

Notes, Short Comments, and Answers to Correspondents.

“WARE BERLIN.”

WHATEVER the attractions of Berlin to the student of medicine—and these we are far from undervaluing,—the sanitary state of the city must be put on a safe and satisfactory footing before it can reasonably expect to entertain “the stranger within its gates.” The picture we lately drew of the hygienic condition of the capital of the German Empire was even short of the scandalous truth. “Since Cloacina,” says *The Times* correspondent, “has been considered an amphibious goddess, all the cabbage-water and every kind of soluble horror from the houses pours in fetid nastiness into the all but stagnant canal.” Leaning over any of the bridges that span it, one will see “a soot-black hell-broth, writhing, seething, and bubbling with poisonous gases, which roll over the banks, and envelop the people in their venomous folds; then creep into the houses, and devastate the families, or turn the round, rosy faces of childhood into poor, pinched, pallid, withered-looking masks, such as make one’s heart bleed to look at.” Where the filth accumulates most is the point of departure for the feeders of the artificial lakes in the Hyde-parks and Kensington-gardens of Berlin. The west end of the city has its houses open on each side of the main drain; while the other streets give constant work to a whole army of scavengers in clearing away the black putrid mud which overflows from the gutters to the depth of six or nine inches. Amid all this, diarrhoea prevails extensively, varied by an Egyptian plague of boils. The mortality of Berlin is 40 per 1000. Think of that, Dr. Farr! King Cholera must be inordinately shy if he resists such a hearty, pressing invitation as that held out to him by Berlin.

A. B. C. could not do better than read Professor Corfield’s book on the Treatment and Utilisation of Sewage, and Professor Parkes’s work on Hygiene.

T. A. H., (Lincolnshire).—The circular is by no means in good taste.

BLOOD TUMOUR OF VULVA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following are some brief notes of a case of blood tumour of vulva, which appears to be interesting both on account of its rarity and the extremely favourable termination.

Mrs. W—, aged twenty-two, first pregnancy, was confined after a hard labour at one P.M. on April 12th, 1872, the placenta following quickly, with no undue hæmorrhage. Shortly after I left, severe pain commenced in the right labium, and she became aware of a considerable swelling there. I was sent for at once, and saw her again about four P.M. I was told there had been a tumour as large as the child’s head, which had burst, and so relieved the extreme pain. On examination, there remained a tumour about the size of a small orange in the substance of the right labium, composed of clotted blood, with a vertical wound in it about three-quarters of an inch in length, and about an inch and a half in depth (not communicating with the vagina at all). From the appearance of the linen, &c., I should estimate the loss of blood at about three or four ounces. There had been no varicose condition of the vaginal veins during labour or, so far as I could ascertain, previously.

April 13th.—Doing well. Has passed no urine, but is in no pain. Ordered, fomentations to lower part of abdomen. Tumour much the same; no discharge from it.

14th.—Was called early on account of continued inability to pass urine, with pain. Passed catheter, and drew off about three pints of urine. Tumour still the same.

15th.—Yesterday afternoon the tumour began discharging clotted blood, which continues to-day. Still retention, but no pain. Passed catheter.

16th.—Could pass urine without aid. Clots still being discharged.

17th.—Slight rigor last night, and some abdominal tenderness; thirst and headache, but no diminution of lochia or milk. Ordered, small doses of aconite, with effervescing salines. No difficulty with urine. Tumour still discharging freely, and much less in size.

19th.—Discharge from tumour much less, and has shrunk in size. Passes urine freely. Slight abdominal tenderness, but feels better. Repeat mixture.

20th and 21st.—Discharge continues getting less.

22nd.—No tumour perceptible, only the wound in the labium healing by granulation. None but lochial discharge, and that slight. Feels quite well, and would like to get up.

26th.—Has sat up the last two days, and felt no discomfort. On examination, wound now nearly healed up, with scarcely any discharge.

