"MEDICAL SOCIETIES AND HOMŒOPATHS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I read your leading article on the above subject in THE LANCET for April 13th, but did not know that you expected or would admit a reply to your "arguments" until I saw in to-day's issue that you apparently expected such a reply. As I happen to be a member of the Pathological Society of London of more than forty years' standing, I suppose I may consider your article includes a reference to my membership in this society. I may say that I joined this society in order to keep myself *au courant* with the progress of pathological knowledge, and not with any view of enlightening its members on any peculiar pathological theories or doctrines held by the school of homœopathy, for I may add that our school has no peculiar pathological theories or doctrines, and that the pathology we profess is precisely that taught in the ordinary medical schools. Such being the case, I do not see how my peculiar therapeutic views should disqualify me from being a member of a pathological society which is of no therapeutical faith. I do not happen to be a member of any society of general medicine which has to do with therapeutics, the homœopath societies proper being quite sufficient for my wants. But as according to the confessions of your most eminent men the therapeutics of the non-homœopathists are in a most imperfect and unsatisfactory state, I do not think it would do the general profession any harm, but probably much good, if they had in their societies members who are conversant with the reformed therapeutics of homœopathy. As we observe with amusement the frequent recommendations in THE LANCET and other medical periodicals, as newly-discovered remedies, of medicines that have long been used in our school, and for precisely the same affections as they are employed in homœopathy, it might on the whole be better that you should obtain a knowledge of these medicines and their therapeutic uses at first hand, from those who have long employed them, than have them introduced into your practice in the indirect and roundabout manner they are at present. To object to us as "irregular practitioners" seems to me to be very absurd, as we are the only medical men who really practise according to a *regula* or rule, and eminent authorities in your school have declared that medicine as they practise it has no principles, and that their treatment is not guided by any rule. I can assure you that those whom you call "homœopaths" are not, as a rule, desirous of joining your therapeutic societies, as they know they would meet with but scant courtesy from the members; nor are we at all desirous of having consultations on medical treatment with adherents of the old school, as we think that our own therapeutic method is infinitely superior to yours, as we are always ready to prove by reasoning and by results.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

R. E. DUDGEON, M.D.,

Member of the Pathological Society, and Consulting Physician to the London Homœopathic Hospital.
Montagu-square, April 27th, 1895.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—On page 1094 of the current number of THE LANCET you say: "If this is the only answer homœopaths can give to our arguments, further remarks on the subject would seem not to be called for." The inference is that if homœopaths have anything further to say you are willing to place it before your readers. I will therefore avail myself of your courtesy and offer a few brief remarks on the subject of your leading article in THE LANCET of April 13th on "Medical Societies and Homœopaths." Allowing for the moment that homœopathy is a delusion, and agreeing fully with your own view that this delusion, however unfortunate it may be, refers only to "the limited department of drug treatment," it is not obvious to those who view the matter from a standpoint other than your own that there is left no common ground between the "homœopath and the general body of the profession." Consequently to refuse to meet "homœopaths" either in "consultation upon an individual case" or at a medical society "in a conference upon any question of scientific interest" appears irrational and illiberal. In these days superstitions die an easy death when once the light of science is allowed fully to shine in upon them. No scientific society has ever investigated the pretensions of homœopathy except such societies as were composed of

medical men already ostracised for having investigated them. To permit its claims to be thoroughly sifted in the light of day would result, if they are fallacious, in their final repudiation in a far shorter time than by any other method. The ever-changing measures and methods of modern therapeutics suggest that some enduring guide to the administration of drugs is at least a *desideratum*. It is claimed by thousands of educated practitioners and teachers of medicine that homœopathy affords such a guide. That it is "partially true" is acknowledged by authorities so high as Lauder Brunton and Sidney Ringer. This being so, the leaders of the general body of the profession are incurring a serious responsibility in declining to investigate a method so promising. That "homœopathy in the strict sense" is extensively practised in this and other countries is a fact of which you appear to be ignorant. That it is in some instances a safe and useful guide to treatment is easy to prove from writings the soundness of which even you yourselves would not question. Just how far it may be trusted is a point which demands a patient and vigorous investigation at the hands of those competent, by education and open-mindedness, to decide. The resources of the learned societies are required for this noble and pressing purpose. A few years devoted to the subject by those possessed of brains and money would suffice to settle the question, to advance therapeutics from a changing art to a stable if juvenile science, and to remove the disgrace of medical schism.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

London, April 29th, 1895.

