

## SOUTH MIDLAND BRANCH.

THE Annual Meeting of the South Midland Branch will be held at Woburn on Thursday, the 23rd of June, at 1 P.M.; H. VEASEY, Esq., President.

Gentlemen intending to read papers or cases are requested to forward the titles of same to Dr. Bryan, Northampton, not later than the 9th of June.

JOHN M. BRYAN, M.D., *Secretary*.

## LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE BRANCH.

THE Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting of this Branch will be held in the Town Hall, Lancaster, on Wednesday, June 29th, at Twelve o'clock, noon: E. D. DE VITRÉ, M.D., President.

Gentlemen intending to read papers are requested to transmit the titles of the same to the Honorary Secretary, Dr. Wm. Roberts, Chatham Street, Manchester, not later than June 16th.

WILLIAM ROBERTS, M.D., *Hon. Sec.*

## MIDLAND BRANCH: QUARTERLY MEETING.

THE Quarterly Meeting of the Midland Branch took place on June 4th at Matlock. There was a very good and influential attendance, most of the leading practitioners of Derby and the neighbourhood being present. Dr. CANTRELL of Wirksworth took the chair, in the unavoidable absence of Dr. GOODE, the President for this year.

After the usual business had been transacted, and two papers—one by Mr. Lindley on Club-Foot, the other by Mr. Dolman on Hamorrhage from Palmar Arch—had been read and discussed, the members and friends visited several of the beauties of Matlock.

An agreeable afternoon was pleasantly terminated by a first-rate dinner at the new Bath Hotel. After dinner, some very apposite remarks were made on the inconsistencies of the proposed alteration of the County Court law, and hopes were expressed that the several branches of the British Medical Association would petition both houses against the passing of such an unjust Act. A petition of the Derbyshire Branch has been numerously signed, and will shortly be presented.

**WHY BEES WORK IN THE DARK.** Every one knows what honey fresh from the comb is like. It is a clear yellow syrup, without a trace of solid sugar in it. Upon straining, however, it gradually assumes a crystalline appearance—it *candies*, as the saying is—and ultimately becomes a solid mass of sugar. It has not been suspected that this change was a photographic action—that the same agent which alters the molecular arrangement of the iodide of silver on the excited collodion plate, and determines the formations of camphor and iodine crystals in a bottle, causes the syrupy honey to assume a crystalline form. This, however, is the case. M. Scheibler has enclosed honey in stoppered flasks, some of which he has kept in perfect darkness, whilst others have been exposed to the light. The invariable result has been that the sunned portion rapidly crystallises, whilst that kept in the dark has remained perfectly liquid. We now see why bees are so careful to work in perfect darkness, and why they are so careful to obscure the glass windows which are sometimes placed in their hives. The existence of their young depends on the liquidity of the saccharine food presented to them; and if light were allowed access to this, the syrup would gradually acquire a more or less solid consistency; it would seal up the cells, and in all probability prove fatal to the inmates of the hives. (*Quart. Jour. of Science*.)

## Correspondence.

## IRIDECTOMY.

LETTER FROM JAMES DIXON, Esq.

SIR,—The gentlemen who appear in this day's JOURNAL as witnesses on Mr. Bowman's behalf have attempted that which is proverbially difficult, namely, to prove a negative.

In reply to my assertion that *I have seen* numerous instances in which iridectomy has been abused, they affirm that *they have not seen* such cases. It must depend, therefore, upon my character for truthfulness, and upon the extent of the opportunities I have had for careful observation, whether the profession at large will accept my statements or not.

I should feel it altogether undignified and unbecoming to hand about for signature a counter manifesto in opposition to that which has just appeared; but, were such a reply to be drawn up, I feel assured that a series of names, as well known and as respectable as those which appear in your JOURNAL of to-day, would testify that the writers had seen numerous instances of the abuse of iridectomy.

During the course of the present controversy, I have repeatedly stated the opinion I entertain as to the great value of the operation in a certain special form of disease. As a cure for that disease, I practise, and have long practised it, with success. The clamour which Mr. Bowman has raised against me will neither induce me to employ it on what I deem unsuitable occasions, nor deter me from publicly expressing my opinion as to the evils resulting from its abuse.

I am, etc., JAMES DIXON.

Portman Square, June 4th, 1864.

## SCHOLARSHIPS AT CAMBRIDGE.

SIR,—In his letter in this day's JOURNAL, Dr. Ogle undervalues the scholarships at Cambridge in speaking of them as being from £20 to £40; whereas I find, from a list published in the *Lancet* (April 12th, 1862), that the greater number are above £40, many being as high as £60 or £70 *per annum*. Some of these are competed for by students before they enter the University, and some are given to those who have been at College about a year. Indeed, it is stated that the total sum given by the colleges at Cambridge is about £26,000 annually, in 450 scholarships, of the average value of £55 each. This is besides fellowships and University scholarships. Such prizes offer no small inducements to the better class of students, whether intended for the medical or for any other profession, to go to Cambridge; though I quite agree with Dr. Ogle, that the chief prize is the "mental training", that "best foundation" which is laid in reading for a degree.

While underrating the value of the scholarships, I think Dr. Ogle rather overrates the difficulties which beset the English graduate in first commencing practice. Difficulties enough, it is true, beset us all; but I do not see that they are greater to the university man than to those who enter the profession by other routes. Are they not, on the contrary, less? Does not a Cambridge or an Oxford degree prove a considerable assistance towards a good position in the profession? And do we not wish our children to get as good a position as possible? In London, I am told, the graduate has great advantages. My own knowledge supplies me with the names of several graduates who are doing well in the provinces.

The general tenor of Dr. Ogle's letter is so favour-