

He had seen no evil result from this use of the paint. But in Wood and Bache's "Dispensatory of the United States," eleventh edition, 1858, p. 601, the recommendation of Professor Gross, confirmed by Dr. Henry, is referred to, and it is added that a case of colica pictonum from the white lead treatment of a severe scald was reported by Dr. Kunkler in the *North American Medico-Chirurgical Review*, July, 1857, p. 605. I am, Sir, yours truly,
London, March 10th, 1883. W. JULIUS MICKLE.

THE MEDICAL AND SANITARY DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN STEAMSHIPS AND THE POSI- TION OF SHIP-SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Fourteen months have passed since first I called attention to this subject, and nearly three since an unequivocal resolution was unanimously adopted by the Manchester Medico-Ethical Association, and statements were published over my name of a nature so serious that none can pretend to regard them as unworthy of notice. These statements have been amply confirmed by the highest authorities. The medical journals are unanimous and urgent in warning voyagers of their danger, and demanding reforms unquestionably necessary in the position and status of surgeons employed on passenger ships. The daily press also, widely recognising the grave public importance of the subject, has ably supported our views and seconded our demands. My statements and statistics have not been questioned, nor has anyone ventured to dispute the momentous conclusions that have been drawn from them. It may, therefore, be assumed that upon all sides is admitted the truth of what has been asserted, and the justice and expediency of the remedial measures proposed; and this being so, it may fairly be hoped that those responsible will need no further stimulus to institute reforms upon the lines indicated by those best qualified to judge. I wish, however, in prospect of soon leaving England to reside in New York, to repeat that I am now able and ready to prove every statement which has been advanced by me, if called upon to do so by any responsible person.

Should the American authorities insist upon every vessel bringing emigrants to the United States carrying an independent medical superintendent, appointed at Washington, responsible to the United States Government alone, and assured by it of the fullest powers in all matters affecting the health of the passengers, such a proceeding could not be questioned upon grounds of either justice or expediency; indeed, it would but follow the precedent of our own colonies, which have long since declared this the only guarantee that our own passenger laws should be faithfully observed throughout the voyage. That the American Government has full command of the trade, and ample power to legislate as it may please for vessels of any nationality carrying emigrants to its ports, is well understood by Liverpool shipowners, and has been unmistakably asserted by successive Acts of Congress, by none more emphatically than by the ill-advised and, in many respects, ridiculous law of 1852. So far as I am aware the principal Liverpool companies, although naturally unwilling to increase expenditure, and objecting to a "marine medical service" not immediately subject to themselves, are prepared to meet this matter in an honourable and straightforward spirit. It has, however, come to my knowledge that one company has been so puerile as to demand from each of its surgeons a letter declaring himself satisfied with the existing state of affairs.

I have asserted that the mortality on Atlantic steamers is excessive; that the sanitary arrangements are, without exception, far from perfect, often very defective; that the medical officers are appointed without due regard to age, qualifications, professional experience, or character; that they are denied such independent authority in sanitary matters as is essential to their efficiency as sanitary officers; that their responsibility in these matters is entirely undefined; that they are not allowed the requisite assistance for the proper care and treatment of the sick; that the hospitals are usually insufficient, often ill placed, and occasionally taken from the control of the surgeon, and devoted to other purposes than the accommodation of the sick; that the medical officer is generally allotted quarters without regard

to his health, personal comfort, or the possibility of efficiently discharging his professional duties; that his tenure of office is uncertain at best, and often dependent on the mere caprice of other officials; and lastly, that his remuneration, on a par with the cook, steward, and fifth engineer, is monstrously unjust. If this company is anxious to do battle, let it produce a surgeon who will undertake to disprove these statements, even one who will stake his knowledge of naval hygiene upon the perfect sanitary condition of his own ship. I shall be prepared to meet him.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. A. IRWIN, M.A. Cantab., M.D. Dub., &c.,
Late Hon. Physician to the Manchester Southern Hospital.
Regent-street, London, March 6th, 1883.

THE OPINION OF A "DENTAL SURGEON."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I cannot allow the letter of Mr. Hamilton Cartwright in THE LANCET of to-day to pass without some notice. To use his words, "there are other readers of your journal who might think you classed this qualified surgeon who is practising dental surgery" with other qualified surgeons who are practising the same specialty—dentists who, in addition to their mere surgical or dental diplomas, are either F.R.S., F.R.C.S., M.D., L.R.C.P., or M.A.; thus, by virtue of the simple M.R.C.S. obtained by him in 1867, "placing himself nominally on a footing with the best educated in the profession."