My attendance on her ceased here; but I heard about a fortnight afterwards that she was perfectly well in every way.

Yours truly,

S. G. SLOMAN, JUN., L.R.C.P. Lond., &c.

Farnham, Surrey, August 1st, 1872.

Williams.—1. The pay of surgeons in the service ranges from £10 to £14 per month, according to station.—2. Surgeons are kept on foreign stations for some time after entering the service; but they receive the maximum rate of pay on the most unhealthy stations (e. g., the line from Suez to Bombay).—3. We have no information on this point. There are some surgeons on the home (i. e., the Mediterranean) stations who have served for upwards of ten years.—4. All medical officers are compelled to subscribe to an Insurance Fund; but we are not aware of the existence of any superannuation allowance, and in any service of this kind it is almost unknown.

Qui se sert de la Lampe au moins de l’Huile y met, (Malta).—The communication shall receive insertion next week.

UNQUALIFIED ASSISTANTS.

WE have been literally inundated by letters from both principals and assistants, the latter qualified and unqualified, on the subject of the relations between these several branches of the profession. We cannot say that our unqualified correspondents have succeeded in modifying the convictions we lately had occasion to express concerning the class to which they belong—a class, doubtless, comprising many well-meaning and industrious persons, and perhaps some capable and meritorious practitioners. None the less, but perhaps rather the more, do we regard the existence of the class itself as an evil, and we are sure that no ten righteous amongst its ranks can save its privileges for any considerable time. The principals who write to us complain that qualified assistants are not fit for the duties they undertake; the qualified assistants complain that they are not treated with due courtesy and consideration. The many principals and assistants who are mutually satisfied hold their peace; if they did not, we should have to enlarge our letter-box, and the Post-office would require a new van. To the minority we can only recommend forbearance, the answer that turneth away wrath, and the charity that thinketh no evil. The battle of life falls hardly enough, oftentimes, upon principal as well as upon assistant, and much may be excused to those who bear its burden.

South Hornsey.—It is neither customary nor proper, unless for very special reasons, for a consulting surgeon to recommend a medical man to a patient other than his ordinary adviser.

D. M. had better apply to the gentleman whose name is mentioned in his letter.

DIPSOMANIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The accompanying scrap found among the papers of a rising barrister, who fell a victim to his mania at the early age of twenty-eight, will, I think, be of more than private interest at this time, when we are all longing for some plan to be adopted to enable us to deal with dipsomaniacs. Repentance came too late in this case, granting it had been sincere, total structural degeneration of liver and kidneys precluding possibility of living.

“Have you never seen the confirmed drunkard arise after a night of dissipation, weary, ill, trembling from the effects of incipient delirium tremens, cursing the drink that was ruining him, cursing the fate that made him drink, cursing himself for being too weak to refrain from the poison. A few hours more—aye, a few moments perhaps more,—and the repentant takes the draught that has become absolutely necessary to enable him to collect his ideas, and then follows another, and yet another, until the beauties of the virtue he admires, he in vain in his sober moments longs for, prays for, years for, fades before him, and he becomes once more lost in the darling passion, the weakness, if you like, of his poor mortal frailness.”

No comment of mine is needed.—Yours obediently,

RICHARD NEALE, M.D. Lond.

Boundary-road, St. John’s-wood, Aug. 9th, 1872.

CANTHARIDES POISONING.

DR. PALLÉ, in a recent number of the *Journal de Phar. et de Chimie*, relates an interesting case of some soldiers who had in mistake drunk large quantities of tincture of cantharides. Although the physical suffering and agony were very great, there were no cerebral symptoms apart from the excitement caused by pain and terror. Vesical and rectal tenesmus were observed in all the patients. The penis was swollen and painful, but not rigid; no priapism and no aphrodisia. In every case the urine was albuminous, while some suffered from paraplegia. The treatment pursued, and under which all recovered, was the ordinarily received one—viz., emetics, warm baths, camphor, and opium, with oleaginous drinks and injections.

