

cumstance must be attributed their desire to further by all legitimate means any steps that will facilitate a diagnosis.

The Bradford and District Trades Council, in proposing the above resolution, which calls for a bacteriological examination of the blood in suspected anthrax is, however, assuming rather an unusual position. There are few instances of a lay body trying to force the hands of the medical profession through the medium of Parliament.

Whether compulsory abstraction of blood from a case of suspected anthrax is demanded by law or no there is not the least doubt that members of the medical profession must be allowed a great amount of discretion in the matter, the state of a patient's health and his prospects of recovery being the primary consideration. So long as this is kept well in view there is no reason why the blood should not be examined during life for anthrax bacilli, for the operation is at present frequently performed, and is admitted to be a valuable aid in diagnosis.

## THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL ELECTION.

The result of the voting for the election of a direct representative for England and Wales was formally declared at a meeting of the Branch Council for England held at the offices of the General Medical Council on the afternoon of September 25th.

It will be remembered that the vacancy was created by the approaching expiration of the term of office for which Sir Victor Horsley was elected in 1897. It will be seen that he has been re-elected by a majority of over two to one.

The number of votes was declared as follows:

HORSLEY, SIR VICTOR, F.R.S., F.R.C.S.	...	7,672
SMITH, JOSEPH, M.R.C.S....	...	3,105
Majority	...	4,567

## THE PLAGUE.

### PREVALENCE OF THE DISEASE.

#### INDIA.

DURING the week ending August 30th the deaths from plague in India numbered 4,862, being an increase on the number of deaths from the disease during the previous week, when they were returned as 4,371. Virtually the increase is confined to the Bombay Presidency, where 3,626 deaths are reported. The only other badly-affected district is Mysore, where 638 deaths from plague occurred during the week ending August 30th. In the North-West Provinces and Oudh 193 deaths from plague occurred. The outbreak in Cawnpore City is somewhat abated. In the Punjab the deaths from plague during the week ending August 30th numbered 56, against 63 in the previous week.

The cities and districts of the Bombay Presidency most seriously attacked by plague are chiefly on the main line of railway to the South. In Satara during the month ending August 31st there were 3,179 deaths from plague; in Belgum, 1,723; Dharwar, 2,707; Kolhapur, 1,474; Poona District, 294; Khandesh, 514; Surat, 516; Thana, 235; Kathiawar, 375.

#### CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

During the week ending August 23rd no case of plague was discovered in any part of Cape Colony. On August 24th a number of rats, dead of plague, were found in a forage store at Port Elizabeth. During the week ending August 30th no case of plague in either man or rat has been met with.

#### EGYPT.

During the week ending September 7th 5 fresh cases of plague occurred in Egypt and 2 deaths from the disease. Four cases of plague remained under treatment on September 7th, all at Alexandria.

#### HONG KONG.

On September 18th the Governor of Hong Kong, Sir H. E. Blake, telegraphed: "No cases of plague last ten days."

## LITERARY NOTES.

THE *Münchener medicinische Wochenschrift* of September 16th contains the following lines, signed with the initials "A. W.":

IN MEMORIAM RUDOLFI VIRCHOW.

Summo cum ingenio	"Omnis" dixit "cellula
Morbos illustravit;	E cellula exorta";
Explorando mortuos	Tum doctrinae lucidae
Vivos adjuvavit.	Patefacta porta.
Vitae persecutus est	Quae reliquit opera
Intima arcana	Perditi vigeant
Et ubique somnia	Magna haec vestigia
Dissipavit vana	Non evanescebunt.

We are pleased to be allowed to state that the correspondent to whom we are indebted for the copy of Berkenhout's

*Symptomatology*, which was referred to in this column last week, is Mr. Arthur E. Hayward, of Teignmouth. Mr. Hayward has kindly presented the book to the Library of the Association.

