Local Government Board, and applied for information as to the antecedents of the patient to Dr. Harry Leach, Port Medical Officer. As the man came from Rotterdam, an infected port, Dr. Rogers very properly ordered his removal to the London Hospital, and made immediate arrangements for the fumigation of the lodging-house and the disinfection or destruction of the clothing of the patient. The unfortunate man died about two hours after his reception into hospital. We hear, on going to press, that the Port Medical Officer has, with the harbour master's assistance, isolated the vessel, and that the ship will be at once thoroughly fumigated and disinfected. This is considered advisable as a precaution, although no symptoms of illness occurred until some sixteen hours after the patient had disembarked. This last event shows most emphatically the necessity of a small cholera hospital in the East of London.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

DR. BELL PETTIGREW ON VITALITY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is gratifying to find that Dr. Bell Pettigrew (THE LANCET, November 15th, p. 693) is, so to say, ready to go a very long way with me upon the vitality question, and I venture to think that if he carefully examines my writings he will be prepared to admit that in some respects the difference between us is less than the readers of his lecture may have been led to conclude.

He says that "the vital forces transform matter, but do not destroy it," which is precisely the view I have long endeavoured to inculcate. But some of his remarks would certainly lead his readers to conclude that, in my opinion, vital force really did destroy the forces which actuate ordinary non-living matter. I have been over and over again inferentially accused of believing and teaching absurdities which have been neither believed nor taught by any person during the last fifty years; for instance, that vital force *makes or destroys* matter. Dr. Pettigrew, like some other distinguished teachers, deems it necessary to assure his pupils that the vital forces cannot "annihilate physical forces," as if any mortal supposed that they could! "Vital forces," he says, "may over-ride or bridle certain physical forces," but this view does not differ from my own.

Again, after quoting from one of my works, he remarks "that it does not follow from this that gravitation as a power is extinguished." But has anyone in his senses suggested that gravitation might be extinguished? It is too bad, when directing attention to views of mine concerning growth, to tell people that the "physical forces of capillarity, osmosis, chemical affinity, &c.," are "*largely employed*." Of course they are, but all of these physical forces together will not account for the growth of a tree upwards. What is the use of confusing people? In such discussion it is easy to fight shy of the real difficulty, hide it in a cloud of words, and shunt the main question off the line into a siding. Dr. Bell Pettigrew knows as well as I do that capillarity involves a tube, and, at the same time, he knows that no one has adequately explained, and that no one can explain, by physics, the growth of this capillary tube in any vegetable organism. Nor can a growing capillary tube be artificially constructed. If this could be done I should say let *vitality* go to the winds; but as it cannot, I would say, don't let us for ever go on and on talking about "natural laws" that have never been drafted, and of the terms of which we know nothing. If vital force can be proved to be physical, let us have the evidence and have done with the question. If no one can prove this, let people be told so plainly, and let it be distinctly confessed that up to this time the view that vital power is distinct from physical forces, and may temporarily suspend or interfere with their action, is not opposed to the facts of science.

As regards his remarks on protoplasm and bioplasm, Dr. Bell Pettigrew is simply unfair. After stating what protoplasm is held to be by different authorities from whom I differ *toto cælo*, he says, "Analogous in many respects to the

protoplasm of Huxley is the bioplasm of Beale"—as if Huxley's protoplasm had been born before my germinal matter or bioplasm made its appearance.* "Analogous in many respects!" The protoplasm may die and then be roasted before a fire without losing its identity, as in the case of roast-mutton protoplasm instanced by Mr. Huxley. Although bioplasm has retained its vitality in spite of very prolonged literary roasting, it succumbs and is utterly destroyed by boiling water. Protoplasm may be active or passive, dead or living; bioplasm *living* only. That which is *formed* may be and is called protoplasm. Bioplasm is *formative* only; nothing *formed* consists of bioplasm. Some forms of protoplasm may exhibit structure; no form of bioplasm does. Bioplasm is analogous to *certain forms* of protoplasm only, for protoplasm includes things that are alive, and dead, and roasted. My bioplasm is in *no sense* "identical" with protoplasm. Protoplasm is by no means always "undifferentiated"; my bioplasm cannot be otherwise.

I do not affirm that bioplasm is a *product* of vital forces. Bioplasm is *not*, according to me, "the same *always and everywhere*." I do not claim for bioplasm "similar properties to those claimed by Huxley for his protoplasm."