Dr. J. Fletcher Little.—Dublin or London Universities would answer the purpose of our correspondent. We should advise consideration before making any change of plan.

Faculty.—The qualification answers all purposes as a legal qualification in Surgery.

TRANSFUSION APPARATUS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having received a number of letters from your readers, asking where my transfusion apparatus may be obtained, would you oblige me by stating that it may be had from Messrs. Kröhnke and Sesemann, Duke-street, Manchester-square.

Faithfully yours,

J. H. AVELING.

MACARONI.

THIS, the national fare of Italy, deserves much more popularity than it enjoys among ourselves. Weight for weight, macaroni contains from two to three times as much flesh-forming material as good household bread. This is the opinion of eminent analytical chemists at home and abroad; while Dr. Hassall claims for it far more nutrient power than any of the cereals employed as food in this country. Now that butcher meat has become so high in price, the use of macaroni, as a substitute, twice or thrice a week deserves consideration. It is susceptible of varied culinary treatment, and is not only palatable and appetising, but of high nitrogenous value when cooked with cheese.

Antiquary, (Surrey).—The particular inn at Epsom from which Dr. Arbuthnot witnessed the carriage accident to Prince George of Denmark, and came to the assistance of his Royal Highness, no longer exists.

Enquirer.—No.

W. C. A.—We cannot promise at present; but the paper shall receive due consideration.

THE CLIMATE OF CANADA.

THE physicians of the Canadian Dominion are exerting themselves to vindicate the meteorological characters of their country, and to deflect thither the stream of emigration setting steadily past its shores. Dr. Hurlbert has just put forth a well-written pamphlet, in which he proves that there are vast areas in the new Dominion with climates and soils the best adapted for the chief staples of the temperate zones. By the aid of maps he shows that the zones of the grains and grasses on the eastern continent have their corresponding position on the western; while the temperature and rainfall in the best regions of those staples in Europe are less nearly paralleled in the United States than in Canada, which embraces the better part of the temperate zone, and the main region of the cereals, coarser grains, and grasses; while it is also the appropriate home of the ox, sheep, and horse. Indeed, for the staples of the temperate zones, Dr. Hurlbert says Canada is as superior to the United States as the Southern States are to the Northern ones for subtropical plants. These are facts worth knowing, particularly in Germany, whence emigration has flowed so steadily as to have cost it 1,799,853 of its population in thirty-five years; males forming the main body of this emigrant army, the female sex left behind are in an excessive majority, notwithstanding that (according to Prof. Roscher) many more males than females are born. The professor approves the policy of Miss Rye in sending the female, and not the male, portion of the community to colonise Canada, and sees in it the surest preventive against over-population.

Capt. Coghill, (19th Hussars.)—The interesting document shall receive consideration.

CASE OF SUPPURATIVE HÆMATOCELE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am reminded of a case of suppurative hæmatocele, which I find in my note-book as having occurred in my practice in the year 1864. A case somewhat similar is reported in a contemporary journal in July of this year at the Bristol General Hospital, under the care of Mr. Dobson. I send you the particulars of my case.

C. B.—, aged sixty, healthy man, for many years has been the subject of hydrocele, and has been twice tapped for it. He received a severe blow in the scrotum, and very shortly it became black and swollen, and very tender. He was put to bed, and placed in the recumbent position, and warm applications were applied for a few days. Then a trocar and canula were plunged into the sac, with the hope of drawing off the fluid; but nothing escaped, and the scrotum was consequently freely laid open, and a large clot of coagulated blood escaped. The testis was in a state of cystic degeneration, and was consequently removed. The cord and tunica vaginalis were much thickened. A small portion of the scrotum was excised, as it put on a very unhealthy aspect. The lips of the wound were soon brought together, and lint and water-dressing used. Tonic treatment and opium were freely administered, and the man made an excellent recovery in a few weeks, and is now at work. Your obedient servant,
Sible Hedingham, Essex, Aug. 12th, 1872. SIDNEY THORP.

