

## EXCISION OF OBSTRUCTION AT THE NECK OF THE BLADDER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In concluding my Lettsomian Lectures I expressed my regret that time had only permitted me to glance at some of the more salient points of my subject. Much there was that I left undone. I ought, for instance, to have exhibited the *dilatable air tampon*, invented by Bushe, for the arrest of hæmorrhage after lithotomy, and reproduced many years afterwards in THE LANCET by Mr. Browne. I ought to have shown that the lithotrite, recently described by Sir H. Thompson in one of your contemporaries as *new*, was constructed after the principles of Mercier, whose instrument had been introduced by me several years previously in THE LANCET. I ought, further, to have exhibited Mercier's aspirator side by side with Sir H. Thompson's, and pointed out that the latter was but a modification of the former. It will thus be seen that in matters of omission I have been a great offender. I am not unacquainted with Sir H. Thompson's valuable works, and am in particular aware of his criticism on Mercier's operation, but I am also acquainted with Mercier's reply. That surgeon's operation was submitted to the searching investigation of the highest known tribunal—a Commission of the Académie de Médecine, from whose long report this is an extract:—"M. Mercier s'est occupé des maladies de la prostate et notamment des saillies valvulaires qu'amène au col vésical l'hypertrophie de cet organe. .... Il a présenté un instrument fort ingénieux pour en pratiquer l'excision. Les faits nombreux dont votre Commission a été témoin sanctionnent l'importance et l'utilité de ce procédé opératoire" (p. 44). The report of the Commission of the Académie des Sciences was still more flattering. Mercier's operation has recently been described by that distinguished surgeon M. Reliquet, and its indication set forth at p. 458 of his "Traité des Opérations des Voies Urinaires":—"L'excision est indiquée quand la rétention étant complète, le malade éprouve de grandes difficultés à se sonder, ou ne peut plus le faire. La disparition de la saillie contre laquelle la sonde de gomme vient heurter est un résultat immédiat et des plus importants." Much more I could add, but I think I have produced sufficient evidence to enable your readers to form a correct opinion on the merits of Sir H. Thompson's reclamation presented by Mr. Browne.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Portman-square, June 8th, 1880.

W. F. TEEVAN.

## TREATMENT OF CANCER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I notice in THE LANCET of June 5th a paragraph that Drs. Simpson and Macdonald "have stated that in their hands Chian turpentine, as yet, had not been productive of benefit when used in cases of uterine cancer." I presume that the cases in which the remedy was used were treated in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. If such be the case, I may be allowed to state that I have every reason to believe that the drug used for some time in that institution was not genuine Chian turpentine. Within the last two or three weeks, however, from a specimen that I have seen, it is probable that a drug of a better quality is being used, although undoubtedly adulterated with some other resin. Considering the short time that the latter has been in use, comment is unnecessary. I may add that in my hands the most satisfactory results continue to be produced by the true remedy in cancer of various organs.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

Birmingham, June 7th, 1880.

JOHN CLAY.

## FILTERING MATERIALS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A paragraph from *The Times* has been going the round of the papers concerning my report on Filtering materials. That paragraph is a misleading one, and does not give a fair account of the conclusions arrived at. The experiments were made to ascertain if the new material carferal was sufficiently good as a filtering substance to

justify its adoption for service purposes, and for that purpose it was tried against spongy iron and silicated carbon. All three were found good filtering media, but the balance was rather in favour of the carferal and of the spongy iron. Indeed, the excellence of the latter material was never questioned. The carferal seemed, however, more practically convenient for the public service. For ordinary purposes the spongy iron still remains one of the best filters in the market.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

F. DE CHAUMONT.

Netley, June 8th, 1880.

## NAVAL MEDICAL SERVICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The usual advertisement appears from the Admiralty informing young medical men that their services are required for commissions in the Medical Department of the Royal Navy. It does not therefore seem as if any action was about to be taken on the Report of the Committee which has just sat to inquire into the disabilities of the service, and it is as well they should be told that the circular printed for their guidance is a snare, and that instead of medical officers having choice of cabins according to relative rank a case now presents itself where a cabin is being specially built on board a frigate refitting at one of the ports for the chaplain, an officer of only three years' service, and twenty years junior to the fleet surgeon, who still is allotted the same accommodation as the junior lieutenant, a young man of twenty-three years of age. This is the injustice medical men are invited to submit to.

Your obedient servant,

June 8th, 1880.

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## SEA-WATER FROM LOWESTOFT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I observe in your issue of last week you hint that the sea-water which is being conveyed by this Company may perhaps be obtained from the harbour or from off the Ness, both of which places, you say, are contaminated by sewage from the town.

I am instructed by my Directors to state that the water is obtained from neither of those places, but from a point about half way down the new arm which is being added to the North Pier. This point is outside the harbour, and was selected by the company's engineer as being the best for obtaining a pure supply.

You also suggest that tinned water may not be good. My Directors admit that, under given circumstances, this may be so, but the water *ex* Lowestoft is in tins a few hours only, and not long enough, they are advised, to be affected.

My Directors, however, think that experience may show some other material to be better than tin. We first experimented with earthenware vessels covered with wicker-work, but had to give them up on account of their weight. Then we took to tin; and now we are having made, for experimental purposes, vessels of papier-mâché, of wood, and of glass encased in wicker.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Great Eastern Railway, Secretary's Office,  
June 8th, 1880.

J. HADFIELD.

## PARIS.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE difference of opinion between the Faculty of Medicine and the Ministry seems to be now smoothed over. The project of creating a professorship of Pathological Anatomy has been abandoned in favour of a histological laboratory which will be directed by one of the *agrégés*, who will be styled "Directeur des Travaux Anato-mo-pathologiques" and rank with the already existing director of anatomical studies. Having been unsuccessful in his endeavour to create this professorship for himself, M. Cornil has withdrawn from the candidature altogether, and the new appointment will probably be bestowed upon M. Cadiat, who is already well known, at least in France, for his microscopical labours.