

pulse jerking and forcible. Next day there was augmented dulness, whilst the impulse was almost absent, and the heart's sounds were obscured. Pulse 78; tongue quite clean; no cough; slight pain at the middle of the sternum; decubitus on the back.

May 6th. The impulse and the sounds were more clearly audible, and there was double friction sound over the cardiac region. The patient recovered speedily. The treatment was that previously stated to be suitable for these cases. I examined the heart on the 18th December, 1854, and found no abnormal sound.

In the absence of a stethoscopic examination, one would be disposed to dispute the nature of the preceding cases, particularly as they were unattended by pyrexia. The two symptoms that lead to a correct diagnosis are the redness of countenance and the dyspnoea on exertion. But the physical examination settles the matter.

As I set forth certain propositions at the commencement of this paper, I have only to state, in conclusion, that I desire the assistance of the profession to investigate the subject, so that it may be determined whether or not I have described a disease that can be found by due observation.

It is desirable that *post mortem* examinations of the heart should be made in cases that are free from complication; but as opportunities seldom occur to one individual, it is necessary that there should be many observers engaged in the investigation. This must be my apology for laying before the Society a crude paper.

## Reviews and Notices.

SECOND REPORT OF THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL ON THE POST OFFICE. Presented to both Houses of Parliament, by Order of Her Majesty. pp. 84, with map. London: 1856.

THIS Report is very interesting as regards the general statistics of the Post Office; but in this place we have only to do with that portion which relates to the medical arrangements.

Early in 1855, it was determined to appoint a medical officer to take charge of the health of the letter carriers employed by the General Post Office. It was originally intended to confer this appointment on Dr. Hector Gavin; but his untimely death frustrated this arrangement, and the post was conferred on Dr. Waller Lewis, whose first periodical report is to be found at p. 74.

Dr. Lewis reports that, on the 14th of last November, there were 1071 inspectors, letter carriers, sorters, etc., of whom he had full charge; 387 clerks with salaries not exceeding £150, whom he does not visit at their own abodes except during the prevalence of an epidemic, when he also extends his supervision to 295 officers with higher salaries, and prescribes medicine and gives advice to the officers of the department generally.

The general health of the persons employed in the Post Office has been good; but diarrhoea and rheumatism have prevailed somewhat extensively. Several patients under Dr. Lewis's care had consumption: six died of this disease in the latter half year of 1855.

Dr. Lewis reports that a number of sorters and stampers suffer from catarrh, bronchitis, influenza, and cold, arising from exposure to draughts of cold air. He says that measures are being taken with a view to remedy this evil. A large amount of bowel complaint, he had reason to believe, was caused by contaminated air from the water closets. To remedy this, he recommended that these places should be removed to a situation where a free current of air should intervene between them and the office. This has been done, with good effect.

Dr. Lewis also recommends the erection of good lodging-houses in the neighbourhood of the Post Office for a large body of the letter carriers, many of whom live in houses of

most insanitary condition, and often suffer from zymotic diseases. On this point, the Postmaster-General (the Duke of Argyll) also lays stress in his Report. His Grace says:

"The general freedom from disease which seems to be enjoyed by the occupants of the model houses that have been erected in the last few years affords grounds for hoping that immunity from sickness to a similar extent might be enjoyed by the letter carriers if their dwellings were equally good; an object which might in some degree be attained by the erection in the neighbourhood of the Post Office of suitable buildings, available, on the payment of a moderate rent, to such of the letter carriers as might desire to live there. Such an arrangement would be beneficial to the men, not only by affording them better dwellings, but by saving their time and labour in walking to and from the office; while to the department much convenience would be given by the opportunity of speedily summoning an increased force on the arrival of any large mail from abroad." (p. 31.)

It is highly satisfactory to see that so much care is being taken of the health of a large and valuable class of public servants.

CONSUMPTION: ITS CAUSES, PREVENTION, AND CURE. By THOMAS BARTLETT, M.D. pp. 172. London: Hippolyte Baillière. 1855.

THERE is much common sense in Dr. BARTLETT's book, which appears to be intended for the public as well as the profession. On the minutiae of tubercular deposits, he says but little; and he might have well omitted the rather meagre account of the stethoscopic signs of consumption at page 6. The hygienic precepts which he lays down to be followed in the prevention and cure of consumption are sound and valuable. In regard to climate, he deprecates the expatriation of phthisical patients, when our own island, especially the south parts of Devon—Dartmouth, Salcombe, Blackpool, etc.—possesses so many advantages.

This is a book which the public may consult with safety, and the profession often with advantage.

DENTAL ANÆSTHESIA. PAINLESS TOOTH EXTRACTION BY CONGELATION. By J. RICHARD QUINTON. Fourth Edition, enlarged. pp. 154. London: R. Theobald. 1856.

MR. QUINTON is somewhat like the old historians, who, when they essayed to write a History of England, used to begin with Adam. For he has pressed into the service of dental anæsthesia, astronomy, geology, and physical geography! a good recognition, indeed, of the unity of science, but carried out in a rather awkward manner. *Exempli gratia*; in the special chapter on the Painless Method of Applying Cold, there is an allusion to the law of planetary distances, and a criticism (in a foot note) of the theory of the formation of the asteroids from an exploded planet!

Mr. Quinton possesses evidently an amount of general knowledge which is most creditable to him; but we would advise him not to parade it quite so extensively, or his readers will become mystified. Nevertheless, we are bound to say that he makes out a good case in favour of the employment of cold to produce anæsthesia in dental operations.

THE RUGELEY CASE. Very great interest has been excited this week at Guy's Hospital by a series of toxicological experiments on the lower animals, relative to the poisonous action of strychnine, antimony, etc. Dr. Christison and Dr. Tweedie, of Edinburgh, Dr. Alfred Taylor, and Dr. Owen Rees, of Guy's, are all busily engaged in these researches. As the experiments and tests will be produced on the trial, it would be premature to state the general result. The admirable and hitherto unequalled set of experiments by Mr. Nunneley, of Leeds, are the general theme of admiration, and have been more or less repeated as regards strychnine; while, as regards antimony, the reagents and pathological effects of this mineral, as shown by Dr. Richardson, seem less open to doubt. It has been stated that Dr. Letheby is also engaged in a similar set of experiments.