, to put down advertising, to do away with open dispensaries, all of which appeal to the lower branches of the profession. Would it not be well to remember the beam in our own eye, and do something for this evil?—Your obedient servant,

The Towers, Torquay. J. R. RICHARDSON, M.B.

## AN IMPROPER OVERTURE.

MESSRS. HANBURY, HAWKES and Co. appear to have issued regular to members of the profession offering a payment of five guineas, in the way of commission, on the fares taken for every patient whom they may recommend to take a yachting cruise in the yacht belonging to the Pleasure Steam Yacht Company. Such a proceeding evinces very little knowledge of the sense of honour and equity which guides professional men in their recommendations to their patients, and is nothing less than an insult to the profession, which we regret to find proceeding from a respectable business firm.

## HYPERICUM OIL FOR BED-SORES.

SIR,—I am indebted to the courtesy of Dr. James Johnston of Bradford for his information. From this, and previous communications to the JOURNAL, it would appear that the St. John's wort (making all due allowance for old women's methods of preparing it), belongs to the class of "good remedies," now, unfortunately, gone "out of fashion," and is a medicinal agent which, so far as my experience goes, certainly deserves to be revived, for the sake of at least one intractable complaint.

HERBERT L. SNOW, M.D. Lond.

## HABITUAL DRUNKARDS' ACT.

THE fourth report by the Inspector of Retreats, Mr. Hoffman, just issued, is of a much more encouraging nature than any of his previous reports. He states that, during 1883, he had no fault to find with the general condition of the retreats, and that the health of the patients had been, as a whole, remarkably good. There are four retreats now licensed under the Act, Hall Court, Cannock, Staffordshire; Dalrymple Home, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire; Tower House, Westgate-on-Sea; and Colman Hill House, Halesowen, Worcestershire, with a total provision for 60 patients. Forty patients had been admitted during the year, and 38 had been discharged. At the close of 1883, there were 16 inmates remaining in the various institutions. There were two complaints against publicans for supplying patients under the Act with liquor, in contravention of the law; but though in neither case did the evidence secure a conviction, it is believed that the action taken by the Home Secretary will act as a warning for the future. The Dalrymple Home is specially commended in the report, and is stated to be so much in demand that many applications for admission have been refused. The Inspector adds that the report of this home is very satisfactory, that its success has been very marked, and that it may well form a model for similar establishments which may yet be opened. The gratifying feature is noted that, though established and carried on on philanthropic principles, and though conducted on a very liberal scale, this home has proved financially successful. It is to be hoped that the cheering tone of this report will stimulate the benevolent public to provide generously for the treatment of inebriates with limited means and of those entirely destitute of resources.

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

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## BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

On the Sclerosis of the Spine. By Julius Althaus, M.D. London: Longmans, Green and Co.  
 Tumours of the Ovary, Fallopian Tube, and Broad Ligament. By Alban H. G. Doran, F.R.C.S. London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1884.  
 Materia Medica, Physiological and Applied. Vol. I. London: Trübner and Co. 1884.  
 Elements of the Physiological Physics. By J. McGregor Robertson, M.A., M.B., C.M. London: Cassell and Co. 1884.  
 Life in the Soudan. By Dr. Josiah Williams, F.R.G.S. Illustrated. London: Remington and Co. 1884.  
 Surgical Handicraft. By W. Pye, F.R.G.S. London: H. Kimpton. 1884.

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