the use of the word "Doctor" according to its dictionary meaning and its present accepted use by the public.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Barking-road, E., August 24th, 1903.

PERCY ROSE.

ASEPTIC AND ANTISEPTIC SURGERY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of June 13th, p. 1697, is a letter under the above heading signed Robert Henderson, purporting to be an answer to my letter in your issue of May 30th, p. 1543. Mr. Robert Henderson accuses me of endeavouring to belittle the "general practitioner," and as I had no such intention I am sorry that my letter should have been construed as such. At the same time I hardly consider that Mr. Robert Henderson was justified in his remarks about the consultants, for I feel perfectly convinced that if any severe major operation had to be performed upon any near and dear relative of Mr. Robert Henderson's that he would not call in the ordinary general practitioner to do it but would select *la fleur l'élite* of the consultants.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

FREDERICK DEANE, F.R.C.S. Edin.

Barbados, West Indies, July 17th, 1903.

SCIATICA AND THE HIP-JOINT.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The interesting paper on Sciatica by Dr. William Bruce in THE LANCET of August 22nd, p. 511, reminds me of a case which I had in hand some years ago. The patient was a man, aged 59 years, who had suffered for many years from arthritis deformans, the disease mainly affecting the hip-joints. He was also the victim of intense double sciatica and his lower limbs were useless for walking, compelling him to go on crutches. Three years before I saw him he had fallen downstairs, thereby sustaining an intracapsular fracture of the left femoral neck. Union was not good and he was left with an evverting limb, but one result of the injury and of the treatment it engendered was that the sciatica almost entirely disappeared from the left leg. In the right leg it was as bad as ever. When I first saw him he had just met with a similar accident—a fall downstairs—this time sustaining an intracapsular fracture of the right femoral neck. The treatment was extension with a weight over a pulley, the limb being kept in position with heavy sand-bags. As a result there was good union with no subsequent eversion, and as a further effect cure of the sciatica on this side also. Was the cure of the sciatica to be ascribed to the prolonged rest or to the prolonged stretching of the nerve aided by the solution of continuity in the osseous core of the limb?

Dr. Bruce's aspersion on removal of the Gasserian ganglion for relief of tic douloureux seems to me to be a *non sequitur*. His "bold affirmation" of the invariably peripheral origin of the disease surely does not establish the "essentially barbarous" nature of the operation undertaken for its relief unless he has an alternative and less heroic cure to offer. Possibly Dr. Bruce does not mean that an operation which is "essentially barbarous" is therefore unjustifiable. Doubtless most of our operations will one day be regarded as meriting his epithet. But anyone who has suffered even for a short time from intense trigeminal neuralgia can well understand the willingness of a patient to undergo the most heroic operation promising relief when the affection is chronic and other treatment has failed to cure. The barbarity of procuring relief at any cost is surely in this disease purely theoretical.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

J. S. MACKINTOSH, M.R.C.S. Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond.

Hampstead, August 24th, 1903.

OBSERVATIONS ON MASTICATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Harry Campbell in his instructive Observations on Mastication says that "tooth powder should not be used as a matter of routine" and that "antiseptic powders and washes are to be scrupulously avoided" since many of the bacteria "play a useful part as scavengers."

As this is opposed to the usual custom sanctioned by most dental surgeons, may I ask Dr. Campbell to give reasons for these statements—i.e., observations and experiments upon which they are based.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

August 25th, 1903.

M.D.

NOTES FROM INDIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

Dispensary and Private Practice in the United Provinces.—The Volunteer Forces of India.—The Growing Plague Mortality.—Offences at Examinations.—The Want of Ambulances in Calcutta.—The Municipal Sanitary Administration of Indian Cities.

THE Inspector-General of Hospitals for the United Provinces raises a very important point with regard to dispensary and private practice in India which is not altogether without its parallel in England. He considers that the Government instead of encouraging the opening up of new dispensaries in villages should do all it can to encourage qualified native practitioners to settle in the villages and small towns. At present the medical officer of a dispensary has to attend the whole population and it is unquestionably bad policy to encourage the general population to expect gratuitous medical relief. To the objection the Lieutenant-Governor replies that it is not possible at present to substitute private practitioners for dispensaries, that private practitioners could not afford the appliances which are provided at the dispensaries, and that Western medicine has not sufficiently established itself in these provinces for men of the hospital assistant class to stand alone. Colonel Joubert also calls attention to the utter want of privacy in the treatment and examination of out-patients in most of the dispensaries and to the use of the ordinary bench or form on which the patients sat as a couch for examination. This may account for the very small number of female diseases returned in the registers.

In view of the faulty physique and want of fitness for service shown amongst the volunteers attending the Delhi Durbar to which I called attention the following return may be interesting:—

The Volunteer Forces of India; annual report.—Following is the full text of the annual report on the volunteer forces of India for 1902-03 by Major-General J. Stratford Collins, Inspector-General. The total strength of the volunteers in India for the year 1901-02 was 31,233; the strength for the year 1902-03 is 34,496 (an increase of 1263), made up as follows:—

Naval Volunteers	432	Railway Volunteer Rifles ...	11,569
Submarine Mining Engineers	140	Local Volunteer Rifles ...	11,464
Electric Engineers	46	Cadets	4,274
Light Horse	1,724	Reservists	792
Mounted Rifles	776		
Artillery	1,279	Total	32,496

During the year no new battalions or corps have been raised. Two railway corps (Bengal Nagapore Railway and the Great Indian Peninsula Railway) have been formed into two battalions each.

The plague mortality for India having sunk to its yearly minimum has during the past few weeks been slowly but steadily rising again. The increase as well as the mortality is almost entirely confined to the Bombay Presidency and the Mysore State, for which 1817 and 270 deaths respectively were recorded for last week out of a total in all India of 2284. The Punjab returned only 55 deaths, Bengal 29, the United Provinces 21, and the Hyderabad State 12.

An incident connected with the Grant Medical College, Bombay, illustrates the strong tendency so often shown in India to obtain illicit information. 15 first- and second-year medical students have been rusticated in consequence of their having committed "certain dishonest acts at the last terminal examination inasmuch as they copied." Government and municipal officers are well aware how frequently private information is surreptitiously obtained. Great precautions have to be taken at examinations to prevent students getting "outside" help and it would be better if examiners generally were more on the look-out for this offence and if they reported all delinquents accordingly.

The ambulance scheme for Calcutta to which I referred a little while ago has ended almost in a fiasco. Although the special committee of the corporation recommended that litters on wheels should be kept at certain stations in charge of the police and that special ambulances should be kept for the removal of infectious cases, the general committee disapproved of the latter and only sanctioned a few of the former and these are to be kept at the tramway depôts. The dangerous practice of using hackney carriages for infectious cases will therefore have to be continued and no help can be expected from the police in cases of accident. Comment is unnecessary, but that such a state of things should be permitted in the metropolis of India, with a population not far short of a million, is, to say the least, extraordinary.