started on our journey, I carried with me a couple of soda-water bottles, filled with cold tea; but I soon found out that when once I tasted a drop I could not stop until all was drunk, and then I suffered a great deal from thirst. I therefore made up my mind to overcome the first feeling and desire to drink, and not give way to it. It was not difficult, and, after a few days, I can truly say that I never once felt so thirsty as to suffer from it.

Although Mr. Rassam occasionally took a glass of beer in the evening, and generally added a few drops of brandy to the water he drank, and, moreover, took every precaution possible to secure water in its purest state, he nevertheless, in my opinion, did not sufficiently abstain from it. The result was that, after a while, he suffered from fever; however, under proper care and treatment, he soon regained his former health, and, taught by experience, he was more careful in future, and more cautious in the selection of the water he used.

We have here the case of three Europeans placed exactly under the same circumstances. All three had resided for a certain number of years in the East; and, considered individually, Mr. Rassam was, at starting, the strongest of the three; Mr. Prideaux, although in good health, somewhat anemic, from a long residence at Aden; and myself in rather indifferent general health. We all three lived very moderately; and in every other respect, except the question of water, we were exposed to the same influences, and followed exactly the same mode of life. *Two out of the three, throughout that long journey, never touched a drop of water in its natural state, and came out triumphant from the trial.* The third, who only partially adopted the same rule, suffered in health. This proof would be almost sufficient to warrant the assertion I made as to the baneful influence of the water. However, it will appear even in a more striking light when we come to consider the question of our servants and followers, who all of them suffered in various degrees from some malarious sickness or the other, according to their neglect or observance of the directions we gave them as to the precautions they should take regarding the water they drank on the journey.

In their case, the total abstinence from water was hardly practicable. We told them plainly of the danger to which they exposed themselves. They listened with due submission, agreed, but few strictly followed our advice. Many of them took tea and coffee morning and evening, soup at dinner, and only after their meals a few mouthfuls of the best available water. Those were the best off, and, on the whole, sickness in their case was not very severe. Others totally discarded our advice, and drank often and freely of any water they met on the road. These suffered severely from fever, diarrhoea, or dysentery, and several nearly paid with their lives their stupid obstinacy and foolishness.

We were well aware that to expect tired and thirsty natives to await the time required to boil tea or coffee would, in the majority of instances, prove a failure. We therefore always endeavoured to obtain, as soon as possible, on a halt, the best water the locality could afford. As long as the wells were not too deep, we never used those which we found in existence, but at once set a party to work and had a well dug for drinking purposes, the old wells being used only for the camels, mules, horses, etc. But, as we proceeded further inland, the wells increased gradually so much in depth that at last it was beyond our power to dig fresh ones with the limited time and labour at our disposal. The plan we adopted on those occasions was the following. We selected amongst the several wells one or two where the surrounding ground was less swampy, and less impregnated with dung and other filth. A few men were made to remove all the water in the wells at the time, along with all filth and rubbish, and wait until it was partially filled again, when this water was also baled out; and it was only after the second water had settled down that we allowed it to be drawn. We had several filters with us, and they were, of all things, the first unpacked and in readiness; every one could use them if they preferred; but, except the Indian servants, no one seemed to understand their value. We had also brought with us a certain number of water-skins; and whenever the water-supply was good, or when necessity obliged us to carry water with us, as none would be found for many miles, they were filled and carried on camels. When the water was clear, as from the Atbara, apart from a rather disagreeable, greasy, and leathery flavour, a day or two of travelling did not spoil it much; but when the water so carried was, in the first instance, indifferent, a couple of days' shaking on camels' backs did not improve either its taste or qualities. To the great surprise and dismay of many travellers, they find that, after a couple of marches through a desert, or tropical plains, the water-skins are more or less empty; leakage, or dishonest natives, are at once accused. Let however, on such occasions, the little water remaining in the skin be poured out and examined; the mystery will then at once be explained. A constant filtration and evaporation of the fluid takes place; a fact easily ascertained by placing one of the water-skins in the shade, and

exposing it, at the same time, to the influence of the hot winds, when the water will be found to be almost cold. If the skins be not well prepared, and well coated with tallow, there soon remain, out of several gallons, but a few pints of a thick, dirty fluid, as disagreeable to the taste as it is unwholesome. It was after we had been obliged to use, for several days, water of that description, that sickness was most severe and prevailing.