PARKS FOR THE PEOPLE.

IT is satisfactory to perceive evidences of an increasing appreciation by local authorities of the value and importance of open spaces near large centres of industry. The Town Council of Bradford have, it is announced, recommended the purchase of some seventeen acres of land at Horton, for the purpose of forming a public park and recreation ground. There can be no doubt, we think, that familiarity with the pure air and sweet scents of parks and gardens will render the humbler denizens of crowded cities less tolerant of evil smells and foul emanations at home, and will thus, in this indirect but effectual manner, operate as an important auxiliary to the sanitary officer.

Anæstheia.—Our correspondent might with advantage refer to a series of articles published in THE LANCET (vol. i., pp. 770, 840; vol. ii., p. 16, 1870), in which the whole subject was fully discussed, in reference both to the history of the various anæsthetic agents, and the value of the respective claims to priority of their introducers.

SPONTANEOUS GENERATION OF DOCTORS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your able remarks on foreign degrees induce me to request of you a small space to notice the remarkable creation of doctors that has been going on for some time past in the columns of your weekly contemporary, the *Chemical News*. Almost every foreign name in that journal for the last year or two has the prefix of "Dr.," and as many of these German and French gentlemen are personally known to me, I can assure you they would be more surprised than pleased if they saw themselves thus decorated by an unknown hand. British subjects, for palpable reasons, are not so honoured. It is clear that the editor is jealous of doctors generally; and in thus creating an abundant and fictitious flock of foreign doctors, he intends, no doubt, to throw a slur upon the titles obtained at foreign Universities by many of your most distinguished professors, and more especially your distinguished chemists. Pray allow me to expose this practice in the columns of your widely-read journal, and believe me, Sir,

Your constant reader and obedient servant,

L. STEIN, M.D.,

Demonstrator of Anatomy in the University of
Copenhagen.

Brighton, Aug. 14th, 1872.

L. D. P.—Such proceedings may satisfy Scotch law and public opinion, but not English. Our correspondent may make complaints to the Procurator Fiscal, or, this failing, to the Home Secretary. He will not get credit for perfect disinterestedness; but that is not an objection which should deter him if he thinks the investigation really inadequate to decide as to the mode of death

SOCIAL LIFE IN INDIA.

DR. GOPAUL CHUNDER ROY has made a welcome and much-needed addition to our knowledge of the social condition of our fellow-subjects in Hindostan by his lecture delivered at the rooms of the Social Science Association on the 9th inst. The picture drawn by the lecturer of the life of the Hindoos was a dark one—all the darker by reason of its contrast with the bright hues employed in depicting the doctor's experiences in England. The studies and training of physicians are, no doubt, of a nature to confer increased value on their observations of national customs, and on their estimate of the position occupied by communities in the scale of civilisation. And though some of the statements made by Dr. Chunder Roy were not suffered to pass unchallenged by his audience, yet we feel justified in characterising the lecture as one worthy of being pondered by all who are interested in the actual condition and progress of the human race.

A. Woolsey Blacklock.—Such qualifications are recognised for Poor-law appointments.

ERYTHROXYLON COCA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In reply to "Ishmael," will you allow me to say that I believe the only place where erythroxylylon coca is to be obtained is at the English and Foreign Pharmacy, Warwick-street, Regent-street; but, owing to its scarcity, the price is nearly double what I stated. When the stimulating power of the plant, far superior to that of tea, becomes more generally known, the demand will induce importation, and consequently lower the price.

Yours faithfully,

Leicester-street, Regent-street, Aug. 14th, 1872. RICHARD VERITY.

Anti-Humbog's clever and amusing letter certainly hits some blots in the publication referred to. Why not communicate with the compilers at once?

Theta.—Such an addition is not in good taste.