With regard to the Association of Dental "Surgeons," your readers may like to know that they have held no meeting at their rooms for over six months; that for the present they content themselves with dining together once a year, paying an annual sum for their brass plate to remain on the Medical Society's door.

As to the Dentists Act being a "monstrous" one, the replies of the President of the above Association, as its mouthpiece in August, 1881, before the Commission to inquire into the Medical Act, show that ultimately the profession will be raised by it.

Questioned by Mr. Simon, the President of the Association thus replied: "6434 (Mr. Simon). 'And yet you think the Act has been of advantage, and is of advantage to the profession of dentistry?' 'I think it will be hereafter. At the present moment I can hardly say, having regard to the mixed people that are registered, that the profession is at present raised by it. I believe that it will undoubtedly be ultimately raised by it as soon as those men of whom I speak have in the course of time died out.' 6435. 'You are of course familiar with the fact that in all analogous legislation (for instance, on the passing of the Apothecaries Act in 1815), whenever a first register has had to be made, persons already *bonâ fide* in the position for which provision has had to be made have been recognised as being entitled to registration?' 'I quite admit the whole difficulty.' 6436. 'So that, in fact, unless that had been done, a first register could not have come into existence?' 'No, but I think it might have been a little more exclusive.'"

It is undeniable that there are undesirable "registered" dentists, but I deny that the "dental shops" were called into existence by the Dentists Act, as they existed before, and would have continued to exist had this Act not been passed, which provides for the compulsory education and registration of all dentists or dental-surgeons after 1878; so that in future educated men will not so disgrace themselves.

In the annotation on page 779 of your journal reference is made to dentist-druggists keeping "doctors' shops" and prescribing their own drugs; the mere name of dental-surgeon has no influence, for poor people have always gone, and will always go, to the "chemist" to be doctored, unless some change is made in the Medical Act itself.

Now, as to the *right* of the dentist to use the term "surgeon" in conjunction with "dentist" or "dental," it has been established, first by immemorial custom, then by law (by the judgment of Lord Chief Justice Cockburn and Mr. Justice Crompton in the case of Ladd v. Gould, Court of Queen's Bench, 1860), and the Dentists Act did not take it away; and the commissioners referred to above in the Report, section vi., article 63, said—"The Association of Dental Surgeons practising dental surgery appeared before us by their president, asking that qualified dentists not on the Medical Register should be prevented from styling

themselves 'surgeon-dentists.' *We do not see our way to make such recommendation.*" It is not generally realised that the curriculum for the licence in dental surgery is three-fifths medical and surgical and two-fifths specially dental. This fact alone would justify the use of the term dental "surgeon," did it need justification.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Brook-street, March 10th, 1883. S. J. HUTCHINSON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Mr. Hamilton Cartwright's remarks under this heading in THE LANCET of to-day are based upon an error, an error inexcusable in one who sets himself up as an instructor in dental politics; for it has been exposed over and over again in your columns, and must be known to everyone duly acquainted with the Dentists Act. Of the actual provisions of this Act, of which he confidently speaks, and which he tries to discredit, Mr. Cartwright shows himself ignorant. The Act did not, as he alleges, confer upon the inferior practitioners, of whom he complains, the right to assume the title "surgeon," or "surgeon-dentist." These men have no more right now to that title, or to any other medical title they may choose to assume, than they had before the passing of the Act. All that the Act did in this regard was to compel every individual in practice as a dentist to register; and it provided that in future no one should be allowed to enter the profession of dentistry unless he possessed at least a recognised diploma in dental surgery.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Wimpole-street, March 10th, 1883. HENRY SEWILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—When a "professor" presumes to disparage a witness in a civil trial, and implies an illegal assumption of the title "dental surgeon," it is expected that he has at least ascertained all the facts of the case. It was, of course, beneath the dignity of a "professor" to examine the Dental Register, or an authorised list of licentiates in dental surgery, to learn, if possible, the name and qualification of the said witness. It was quite enough for this learned dignitary that the witness travelled third-class. To a professional "saloon" passenger it would never occur that there might be exceptional circumstances deciding even an L.D.S. to travel third-class, not as an emigrant, but as a passenger. Allow me, as the witness referred to, to state that I deposed I was a "dental surgeon" simply because I held the diploma of Licentiate in Dental Surgery, Eng. Had my claim to the title "dental surgeon" been questioned, I should have stated the ground of my claim. But I must flatly contradict the scornful assertion of Mr. Cartwright, that "I presumed to offer myself as a medical witness." I was subpoenaed to give evidence in support of a protest signed within four hours by 111 male steerage and third-class passengers on board the *Chimborazo*. Mr. Justice Field narrowed the complaint to the question, "Was the meat served to the third-class passengers putrid, and did the supply of rice and sugar fail?" In the course of my reply to this inquiry, I referred to the fact that on one occasion nearly all the said passengers suffered an acute attack of diarrhoea, caused, I believed, by tainted meat. Mr. Justice Field ruled that this circumstance lay outside the inquiry in hand, and counsel for the defendant chaffingly observed, "A dental surgeon is not a judge of that." That Judge Field refused my evidence on the ground that I was a dental surgeon is an insinuation I had not heard or met with until I read Mr. Cartwright's letter in your issue of the 10th. Permit me to regret the spirit of that letter, and to add that I was, and am, as much disgusted with the admission of an indiscriminate host to the Dental Register as the "professor" himself; and also, that I am equally disgusted with the pharisaic pride of those who assume pre-eminence in the domain of dental surgery, solely on the ground that they are "medically qualified," and call themselves, "We who are surgeons!"