If I have insisted upon many details concerning the water-supply, it is because I believe it to be the most important question for all travellers; the one that should, before any, be taken into serious consideration; and the neglect of which will baffle all the other more or less important precautions that should also, at the same time, never be omitted.

Each of us had taken with him a small folding, very light iron-bedstead; and we made it a rule, from which we seldom departed, never to sleep on the bare ground. Even when too tired and sleepy to wait for our beds, we used, on those occasions, a thick-tanned cow's-hide, always carried with us tied on one of our servant's mules—all the servants and followers were also provided with similar skins and blankets. Every one slept in the open air; every one wrapped up, native fashion, face and all, in a good thick blanket. The nights were cold compared to the day; the average, from noon to two P.M., being, in a tent pitched in the shade of some tamarinds or other large leguminosæ, 105; at sun-rise, from 69 to 72. The great change in the temperature was most marked an hour or so before sun-rise; and, if we intended to halt for the day, and slept a little later that morning, had we not taken care to be well covered on going to rest, we would, no doubt, have suffered from the sudden change. Covering the head is not to be neglected. The blanket forms a kind of respirator, and modifies, no doubt, to a certain extent, the night-air, so much more dangerous than in the day-time, when effluvia are kept down by the heated winds. No doubt the little iron bedsteads were very valuable; and often, if the place seemed rather unhealthy, we waited patiently for them. A few feet above the ground, the effects of malaria are less; and this fact should, when practicable, always be considered. Our tanned hides were wide and large, and covered a certain extent of ground around us. On a morning, when they were removed, although the spot on which we had laid down had seemed perfectly dry, the hide was usually quite damp on the side that faced the ground.

Dew often falls so heavily towards morning in the Soudan, that everything around us was quite wet; and, had we neglected our blankets, we would have been alone to blame had we awoke feeling sick and feverish.

THE CASE OF A YOUNG GIRL WHO IS SAID TO HAVE FASTED FOR THE LAST SEVENTEEN MONTHS.

By J. LEWIS, M.D., Carmarthen.

SARAH JACOBS, aged 12 on the 17th of next month, is the daughter of a farmer residing in the parish of Llanfihangel-ar-Arth, Carmarthen-shire, and is the third child in a family of seven. All the other children are healthy. The farm is situated in a valley having a south aspect, and it is near the lower part of the valley. There is humid land on the west side of the house. The house itself is straw-thatched, with one storey. The room occupied by the girl is on the ground-floor, and is of moderate size. The floor is of mortar composition, and is not covered with boards or matting. There are two bedsteads in the room—one occupied by the girl's parents, and the other by herself. Her bedstead is rather low, and so placed in the room that no direct light falls on the girl; and this has been the position of the bed for the last twelve months. There has not been any fire in the bedroom from the commencement of her illness.

The alleged facts respecting this girl are, that she has not swallowed any food whatever since October 10th, 1867; and that she has not swallowed any water or any other fluid since the end of December 1867.

Previous History of Sarah Jacobs.—She was healthy as a child, and remained so until February 1866. At that time she passed through an attack of scarlatina, which spread through the family; and, although no medical treatment was adopted, all the children recovered. After about a fortnight's confinement to the house, she was quite well, and went to a neighbouring school. About February 15th, 1867, she first complained of pain in the epigastric region; and one morning, on getting up, she complained to her mother of having some frothy bloody fluid in her mouth. What the source of this was, could not be ascertained. On Sunday, February 17th, the epigastric pain, which was chiefly in the left side, became agonising, and continued until the evening, when,

