

at large to the objects of this Association, and, further to observe that while in nearly every other part of London a serious epidemic of scarlet fever has been raging, in these two parishes, which contain a population of 60,000, the number of cases notified to the Society have barely exceeded the average of the last four years; and, as far as the above parishes are concerned, there has been really no epidemic of scarlet fever or other infectious disease.

In the last six months of 1886 thirty-three cases of infectious disease came under the notice of the Society's officers, and in the five months from June 29th up to date the number has been thirty-nine. Now, in the absence of all compulsory notification, these figures may appear to have little value; but really the success of the Society has been so great, and has so enlisted the sympathy and co-operation of the medical men resident in the district, that practically the notification of all infectious diseases is immediately communicated to the Society.

We have also the cordial co-operation of the medical officer of health and his sanitary officers, who inform us of every case that comes under their official cognisance; and in return we take immediate steps for disinfecting the infected house, removing in the meantime, if necessary, the healthy occupants to our sanitary house, at 1, Edward-street, Vincent-square, while the process of disinfection is being carried out. This is done effectively by our nurse and indefatigable lady manager, Miss Stevenson, who seal up the infected house or dwelling room for at least twelve hours and burn sulphur cakes. All the bedding and clothing, of course, is opened and exposed to the fumes. As a matter of fact, in almost every case Miss Stevenson, by judicious reasoning and persuasion, induces the parents or friends to consent to the removal of the sufferer to the fever hospital, and I am happy to say that, mainly owing to the good work of this Society, the opposition to the Bill for the Compulsory Notification of Infectious Disease has practically died out amongst the tradesmen and shopkeepers in this district, so much so that last week the Sanitary Committee of the Westminster District Board of Works, on the invitation of the Medical Officers of Health Association and the vestry of Kensington, decided to petition the Government to bring in this Bill. It appears certain that in the next Parliamentary session this question will be effectually dealt with, and I cannot but feel proud that in this district we have, so to speak, inserted the thin edge of the wedge, and taken the first step in practically testing the machinery which must be set in motion when this Bill becomes law.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

THOS. BOND, F.R.C.S.,

Member of the Sanitary Committee of the Westminster Board of Works.

The Sanctuary, Westminster, Nov. 28th, 1887.

* * * The objects of the Westminster Sanitary Aid Association are to provide female sanitary visitors to teach the practice of disinfection, to promote the removal of infectious cases to hospital, to assist, when local circumstances permit, in the isolation of the sick in their own homes, and, further, to watch over houses in which infectious disease has recently appeared. The Association also aids in the nursing of the sick, in the prevention of attendance at school of children likely to convey infection, in procuring the sanitary improvement of houses in which are found conditions prejudicial to health, and, finally, in enlisting the co-operation of all existing sanitary agencies in the prevention of infectious disease.—ED. L.

SIR JAMES PAGET'S "MORTON LECTURE" ON CANCER AND CANCEROUS DISEASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the discussion on Cancer at the Pathological Society in 1873 Sir James Paget stated that since his practice had become exclusively, or almost exclusively private, one in every three was the proportion of instances in which it was possible to discover a history of cancer in the family of his cancerous patients.

The report of the Collective Investigation Committee on Cancer of the Breast shows that 210 returns contained

definite statements as to the heredity of cancer. Of these 116 were to the effect that there was no family history of cancer, while in 68 cancer had occurred in other members of the patient's family; the proportion is therefore more than one in three.¹

From a large number of cases of cancer which I have collected in hospital and private practice, I find the proportion of cases with a family history of cancer is slightly below one in four cases, and in several cases several members in the same family were affected with the disease. Of two of the most striking cases, one was that of a man aged sixty-one, who died of cancer of the tongue, in which the lymphatic glands in the neck were extensively involved. His father died of cancer of the penis, aged sixty-three; his uncle (father's brother) died of cancer of the tongue, aged sixty-three; his father's sister died of cancer of the breast, aged sixty-five; his mother also died of cancer of the uterus. The other case was that of a gentleman who died of a malignant nasal growth; one sister died of cancer of the breast, and another of cancer of the stomach; these three died within a period of fourteen weeks.

The further experience of Sir James Paget evidently has not shaken his belief in the constitutional origin of cancer, or that it is a blood disease and probably of micro-parasitic origin. I have always contended, and the results of my investigation, so far as they have gone, support my contention, that to satisfactorily account for the occurrence of cancer in any individual two factors must be present: the one, as Sir James Paget describes it, general or diffused in a morbid material in the blood; the other local, in some part with which the material produces disease.

