adopt such a resolution as may at least set aside the proposed innovation, and if it do not hasten the adoption of that system which has already received the approbation of a large portion of the civilised world, will leave us in the undisturbed use of those weights to which we have all been accustomed and which are universally understood wherever the science and art of medicine are exercised by qualified persons. The proposal to adopt new grains, scruples and drachms as parts of the avoirdupois ounce and pound, seems somewhat ominously to have commenced in Ireland, where it assumed the appearance of making the sum of the parts greater than the whole. The contrivers of the new *Pharmacopœia* were too shrewd to commit themselves to such a blunder, but at the same time they were caught with the facilities apparently presented by the Irish plan. There is generally something to be admired in initiating the kind of blunder known as an Irish bull. They therefore filed, or swealed, or otherwise reduced the parts, so that when combined they should not exceed the whole, but then they retained old names to designate new things, and unless some distinction be appended to them amounting in fact to the adoption of a new name, doubt and confusion must be the inevitable consequences.

It has been said in defence of the new little grain, that no danger can result from the change, since it can only lead to smaller doses being given. This, however, is a one-sided view of the case; for we must not suppose that all the grains, scruple, and drachm weights now in use, will at once be discarded from every apothecary's and druggist's shop. In spite of law there will be a lingering adherence to long established usage; and when an apt scholar in the new system may in the use of the little grain, have brought his patient to the maximum dose of a powerful article, of elaterium for example, the prescription may afterwards be placed in the hands of a different and distant dispenser, by whom the larger old grains are employed. I need not offer other illustrations which will readily suggest themselves as likely to occur in practice.

I am not, however, so immoveably attached to our old system of weights, as to wish to prevent, or even to delay the adoption of a real improvement in our medical weights. There is, undoubtedly, a practical inconvenience in the simultaneous and concurrent employment of two systems of weights, the one for commercial, the other for medical purposes; and I will just mention an evil connected with it which I have never seen noticed, and which, though of no very great importance, is probably of very frequent occurrence, especially in country shops and other situations, in which the sale and dispensing of medicines are combined. All quantities amounting to a few grains are doubtless determined by the right description of weights, and with at least ordinary care in the use of them; but the avoirdupois ounce will without any fraudulent intention, and probably by mere accident on the part of a subordinate, be at times employed in place of the apothecaries', the half ounce for four drachms; and the quarter ounce for two drachms, in cases in which several doses of the articles prescribed in grains are to be made up.

All difficulties of this kind would be completely obviated by taking the lead of our countrymen, and employing the metrical system, now very generally in use with our continental brethren.

More than twenty years ago, I attended a meeting of the Academy of Medicine in Paris, when this subject was very earnestly discussed. Although the use of the *gramme* on the metrical system was in universal and approved employment throughout France for commercial purposes, some members of the medical profession were most conservatively attached to the apothecaries' weights in general use throughout almost all countries. Still, this section of our French brethren were unable to maintain their ground; and the *gramme* has become the general measure of weight with the prescribers and dis-

pensers of medicine, as well as with the scientific and manufacturing chemists.

This admirable system of weights is by no means new to this country. More than forty years ago, my late accomplished and amiable friend Dr. Andrew Duncan (generally called young Duncan, though he was probably fifty years of age) fully described them in his *Dispensatory*, and they have been very much used by English chemists in their investigations; but they have had to convert them into the apothecary's nomenclature for the use of their countrymen. I am not going to dwell on the merits of this metrical system, which have been amply set forth in the publications of the International Decimal Association, and more especially in those of my friend James Yates, who has devoted the most enlightened and persevering attention to these subjects; but I would earnestly entreat, not only my fellow-members of the British Medical Association, but my British medical brethren generally, not merely to set their faces against the new grains, which will not remove old inconveniences, but give rise to many new ones, but rather take the lead in introducing that beautiful and practically convenient system of weights and measures which, though devised by our nearest foreign neighbours, should excite no national jealousy, since it belongs alike to every portion of our globe. Having already been accepted in almost every part of Europe, the continued rejection of it by our countrymen is calculated to leave Britain in a sort of Bœotian singularity.

Illustrations OF HOSPITAL PRACTICE: METROPOLITAN AND PROVINCIAL.

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL.

PRACTICAL REMARKS ON THE PATHOLOGY AND TREATMENT
OF SKIN-DISEASES.

By C. HANDFIELD JONES, M.B., F.R.S., Physician to the
Hospital.

[Concluded from page 173.]