Mr. John Lane has just published a book entitled *With Napoleon at St. Helena*. The original, *Napoleon; Prisonnier*, appeared in Paris eighteen months ago. The author, M. P. Frémeaux, was largely indebted to papers and letters which had not previously been made public. These were written by, or to, Dr. John Stokoe, surgeon on the *Conqueror*, H.M. flagship at St. Helena. They contain interesting details of his intercourse with Napoleon who wished to have Dr. Stokoe as his personal medical attendant after O'Meara's removal. The translator is Miss Edith S. Stokoe.

It appears probable that Mr. Pierpont Morgan's offer to purchase the Burns MSS. in the Liverpool Athenaeum Library for £5,000 will be declined. It may be interesting to some of our readers to know that the MSS. formerly belonged to Dr. James Currie, who used them in the preparation of his well-known biography of the poet. Dr. Currie, who was born in 1756 and died in 1805, after an adventurous career in the West Indies and America, studied medicine at Edinburgh and graduated at Glasgow. He settled in Liverpool, where he soon acquired a leading position, not only in medicine but in literature. He was an ardent advocate of the abolition of slavery and a political pamphleteer of some note. He was a pioneer of the treatment of fevers by cold bathing, and urged the regular use of the thermometer in clinical observation.

In the article entitled *The History of Kasr-el-Aini and the Modern School of Medicine in Egypt*, which was published in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of September 20th, p. 909, in speaking of the reformation of the hospital by Dr. Sandwith, we fear that the part played in the work of reform by Mr. H. M. N. Milton was somewhat inadequately stated. This part will be better appreciated if we quote Dr. F. M. Sandwith's own words:

We were able to remove without delay some of the abuses which were crying for redress, and chains were abolished in all Government hospitals within the first week of my appointment. But to carry out serious reforms it was necessary that there should be a resident medical director, and with some difficulty I obtained leave to find an Englishman to fill this important post. Mr. H. M. N. Milton was chosen, and he for some years devoted himself very thoroughly to studying the language and habits of the Egyptians, and to creating anew every single department which goes to make up a hospital. His work is not the least of the many triumphs of England in Egypt.

In connexion with this subject Greene Pasha writes to point out that when Kasr-el-Aini underwent transformation into a hospital he was at the head of sanitary affairs in Egypt, having been appointed subdirector, in succession to Dr. Sandwith, in January, 1885, and director two years later.

The increasing interest in the history of medicine that is a sign of the times is reflected in subjects chosen for their theses by candidates for the doctor's degree of the Paris Faculty of Medicine. Dipping almost at random into the collection of *Thèses de Paris* in the Library of the Association we find three which were accepted by the examiners in 1900. One of these, presented by M. A. Beauvois, deals with a German practitioner of the eighteenth century; a second, by M. E. J. A. Maruitte, treats of Paul Portal, an eminent French obstetrician of the early part of the same century; while the third, by M. Maxence Broussais, narrates the life of Ambroise Paré which has been told by several writers during the last few years. M. Beauvois's hero, John Henry Cohausen, was born at Hildesheim in Lower Saxony in 1665, and after studying at Halle, Leyden, Amsterdam, and other places, graduated Doctor of Medicine in 1693 and returned to practise his profession in his native town. Soon, however, he removed to Coesfeld, near Munster, which was at that time the summer residence of the Prince Bishops of Munster. A curious circumstance gave him a chance of distinction of which he was not slow to avail himself. Conrad Berthold Behrens, a physician of the day, had written a treatise on longevity which he had dedicated to the first Minister of the Bishop of Munster. The title led the episcopal court to suppose that the book contained an account of methods of prolonging life, whereas the author's real aim was to show that the hope of accomplishing this was a chimera; thereupon, Cohausen issued his *Decas Tentaminum Curiosa* (1698), in which he had gathered together all

