

4. Fermentation test. A positive result confirms the presence of sugar. A negative result may be due to presence of sugar and formalin, to the presence of formalin alone, or to the absence of both substances.—I am, etc.,

Dublin, Oct. 17th.

W. D. O'KELLY, M.B., D.P.H.

THE VALUE OF TEETH IN THE HUMAN ECONOMY.

SIR,—The paper by Mr. J. G. Turner in your issue of September 17th is scarcely likely to help his professional brethren, and to the lay mind it is very misleading. Mr. Turner may have proved to his own satisfaction that *even* in children teeth are non-essential to nutrition, but to the observer of Nature his conclusions are erroneous and somewhat farcical. There is a trite saying, "An empty house is better than a bad tenant." It would, however, be difficult to prove to landlords that tenants are not essential. Unfortunately we find it necessary to deprive children—as well as adults—of teeth in order to save their lives, but to draw conclusions as to the *necessity* of teeth is as wise as discussing the utility of other organs because at times they are sacrificed for the body's welfare.

It is a wholesome rule in surgery to save as much of a limb as possible, and the dental student imbibes this teaching from start to finish. Any departure from this doctrine is distinctly dangerous.

The inspection of teeth by the school medical officers in more than three hundred educational centres renders it more than ever necessary that the medical students should know how teeth can be *saved* as well as lost. This, coupled with the fact that teeth are being sacrificed all over the country by men who have no hospital training, is my reason for suggesting that Mr. Turner's paper is far more likely to do harm than good.—I am, etc.,

R. DENISON PEDLEY, F.R.C.S. Edin., L.D.S. Eng.,
Consulting Dental Surgeon to the Evelina Hospital
for Sick Children, Southwark.

London, S.E., Oct. 17th.

IODINE AS A DISINFECTANT.

SIR,—The use of iodine as a disinfectant of the skin has, I think, a wider application than has been alluded to in recent discussions on its use for this purpose. A rapid and, judging by results, an effective sterilization of the skin can be secured by first painting the site of the proposed incision with the liq. iodi fort, B.P., and then washing this off with sulphurous acid.

Such a method has the advantage of being equally applicable to the hands of the operator (where gloves are not used), and after a preliminary scrub with soap and water, seems likely to prove as effective as a more elaborate ritual, not always easily obtainable in emergency practice.

Painting the affected parts with tincture of iodine and a subsequent bleaching with sulphurous acid has, in my experience, proved a very rapid and effective, if somewhat painful, treatment, not only for impetigo, but also, when several times repeated, for syphilis.

The secondary circle of small boils, which so frequently follow a larger boil, can be avoided if the skin surrounding the primary boil is treated at intervals in a similar manner.—I am, etc.,

Old Hill, Staffs, Oct. 11th.

THOS. E. MITCHELL, M.B.

THE FIRST OPERATION UNDER ETHER IN EUROPE.

SIR,—I am collecting materials for a description of the first operation under ether in Europe—that performed by Robert Liston on December 21st, 1846—and should be glad to hear from any surviving witness. At present Lord Lister is the only one known to me. The dresser, whose notes of the case are now before me, was Edward Palmer.—I am, etc.,

London, W., Oct. 15th.

F. WILLIAM COCK, M.D., F.S.A.

HOW TO USE THE "JOURNAL."

SIR,—As I am one of those who adopt the cutting out from the JOURNAL the articles that appeal to me as being useful in my practice, might I suggest that the Manager ought to issue an album to suit them, as I am sure that a great number adopt this system?—I am, etc.,

Louth, Oct. 11th.

THOMAS CONNOLLY.

The Services.

ROYAL NAVY MEDICAL SERVICE.

DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES AT HASLAR.

ON Friday, October 7th, the course of instruction to the acting surgeons, R.N., was brought to a close and the prizes were distributed by Admiral Sir John Durnford, K.C.B., D.S.O., who was accompanied by Sir James Porter, K.C.B., the Medical Director-General of the Navy. Luncheon was first served in the Medical Mess, and the prizes were distributed in the Medical Library in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir A. G. Curzon-Howe, Lady Curzon-Howe, his staff and a large number of the medical officers of his fleet who were stationed in Portsmouth. Inspector-General T. D. Gimlette, C.B., having read a list of the successful candidates, the prizes were then presented by Sir John Durnford, the awards being as follows:

The gold medal for the highest aggregate of marks at the London and Haslar examinations: Surgeon W. H. King of University College Hospital.

The silver medal for the second highest aggregate: Surgeon H. E. R. Stephens of Manchester University.

Hygiene Group: Surgeon C. F. Sankey of St. Thomas's Hospital.

Tropical Medicine Group: Surgeon J. S. Ward of Edinburgh.

Analysis Group: Surgeon H. E. R. Stephens of Manchester University.

The following is a list of the marks and seniority of the candidates:

	Marks.
1. Surgeon King of University College Hospital ...	3,625
2. Surgeon Stephens of Manchester University ...	3,558
3. Surgeon Ward of Edinburgh ...	3,539
4. Surgeon Alton of St. Thomas's Hospital ...	3,496
5. Surgeon Laughlin of London Hospital ...	3,430
6. Surgeon Sankey of St. Thomas's Hospital... ..	3,419
7. Surgeon Horgan of Queen's College, Cork ...	3,381
8. Surgeon Mitchell of Guy's Hospital ...	3,292
9. Surgeon MacEwan of London Hospital ...	3,240
10. Surgeon Joy of Belfast ...	3,208
11. Surgeon Paterson of Edinburgh University ...	3,147
12. Surgeon Caldwell of Belfast ...	3,134
13. Surgeon Markham of Durham University... ..	3,045

Surgeon Biddulph, owing to illness, was unable to complete the examination.

Admiral Sir John Durnford delivered the following address:

I understand that on this occasion I am expected to say a few words, and in the first place, on behalf of those who have been good enough to attend this prize distribution, and in my own name, let me offer our congratulations to the medical officers who have now successfully qualified for commissions in His Majesty's navy. I can assure them of the high esteem in which the naval medical branch is held by the whole service, and also by those who control it. You have, at a considerable pecuniary outlay, selected a profession of great importance, and a responsibility devolves on you which is not surpassed, and rarely equalled, in any other calling. You will have to depend mainly on your own judgement and skill, to act promptly, generally without any one to consult as to the steps to be taken. So far you are circumstanced as many of your professional brethren who practise on shore.

But you, gentlemen, have undertaken a further responsibility, that of accepting a definite share in the defence of the Empire, by joining His Majesty's navy, a profession which is rightly and justly esteemed of incalculable importance, as the safety of the Empire depends on the strength and efficiency of its fleet. It should be your aim throughout your career, by careful study, research, and practice, to keep abreast of the times in your profession, and to maintain the personnel of the fleet in the highest state of physical fitness reasonably possible. You should remember the prospect of ultimate success will be much greater if the occasional somewhat monotonous periods that occur during peace are spent in preparation for the supreme moment. I have, during my experience, found the advice of the medical officer of great value in the conduct of the service. I have always considered him one of my most trusted advisers, and this confidence has never been misplaced.

It is desirable you should pay much attention to the training and advancement of the sick-berth staff, on whom much depends. Encourage their attention to the sick, their industry, and laudable ambition.