COMMUNICATIONS, LETTERS, &c., have been received from — Dr. Aveling; Mr. John Gay; Dr. C. Theodore Williams; Dr. Struthers, Aberdeen; Dr. Crystal, Canterbury; Mr. Morley; Dr. Neale; Mr. Watts; Dr. Barclay, Banff; Mr. Mumford; Mr. Renton; Dr. Blacklock, Godalming; Dr. Lowe, Sedgfield; Mr. Lucas; Dr. Arnison, Newcastle; Dr. Ross, Monaghan; Dr. Burrows, Bristol; Mr. Thompson, Islington; Mr. Cole; Dr. Pratt, Appledore; Dr. Smith, Haverstock-hill; Messrs. Clarke, Bleasdale, & Co., York; Dr. Miller, Edinburgh; Mr. Macadam; Dr. Catty, Montego Bay; Dr. Davidson, Aberdeen; Dr. Bell, Edinburgh; Dr. Thorp; Mr. Lyell; Mr. Elwin, Bristol; Mr. Hewitt, Darlington; Mr. Horton, Trowbridge; Dr. Nursey, Sunderland; Mr. E. Hunt, Colchester; Mr. Croft, Bicester; Mr. Henry, Deal; Mr. B. Brown, Manchester; Mr. Addy; Mr. Denham, Southsea; Mr. Keene, Stamford; Mr. Pulman, Exeter; Mr. J. S. Brazier, Aberdeen; Mr. W. Ralph; Mr. Jones, Carnarvon; Mr. Porter, Sheffield; Mr. Hoppood, Sunderland; Dr. Mackintosh, Southsea; Mr. Claremont; Dr. Montini, Cremona; Dr. Crombie; Mr. J. Hooper; Mr. Poole, Dudley; Mr. H. Green; Dr. Wardell, Tunbridge Wells; Mr. A. H. Chrystie, Cullen; Mr. Bridson, Douglas; Mr. Williams; Mr. Warren, Chepstow; Dr. Dorsey, Ipswich, Queensland; Mr. Milligan, Wirksworth; Mr. Gibbs, Rathdrum; Mr. Kingsford; Mr. Corner, Buxton; Mr. Foster, Wareham; Mr. Marten, Oswestry; Mr. Wilson, Bowden; Mr. Verity; Dr. Haldane, Edinburgh; Dr. Nesbitt, Tunbridge Wells; Mr. Greene, Chelmsford; Dr. S. Westropp, Limerick; Mr. Whitaker, Derby; Mr. Brooks, Wallingford; Dr. Wolfe, Glasgow; Dr. Stein, Brighton; Mr. Hocking; Dr. Fairbank, Lynton; Dr. Bell, St. Andrews; Mr. Bowker, Newcastle, N.S.W.; Mr. S. Dollman, Worcester; Mr. Young, Birmingham; Mr. J. Woodleigh; Mr. Matthews, Southend; Mr. Morrison, Balloch; Mr. Stevens, Biggleswade; Mr. Jones, Newtown; Mr. Brunton, Great Yarmouth; Dr. W. H. Edwards, Antigua; Mr. Howell, Winchester; Mr. Peters, Ormskirk; Mr. Mansell, Tiverton; Mr. Deverell, Eye; Mr. Reed; Captain Coghill, Sandgate; Mr. Houghton; South Hornsey; Omega; Scoparius; Faire sans dire; Enquirer; J. A. H.; A Subaltern Doctor; The Surveyor of the Teddington Board of Works; Celsus; A. B. C.; F. L. S.; Faculty; X.; M.R.C.S. and L.S.A.; Accident; Theta; D. E. F.; &c. &c.

Cumberland Advertiser, Australasian, Lincolnshire Chronicle, Surrey Comet, Trelawny (Jamaica), Tunbridge Wells Journal, Melbourne Argus, Buncorn Guardian, New South Wales Medical Gazette, Australian Medical Journal, Times and Mines (Melbourne), Irish Times, County Union (Jamaica), and Melbourne Daily Telegraph have been received.

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