

ment, and robbing them of sleep. Hence children are generally well satisfied with this process, and often ask for its repetition long before the time is come.

3. The influence on the physiological functions of the skin is still more important. During the coming on of scarlet fever, the skin becomes diseased, in consequence of which it loses its vital power. During this illness and until a new covering is again prepared for the surface, the functions of the skin are very imperfectly performed, or during the desquamation, probably not at all. In order to explain the extent and importance of the imperceptible functions of the skin in a merely mechanical view of the matter, the reader is referred to the accurate experiments of Seguin, which fix the quantity of matter thrown off from the outer skin at eleven grs. per minute in a grown person, and therefore more than two pounds per day. What efforts must it cost the organism to lead so large a quantity into other paths, in order to throw it off, when the skin is incapable of so doing!

4. With this disappearance of the desquamation, disappear all those bad symptoms which attend on it. In order to give a striking proof of the importance and bad influence which the interrupted functions of the skin produce on the healthy activity of relative, even if distant organs, we may cite the fact, that death is always the result where more than one half of the skin has been destroyed by fire or boiling liquid. A similar destruction of the skin ensues in scarlet fever, with this difference, that it takes place gradually, and thereby the organism is better enabled, by employing all the activity of the body, to find aid against the mischief which must result from the cessation of the functions of the skin.—[Medical Journal.]

☞ If the Saints are destitute of bacon, let them make a free use of olive oil.—[E.D.]

SOME PHENOMENA OF DEFECTIVE VISION. One of the earliest evidences of old age is defective sight, and the opinions hitherto held respecting the causes of this have been various. A letter has lately appeared in the London, Edinburgh, and Philosophical Magazine, from a Mr. R. T. Crammure, Eng., respecting a discovery made by him, which will appear singular to many, because the flattening of the cornea has hitherto been held to be the cause of loss of vision, and this is the reason why convex glasses are employed to restore it, and we believe this is the principle upon which Prof. Bronson acts to restore sight—but Mr. Crammure, who has been defective in vision, states that he took a card and made two fine pin holes, exactly in the position of the centres of the pupils of his eyes, and he found that he saw the true image as correctly as he ever did in his life, to use his own words; "it supplied the place of a pair of spectacles."

By making the pin holes larger or smaller, the focal distance is increased or diminished proportionably. In sunshine he can read at the natural focal distance, but with faint light there is the common confusion of letters. A flattening of the cornea won't explain this; he thinks the cause to be "some want of contractility engendered in old age in the iris." There is one curious fact which he has observed, viz.; that fine wire-gauze, of 1-50 of an inch in diameter, in meshes, enables him, when worn close to the eye, to read small

print with great facility, at the distance of six inches, and when the meshes are still closer, he can see the most minute objects with remarkable distinctness. This is something for our optical instrument makers.

[Scientific American.]

A NEW ROUTE DISCOVERED IN NICARAGUA.

Advices from San Juan, dated Nov. 2, say that the engineers employed in making the surveys for the proposed ship canal have met with the most eminent success, and that the practicability of constructing the canal no longer admits of any doubt. A route has been surveyed from Nicaragua Lake, four miles north of the city, which has an elevation of only sixty feet, and a gradual descent to the Pacific. The engineers pronounce the route to be in every way desirable, the distance being but twelve miles from the Lake to the Pacific.—[Sci. Am.]

SELF-ACTING PARALLEL GATE.—Mr. S.

T. Sanford, of Fall River, Mass., has invented and taken measures to secure a patent for an improvement in a self acting parallel lifting gate. The gate is so made that there is a platform, or road-way, on each side of the gate, on which, when a person or a team treads, the gate flies open, and when the person or animal, or a carriage, passes off the platform, the gate closes of itself. The gate is made of two leaves, of parallel bars, like Smith's, and these two leaves, when the person, &c., steps on the platform, (which is part of the road-way,) immediately fly, or rather fold up vertically at the gate-posts on each side, so that there is a free passage at once through the gates. The platform spoken of is connected with levers below, which are acted upon by the platform, like scales, and two levers being connected by a rope passing over the inner ends (which are shaped like pulleys) of the bars of the gate—the result is, that the levers are pressed down at their inner ends; this action draws down the cords spoken of, consequently the parallel bars fly up, and the two leaves are folded together, thus opening the gate. The gate is kept open while the weight is on the platform, but, when it is off, the leaves of the gate, and each bar, fall successively into their proper places.—[Sci. Am.]