after taking some remedies ordered by Mr. Davies of Llandysil, she was relieved. She has never left her bed since this severe attack. For a fortnight afterwards she complained still of epigastric pain, but did not lose consciousness. At the end of a fortnight from the commencement of her illness, she began to suffer from convulsive attacks, which, from the description given, were epileptic. During the fits, the body was arched forward very considerably, the centre of the spine being very much raised from the bed. After continuing for a short time in a state of opisthotonos, the muscular spasm suddenly ceased, and she fell flat on the bed again. For a whole month she continued in a state of unconsciousness, suffering from constant repetitions of severe convulsive attacks, during which time she took little food. At the end of the month, she seemed to recover natural consciousness, and asked for food. From this time the fits ceased to be of the convulsive type; they were simply temporary loss of consciousness, with sudden awakings. For a month she partook of rice and milk, and a preparation of oatmeal and milk, in fair quantities. She then gradually declined in her desire for food until August of the same year, when she took only small quantities of boiled apple and milk. Thus she continued until the 10th of the following October (1867), when she ceased to take any food whatever. From this date to the following Christmas, she was given small quantities of water, in the course of the day amounting to only a few teaspoonfuls; but, since the end of December 1867, she has not swallowed any fluid. Occasionally, after coming out of her attacks, a little water is applied to her lips; but even this has not been done for the space of nine days. Since she has ceased to take any food, she has not suffered from any intercurrent attacks of illness, saving a few herpetic eruptions on her lip and an occasional headache. The last time the bowels were moved was on November 6th, 1867. She continued to pass some urine for about a month after this, and then she ceased to pass any until August 1868, when she was found occasionally to wet the blanket—about twice a week—with a small stain. She has had no secretion from the nostrils; and the skin has had no sensible perspiration, except on the hands and feet, which feel moist. In May 1867, she lost all her hair; but since then it has been entirely reproduced, and is now long. Her second dentition has been completed since her illness, and she has grown in length during this time.

State on April 7th, 1869.—She was lying in a low bed, on her back, the shoulders and head slightly raised, and her right arm outside the clothes, which she moved at will. Her face was not emaciated, but moderately full, with slight flush on the cheeks, and the nose and colour of lips natural; her features were perfect, and good-looking; the skin of her face generally was healthy; her front teeth were normal, and it was said that the remainder were so, though I did not see them. She was not able to open her mouth: she never put out the tongue. The temperature of the forehead was natural; her eyes were bright; the irides of hazel brown colour. The general aspect of her face was that of being delicate, not cachectic. As her examination required to be proceeded with cautiously, her body was not uncovered, but my hand was applied immediately to the front of the chest and the abdomen. The skin covering these parts was warm; there was no excessive emaciation felt; the abdomen was not depressed, but was of the usual position of a slender child. Occasional flatulent rumbling noises were heard in the abdomen. The whole of the right arm was seen, and the legs; the colour and texture of the skin on these parts were healthy; the hand looked delicate, and the nails well formed. The length of the right fore-arm and hand, from the point of the elbow to the end of the middle finger, was 14 inches; from the point of the elbow to the carpal end of the ulna, was 8 inches; the girth of the middle of the arm, 7 inches, and of the middle of the fore-arm, 6½ inches; the length of the whole body was 4 feet 8 inches, measured with a tape. The respiration was natural; 17 inspirations in the minute. The superficial breadth of the chest, across the level of the mammæ, was 10 inches. The pulse was feeble, but distinct, and variable, from 100 to 108 per minute. The temperature in the axilla, after three minutes' rest, was 95°; the temperature of the feet rather low. She sleeps well every night, from six to eight hours, but she does not sleep in the day. She is cheerful in her disposition. I heard her read aloud a Welsh hymn; her voice was plaintive, but moderately loud and distinct. During my visit, she had three or four attacks of unconsciousness; one was caused by the barking of a dog; she partially closed the eyelids, and remained perfectly still; the colour of the face was not altered. After two or three minutes, she heaved a sigh, made a slight sound, and seemed like one suddenly awaking from sleep.

She is once a day removed from one bed to another, for the purpose of shaking her bed; during this time she remains in a state of unconsciousness, or what they call "a fit", and does not recover until replaced in her own bed. She is clothed in a coloured flannel and calico night-dress.