THE treatment of the papular eruptions is, on the whole, very similar to that of the squamous. Blood-letting, general and local, is to be resorted to in cases where the dysæsthesia is severe, and the state of the system warrants it. Purgation, abstinence from exciting food or drink, cold or tepid baths, and weak acid or lead lotions, are to be employed in the earlier periods, especially of lichen. Mr. Green's cases of prurigo show very forcibly the importance of proceeding on the same principles in this disease. None of them, and the youngest was aged 60, were benefited until bloodletting had been performed, which in one case was repeated twice. Some of Mr. Hunt's cases are quite to the same effect, especially one of prurigo formicans, in which the patient lost over seventy ounces of blood in little more than six months, and took large quantities of colchicum, antimony, and purgatives, besides twice having her gums show tender by mercury. No permanent depression, however, ensued. Can it be doubted, Mr. Hunt asks, that prurigo is sometimes expressive of a plethoric (sthenic?) condition of the system? Arsenic and the sulphur fume are as great remedies in these affections as in the squamous, and to be used with the same precautions. Cazenave writes: "Il faut bien se garder dans le début d'employer les bains sulfureux ou alcalines; ils aggraveraient la maladie; plus tard, au contraire, quand l'inflammation est décroissante, ils sont fort utiles." He also joins in recommending arsenic in lichen, but does not mention it in

prurigo. My own experience has satisfied me of the value of a mild course of hydrargyrum cum cretâ and Dover's powder in severe sthenic lichen, such as is mostly met with in lichen agrius. Bichloride of mercury also acts well in some cases. Arsenic, I think, is also useful in the more asthenic forms; but I have not nearly the same confidence in it here as in the exudative affections. It is usually too irritating. In lichen urticatus, it acts better. In prurigo, I have found antimony serviceable, followed by arsenic. In prurigo senilis, the use of one-eighth of a grain of bichloride of mercury three times a day has been of great benefit, together with cod-liver oil. With the bichloride I have associated arsenious acid in the declining stage of the disease; and I have found alkaline and sulphur baths to do good service in the same period.

It thus appears that the papular eruptions require a similar plan of treatment to the squamous, and that it must be conducted on essentially the same principles. Antiphlogistic measures are very necessary in a large proportion of cases; but eliminatory are by no means clearly indicated—certainly, I think, not so much as stimulant. I see, therefore, very little to justify the assumption that these disorders result from a separable and eliminable poison in the blood, or even that there is any material poison at all. The irritable and erethitic state of the nerves appears to be the main disorder; and it seems to me more probable that this depends upon some subtle imponderable agent, like the cause of ague or influenza, than on any product of morbid nutrition, like lithic acid. If there be an unhealthy state of the blood, it scarcely shows itself otherwise than in the state of the skin. This, as before remarked, is not according to the analogy of syphilis or the exanthemata.

Admitting, as I think we must, that nerve-disorder is the *grund-leiden* in papulous eruptions, it is very apparent from the results of treatment that this disorder is often by no means one of debility, but the reverse. The nerve-tissue is not in a state that will tolerate stimulation; it is essential to reduce it to more tranquillity. There is a wide difference between this condition and that of common neuralgia, which is so markedly benefited by tonics and stimulants. It is very evident, in comparing the three classes of skin-eruptions we have now reviewed, that they differ widely in the remedial action of arsenic upon them. In the exudative, one feels scarce any doubt that the drug, properly administered, will cure in the great majority. In the squamous, one is by no means so confident of complete success; and in the papular one has still less ground to rely upon it. The following figures illustrate this. Of the exudative cases, forty were benefited, four not benefited, and five doubtfully; three took no arsenic. Of the squamous, three were not benefited, three were doubtfully, and twenty more decidedly improved; nine took no arsenic. Of the papular cases, there were benefited six, doubtful six, not benefited one; and nine took no arsenic. The benefit from arsenic in the exudative cases was generally much more complete and speedy than in the other groups. Omitting the cases who took no arsenic, we have, of a total

Of 49 exudative cases, improved 81.6 per cent.

„ 26 squamous „ „ 77 „

„ 13 papular „ „ 46 „

I have observed one case in which the administration of iodide of potassium appeared to give rise to an eruption resembling lichen. This, however, is a very rare occurrence, and can only be referred to a peculiar irritability of the skin or its nerves.

CASE I. A. S., aged 15, was admitted Feb. 27th. Her previous general health had been good. She had had a papular eruption nine months, affecting the arms first, and then the face, where alone it was now. The tongue was clean; the conjunctivæ were much injected. There was no dyspepsia. She was ordered to have four

minims of the solution of arsenite of potash in an ounce of compound infusion of gentian three times a day, and to rub in mercurial ointment.