NEW FABRIC.—A new article for clothing has just been patented in England, made of the fur of animals and designed for winter wear. The fabric is said to be lighter, firmer, and warmer than that of materials now generally worn. The fabric is also made partly of fur and partly of silk, and is as soft as satin or the finest lamb's wool. Under garments are made of it without seams, also gloves and stockings.—[Ex.]

WORLD'S GREAT CONVENTION OF DOCTORS.

An account is given in some of the European papers of a great congress of medical men, which it is proposed to hold in France, for the purpose of testing by experiment the virtue of a newly discovered cure for madness and for the bites of venomous serpents by means of "cedrone" seed. It seems that 2 subjects, M. Auguste Guillemin and M. Hippolyte Fournier, Professor of Mathematics, of the Department of Aveyron, have offered themselves to be operated on—which means, we suppose, that they offer themselves to be bitten—for the purposes of

the inquiry. "It has been thought advisable," says the Brussels Herald, "to postpone until next month the experiment to be tried on M. Auguste Guillemin, in order to afford sufficient time for all the celebrated medical men of France and other parts of Europe to meet together at this sort of medical congress, in which one of the most difficult problems of occult medicine is to be resolved." It is announced that all the different states of Europe will be represented at this meeting:—Russia, by a physician attached to the person of the emperor; the German States by seventeen doctors; and Sweden, Norway, and Denmark will send delegates, although in those cold regions there are but few serpents, and cases of madness are rare. Some of the "cedrone" seed will be sown in the Jardin des Plantes—where it is hoped it will succeed. Several of the faculty, who have already made experiments on different animals, hope, by means of the "cedrone" seed, to arrive at the cure of mental disorders and epilepsy.

SWEARING AND LYING.—The following mirth-provoking story may be an old Joe redivivus, but we do not recollect having seen it before. At any rate, the reading of it proved a dangerous experiment to our waistbands:

A Quaker had a piece of new ground to plough, which was very full of roots, and he sent his hired man John, to hold the plough, while he drove the oxen. A root would catch the nose of the plough; the plough would hit John a wall on the side; and John would commit a breach of the commandment 'swear not at all.' So it went continually—catch, jerk, thump; swear, whoa! back! gee! haw! jerk, thump, swear.

At length the placid spirit of friend Jedediah became disturbed by so much profanity, and he stopped the team, and told John to take the goad and drive the oxen, and he'd see if he couldn't hold the plough without swearing. John took the ox-goad, and Jedediah seized the plough-handles. He placed his two legs in a bracing position, and John drove ahead. The plough caught a root, made a bound, one of the handles hit Jedediah under the chin, and he exclaimed,

"Well, raly, I never saw the like."

Again it caught, hit Jed again, and he again declared he had never seen the like.—It caught again, knocked Jed down, and he arose with the exclamation,

"Well, raly, I never did see the like."

So matters went, till Jed had returned to the starting point, and had positively affirmed that he had never seen the like, some fifty times.

"There John," said he, "take hold of the plough, and see if thou canst get along without swearing. Thou hast seen that I have not sworn an oath in the whole round."

"No," replied John, "thou hast not, friend Jed, but thou hast told full fifty lies."

Jed thought a minute, and replied,

"Well, John, I don't know but my lying may be prompted by the wicked one, as well as thy swearing. I hope the pesky roots will be taken into consideration in the final account of both of us. Get up! Duke and Darby!"

Grain is treated like infants. When the head becomes heavy it is cradled; and generally well thrashed to render it fit for use.