The foregoing account is drawn up, after a visit to the girl, for two

objects: to satisfy the curiosity of persons at a distance who are desirous of knowing the history and present state of the Welsh fasting girl, and also to awaken the attention of those who have the leisure and the scientific ardour to visit the case, and investigate and judge for themselves. During the fortnight ending April 5th instant, she was watched by two persons night and day. The result of this will doubtless be communicated in a short time. The statements made respecting Sarah Jacobs are of such an astounding nature that belief is scarcely possible; yet accumulated evidence might produce conviction. Some attempt has been made to test the credibility of the parents of the girl, as already mentioned, by watching her closely; but the attempt came to an end for want of funds to pay for the services of the watchers. It may be stated that the girl's parents are respectable farmers, not in needy circumstances, and that they could have no motive for imposing on the public. I do not offer any explanations as to the manner in which life and growth can be maintained without ordinary food. Those who read the case will form their own theories. My office has been simply that of a narrator.

DEATHS FROM BEE-STINGS.

By D. THOMPSON, L.R.C.S.Ed., Launceston.

DEATH from the sting of a bee in our climate is a matter of such rare occurrence, that, when it does happen, it is usual to look for some unhealthy condition of the body in the individual, to account for effects which, in other instances, would be comparatively innocuous. Among men who lead lives of dissipation, or who with sedentary habits are subjected to the close confinement of large towns, it is not uncommon to find accidents of comparatively small import to produce effects of a grave character; but in persons of sound constitution, living active lives, in healthy rural districts, it is very rare to find death to result from such a trivial circumstance as the sting of a bee is generally considered to be.

In Holmes's *System of Surgery*, Mr. Busk says, in reference to the stings of the bee and the wasp: "Though painful and annoying, except in persons attacked by numerous swarms, these wounds can rarely be accounted serious. . . . When large communities of hymenoptera, however, are disturbed, and the assailant is attacked by numerous angry members, very severe consequences, and even death itself, have often followed". Dr. Handfield Jones says: "In some constitutions the vital power is weak, and is seriously affected by comparatively slight agencies; thus, it is recorded that very alarming symptoms have been produced by the stings of a bee and of a wasp." I think that the following cases, from their unusual character, are worthy of record.

On Friday, February 12th, 1869, I was hastily summoned to see Mr. P., aged 58, a retired farmer, of active habits and sound constitution, but of a nervous temperament, who, at 8 A.M., had received a sting from a bee in the neck just below the right ear. He was reported to have become very faint, and the messenger feared he was dying. On hastening to the place, which was six miles from me, I found the patient dead; and the account given me was as follows. At 8 A.M., when he arose, and before taking his breakfast, the deceased went into the garden to see to a hive of bees which he had, when one stung him. He at once came into the house, and, complaining of a strange sensation passing over him, became very faint; the faintness not passing, he walked into the garden to see if the open air would relieve it, but soon returned, feeling worse. He then sat down in a chair, became rapidly worse, and died a few minutes after. The whole period from the occurrence of the sting until his death was not a quarter of an hour. There was no swelling around the throat, and at no time any difficulty of breathing. On my arrival, I examined the neck; but, beyond a slight blush of redness from the place where the wound was said to have been inflicted, there was nothing to be seen. No *post mortem* examination was obtained.

The second case occurred about twenty-four years since, and was of a precisely similar kind. For the particulars, I am indebted to the widow.

Mr. C., aged 50, a healthy man, who, though an innkeeper, was not a hard drinker, was stung by a bee in the neck at 4 P.M. He came from the garden, where the accident occurred, into the house, and complained of feeling very uncomfortable from the sting. He then left the house, to obtain some parsley from the garden, to apply to the seat of injury; but, not returning as soon as expected, search was made, and he was found dead by the gate leading from the garden, having picked the parsley, but not being able to reach the house. In this case as well, the time from the occurrence of the accident to the period of death, was not more than a quarter of an hour.