I am surprised that Dr. Bell Pettigrew should have so misunderstood my views, but as these have been so fully stated I shall not venture to press them upon your readers. They are given in "Bioplasm," while the controversial part of the question is discussed in "Protoplasm," to neither of which works has Dr. Pettigrew referred in his lecture. Dr. Bell Pettigrew, however, I am glad to acknowledge, agrees with me in one conclusion of vast importance, and this agreement carries with it a great deal—viz., that "living organisms cannot be produced from purely inorganic matter by purely physical forces."

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

Grosvenor-street, Nov. 18th, 1873.

LIONEL S. BEALE.

A FREAK OF NATURE:

CASE OF A LADY WITH BEARD AND WHISKERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am induced, after reading your very interesting article entitled "A Freak of Nature" (which appeared in THE LANCET of 25th October), to publish the notes of a case of remarkable hirsute growth in a lady who very recently consulted me. The extreme rarity of such an occurrence renders it, in my opinion, worthy of being placed on record. The history of the case is briefly as follows:—

A lady, aged thirty-two, unmarried, of a spare habit of body and of a nervo-sanguineous temperament, consulted me several times at short intervals in regard to some slight derangement of her digestive organs. I observed that on each occasion she wore a broad black silk ribbon, which covered the chin, cheeks, and ears, thus giving her, as can easily be imagined, a very peculiar appearance. On asking her the reason why she wore this covering, she stated in reply that she had long done so, and that it was very necessary, as I should find when she removed it, which she at once did without more ado. The removal of the covering at once brought into view well developed whiskers and a good strong beard. She now presented such a very masculine aspect that I was led to entertain some doubt as to her sex. The hair was of a brownish colour; the average length in whiskers was fully three inches, the beard being somewhat longer. The upper lip was quite free from hair. The front of the chest, especially over the sternum, was very thickly covered with brownish hair. The mammae were large and full. The uterus was found on vaginal examination somewhat smaller than usual, but in other respects quite natural. The external sexual organs were healthy and well developed. She informed me that her catamenia were regular, and had always been so from the age of fifteen or thereby. There was no peculiarity observable about her voice. I may mention that the skin beneath the hair seemed everywhere and in all respects quite healthy. I ascertained that the hair upon the face and chest first appeared about the time when she began to menstruate. As this unusual hirsute development caused

* Germinal matter before 1861; Huxley's protoplasm, Nov. 1863.

her much vexation and annoyance, she tried from time to time several expedients to remove the hair, such as shaving, various depilatories, &c., but with no satisfactory results. She could not persevere with the shaving from great tenderness of the skin being thereby produced. She has ultimately abandoned all treatment, and constantly wears the ribbon already referred to. I may here state that Dr. Hugh Miller and Dr. Wood Smith had each an opportunity of seeing and examining my patient.

I remain, Sir, yours, &c.,

J. G. WILSON, M.D.,

Professor of Midwifery in Anderson's University, &c.
Glasgow, Nov. 13th, 1873.

PROFESSIONAL REMUNERATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There is not the least doubt that the evil complained of in Mr. W. P. Swain's letter, which appeared in THE LANCET of last week, does actually exist, as I can testify from personal experience. I would not, however, include all the physicians in the neighbourhood in this charge, as I believe there are exceptions. The thanks of the profession are due to Mr. Swain for bringing this matter forward, and I trust the remedy suggested by him may be at once adopted—viz., that physicians take a fee of one guinea for each consultation.

There is yet another grievance to be attended to. It is this: the numbers of patients, well able to pay the general practitioner, that are every week prescribed for *gratuitously* by certain physicians in this neighbourhood, who have rooms set apart for this purpose, the patients being admitted by tickets.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

J. L. CUTCLIFFE.

Bronte Villa, Stoke, Devonport, Nov. 17th, 1873.

TEST-TYPES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you allow me to mention that Mr. Bellows of Gloucester, the printer of the well-known pocket French and English Dictionary, has prepared for me a very handy set of test-types for the approximate determination of vision. They are in English, French, and German, and in eight varieties of size, nearly corresponding to Jaeger's scale, and all contained on an octavo page. They are not suited for the exact determination, for which no common printing types will suffice; but they are quite sufficient for testing improvement or retrogression, or for prescribing spectacles. At my suggestion Mr. Bellows has struck off a few additional copies, and will supply them, post free, for twenty-four stamps.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Wimpole-street.