that had been said by writers ancient and modern as to means of attaining longevity. The Bishop was delighted with the book, and appointed the author his physician in chief. Cohausen, who was a man of wit as well as learning, became a great favourite in the high society which this appointment opened to him. On the death of his patron he was continued in his office by his successor, but on the death of the latter in 1718 he resigned his post. For several years he lived at Vreden with his friend, Canon Nunning, a man of wide learning and a great student of archives. During his residence at Vreden Cohausen analysed the waters of Bentheim, which he brought into great repute. Among his other writings are *Neo Thea*, a counterblast against the abuse of tea; *Pica Nasi*, an amusing diatribe against snuff; monographs on phosphorus, ferments, etc. In opposition to Ruysch, he proved that retention of the placenta is a serious danger. He wrote also on fevers, dysentery, and other medical subjects, handling them all with great learning, and adorning all he touched with a brilliant wit. His last work, written when he was 75 years old, was the *Hermippus Redivivus*, in which he propounded the famous theory that, as contaminated breath can produce disease, in the same way wholesome breath can give health, the corollary being that the breath of "young girls, healthy, chaste and virgins," might in certain cases be used as a remedy. Paul Portal was born at Montpellier about 1630, and began his medical studies in his native city, but soon migrated to Paris, where, after failing as a surgeon, he acquired a great reputation in midwifery. He was for some years resident accoucheur at the Hotel-Dieu. At that time the patients slept sometimes four in a bed, and respectable women awaiting their confinement were mingled with prostitutes. There were no cradles; hence "overlying" was common. Epidemics of puerperal fever devastated the wards from time to time; the mortality among the children was also frightful. The women were taken into a little room to be confined, and immediately after delivery they had to walk back to their beds in the ward. The next morning at 5 o'clock they were expected to get up to have their beds made. Portal delivered on the average a hundred women in a month at the Hotel Dieu. When his term of office was completed, he published a *Pratique des Accouchements*, which was long regarded as a standard authority. It contains records of many instructive cases, and is written in a racy style. Like other French writers on midwifery, Portal was much concerned about the baptism of newborn children. He embodied the general opinion of his day in the aphorism that the baptism of the child is the chief object of the Caesarean section. In many of the cases recorded by Portal it is noted that the mother, seeing herself in danger of death begged him to do all he could to baptise her child. For this purpose he sprinkled "conditionally" whatever part of the foetus first appeared at the vulvar orifice. The nature of the fluid employed for this purpose was not looked upon as immaterial. The best, in fact the only proper one, was natural water, but in case of need, sea water, sulphurous or mineral waters, dew, water mixed with wine or milk provided the water predominated, might be used. Soapy water and small beer were regarded as doubtful; pure milk, blood, tears, sweat, pus, urine, pure wine, oil, mud, and ink were unsuitable. In difficult labours, when it was doubtful whether the child would be born alive, it was customary to practise intrauterine baptism. The operation consisted in introducing with the hand, a syringe or a siphon, tepid water in such a manner that it should come in contact with the body of the child, the membranes having been ruptured as a preliminary. During this procedure the words of the baptismal ceremony were pronounced. The question of the validity of this form of baptism was discussed by the Paris Faculty of Theology at a special meeting. The report of this conference supplied Sterne with materials for a famous chapter of *Tristram Shandy*. A special kind of syringe was used by all French midwifery practitioners, who are said to have been mostly very religious men, in the eighteenth century. Grégoire alone did not use it. His method, as described by Diderot, was to pronounce the ceremonial words, and then to fill his mouth with water, which he discharged with all the force at his command in the right direction. Wiping his lips afterwards with a towel he used to say "Only the hundredth thousandth part of a drop is required to make

an angel." Of Ambroise Paré naturally M. Broussais has little that is new to say. His account of the Father of French Surgery, whose motto was *Je le pansay, Dieu le guarit*, is meagre to tenacity, but incidentally he gives a brief but interesting account of the condition of French surgery in the sixteenth century.

