injury to both of the standards was the loss of the left-hand gold stud, but whether this was caused by the action of the flames or otherwise is not known. When the Palace of Westminster was rebuilt the bars were deposited in the Journal Office, and from that time until recently they seem to have been wholly lost sight of. Some time ago it happened to be stated in the lobby that one of the duties of the speaker was to inspect once in every twenty years the standards immured in the sill of the lower waiting hall. Inquiries at the standards department of the Board of Trade elicited the fact that, so far from any statutory requirement being imposed upon the speaker in the direction indicated, Section 35 of the Weights and Measures Act, 1878, which provides for the care and restoration of the parliamentary copies of the imperial standards, specially exempts the walled-up copy from periodical inspection and comparison. It was found, however, that in 1871 Speaker Denison took cognizance of the standards; and this fact was brought to the speaker's notice. While inquiries were being made as to Speaker Denison's inspection, an official in the Journal Office mentioned that when the contents of that office were recently being transferred to the new wing he had observed among the lumber some old weights and measures. These proved to be the missing standards. They were examined by Mr. Chaney, the superintendent of weights and measures.

The most important of the standards thus rescued from oblivion are the yard measures constructed by Bird in 1758 and 1760. The former was copied from a bar in the possession of the Royal Society, which was itself a copy of a standard preserved in the Tower; and the second was constructed under the directions of a committee of the House of Commons from the 1758 standard. "Each of these two standard yards consisted of a solid brass bar 1.05 inches square in section and 39.73 inches long. Near each end of the upper surface gold pins or studs 0.1 of an inch in diameter were inserted, and points or dots were marked upon the gold to determine the length of the yard." The other standards in the custody of the Journal Office are two brass rods answering the description of the old exchequer yard, and four weights supposed to be certain of the "copies, model, patterns, and multiples" ordered by the House on May 21, 1760, "to be locked up by the clerk and kept by him." The most important weight — the standard troy pound — is not among those now brought to light.

INHALATIONS IN THE TREATMENT OF PHTHISIS.[1]

THE history of inhalations in the treatment of phthisis is not an encouraging one. They have been widely employed and hailed as the most rational and effective mode of assailing the disease at its seat. But the results of this method of medication have not been commensurate with the expectations excited by it, and we imagine that of late it has been gradually falling into disfavor and disuse. Several potent objections have been urged against the method. First, it has been denied that the various antiseptic and germicide agents applied by inhalation succeed even in reaching the seat of the disease — viz., the submucus tissue of the bronchial mucus membrane — but are arrested often in the pharynx, oftener still in the larynx. Then it has been shown that, even assuming that the medicated atmosphere produced by one of the ordinary inhalers really reaches the seat of the disease, its impregnation with carbolic acid, creosote, thymol, or other such agent, is so exceedingly feeble as to leave no solid ground for anticipating serious benefit from its use. Further, many authorities urge with much force that if the phthisical patient be taught to rely upon inhalations the inevitable result will be a life of indoor invalidism and constant tinkering with his inhalers, a mode of existence sure to effect an amount of mischief more than sufficient to counterbalance the problematical advantages of inhalation.

There is much weight in the above objections, and until they can be satisfactorily met, the place of inhalations in the therapeutics of phthisis can not be an important one. Professor Germain-Sée, in a recent paper presented to the French Academy of Medicine, has sought to overcome the first of the objections to which we have made allusion, viz., the failure of the medicated atmosphere to reach the actual seat of the disease. He recalls the researches made at various times into the action of creosote upon tuberculosis. This drug has had a remarkable and somewhat checkered career. Discovered in 1832 by Reichenbach, its true composition was first made known in 1853 by Gorup-Besanez, who showed that it consisted mainly of two substances, Gaïacol and créosol. It was in 1877 that Bouchard and Gimbert conceived the idea of its possible utility in phthisis, and made trial of it both *per primam viam* and hypodermically. Later, Fraenzel and Sommerbrodt in Germany made extensive trial of creosote, and reported benefit from its use.

Guttmann, in his researches in the year 1889, found that the saturation of the system with creosote arrested the development of the bacilli, and suggested that the best means of bringing the system thoroughly under the influence of the drug would be to submit the patient to an atmosphere saturated with creosote under pressure. This is also the method recommended by Professor Germain-Sée. He describes it as follows: "The patient is shut up in a metal chamber, hermetically closed, and compressed air, passed through creosote and eucalyptol, is made to enter slowly. The air in passing through these liquids is saturated, and arrives charged with a large quantity of these medicaments. The pressure must be slowly increased, and should not exceed a half atmosphere. The speed of delivery of the air saturated with the medicated vapors is from fifteen to twenty cubic metres per hour for a space of five cubic metres of capacity. The length of time the patient remains in the chamber is usually two hours, sometimes three or more, and no inconvenience ensues as the result of this procedure. The inhalations are made daily or more frequently."

Professor Germain-Sée has tried this method in twelve cases, of which one was a case of apical bronchitis, a second was a case of fœtid bronchitis, and the remaining ten were genuine cases of tubercular phthisis, all of which, with one exception, had arrived at the stage of softening. The results obtained appear to be surprising, a marked amelioration being in most cases observable, not only in the amount and character of the expectoration, but in the general constitutional condition, and in some cases, though not in all, a corresponding improvement in the physical signs. Contrary to what might seem probable, hæmoptysis was not only not excited, but seemed controlled by this mode of treatment, and the appetite and digestion were improved rather than otherwise. Hectic fever was also diminished. Naturally, the least improvement was manifested in the physical signs, but Professor Germain Sée is inclined to hope that by this new method the disease, if not cured, may at least be arrested, and further progress prevented. Benefit was obtained in some cases in a fortnight, in others the treatment was kept up for three months. Very great benefit was obtained in some cases of scrofulous enlargement of the cervical glands.

At the present time it is hardly necessary to emphasize the necessity for extreme caution in admitting the claims of any new alleged remedy for tuberculosis, and the evidence before us in the present case, although interesting, falls immeasurably short of demonstration. Further trials will no doubt be made, and the results will be awaited with attention. One benefit, somewhat negative in character, may even now be derived from Professor Germain-Sée's researches, viz., the realization of the utter futility of the methods of inhalation so long adopted, and the uselessness of the inhalers now commonly employed. If inhalation is ever to become a valuable agent in therapeutics, it will probably be by the adoption of some plan analogous to that sketched above, and, according to our present knowledge, the most hopeful medicament with which to experiment would seem to be creosote.

[1] From the London Lancet.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*** Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.*

On request in advance, one hundred copies of the number containing his communication will be furnished free to any correspondent.

The editor will be glad to publish any queries consonant with the character of the journal.

Beech Trees and Lightning.

THE question was raised in *Science* a short time ago as to whether beech trees were ever struck by lightning. During a severe thunder-storm which passed over here this afternoon a beech tree