

a member of Tattersall's, blush to record. Now, I think it may be fairly urged, and that, too, without fear of contradiction, that *this* is, in every sense of the word, an exceptional year, and but for the lamented loss of *one* whose memory will be for ever dear to us, would be a *gala* year. His grand conception—the World's Fair—is now in full practical work. Our capital swarms with strangers; casualties must increase in a fearful ratio; St. Thomas's *pro tem*. will be partially neutralized in its usefulness; myriads will throng the portals of these glorious receptacles for the alleviation of misery. This, then, I humbly contend, is the acceptable time for the initiation of such a principle.

Now, Sir, my present most earnest appeal (in anticipation of any general measure to be taken by the Jockey Club) is made to the fortunate winners of the Derby and Oaks—viz., that if they will kindly consent *this year* to an allocation of ten per cent. of their winnings, I will, with much pleasure, add a contribution of 1000 guineas; but should such per-centage be deemed excessive, I shall be happy to give an amount equal to a deduction of *five* per cent. upon their stakes respectively.

Let it be distinctly understood, that this is not offered in lieu or in abandonment of my former proposition, the spirit of which, if I live, shall be acted up to in all its integrity, and for the fulfilment of which I await only the fiat of the Jockey Club, making it a condition, at the time of entry, next January, that five per cent. shall be allowed *en perpétuité* out of the winnings of the Derby and Oaks. They are honourable, influential, and kind-hearted men, and I make no doubt that, sooner or later, I shall obtain the seal of their high approval for the enforcement of so sacred a principle, and thus enable the indigent sick of this mighty metropolis to participate in so rich a fund. In respectfully commending the above statement to your kind consideration, I feel it necessary to make but one observation more in order to bespeak your generous assistance. Dwarfs are treated with contemptuous indifference, but when raised on the shoulders of a giant they are not only seen, but heard and respected.

I am, Sir, obediently yours,
Queen's-road, Gloucester-gate, N.W., July, 1862. JOSEPH BOND.

ARSENICAL ROOM-PAPERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Dr. M'Cormac mentions, in your journal of the 28th ultimo, his opinion that it is the detritus rubbed off these papers which produces their poisonous effect. I remember a case which proves this very satisfactorily. I was one day calling on a friend who had been for some time under the care of a homœopathic practitioner, suffering from symptoms which looked to me very much like slow poisoning by arsenic. Noticing a green paper in the sitting-room, I asked for some of the dust from the top of a bookcase standing at one end of the room; and on analyzing this dust, I found the poison in large quantity. On taking him under my own care he soon recovered from all his symptoms, my first prescription being the removal of the guilty paper. I might mention that the paper was a flock one.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Lancaster, July, 1862. FREDERIC MEGGY, M.R.C.S. Eng.

TREATMENT OF CHRONIC OBSTRUCTION OF THE LACHRYMAL DUCT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET of June 7th (p. 595), under the head of "Memorabilia of Ophthalmic Surgical Practice," by Mr. W. White Cooper, I observe some remarks on the treatment of chronic obstruction of the lachrymal duct by pressure on the sac with an instrument (constructed for him by Mr. Bigg, of Leicester-square) on the principle of a truss spring and pad. I have not yet had an opportunity of seeing it; but during the last two or three years I have been in the habit of using, at the Marylebone Eye Institution, an instrument *similar in principle*, and devised for a like purpose. It consists of a piece of watch-spring, rather more than one eighth of an inch in width, and of sufficient length to pass over the forehead to the back of the head. A piece of gutta percha is attached to either end, the one small and moulded when in a plastic state, to the parietes of the emptied sac, the other larger and spread out at the back of the head, to which a narrow riband is fastened that passes round the forehead, and, when tied at the side of the head, keeps the spring *in situ*, and secures the re-

quisite amount of pressure. Latterly, however, I have modified this plan, using only a short spring, fastened by means of a small piece of gutta percha to the riband that goes round the forehead and is tied at the back of the head, and again secured by two other pieces of riband sewn to the sides thereof, and tied at the top of the head. In fitting the spring, care must be taken to curve the ends a little outwards before moulding the gutta percha thereto, otherwise they will penetrate it and abrade the skin. This is easily done by exposing them to a red heat in the flame of a spirit lamp, and whilst in this state making the requisite curve with a pair of pliers.

The accompanying sketch will sufficiently indicate the nature of the apparatus, and its mode of application.