The Special Vaccination Number of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL published on July 5th, has received many expressions of appreciation not only from correspondents, but from the medical press of other countries. We have already quoted what was said by one of the leading medical journals of Italy on the subject. We venture to add some further testimonies. The *New York Medical Record* of August 9th says:

The BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of July 5th is devoted almost wholly to a consideration of the vaccination question. The issue is splendidly set forth, and the various writers concerned in the discussion offer a strong defence of the efficacy of vaccination as a preventive of small-pox.

The *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* of July 17th says:

The BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL for July 5th appears as a Special Vaccination Number. The first article is an admirable sketch of the life of Edward Jenner, illustrated in an interesting fashion by various portraits and engravings. Such a paper as this is certainly timely when we consider how easily the work of pioneers in various lines of medical research is forgotten by the present generation. Following this paper is a discussion of the general subject of small-pox and vaccination, beginning with the epidemiology of small-pox in the nineteenth century. This, illustrated as it is by graphic representations of the extent of small-pox in various years, should prove of great value to the statistician as well as to the general reader. A paper, entitled, "A Century of Vaccination," giving in detail the various epidemics which have occurred and the influence of vaccination, is also worthy of being read with care. Further articles, considering the administration of the laws for the prevention of epidemic small-pox and vaccination problems for Parliament, together with a series of minor articles on the general subject practically fill this number of the JOURNAL. The bacteriology of vaccinia and variola come in also for a lengthy discussion. This effort on the part of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL to bring together in one number the essential features of our knowledge of a disease so prominently before the public mind as small-pox is very much to be commended. It means unquestionably a large amount of editorial work, but the result is one which may well be emulated in medical journalism.

The *Yale Medical Journal* says:

The BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of July 5th is a noteworthy number, being almost entirely devoted to small-pox and vaccination. It contains two stereoscopic photographs and two full-page lithographs of small-pox, chicken-pox, and vaccination sores, besides several pictures of Jenner. The whole number is well worth reading by the busiest practitioner.

The highest compliment paid to the Vaccination Number, however, is the evident vexation which it has caused the *Vaccination Inquirer*. In its issue of August 1st that journal writes:

The British Medical Association, through its weekly journal, has certainly done its best to preserve Edward Jenner from oblivion, and to indoctrinate the members of its union with the true faith of the gospel of vaccination in its varying and ever-shifting developments.

Two or three pages are devoted to discussing the papers contained in the number from our contemporary's peculiar point of view. It professes to find nothing that troubles it either in our "facts" or our arguments. But a note of sadness makes itself heard through the shrillness of its protestation:

One friend, unduly impressed with the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL's effort, has summoned us to call all our specialist staff, all our experts together, and bring out a double number in emulation of the medical journal with thousands of wealthy practitioners at its back, and with a friendly Government behind it, and a hearing in the country that it costs it no struggle to obtain. Far be it from us to discourage well-meant counsel from friends, but the unconscious irony of advice like this costs us infinitely more distress than any move of our opponents. Where is our expert staff?

Where indeed? It is not often that our contemporary deviates into such unreserved frankness. On the question of "expert" knowledge, it may not be unprofitable to listen to another critic who bought a copy of the Vaccination Number "to keep as a curiosity." He writes:

It is indeed a mystery that educated men should so prostitute their abilities as to call such matter (as the issue of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of July 5th) expert knowledge. Here and there there is a rift in the cloud of darkness that rests on the medical faculty through enforced creed or dogma, and we hear it called a grotesque superstition, a medical monstrosity with no scientific basis, the most infernal mystification the world has known since the creation, etc., these expressions being the result of independent medical research or an unbiassed examination of the foundation on which the whole structure is built. We get these echoes from Germany, Italy, America, and at home, and the day will come that students will not accept theory for fact, but will use their private judgement and rid themselves of the present day incubus and ask for proof, scientific proof, of the value of the theories advanced.

Dr. Johnson said he never thought he had hit hard in a political pamphlet unless he were attacked or abused in return. Judging by this criterion, we have ample reason to be satisfied with the effect of our Vaccination Number.