No surgeon doubts that the development of malignant disease is nearly always due to local irritation of the part affected; but to prove that the local irritation is the actual cause of the malignant growth, I submit that the same irritation existing in another individual of similar age &c. should produce the same result in the majority, if not in all, cases. This we know is not the fact. What explanation can we give, then, to account for the disease developing in one case and not in the other? I contend there can be but one reasonable explanation, and that is: in the one case the soil is adapted to the growth of cancer—i.e., that there is some morbid condition of the blood which renders the individual liable to the disease; while in the other case there is no such condition of the blood.

The case reported by Mr. Jennings in your last week's issue, in my opinion, illustrates this in a peculiar manner, as it is most rare to find cancer existing symmetrically as he has depicted in any one individual; and while the same cause of irritation might have caused the disease on either side of his patient's face, yet I doubt if such would have occurred had there not been some marked condition of the blood existing.

One word with regard to the treatment of cancer with Chian turpentine. I have given this drug an extensive trial in numerous cases of cancer of the breast, tongue, and uterus. Notwithstanding the patients took this drug on exactly the same lines as laid down by Mr. Clay, I have not seen the slightest good effect in any case of cancer of either the breast or tongue. In some of the cases of cancer of the uterus the patients have expressed themselves as free from pain, and the offensive smell has been lessened; but in no case have I seen the disease cured or otherwise improved. I hope, however, to report on the cases treated by me at the Cancer Hospital by this drug more fully at a future date.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

F. BOWREMAN JESSETT, F.R.C.S. Eng.

Upper Wimpole-street, W.

THE TREATMENT OF CANCER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your issue of the 3rd inst., Dr. Elder of Nottingham, referring to the treatment of cancer by Chian turpentine, says that "seven years ago Professor Clay gave to the profession the welcome intelligence that at last a specific cure for cancer had been found in Chian turpentine." He proceeds to assert that "no remedy has had a fairer trial at the hands of his *confrères*, or [has] more grievously disappointed them." As a mere matter of justice I am bound to

¹ Vide Report, Brit. Med. Jour., ol. i., p. 37. 1887.

traverse these assertions. I did not declare the discovery a "specific cure" for cancer. I stated in my first communication to THE LANCET that, as the result of experiments carefully made and continued for a considerable time, I had found Chian turpentine beneficial in certain cases of cancer—uterine cases were those especially referred to—in a degree far greater than in the case of any other means then adopted. I said that as the result of using the drug, under the conditions I then specified, the progress of the disease had been arrested, hæmorrhage had ceased, pain had been alleviated, and the growth had finally disappeared. I supported these statements by details of cases, and upon them I based the conclusion that an agent had been discovered by which this terrible malady might be held in check in a manner hitherto un hoped for. In a later paper, I stated my belief, founded upon longer experience, that it was possible to formulate in certain cases a plan for the treatment of cancer which would result in a cure. This conclusion I again supported by the citation and description of cases. Still later, in your journal of the 19th of November of this year, I gave details of other cases which supported my view; and I have also received independent testimony from medical men who have tried the remedy or have watched its trial, and have acknowledged similar results.

To speak of the proclamation of a "specific cure" when the claim put forth was tentative and experimental, and was from time to time supported by the publication of cases open to inquiry, is nothing but an abuse of terms; and, in the presence of the evidence of benefit referred to, it is equally an abuse of terms to speak of the "almost unanimous condemnation" of the use of Chian turpentine in cancer. I have hundreds of letters from medical men and their patients testifying to the great benefit experienced from the treatment. As to the fair trial of the alleged resulting grievous disappointment, I have to say that it is useless to attempt to do what many of those who condemn the treatment have done—namely, to apply it without reference to the conditions which, according to my experience, are necessary to success. I have invariably declared that to be of value the treatment must be adopted in an early stage of the disease, that it must be persistently continued, and that it must be enforced with due regard to all the circumstances of particular cases. It is obviously unjust to the treatment to have recourse to it in advanced stages when, as some medical men have admitted, "the end is near," and then to expect beneficial effects which are obtainable only in conditions affording reasonable hope of advantage. Such an assumed trial is not a fair one, and any condemnation based upon it is valueless. In the face of such statements I must be pardoned if I prefer to adhere to the evidence of my own experience; and here I affirm that, referring especially to uterine cases, only twice out of numerous examples have I seen a cloaca develop when the drug has been properly used, both as to method and time. That, as shown by the Middlesex Hospital Reports, such patients have died from other causes I do not contest, and it is obvious that fatal results occur when the use of the Chian turpentine is complicated and hindered by the use of opium and its derivatives. I cannot too often or too strongly repeat that to give it full and fair effect the remedy must be employed under the conditions which alone in my experience render it operative. If medical men will resort to the remedy at an early period, will persist in its use under apparent difficulties, will avoid opiates, and will give increasing doses, I am convinced that the reported failures will be replaced by records of numerous and most gratifying successes; but if success is to be obtained, the conditions essential to progress must be observed. With reference to your own observations on the subject, I have to thank you for their courteous and considerate tone, prompted by a manifest desire only to arrive at the truth. That is my own desire. I shrink from no test of the cases I have recorded, and from no method of inquiry based upon sound principles and controlled by adequate conditions. I should welcome such an inquiry, but it is obvious that the claims of a large private practice and detachment from hospital work prevent me from conducting investigations such as those by M. Pasteur with regard to hydrophobia. I can only continue my own investigations as cases occur in my practice. These, by their results, confirm my original conclusions in an increasing degree, and I shall, as they progress, be willing to communicate to the profession both the results and the details of the cases upon which they are established. If others will, under the same