EDWIN A. NEATBY, M.D.

"HOSPITAL PATIENTS AND IMMORALITY."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reference to the annotation "Hospital Patients and Immorality" in your last issue, with the tenour of which I most fully and heartily concur, permit me to point out that your annotator has been led into error as to the statements attributed to me through trusting to a Sunday contemporary which contained an altogether insufficient and totally unauthorised account of my remarks. The meeting at which I presided was addressed by the Rev. the Marquis of Normanby on the subject of "Temptation and Self-control," with especial reference to impurity. In my chairman's address, after alluding to the importance of the subject and illustrating the need of self-control in the ordinary affairs of physical and social life, one turned to the many forms of want of control which young men were especially prone to develop, prominent among them being impurity, intemperance, gambling, and other such vices, which left their marks not only on the moral but also on the physical nature of those who indulged in them, adding by way of emphasis the statement to which umbrage has been taken, but which referred *not only to the results of impurity* but also to the other excesses to which I had already alluded. To such a statement surely no one can take exception. Moreover, as to statistics, I was most definite in pointing out that none were to hand, and hence my estimate was to be taken with a certain amount of reserve, rather as an impression received from many years of hospital work than as an accurate statement of facts. Under these circumstances I think you will agree with me that the want of accuracy lies not with the most carefully guarded remarks made by myself, but in the incorrect interpretations which have been placed upon them by others and in the want of care evidenced by those who copied such a statement without verifying it.

I am, Sirs, yours obediently,

Welbeck-street, W., April 30th, 1895.

ALBERT CARLESS.

"THE NECESSITY FOR A CENTRAL MEDICAL ORGANISATION."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—When reading my paper on "The Necessity for a Central Medical Organisation" before the Hunterian Society on Wednesday last the time at my disposal did not allow of more than a very brief sketch of the organisation I proposed. It was, I think, generally agreed that an organisation is necessary and that there is no organisation at present which meets the necessities of the profession. As there was a slight misunderstanding about the scheme I suggested

will you allow me to give it a little more in detail? I suggested a coöperative association which embodied the following idea. It consisted, in the first place, of a union of medical societies, whose members supplied the funds—either as shares or as subscriptions guaranteed for a number of years, preferably the former, which are essential, in my opinion, to the success of any undertaking of this nature or with this object. The local organisation of the profession would be carried out by boards in each district, and from these boards delegates would be sent to form the board of directors of the association. This board would therefore be composed of medical men in direct touch with every part of the kingdom. Through it local as well as general unity of action might very well be arrived at. The medical societies of the United Kingdom represent, on the average of the three kingdoms, about 50 per cent. of the medical profession, and might therefore be utilised for the purpose suggested. Such a coöperative association, with money at its command, would be capable of successfully meeting the many lay as well as the so-called charitable competitors we have to contend with. It could cope with the prescribing druggist, with medical aid associations, with the abuses of hospitals and public dispensaries, and with provident dispensaries and their sweating system. I will refer to the method by which it might deal with lay medical aid societies, as this point was especially animadverted upon in the discussion which followed the paper. By the transference from the lay companies to the medical coöperative association of the business of the former, the medical officers now attached by bond or by necessity to them would be freed from lay restraint and from "sweating." This could, I have every reason to believe, be accomplished by the process of underselling them or by buying them out, or by both methods combined, and without much difficulty. I cannot see that this would bring the association into conflict with the tenets of medical etiquette. Obviously, it need not affect the medical officers. One important result of such action would be that insurance societies would be very chary of embarking capital in a business when they knew that they would be systematically undersold to an extent which would cause them to fail to earn a dividend. Such an association as I have suggested would have far more power over its members than any body supported by voluntary contributions. It could unite the existing protection, insurance medical societies &c., and could afford its members exceptional facilities, as in supplying them with drugs, instruments, &c. at manufacturing or greatly reduced rates, 35 per cent. being commonly added to the cost of production.

In conclusion, I shall be happy to hear from any medical men who agree with me as to the necessity for a central medical organisation, and if together we can produce a workable scheme and can start it the amount of time expended on such an object will be well repaid in feeling we have benefited our profession.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
Fellows-road, N.W., April 27th, 1895. F. R. HUMPHREYS.