March 5th. The eruption was worse. Her face was swollen. The arms were also affected. There was conjunctivitis. She had great itching at night. She had alternations of heat and chills. She was ordered to take hydrargyrum cum cretâ and Dover's powder, two grains of each three times a day.

March 8th. The papules had formed in many parts acuminated vesicles; they were generally of large size. The medicine was continued.

March 12th. Gradual improvement was manifest. The face was much better.

March 19th. She was much improved. There were low red papules on the face and hands, which were cool. She was ordered to take one-twelfth of a grain of bichloride of mercury in an ounce of compound infusion of gentian three times a day.

March 26th. There was relapse. The face and hands were worse; she had much itching at night. Hydrargyrum cum cretâ and Dover's powder, two and a half grains of each, were ordered twice a day.

April 2nd. She had improved, but relapsed to some extent last evening. The eruption was evidently papular, but showed a tendency to become eczematous. The mother said there was watery discharge. Skin cool; pulse weak. The powder was repeated twice a day; and she was ordered to take three minims of arsenical solution in a drachm of water three times a day.

April 9th. There was most marked improvement. The face was quite clear; the arms showed little more than the remains of congested papular spots. The treatment was continued.

April 16th. The face was quite well; the arms were better also. There were three boils on the pudenda. She ceased attendance.

This history shows the bad effects of giving arsenic prematurely, its good effects subsequently, and the power of a mild mercurial to control the morbid action while in a sthenic state. The tendency to assume the eczematous form is worth noting, as indicative of the affinity between the different forms of eruption.

CASE II. A. W., aged 44, was admitted May 20th, having been ill fourteen days. She had an eruption on both arms (in the flexures), on the legs, trunk, and neck, of papulose aspect, and itching frightfully. She was of weakly habit. Tongue clean; urine pale. She was ordered to apply sulphur ointment, and to take five minims of solution of arsenite of potash in an ounce of compound infusion of gentian three times a day.

May 27th. The skin was warm, dry, harshish; the eruption was more erythematous. Ten minims of colchicum wine were ordered to be taken three times a day in an ounce of citrate of potash mixture.

May 30th. She was no better. The medicine was continued; and five grains of tannin were given in a pill three times a day.

June 3rd. She was a great deal better. The pills were repeated.

June 13th. There was much itching still. The mixture and pills were repeated.

June 17th. She was much better; the itching was very trifling. The pills were continued.

June 24th. She was much better.

July 8th. Much better.

In this case also, I think, arsenic would not have cured. The saline and colchicum were no doubt of service; but the tannin seemed to be of most efficacy. It is a remedy on which I rely a good deal in cases where stronger tonics are inadmissible. It tones, without exciting.

CASE III. C. T., aged 70, was admitted April 30th. He had been ill three or four years, off and on, with severe prurigo senilis. There were black topped papules

all over the limbs and body. He was obliged to jump out of bed and walk about the room for two hours at night, and scratch himself. Skin cool; pulse rather large, and of good force; urine natural; tongue clean; bowels costive. He took at first one-sixteenth of a grain of strychnia three times a day, with morphia at night; but by May 17th this was changed for one-eighth of a grain of bichloride of mercury and ten grains of nitrate of potash in an ounce of solution of acetate of ammonia three times a day, with an ointment of zinc, lead, and mercury. He took also a warm bath twice a week.

June 14th. He was "quite in heaven to what he was". The eruption was much less, but still showed itself on the calves of the legs and thighs to some extent; it had left very marked brownish stains on the skin, giving it generally a dirty brown tinge. He took cod-liver oil, and persevered with the bichloride in decoction of elm-bark and the ointment. He continued under treatment till Nov. 3rd, the complaint being kept well under, but traces of it still remaining. One-twentieth of a grain of arsenious acid was combined with the bichloride during the last two months. The eruption did not return to any extent till the end of September the following year, when he was again put on the same treatment, and with the same success. He also had alkaline baths twice a week for more than two months, and appeared to derive real advantage from them. He was discharged April 30th.

This patient, though in very poor circumstances, and suffering severely from his skin-disease, showed very little depression, and appeared free from all those pains and dysæsthesiæ which are so commonly complained of by the weakly and neurolytic.

CASE IV. E. H., aged 70, was admitted July 23rd, having been ill three weeks. She had an eruption consisting of arcuate patches of congested and elevated skin, spreading evidently excentrically, and getting well in centres. There was a little appearance of prurigo, and a little also of lichen on the arms. The arcuate eruption affected the whole of the legs and most of the body; it had been on the chest, but had died away. She had no sleep from itching, night or day. Tongue clean; pulse rather excited. She was of feeble conformation. She was ordered to take one-sixth of a grain of tartar emetic and four minims of liquor opii sedativus, in half an ounce of camphor mixture, four times a day.

