CONSTITUTIONAL TREATMENT OF LOCAL DISEASES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The discovery that lithia, quinine, and many other substances can be traced in the various structures of the body, especially in those regarded as extra-vascular (?), as the crystalline lens, has a very interesting relation to medical surgery, first insisted on, under the name of the "Constitutional Treatment of Local Diseases," by my old and revered master, Abernethy. Since his time the subject, so far as I know, has not been prosecuted in any way worthy of its importance, except, perhaps, by a very few of his pupils, who have, amidst a kind of conventional incredulity, seldom spoken with much authority.

The interesting lecture given last night at the Royal Institution by Dr. Bence Jones induces me to send you a short notice of two cases of cataract, in which the opaque lens became clear under treatment directed to the general health. The first case was that of a man about forty years of age, by occupation a house-painter. As it is some years since, I forget the quantity of rum he had been in the habit of drinking daily, but I know that the quantity must have been enormous by the vibrating condition of his whole muscular system, and by my beginning my attempt to wean him from the habit by allowing a pint daily. He applied to be operated on for cataract; but besides that he was not in a state justifying an operation, his symptoms were complicated with those of amaurosis. I told him that no operation would be of service to him unless he could be relieved from certain symptoms not referable to the cataract. As he seemed determined to do his best, I took him under care, and after some time the symptoms of amaurosis were removed. He was in greatly improved health, and had so entirely relinquished spirit-drinking that he said nothing would again induce him to take any more as long as he lived. On looking at the eyes with a view to the removal of the cataracts by extraction, it appeared to me that the lenses were somewhat less opaque, and on testing the degree of improvement in his vision it seemed to me to exhibit a corresponding shade of improvement. On this I told him he had better persevere in his present treatment, which he did with perfect success, the lenses becoming clear and with the return of distinct vision.

About two years ago I met with a similar case in the wife of a publican, but who was a very temperate woman. In her case the treatment for the correction of the various functions (somewhat too vaguely called the general health) was longer than usual from the same complication—viz., that of amaurotic symptoms with the opacity of the lens; and with the same result—viz., the restoration of the transparency of the lens.

I could give you many examples illustrative of how little is generally done as compared with that which may be accomplished by more enlarged views of medical surgery, but as I hope to publish early next year a digest of the principles which I advocate, and which I shall show to be a more perfect development of those intelligibly deducible from Abernethy, I will not trouble you with more at present, but remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Albany Court-yard, March 24th, 1866.

GEORGE MACILWAIN.

THE VACCINATION BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have to apologise for troubling you again so soon, but as no time must be lost I think you will excuse me.

I now beg to hand you a copy of a letter addressed to the following members of Parliament on the subject of the "Vaccination Bill," drawing their attention to the inadequacy of the fees proposed; and I am happy to say that I have received favourable replies from the whole.

The letter has been forwarded to Sir Francis Crossley, Bart., M.P.; James Stansfeld, Esq., Jun., M.P.; Henry Edwards, Esq., M.P.; Samuel Waterhouse, Esq., M.P.; and Edward Akroyd, Esq., M.P., to all of whom I am well known.

I trust every Poor-law medical officer, as well as every private practitioner, will communicate at once with some member of Parliament, or another injustice will speedily be enacted. Two shillings and sixpence per head have been

willingly paid in this district for the vaccination of cattle, and surely human beings, to every sensible mind, are as valuable and require even more attention than the beasts of the field. Some will doubt this, but not the enlightened framers of a "Vaccination Bill," I should hope.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Cheapside, Halifax, April 7th, 1866.

FREDK. S. GARLICK.

[COPY.]

5, Cheapside, Halifax, March 21st, 1866.

DEAR SIR,—A Bill has been introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Bruce and Mr. Baring, entitled "A Bill to consolidate and amend the Statutes relating to Vaccination in England."

The fee of one shilling and sixpence for the successful vaccination of a child is too little, inasmuch as the child has to be inspected on the eighth day and the necessary certificates filled up. The lowest fee, in my opinion, should be *two shillings and sixpence*.

I have been a public vaccinator now for nearly nineteen years, and therefore I think you will permit me not only to express an opinion, but to hope that you will agree with me that the fee I mention will not be excessive for the time, attention, and skill which are necessary for carrying out vaccination successfully.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

FREDK. S. GARLICK.

As a summary, I think the following propositions might safely be submitted to the Right Hon. H. A. Bruce, Vice-President of the Privy Council, with reference to the Bill now before the House of Commons on vaccination.

1. In order that vaccination may be systematically and efficiently carried out, it is only fair to expect that the medical practitioners who discharge the duty should be reasonably and efficiently paid for their services. Unless this is done the Act will, in my opinion, fail, as the preceding Acts have failed; solely because the fees proposed are inadequate. A medical man in ordinary practice does not think it worth his while to vaccinate unless he finds it remunerative, and, to make it so, constant attention must be given to it, without fail, week by week. A supply of lymph must be carefully preserved and constantly at hand, otherwise there will be nothing but delay and disappointment.

2. On this account I think the lowest fee that will prove really remunerative for the time, skill, attention, and responsibility involved, together with the necessary certificates required by the proposed Act, should be two shillings and sixpence for each case residing within a radius of two miles of the medical practitioner's residence, and three shillings and sixpence beyond that distance.

3. That the successful revaccination of any person should be paid for in the same way as primary vaccination, seeing that the trouble and responsibility in both instances are the same.

4. That the necessary certificates required by the Act should be simplified as much as possible, so as to save the medical practitioner's time.

5. That a public prosecutor should be appointed in every district, on whom should devolve the carrying out of the penal clause in the proposed Act. Unless this is done the Act will be constantly evaded, as hitherto, by large numbers. Nothing has a more injurious effect on the public mind than an Act of Parliament, passed it is presumed for the benefit of all, without any provision for its being administered faithfully, energetically, without fear or favour, and in strict accordance with the written word.

CHARTERHOUSE AND ITS REGISTRAR.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you allow me to offer a few words of comment on the incompleteness of the arrangements made on the occasion of the late election to the post of resident medical officer at the Charterhouse, in means not being adopted by the registrar to inform all the candidates *by letter* of the date of the election?

It seems that an advertisement in certain of the daily newspapers was considered sufficient announcement of the event. Did it not occur to the registrar that some of the candidates might possibly, and even probably, never see either of the journals in which the advertisement appeared? That such a contingency *could* and *did* occur, I am, unhappily, able to demonstrate in my own person.