Many years since, at the time I was surgeon to the Royal Sea Bathing Infirmary, and before I had devised the instrument I have described, I adopted the plan of pressure on the lachrymal sac by compresses of lint kept in position by straps of adhesive plaster; and though much nicety was required in obtaining the requisite amount of pressure, yet the treatment was attended in many instances with the happiest results; for this reason it is I venture to offer some remarks in addition to those of Mr. W. White Cooper, on the efficacy of a mode of treatment confirmed by long experience, and which I believed, until I had read his observations, was peculiar to myself, or at least not generally recognised in surgical practice.

This gentleman, it appears, regards pressure merely as an "auxiliary" in cases of obstructed duct without fistulous opening; whereas I first resorted to the practice in those intractable scrofulous affections attended with more or less ulceration of the soft parts, regarding it as the best and only means of cure.

It cannot be denied, however, that Mr. Bowman's operation of slitting the canaliculus, and passing a large probe into the duct, is productive of good results. Such is the plan now pursued by my colleague, Mr. Obré, whilst at the same time he bears willing testimony to the success of my own method of treatment. That there are certain inconveniences consequent on dividing the canaliculus, such as those noticed by Mr. W. Cooper, must be admitted. The principal objection, however, in my mind is that the passage remains permanently open after the operation and use of the probe. Certain cases may indeed arise in which division of the canaliculus affords the best means of cure, and there could be no reason against using the "spring truss," if desirable, after this has been done.

In making pressure, the advantages derived from the use of a gutta percha pad I believe to be—1st, that it is unaffected by moisture; 2nd, it may be moulded to any shape, thereby affording great facility for adaptation to the parts concerned; 3rd, it admits the application of suitable dressings—a matter of importance where a fistulous opening exists. In such cases the patient derives great comfort from pressure if properly applied, and care be taken that the pad does not press too forcibly on the

parts. When simple obstruction of the duct exists, I usually apply, in conjunction with the spring truss, a saturated aqueous solution of iodine and iodide of potash, every second or third day, over the sac with good effect.

Finally, I may observe, that the treatment by pressure, together with Mr. Bowman's operation, will probably supersede the necessity for the old plan of silver style and button, with all its acknowledged inconveniences, in cases of lachrymal fistula.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

June, 1862.

WM. OLIVER CHALK, M.R.C.S.

POOR-LAW MEDICAL REFORM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A consideration for your space was the *sole* reason of my not forwarding for needless insertion "a list of the paupers and the number of patients" from Lord Elcho's Return. Because this Return was not "ordered" to illustrate the working of my plan, is assuredly not a fault, but rather a misfortune, of mine. I cannot, unfortunately, perform a practical impossibility.

"My plan conditionates that the same sick pauper shall be counted *but once* as a case of sickness during the half year."

"Hence, according to my scheme, the cases of sickness could never exceed the 'total number of paupers relieved.'" *Consequently* there is no provision in my Remuneration Clause, for an excess beyond 100 per cent. of the ratio of sickness to pauperism.

In deducing, therefore, from "what *only could* be the *maximum* amount of cases (according to my definition of a case of sickness)," must confessedly afford much safer guidance for an estimate of what my plan could produce, than to commit the absurdity of taking figures which *could never occur* if my scheme were adopted.

My tables, with their analysis, will afford a sufficient criterion to enable medical officers to judge of the comparative extent to which the two plans will interfere with their present rates per case. But I must again forcibly impress on my colleagues the fallacy of estimating a future millennium for the doctors' salaries from the Circean figures in Lord Elcho's Return. The number of "cases" would undoubtedly diminish under *any* system based on totals.

Though withdrawing from this present controversy, I shall still keep a watchful eye on the progress of the cause. I would that my individual watching were aided by a real working body, framed as I have suggested; and to which (*having power to add to its number*) any member would of course be "allowed to name some of the Committee."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Bishopsgate-street Without, June, 1862. ROBERT FOWLER, M.D.

SANITARY CONDITION OF THE ROYAL NAVY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The reconstruction of the navy, and its present state of transition, must greatly modify many of our previous sanitary precautions.

In the year 1857 you inserted in THE LANCET a letter of mine, recommending a thin metallic coating of Muntz's metal for the bilges of wooden ships and steamers, with the view of diminishing the offensive smell which is so annoying and deleterious, especially in warm climates, notwithstanding the greatest attention to cleanliness, and the free use of the chlorides of zinc and lime.