July 16th. She was decidedly worse. On the arms there were well-defined lumps, firm like peas, in the skin; they were now red, but were white when they came out; one group on the arm had an arcuate arrangement. There was a patch on the right arm of purpuric extravasation. Some of the lumps showed a central spot, where exudation had commenced. Pulse of fair force. She was very badly off. She was ordered five minims of arsenical solution in half an ounce of camphor mixture three times a day, and ten grains of Dover's powder every night.

July 30th. There was decided improvement, in the legs especially. On the arms, the small lumps still remained; the purpura was gone. She had slept well with the powders. The medicines were repeated.

Aug. 6th. The eruption went altogether away, but returned yesterday; it was not so copious, affected the arms and legs, and had the aspect of urticaria, here and there approaching to prurigo. She was ordered ten minims of arsenical solution in camphor mixture three times a day, to repeat the powders at night, and to have castor oil. She ceased attendance.

This case shows very well the blending of the characters of urticaria and the papulous eruption, as well as the beneficial action of arsenic.

CASE V. F., aged 3, was admitted May 11th. She was fairly healthy, but suffered from an eruption, which came out especially at night, and consisted of low largish papulæ on an inflamed base, itching very much. There

was no feverishness. She had all her teeth. The trunk, neck, and legs were the seat of the eruption. The bowels were generally inclined to be loose. She was ordered to take, three times a day, a drachm of a mixture containing half a drachm of solution of arsenite of potash in eighteen drachms of water.

May 19th. No fresh spots appeared now. The bowels acted naturally.

June 3rd. There were no more spots. She was in good health. The medicine had been omitted the last five days.

This little girl has continued to have the same eruption almost every year in the warm weather. Latterly, arsenic has not acted satisfactorily; but a bath of decoction of oak-bark has been of great use. The influence of the warm weather in this, as in many other cases, was very apparent; it was to all appearance the sole *causa mali*. The action of heat generally is to stimulate, but to enfeeble, nervous power. It is an *influence*, not a poison. Is not this suggestive that other forms of skin-eruption may depend on like agencies? The disorder was, on the whole, nearer lichen than urticaria; while, in the preceding instance, the reverse was the case.

CASE VI. M. B., aged 50, had been ill seven years. She had extreme itching of the face, neck, and forearms. There was scarcely any appearance of disorder on the forearms; but the face was hyperæmic, the redness fading very little under pressure, and returning again quickly; it was also discoloured, of a brownish tinge, and rough, but not the seat of any visible eruption. There was some appearance of goose-skin on the neck, and brown discoloration, but no eruption. She compared the sensation in the skin to the stinging and itching of a nettle. She had no sleep at night from the irritation. Her health was pretty good. Tongue natural. The catamenia were regular. She had five grown up children. Her bowels were costive; urine natural. She was a laundress, but found herself as bad out of as in the work. She knew no cause for the hyperæsthesia; it affected at first the backs of the hands. I tried the local application of half an ounce of tincture of aconite in an ounce of water, and internally fifteen minims of arsenical solution and five minims of tincture of aconite in an ounce of camphor mixture three times a day, with sulphur and tartrate of potash at night. This was of no avail; nor were small doses of iodide of potassium. She only attended about a month—a space of time utterly too short to modify a disorder which had lasted seven years. In another similar case, I found strychnia and tannin, in pretty full doses, of much service.

CASE VII. S. N., aged 55, was admitted May 12th, having been ill three weeks. She had a well marked urticarious eruption on her neck, arms, upper thighs, and pudenda, presenting on the arms extensive red patches, mingled here and there with distinct small papulæ; it tingled very much, especially when she was warm. It commenced at 4 A.M. on the 11th, with whitish bumps like the sting of a nettle. She had also on the head well marked discharging eczema, with red patches and papules on the neck. The skin of the shoulders felt sore, but there was nothing to see. She never had any eruption before. She had rheumatic fever two years ago. She felt shivering and ill three days before the eruption appeared. She ascribed her disorder to being exposed to draughts while warm. The urine was very clear; pulse weak; skin cool; tongue rough; bowels regular. She was ordered to apply a lotion of half an ounce of solution of acetate of lead in an ounce of glycerine and seven ounces of water; and to take three times a day five minims of arsenical solution, four grains of carbonate of ammonia, and twenty minims of tincture of henbane, in an ounce of camphor mixture.

