

manner. That this is not so now (principally by reason of Bigelow's method) is self-evident, and therefore it seems desirable that the word operation should be specially defined or qualified. Sir Henry Thompson's substitute proposal of a weight limit seems to me objectionable, having regard to the age of patients, for obviously what would constitute a stone in A. B., aged 3 years, might not do so in C. D., aged 25.

A patient of mine, a very large man, passed a stone as big as an averaged sized marble as far as the fossa navicularis, from whence I excised it. It never occurred to me to record the case even in my memory as one of stone in the bladder, but, nevertheless, had such a calculus been retained in the bladder of A. B., and had I cut him for it, I should certainly, and I trust justly, have done so: and yet, perhaps—I didn't weigh the stone—I should have been precluded from doing so by a weight limit. Such a definition, I may add further, would tend to operate very unfairly against Indian surgery, for a very great majority of the cases that are dealt with in the dispensaries of that country occur in very young children, and where necessarily the weight of the calculi is limited.

On the other hand, if perfected mechanical contrivances enable surgeons to wash out small stones from the bladder, it obviously would not tend to enhance the value of surgical proceedings from any point of view, or of surgical statistics either, if they were recorded as cases of stone. It seems evident, therefore, that the old definition, which was very good as long as surgical procedures were limited to lithotomy and lithotomy, will not do now, and that it has been rendered obsolete by litholapaxy.

As regards the new proposal of a weight limit, I think I have shown that it is not comprehensive enough to include numerous cases of children, and the question for the profession is, "Can a better one be devised?" Obviously, no hard-and-fast line can be laid down, and the difficulty must always be great, especially so, perhaps, for surgeons who are working up to the record of Frère Jacques (5,000 cases) as to how they will classify their cases. Having no such difficulty immediately before me, I would beg, instead of adopting the new weight limit, to propose a modification of the old rule, and instead of using the word operation in the old sense, so to qualify it as to exclude removal by special forceps and incision from the urethra, as was always the case, but also the modern practice of washing out by means of enlarged instruments. The definition then of stone in the bladder would run thus: Any calculus formation retained in the bladder for the removal of which either lithotomy or litholapaxy was necessary. This, I think, would cover the ground until Bigelow or some other surgeon still further simplifies the treatment of stone.

NITRITE OF AMYL IN CHLOROFORM SYNCOPE.

DR. JAMES BRYDON (Hawick) writes: Possibly had this medicine been used on the patient who died after taking chloroform at Preston Infirmary the result might have been different, but most probably not. Notwithstanding it has all the prestige of Dr. Lauder Brunton's recommendation. I have, after many trials, found it nearly worthless. The first case I tried it in was one of angina pectoris; and although it is said to be a sovereign remedy in such cases, it afforded no relief. Several capsules were broken and inhaled, the patient became livid and blue, but the angina was not relieved. Nitroglycerine seemed to have more effect, but the only lasting relief was obtained by subcutaneous injections of morphia. I have used the capsules several times in acute asthma, in cases of heart disease, but in none of them was the result what I was led to expect. The old-fashioned remedies, spr. chloroformi, stramonium, and belladonna, were more effective. As far as my experience goes, it is just as inert in relieving heart spasms as the tincture of perchloride of iron is in arresting an attack of erysipelas.

METHYLENE AS AN ANÆSTHETIC.

DR. E. FIELD (Bath) writes: In his communication to the JOURNAL, July 28th, Dr. Dudley Buxton refers to what he is pleased to describe as an "astounding" statement made by me in my letter a few weeks ago. It might be supposed from this that there was a unanimity of opinion among chemists as to the constitution of the liquid sold under the name of methylene, which I have always been under the impression was by no means the case. In leaving, therefore, the chemists to settle their differences, and in forming my own opinion from the effect of the compound on the patient, I think most impartial persons will not consider there is anything "astounding."

The mention of an ether inhaler in my letter was due only to a printer's error. I spoke of a perforated leather inhaler, which, of course, admits of free dilution with air.

A WARNING.

We are requested by Messrs. Waller and Gaskell, surgeons, Sydenham, to state that inquiry should be addressed to them before any engagement is made to employ a person who may apply for appointment as dispenser to a medical man, producing as a testimonial a certificate as to character given by Mr. Waller.

GIBSON AND WIFE V. JEFFRIES AND HILLS. (See JOURNAL, May 26th, p. 1132.)

MR. C. B. KEETLEY (George Street, Hanover Square, W.) writes: Will you permit me to once more to call attention to this most deserving case? If only 5 per cent. of the medical men who are every day in peril of a similar misfortune to that which happened to Messrs. Jeffries and Hills, would subscribe five shillings each, the balance required would be subscribed twice over.

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

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR correspondents are reminded that prolixity is a great bar to publication, and, with the constant pressure upon every department of the JOURNAL, brevity of style and conciseness of statement greatly facilitate early insertion. We are compelled to return and hold over a great number of communications chiefly by reason of their unnecessary length.

BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

The Thermal Baths of Bath, with the Aix Massage and Natural Vapour Treatment. London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co. Bath: Chas. Hallet. 1888.
A System of Obstetrics by American Authors. Edited by Barton Cooke Hirst, M.D. Volume I. Edinburgh: Young J. Pentland. 1888.

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