At the same time I sent that suggestion to the Admiralty, but it was quietly shelved and overlooked. Perhaps it may yet emerge from the official waste-basket, as inventions of infinitely greater value have recently done. I alluded to this subject amongst the hygienic hints in my "Medical Notes on China," which you published on the 14th ult.

I am aware that a kind of composition or varnish, consisting chiefly of the oxide of copper, has been used with temporary benefit. My attention has since been directed to an Admiralty order, directing 70 tons of brick and mortar to be laid down along the bilges of H.M.S. *Warrior*, I presume with the view of facilitating their cleaning, and preventing the accumulation of bilge-water. How this will act time and experience alone can decide, but its effects will of course be narrowly watched by the captain, medical officers, and chief engineer of the ship.

The elaborate statistical reports of the navy by Drs. Wilson

and Bryson, F.R.S., prove that there is no class of men who, on the whole, enjoy a greater exemption from fatal disease than those employed in the royal navy; still it cannot be denied that much remains to be done in the way of mitigating, if not entirely averting, the destructive influences of epidemic disease within the tropics.

Dr. Milroy's valuable researches and important inferences, Dr. Slayter's paper on the fever in the West Indies, read a few days ago before the Epidemiological Society, the startling disclosures made by the late lamented Dr. McWilliam, in reference to the health of the mercantile marine, as well as the numerous reports of naval surgeons, clearly show that sanitary reformers must not slumber until the per-centage of sickness is even less than it is at present.

As you remarked in THE LANCET of 26th April last, the prominent remedies are "an improved and dispersed system of berthing the men at night, forced ventilation especially in screw steamers, and an organized system of cleansing the hold." What this system is, is still *sub judice*.

This subject, confessedly of paramount importance, in many of its bearings comes within the domain of the chemist. It would be well, therefore, if the Admiralty were to authorize the Chief Constructor of the navy to consult one of the great chemical philosophers of the day, such as Professor Lyon Playfair, M.D., C.B.

Another great desideratum is some generally recognised rule of guidance and procedure when eruptions of fever and cholera do occur.

The case of H.M.S. *Icarus* clearly and painfully shows the absolute necessity of shunning, as far as possible, every port or place where yellow fever exists; and should it unfortunately break out on board, the proper course is, whatever the sacrifice may be, to run to a colder latitude.

Instructions to this effect, dictated by humanity, and founded on the deductions of science and the recommendations of medical officers, have recently been given by the Commander-in-Chief in the West Indies.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Kidderminster, June, 1862. JOHN ROSE, M.D., Surgeon R.N.

PRESERVATION OF ANIMAL FOOD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Knowing the avidity with which you seek information upon subjects having for their object the general good, and more especially if that subject is dependent upon chemical scientific researches, I am induced to go out of my usual course by forwarding this letter on the important subject of the preservation of animal food in its uncooked state.

I was invited a few days since by Mr. Richard Jones, of Botolph-lane, City, to inspect his specimens of uncooked preserved joints of meat. A simple statement of facts will explain more fully the nature of this application of science to the requirements of man than any description of mine will convey. I was shown several hundred tins containing hams and bacon, hermetically sealed, from which the whole of the air had been extracted, and the vessel filled with a non decomposing element, to be shipped for consumption to India, China, and other tropical climates. It will, doubtless, be said that nothing is more simple than to preserve that which has been already cured by salting; at all events, the success attending this branch of the business paved the way for more astonishing results, for in consequence of the perfectly-preserved state of these mildly-cured animal substances, it was determined to try the same means upon fresh *uncooked* meat. The various specimens inspected are a proof of the superiority of this method over every other that has been hitherto brought under the notice of the public.

It appears that Mr. Jones has been engaged on his investigation into this subject for several years. He, from the onset, felt satisfied that if means could be adopted by which every pound of meat should have its given quantity of preservative gas, and the vessel containing the meat could be deprived of the whole of its oxygen, the result must be an entire absence of decomposition. Such a theory put into practice is entirely confirmed by results. As a proof, there are a large number of tins containing beef, legs of mutton, fowls, sausages, fish, &c., all of which have been there for months, put to every test of temperature, yet remain perfectly free from decomposition. It was found by experience that tin, although the most convenient vessel, had its objection, and it was determined to place the material to be acted upon in earthenware pans or jars. The result was most satisfactory: the meat could