May 15th. The head and arms were much better. Tongue much coated; bowels open; skin warm. She

had no appetite. The mixture and lotion were repeated; and she was ordered hydrargyrum cum creta and extract of henbane, two grains of each, in pills at night once.

May 22nd. The arms were both well, but still itched much; the neck was well; the scalp was better, but still discharged at the back. Her aspect was improved. She was directed to take five minims of arsenical solution and a drachm of tincture of cinchona in an ounce of compound infusion of gentian three times a day; and to have an ounce of dilute ointment of nitrate of mercury.

June 2nd. She was getting well. She was ordered to continue the medicines, and to take a drachm of cod-liver oil twice a day.

June 16th. The oil had done a deal of good. She felt a different person: all the eruption was gone.

There can be no doubt that the two forms of eruption in this instance had a common cause; probably, as she supposed, a catarrhal influence. Both yielded to the same stimulant non-eliminative treatment. I do not see what other view we can take, than that the nerve-disorder in one part gave rise to the urticaria, in the other to the eczema, owing to some difference in the vital quality of the two cutaneous tracts.

British Medical Journal.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23RD, 1862.

THE TARTUFFE OF THE MEDICAL PRESS.

OUR correspondence proves that the objects of the *Lancet* and its coadjutor, in their late unscrupulous attacks on this JOURNAL, have not been misunderstood by the profession. It is happily plain to the eyes of all, that the proceeding was, from first to last, simply a commercial move—an attempt to burke the JOURNAL, and increase their own sale—a dodge worthy of the famous firm of “Brown, Jones, and Robinson”. The trick has, however, recoiled upon its authors. Tartuffe, like the astutest specimens of his kind, occasionally outdoes himself. His temper gets the better of his cunning; and then, in the fervour of his anger, he makes the mistake of writing himself down in his veritable character.

This is what our Tartuffe and his aide-de-camp have now done. Smarting under the manifest successes of this Association and of its JOURNAL; marking the growing influence which we are exercising over the profession; witnessing the daily addition of the highest and best names in medicine to the ranks of the Association; embittered at the sight of the really great assemblage lately met together; and anticipating the increased strength, and the deeper roots and the firmer hold upon the profession which this *national medical assembling* together will, as a matter of course, give to the Association; finding not one single word of just and true rebuke to cast against the Association and its JOURNAL; unable to suggest one single act of dishonesty, or of untruth-

fulness, or of truckling, or of unfair dealing, or of partiality, or of spite committed by the JOURNAL,—Tartuffe had but one available means of attack left; and he has availed himself of it. He has calumniated. He has even joined himself, for the business, in partnership with an acquaintance with whom he has heretofore lived on terms of the strictest enmity! Let us note how the two worthies now work the partnership affair.

Tartuffe and his friend draw upon each other's banks of issue. One starts the calumny, the other endorses it; and thus mutually reciprocating favours, they attempt to raise the credit of each other's paper. The Association has dwindled down, says the one, to 1500 members. Quite right, repeats the other, the Association has dwindled down to 1500 members. And who will venture to question a statement made by two such respectable journals as we are?

Tartuffe is too bold. The very document—the Report of the Council—from which he and his friend obtained their information told them, unless they forcibly shut their eyes, that our numbers, at the moment when they wrote, were 2120. And we have now the pleasure of informing them that we at present number very nearly 2200 members; including amongst us all the leading medical men in London and in the provinces. Have our friends the courage to retract their egregious error? We shall see. The plea of ignorance will not avail them now. The Report lies before them. Both have their representatives, members of the Association. Both, therefore, were and are fully capable, if desirous, of making themselves masters of the facts of the case. If the error was not designed, they will, therefore, now retract their misstatement.

Having disposed of the Association, Tartuffe then proceeds (of course still assisted by the friend at his heels) to attack its JOURNAL. And here they give us an unmistakable clue to their purposes. The Association may have *Transactions*. It may spend its money in *Transactions*, or in any other way it pleases, but a journal it must not have. Before it had a journal, the Association was a great fact; but since it had one it has been a miserable failure. And of what earthly use is the JOURNAL?

“What did the JOURNAL represent? Was it an independent organ of public opinion? Had it any influence whatever upon the progress of those events which have acted so momentously upon the interests of the profession? Certainly not” (boldly says Tartuffe,

“Answering the question which himself had asked,”)

“Inferior in every respect in its literary performance” [he says not whether inferior to himself or to his friend], “it conferred no honour upon the Association; as a mere commercial speculation, it was a wretched and miserable failure.”

Thus, then, we are bankrupt in purse; we exercise no influence over the profession; we have no independence; and no literary merit. For the truth