"THE THERAPEUTICS OF PAPAIN."
To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Younger's article in THE LANCET of April 27th is a most interesting contribution to the therapeutic value of papain. All the cases he relates refer to a functional disturbance of the digestion, and most of them are accompanied by a condition of anæmia. It seems probable that both atonic dyspepsia and gastric ulcer, to which it stands in close relationship, are always connected, either etiologically or consequentially, with an impoverished state of the blood; there is, therefore, in both disorders an urgent demand for such blood tonics as arsenic and iron. In most cases, moreover, pain is a more or less urgent symptom, and for its relief an anodyne is often essential. Dr. Younger recognises all this because in many of his cases he administered iron, though in comparatively small quantities, while in others he resorted to the use of morphia. The papain seems on each occasion to have been ordered in an acid menstruum, and the iron administered separately. If there is great irritability of the stomach any medicinal mixture, from its disagreeable taste, is apt to produce nausea if not actual sickness, while the mineral acids are not always indicated and are sometimes very badly tolerated. In my own experience these difficulties have been overcome by the administration of the required drugs in pill form; and while each case demands a combination suited to its particular

needs it may be of general interest to state that the following formula, when combined with a suitable regimen, has again and again yielded most excellent results:—R Ferri sulph., papain (Finkler), āā gr. ij.; ext. cannab. ind., ext. nuc. vomic., āā gr. ¼; ext. rhei, gr. ½; ft. pil. Sometimes reduced iron suits better than the sulphate, at others arsenic meets the requirements of the case better than nux vomica, and occasionally morphia is more efficacious than cannabis indica; but I am convinced that, apart from these necessary differences in detail, the full value can only be got from papain when it is administered in association with such other medicinal agents as the crying symptoms of each case declare to be essential, and that in a large proportion of deranged stomachs it is best tolerated in the form of a pill. I have repeatedly found the drug disappointing when given alone, but cases such as those reported by Dr. Younger, or those mentioned by myself in your issue of Feb. 9th, strongly proclaim its signal effect when administered under suitable conditions.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully.
Warwick, April 29th, 1895. GUTHRIE RANKIN.

"THE LONDON AND MANCHESTER INDUSTRIAL ASSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED."
To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I was very much surprised at the letter of "One Interested" in THE LANCET of April 20th, as his experience of the London and Manchester Industrial Assurance Company has been so very different from that of others who have written to you concerning it; but I am confident he would have had a different tale to tell had he kept an accurate record of the medicines supplied to his patients during the year. As it is he only "estimates" the medicines supplied; consequently neither he nor anyone else can definitely say what number of bottles was actually dispensed, and his statements in favour of the above company are in consequence open to doubt. On the other hand, I can give an accurate account of visits and medicines supplied from Sept. 29th, 1894, to March 25th last. I can also give an account from Feb. 7th, 1894, when I became referee, to Sept. 29th, 1894; but during that time I did not take note of all "repeats," consequently the numbers are much under what they would have been had I kept an accurate record. However, I prefer to let them stand as they are rather than estimate the additional numbers. They are as follows:—

	Bottles.	Visits.	Paid.
March 25th to June 24th, 1894	117*	51	£ s. d. 3 17 0
June 24th to Sept. 29th, 1894	346*	59	9 13 7
Sept. 29th to Dec. 25th, 1894	250	59	9 14 6
Dec. 25th, 1894, to March 25th, 1895 ...	222	66	9 5 0
Totals for year	935*	235*	32 10 1

* These are below the correct numbers.

That, worked out, gives only 8½d. for each bottle of medicine and leaves nothing for visits. If that is not sweating a medical man I should like to know what is. Even a "sixpenny" dispensary would pay better. These figures would have been still less favourable had I not refused during the last two quarters to treat as club patients those able to pay an ordinary fee and chronic cases, of whom there were not a few on my lists for the previous quarters. Mr. Woodward says in a letter in your issue of March 30th that the medical officers "are as well remunerated by us as by their private practice amongst the same class of people." To what class of practice does he refer? I am not aware that there is any cheaper class of practice than that carried on in "sixpenny" dispensaries, yet I have shown that his company does not pay as much.

The facts I have just stated constitute, if I may so term it, the "primary sweating" that everyone who carries out his agreement with the company has to suffer. Now let me expose the "secondary sweating," which as yet none of your correspondents has mentioned, and which seems an integral part of the system. Shortly after I had agreed to act as referee the district superintendent called upon me and told me that in order to obtain a large list it would be necessary