Such a case is not common ; it is more paroxysmal than habitual ; and in ordinary conversation, when the patient is free from nervous excitement, the defect may be scarcely observed. A condition named *aphthongia* is even more distressing. It totally prevents speech, and may, at intervals, come on when the person attempts to speak ; but fortunately it is only of temporary duration, and is usually caused by exceptional nervous excitement. It is characterized by spasm of the muscles supplied by the hypoglossal nerve, including the sterno-hyoid, sterno­thyroid, and thyro-hyoid muscles. In almost all cases of stuttering it is noticed that the defect is most apparent when the person is obliged to make a sudden transition from one class of sounds to another, and the patient soon discovers this for himself and chooses his words so as to avoid dangerous muscular combinations. When one considers the delicate nature of the adjustments necessary in articulate speech, this is what may be expected. It is well known that a quickly diffusible stimulant, such as alcohol, temporarily removes the difficulty in speech.

Stuttering may be successfully overcome in some cases by a careful process of education under a competent tutor. Not a few able public speakers were at first stutterers, but a prolonged course of vocal gymnastics has remedied the defect. The patient should be encouraged to read and speak slowly and deliberately, carefully pronouncing each syllable, and when he feels the tendency to stammer, he should be advised to pause for a short time, and then by a strong voluntary effort to attempt to pronounce the word. He should also be taught how to regulate respira­tion during speech, so that he may not fail from want of breath. In some cases aid may be obtained by raising the voice towards the close of the sentence. Sounds or combinations of sounds that present special difficulties should be made the subject of careful study, and the defect may be largely overcome by a series of graduated exercises in reading. The practice of intoning is useful in many cases. In ordinary conversation it is often import­ant to have some one present who may by a look put the stammerer on his guard when he is observed to be talking too quickly or indistinctly. Thus by patience and deter­mination many stammerers have so far overcome the defect that it can scarcely be noticed in conversation ; but even in such cases mental excitement or slovenly inattention to the rules of speech suitable for the condition may cause a relapse. In very severe cases, where the spasmodic seizures affect other muscles than those of articulation, special medical treatment is necessary, as such are on the borderland of serious nervous disturbance. All measures tending to improve the general health, the removal of any affection of the mouth or gums that may aggravate habitual stammering, the avoidance of great emotional excitement, a steady determination to overcome the defect by voluntary control, and a system of education such as has been sketched will do much in the great majority of cases to remedy stammering. (j. g. m.**)**

STAMPS. The stamp duty is a tax imposed upon a great variety of legal and other documents, and forms a branch of the national revenue. The stamp is a cheap and convenient mode of certifying that the revenue regula­tions have been complied with. Stamp duties appear to have been invented by the Dutch in 1624. They were first imposed in England in 1694 by 5 and 6 Will. and Mary, c. 21, as a temporary means of raising funds for carrying on the war with France. They now depend upon a very large number of statutes, the principal one being the Stamp Act, 1870, 33 and 34 Vict. c. 97 (which extends to the United Kingdom). The amount of stamp duty varies from one halfpenny (postage) to thousands of pounds (probate or succession). It appears scarcely

necessary in this place to set out at length the various stamp duties payable in the United Kingdom, inasmuch as those of the most usual occurrence will readily be found in ordinary books of reference.

Stamp duties are either fixed, such as the duty of one penny on every cheque irrespective of its amount, or *αd valorem,* as the duty on a conveyance, which varies according to the amount of the purchase money. The duty is denoted generally by an impressed, less frequently by an adhesive, stamp, sometimes by either at the option of the person stamping. Thus an inland bill of exchange (unless payable on demand) must have an impressed stamp, a foreign bill of exchange an adhesive stamp, while an agreement or receipt stamp may be of either kind. It should be noticed that cer­tain documents falling within a class which as a rule is subject to stamp duty are for reasons of public policy or encouragement of trade exempted from the duty by special legislation. Examples of such documents are Bank of England notes, agreements within § 17 (but not those within § 4) of the Statute of Frauds (see Fraud), agreements between a master of a ship and his crew, transfers of ships or shares in ships, indentures of apprenticeship for the sea service, petitions forwarded by post to the crown or a House of Parliament, and most instruments relating to the business of building and friendly societies.

As a general rule a document must be stamped at the time of execution, or a penalty (remissible by the commissioners of inland revenue) is incurred. The penalty is in most cases £10, sometimes much more ; in the case of policies of marine insurance it is £100. Some instruments cannot be stamped at all after execution, even with payment of the penalty. Such are bills of exchange and promissory notes (where an impressed stamp is necessary), bills of lading, proxies for voting at meetings of proprietors of joint-stock companies, and receipts after a month from date. An unstamped instrument cannot be pleaded or given in evidence except in criminal proceed­ings or for a collateral purpose. If an instrument chargeable with duty be produced as evidence in a court, the officer whose duty it is to read the instrument is to call the attention of the judge to any omission or insufficiency of the stamp, and if the instrument is one which may legally be stamped after execution, it may, on payment of the amount of the unpaid duty and the penalty payable by law, and a further sum of £1, be received in evidence, saving all just exceptions on other grounds. The rules of the Supreme Court, 1883 (Ord. xxxix. r. 8, re-enacting a provision of the Common Law Procedure Act), provide that a new trial is not to be granted by reason of the ruling of a judge that the stamp upon any document is sufficient or that the document does not require a stamp. The stamp upon a document subject to the stamp laws of a foreign state is usually admissible in evidence in a court of the United Kingdom if it conform in other respects to the rules governing the admissibility of such documents, even though it be improperly stamped according to the law of the foreign country. The admissibility of documents belongs to the *ordinatοria litis* rather than the *decisoria litis,* and is governed by the *lex fori* rather than the *lex loci contractus,* unless indeed that law makes a stamp necessary to the validity of the instrument. As to bills of exchange, the Bills of Exchange Act, 1882, 45 and 46 Vict. c. 61, § 72, provides that where a bill is issued out of the United Kingdom it is not invalid by reason only that it is not stamped in accordance with the law of the place of issue, and that where a bill issued out of the United Kingdom conforms as regards requisites in form to the law of the United Kingdom it may for the purpose of enforcing payment thereof be treated as valid as between all persons who negotiate, hold, or become parties to it in the United Kingdom.

By the Stamp Duties Management Act, 1870, 33 and 34 Vict, c. 98, the stamp duties are put under the management of the commissioners of inland revenue, who are empowered to grant licences to deal in stamps, and to make allowance for spoiled or misused stamps. Certain offences, such as forging a die or stamp, selling or using a forged stamp, &c,, are made felonies punishable with penal servitude for life as a maximum.

*United States.—*The subject of stamp duties is of unusual historical interest, as the passing of Grenville’s Stamp Act of 1765 (5 Geo. III. c. 12) directly led to the American revolution. The Act was, indeed, repealed the next year as a matter of expediency by 6 Geo. III. c. 11, but 6 Geo. III. c. 12 declared the right of the British legislature to bind the colonies by its Acts. The actual yield of the stamp duties under the Act of 1765 was, owing to the opposition in the American colonies, only £4000—less than the expenses of putting the Act into force. The stamp duties of the United States are now under the super­intendence of the commissioner of internal revenue. These duties, which depend upon a great body of statutory law, will be found in the Revised Statutes, tit. xxxv.

The principal authorities on the subject of this article are Tilsley, *Stamp Laws,* and Dowell, *Stamp Duties.*

STANDARDS. See **Weights and Measures.**