conditions, adopt the course I have recommended, I do not doubt that their conclusions will confirm my own.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Birmingham, Dec. 6th, 1887.

JOHN CLAY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Mr. Jennings, in your last number, commenting on Sir James Paget's "Morton Lecture," says: "Instances in which the disease [cancer] has been cured are familiar to most practitioners." As I read Sir James Paget's conclusion, it is that in his vast experience he has never yet met an instance of cure. During forty years, in an almost unlimited field for observation, it has never been my lot to see one. If Mr. Jennings or Mr. Clay will lay before the profession a solitary instance in which any cancer infiltrating the textures immediately around its origin, or contamination of the adjacent glands, has been cured by any mode of treatment—not excepting the use of the knife—a result will have been attained not hitherto acknowledged by pathologists. At present I am unable to regard the cases referred to and published by either of these gentlemen as being instances of cancer.

To Mr. Clay an appeal has been made both by Mr. Lawson Tait and myself, as the following extracts will prove:—

"Let him, Professor Clay, submit his cases to his colleagues or other competent observers, that the actual existence of cancer may be beyond dispute; let him cure a single case, and he will have no reason to complain of the congratulations he will receive from the profession in Birmingham or elsewhere."¹

"I attended at the Queen's Hospital, at Professor Clay's request, and was shown by him three or four cases of undoubted cancer in the breast in various stages of progress, and all of which were being treated by Chian turpentine. I was to see them again in six weeks, and the time having expired I wrote to Professor Clay on the subject. I have his letter by me, dated Feb. 1884, in which he tells me the cases were otherwise ill, and not to be seen, save by possible postponement; and this is all I have been able to gather of Professor Clay's treatment by Chian turpentine of his own cases, submitted for inspection."²

Surely there is no time like the present for the "careful re-examination of all the evidence Mr. Clay can produce." These are your editorial words in considering his recent cases. Other correspondents ask for a "tribunal" of inquiry,³ whose judgment the profession would recognise. It cannot, I venture to think, be a moment too soon to arrest the further administration of a nauseous drug in cases already pronounced hopeless, or to promote its administration by every means in our power.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Birmingham, Dec. 6th, 1887.

OLIVER PEMBERTON.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I agree with Mr. George Elder's letter in your last issue, that the claims Mr. Clay makes for Chian turpentine ought not to pass unchallenged by those who differ from him. I have tried the treatment in six cases of uterine cancer and three of cancer of the tongue, and am giving it one more trial at the present time in cancer of the tongue and throat, but as yet I have not seen the slightest benefit derived from the treatment.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Torquay, Dec. 1887.

W. T. BOREHAM, M.D.

THE DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC HEALTH OF THE APOTHECARIES' SOCIETY OF LONDON.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As being directly and mainly responsible for the wording of Section 21 of the Medical Act, 1886, which deals exclusively with the registration of diplomas in sanitary science, I would like to state that it was never intended that the Apothecaries' Society and Hall should be permitted to participate in having their diplomas in public health registered—i.e., if these bodies in the future desired to grant such,—and the wildest interpretation of the said section cannot be made to include these bodies; therefore I, for one,

¹ THE LANCET, Oct. 23rd, 1880. Letter from Mr. Tait.

² The writer's Ingleby Lecture on Cancer in the Female Breast, 1884.

³ Mr. Elder's letter, THE LANCET, Dec. 3rd.