where it is encumbered with any formal process, however slight, such as even applying to an overseer or other proper authority for an order, the delay is still greater, and he does not complain or give up until his strength fails him, and disease has made some progress. It would be better for the surgeon and the parish, as well as for himself, that the pauper should resort early to medical advice; timely assistance, we all know, in incipient illness, will often ward off dangerous, and perhaps fatal, disease. The surgeon would, probably, have more frequent applications, but he would not have so many serious demands upon his time and anxiety, and in opposition to the tenacious regulations at first established regarding the case system, I think that which would seem at first sight to be an anomaly, would be proved to be true—viz., that the more cases in which the medical man prescribes for, the greater number of shillings, and even pounds, would be saved to the parish.

The (I believe almost general) abandonment of the case system, and the allotment of salaries to medical officers, will do much towards effecting the above object; and it has often suggested itself to my mind whether or not more freedom could be given to the pauper by his being furnished with a printed card on his receiving relief, which would enable him to obtain medical assistance easily and speedily; the card to be signed weekly by the relieving officer, or subjected to some other restrictive regulation. Another very important consideration, which refers to the distance and number of parishes which a surgeon is deputed to attend, is the great length of time which must necessarily elapse before the patient can receive the medicines prescribed for him. It seems to me that if the plan of establishing district dispensaries could be effected, much of this evil would be obviated; then the medical man, in going his rounds, would be constantly dismissing his prescriptions at every visit he makes, and his medicines would be taken long, probably, before he arrives home, until some time after which, according to the present system, they cannot be dispensed. I question whether, by making some small deduction from the medical officer's salary, this plan would not be found, in the end, equally economical, and certainly more comfortable and beneficial both to the practitioner and patient.

The *physical* benefit which the better classes of society must derive from the sanatory state of the poorer, is a subject which, one would have thought, in this present enlightened eye, would have met with that due and serious consideration to which it is entitled. The rich, it is true, are generally very careful to avoid those houses or districts where contagious disease is known to prevail; and, with the observance of this caution, they are satisfied to rest quiet, and too often revel in fancied security. But, alas! the plant has grown and flourished, and the winds of Heaven waft its fatal seeds to softer beds and no less congenial soil, where again it buds and thrives, and death and sorrow nurse its growth. In a word, it is in the narrow streets of the town and ill-ventilated house of the poor man, that epidemic disease generally first takes its root; and but too often, having fed on the meagre, though favourable diet of the hovel and the alley, does it breathe its deadly breath into the rich man's house and noble's mansion.

Since, then, it is seen that the health of the poor so powerfully affects all other grades of society, is it not a matter of serious importance, that in every provision for their necessities, that which relates to their wants in sickness, and to the guarding them as much as possible from its invasion, should hold a prominent place in the consideration and arrangements of the legislative portion of the public? Besides the purely medical department of sanatory law, how much good might be done nationally, as well as individually, by a careful inspection of the houses of the poor, if only

once in the hottest and coldest seasons of the year, by a removal of filth and infecting matter which *will* accumulate among them, and by a *timely* administration of necessary comforts, is incalculable!

I am fully aware that no human precaution can ever free us, altogether, from the presence of disease and suffering, for such is the common lot of our nature. But I do contend that, if there be any virtue in medicine, or value in medical science, or if we are allowed by any means to be able to alleviate suffering, or ward off disease, or humanely speaking, to save or prolong life, "I contend," I say, "that it becomes our bounden duty to make use of those means, and apply them according to the best of our ability and judgment."

If there be any truth, then, in what I have above stated, I can only infer, that *morally* speaking, it must be a wicked act in any person, or body of persons, to withhold or improperly provide that medical advice and assistance to the poor which it is in their power and their duty to give, and which the poor ought to receive; that in a pecuniary point of view it is a foolish and expensive act, as I have endeavoured to show, because by so doing, parochial expenditure must be ultimately increased; and lastly, that physically speaking, it is injurious and destructive, and will be sure to recoil with double force on the heads of those who fancy themselves free from its operation.

REGULATION OF LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—Having always taken a lively interest in anything calculated to improve the condition of those unfortunate individuals who are suffering from mania, and having also paid some little attention to that peculiar branch of our profession, the treatment of insanity, I looked forward with some degree of pleasure for Lord G. Somerset's new plan for regulating lunatic asylums. A few evenings since I read his lordship's speech on introducing his bill to the House of Commons, reported in the "Morning Herald" of the 18th instant, in which I find the following paragraph:—"He was not inclined to introduce complexity or difficulties into the mode of making out and signing certificates by the medical men consulted in the case of persons alleged to be insane. For these reasons he intended that the certificates themselves should in substance remain as they were, because he considered they were sufficiently stringent upon respectable members of the medical profession; but it was his intention to remove and take away from the apothecary and surgeon the power to sign certificates, which should authorise the consignment of parties supposed to be insane to receptacles for lunatics. The right to give such certificates he intended to confer only upon members of the College of Physicians. He thought that the public was not at all aware of the vast number of persons confined on the plea of insanity in private houses without any regular medical attendance, or the care and attention paid to their cases by persons experienced in attending on insane patients, which were often so conducive to recovery."

Now, if this is not an insult to the surgeon and the apothecary, it is an uncalculated insinuation. I am not going to take up the cudgels on behalf of the whole of the general practitioners, but I must beg to assure his lordship that whenever a surgeon or an apothecary is called on to sign a certificate to consign to a lunatic asylum an unfortunate maniac, he believes he is doing that which was best calculated to restore the patient to health and reason; and in doing this he is acting quite as conscientiously as one who may by chance have M.D. attached to his name.