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

EDWIN COX,
Licentiate in Dental Surgery of the Royal
College of Surgeons, Eng.

Birmingham, March 10th, 1883.

"REMARKS QUESTIONING THE PROPRIETY
OF INVERTING THE PATIENT IN THE
CHLOROFORM SYNCOPE."

[A CORRECTION.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to apologise to your readers for a very stupid mistake which I find I have made in writing the above short paper. I there recommend the patient to be placed in "the prone position," when I meant in reality that he should be laid quite flat. In almost every such case the patient is already in the supine position, and I should object on many grounds to his being turned on his face. Perhaps, therefore, your readers will kindly read *horizontal* instead of *prone* in the paper referred to, though *supine* and *horizontal* would still more accurately express what was intended.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
EBEN. WATSON, M.D.

LIVERPOOL.

(From an occasional Correspondent.)

THE donations received or promised towards the rebuilding of the Royal Infirmary now exceed the substantial sum of £80,000, nearly all of which has been raised since the appeal made at the annual meeting in January last. It is certain, therefore, that the total sum required—viz., £100,000, will soon be reached, and that in the course of a few years this city will possess, in addition to its other attractions, the first hospital in the provinces. The present building was erected sixty years ago on a site which was then almost suburban, and in a style of architecture which was then considered the model. But now the site is surrounded on all sides by buildings, and the infirmary itself has been so added to and altered that it is difficult to realise what its original appearance must have been. There could hardly be a greater contrast than between the old wards and those of more recent erection, especially the Thornton wards, completed in 1865. An idea of the enormous strides which sanitary science and architecture have made, as shown in the erection of hospitals, is afforded by visits to the Royal Infirmary and to the Royal Southern Hospital completed in 1872. The lofty, light, and well-ventilated wards of these days are so totally different from those of sixty years ago, that it would appear as if we had reached the perfection of hospital building; and yet so continuous is the march of improvement that it may be safely asserted, and without any invidious comparisons, that some recent modern improvements over this most recent hospital erection will be apparent in the new Royal Infirmary. Additional beds are needed for medical cases, many applicants having to be refused weekly, indeed almost daily; and the resident medical and nursing staff require much better accommodation than they have at present. It is to be hoped that every advantage will be taken of the present opportunity to erect a building which shall be in all respects a model for future hospitals and infirmaries.

The controversy respecting the notification of infectious diseases still continues, and threatens to become a burning question. Perhaps the best solution of the difficulty would be for the public to take up the matter and discuss it, with a view to settling the question which lies at the bottom of all the difficulty—viz., Are the general public willing that their private medical attendants shall divulge the fact of any of their patients being infected with infectious diseases? If it is an advantage to the medical officer of health to be informed of the foci of disease, it must apply everywhere—to merchant prince as well as to pauper, to the flourishing tradesman as well as to the mechanic. Are all householders agreed on this point?

The weather here has been intensely cold, the thermometer showing a tendency to remain at the freezing-point, and even below this. Whether it has caused an increased mortality or not remains to be seen.

The sad and fatal accident to Dr. A. C. Hughes is another instance of the dangers incurred by medical practitioners whilst driving through crowded streets. In this case a child's hoop ran against the horse's hind legs, and caused the accident which was fatal to Dr. Hughes, his servant narrowly