R. BRUDENELL CARTER.

HONOURS TO MEDICAL MEN IN THE COLONIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It has often struck me as curious that some of the eminent medical men of our colonies have never received a small share of the distinctions conferred upon their fellow-colonists who have made politics or law their sphere. In the only colony where I have a knowledge of the works of some of the medical men—namely, the Dominion of Canada, I know several who have devoted thirty or forty years of their lives to the spread of medical knowledge and to the establishment of medical institutions in the country, thereby benefiting their fellow-creatures in the country to an incalculable extent. Some of these gentlemen have also obtained deservedly widespread reputations in Canada for their skill in the various branches of their profession. A few of the same honours from time to time conferred on their brethren in England would be a graceful and kindly recognition, on the part of the mother country, of well-earned reputation and years of devotion to the spread of a noble profession.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Tonghoo, Burmah, Oct. 12th, 1873.

MEDICAL STAFF.

A STRANGE STORY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I can fully endorse the statement made under the above heading by Mr. F. Mayhew. I was, about forty years ago, or at the time Eli H— obtained the faculty of speech to the male sex, an apprentice to a medical man in the immediate neighbourhood of Baltonsborough, the village, I think, where the identical Eli H— was born. His affliction was spoken of generally as a judgment on the father for his wicked threat. There is little in Mr. Mayhew's letter different from what I recollect at the time, only that I think the number of daughters born in succession was more than three, and I believe Eli H— had not the power of speech even to his mother or sisters in his father's presence, nor to any male person during his father's lifetime. All this, however, is of little importance. That the general facts obtained credence forty years ago I can verify, and I trust the truth of this "Strange Story" will be satisfactorily ascertained.

I enclose my card, and am, Sir, yours truly,

Nov. 19th, 1873.

MEDICUS.

PARIS.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE School of Medicine of Paris has begun its winter session, and all the professors are now lecturing regularly. In one of my recent letters I gave you a list of the lecturers, together with the subjects which they had chosen for the winter course. On Wednesday last there was a goodly gathering of students and medical men to assist at the maiden lecture of a newly elected professor, Dr. Léon Lefort, who was on that day to take possession of his chair of Surgical Operations. Dr. Lefort had chosen for the subject of his inaugural lecture, "The influence of liberty in promoting the advancement of science," and was very successful in handling this philosophical question. The professor reviewed the past history of medical science, pointing out the advances which were necessarily made under the genial influence of liberty—philosophical liberty; the epochs of great and important discoveries in medicine and surgery corresponding with periods of liberty, whilst those of intolerance produced an arrest in the advance of science. Dr. Lefort referred to the labours of Hippocrates and the Greek philosophers and their grand results, which were arrested by the spirit of intolerance, ending in the exile of Anaxagoras and the condemnation of Socrates. Medicine, from this cause, remained stationary till the days of Galen. Shortly after Galen the dogma of authority flourished again; the despotism of Nero and Caligula, the invasion of the barbarians, the conversion of Constantine, again stopped progress. Then the influence of Catholicism again proved noxious, according to the lecturer, and the few names of medical men belonging to that period, and which have survived, are those of mere compilers. Progress took a fresh start with the conquest of the Arabs, but was brought to a standstill by the condemnation of Averroes. He then passed to the monks of the middle ages, who had the practice of medicine in their hands, and who made no discoveries. The discovery of printing and the Reformation gave an immense impulse to science. Surgery, as a special branch, took its birth with Paré. The philosophers (Bacon, Descartes) added to the work of reformation. Louis Petit appeared, and, "free from the noxious principle of authority, taught that science should be based on experience and reason." The great philosophical movement at the end of the eighteenth century produced, among the votaries of medical science, Hunter, Bichat, Desault, &c. After the wars of the empire, which damped all scientific progress, came the more liberal time of the Restoration, and with it Dupuytren first, and, after him, Cruveilhier, Andral, Rostan, Bouillaud, Velpeau, Malgaigne, &c., who had shed much lustre on the French school. The summing up was that the principle of authority "immobilised" science, whilst liberty favoured its advance. To qualify his remarks, Dr. Lefort added, however, that the authority of the masters should be accepted,