The object of this letter is to urge those surgeons and apothecaries who have representatives in Parliament, to call on them to exert themselves to prevent such a clause being inserted in the bill now before the House of Commons for the purpose of regulating and licensing lunatic asylums.

I am, Gentlemen,
Yours, &c.

GEORGE KING.

Bath, March 25, 1842.

PHYSIC FOR THE MILLION.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—Having accidentally come in possession of the enclosed card, I have thought it desirable to forward it to you, accompanied with a copy of a hand-bill issued a week or two since, and hoping by this step to elicit your editorial observations on the same. By noticing the occurrence you will oblige the members of the profession, and your obedient servant,
Reading, March 28, 1842. L. W.

(Copy.)

"BENEFIT CLUB

FOR THE

LABOURING CLASSES.

A club is about to be formed, the conditions of which will be available to the poorest. An early day will be appointed for the first meeting.

Further information may be obtained by applying (any hour before eleven in the morning) to Dr. Carter, 116, Castle-street, Reading.

(Card.)

PHYSIC FOR THE MILLION!

This ticket entitles a subscriber of three shillings per annum to medicine and attendance. Payments (threepence) monthly.—Dr. CARTER, 116, Castle-street, Reading."

The communication of our correspondent, who has authenticated his letter, involves the question of benefit clubs. Much may be said for and against this system; but we do not think that Dr. Carter, if doctor he be, has set about the matter in a very legitimate manner.

PRACTICAL SUMMARY OF FACTS IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

TANNIN IN METRORRHAGIA.

M. Dumars has published some observations on the utility of tannin in cases of uterine hæmorrhage. The first case was one of simple metrorrhagia; the second occurred at the sixth month of pregnancy; in another case of the same kind severe bleeding ensued at the sixth month, and the fœtus also was preserved.

M. Dumars employs the tannin in the form of pills, mixture, and injection; but the following is the one which he prefers:—Tannin, thirty-six grains; extract of opium, one grain; conserve of roses, enough to make twenty pills. Of these one is given every hour, until some impression is made on the hæmorrhage.—*Gaz. des Hospitaur*, No. 30.

SYPHILITIC MUSCULAR CONTRACTION.

This is a very rare affection, which has only recently attracted the notice of practitioners. It generally attacks the flexor muscles of the forearm; at least, such was the case in a few examples recently observed at the Venereal Hospital, under the care of M. Ricord. In the three cases alluded to, the patients laboured under some tertiary syphilitic affection; the muscles of the forearm were permanently retracted, hard, and stiff, but did not appear to have undergone

any change of tissue. A symptom worthy of notice is the peculiar pain which exists in the contracted limb; this pain is chiefly felt at night, and resembles exactly the pains in the bones which occur during syphilis. In one patient the retraction coincided with tertiary ulcers of the throat, and in another with nodes on the tibia. The patients were treated with the ioduret of potassium, and soon recovered; the pains disappeared about the sixth day, and soon afterwards the movements of the limbs were perfectly restored.—*Bul. de Therapeutique*.

SYRUP OF THE IODIDE OF IRON.

In the last number of the "Pharmaceutical Journal," Mr. Schollefield describes the following mode of preparing this syrup:—

Into a clean Florence flask put 126 grains of iodine and three ounces of distilled water; add thereto one drachm of iron filings, or pure soft iron wire, and allow the mixture to digest for twelve hours, with occasional agitation; apply to this a gradually increased heat,* taking the precaution of placing starch-test paper over the mouth of the flask, and whenever free iodine is evinced by its turning blue, decrease the heat until such effect is no longer produced; proceed in this way until a drop poured on a piece of starch paper produces no change of colour; in this state filter the solution, allowing it to run directly into a capsule containing five and a half troy ounces of refined sugar (this will prevent any slight change of colour, which frequently occurs even in filtering the solution into an intermediate vessel) wash the filter with one and a half ounce of boiling distilled water, and evaporate the syrup so that when cold it shall accurately measure six ounces and two drachms.

This preparation will remain unaffected by air or light for any period, nor will it deposit any sugar at the bottom of the bottle; it contains three grains of the anhydrous salt to the drachm, or four of the hydrated iodide of iron of the London Pharmacopœia, a difference which is unfortunately sometimes overlooked, both receiving indiscriminately the same appellation, a circumstance likely to occasion error in subjects of practical importance.

PROCESS FOR SEPARATING GOLD FROM PLATINUM.

By M. KEMP.

M. Kemp has discovered that oxalic acid is capable of reducing gold from its solutions, but exercises no action on platinum. In order to separate these two metals, and determine their proportions, they must first be dissolved in *aqua regia*; the gold is then to be precipitated in the metallic state by oxalic acid, and the platinum by means of formic acid. The difficulty which has hitherto been experienced in separating gold from platinum, makes this process of considerable importance to the chemist.—*Liebig's and Pharmaceutical Journal*.

* For this purpose I find a water bath the best application, as the heat may be so easily moderated by the addition of cold water.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Elements of General Pathology. By the late John Fletcher, M.D. Edited by John J. Drysdale, M.D., and John K. Russell, M.D. Edinburgh. MacLachlan and Stewart, 1842. 8vo., pp. 518.

CORRESPONDENTS.

From the great increase of the Members of the Provincial Association since the 1st of January, our stock of back stamped numbers has been exhausted; but any new member can receive all back numbers *gratis*, by sending to us the name of a country bookseller, through whom they may be forwarded.