

be looked upon as an absolute contraindication to amputation, but rather that, whilst the presence of arterial degeneration makes the case much less promising, that of peripheral neuritis has not much to say to the matter. Gangrene starting from a perforating ulcer is a much more dangerous affection if the vessels be sclerosed than if they be healthy, but senile gangrene in a diabetic is not a more serious affection in a man with peripheral neuritis than in one without it.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

RICKMAN J. GODLEE, F.R.C.S. Eng.

Wimpole-street, W., Nov. 11th, 1892.

THE CLIFTON LUNACY CASE: MASON v. MARSHALL AND SHAW.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Upwards of four years ago you were kind enough to open your columns for a subscription-list towards defraying the expenses of Dr. Shaw and myself in defending the lunacy certificate action brought against us by Miss Mason. The result of the trial, your readers may remember, was a verdict with costs in our favour. At the time there appeared to be no probability of our obtaining costs; recently, however, they have been recovered, with the result that we have now a balance in our favour. My own legal expenses came to £304 13s. 6d. the taxed costs now recovered to £221 19s. 7d., thereby reducing my legal expenses to £83 13s. 11d. From the treasurer (Dr. E. Long Fox) of the fund contributed by the medical profession I received £155 2s. 9d., which places a balance of £71 8s. 10d. at my disposal. I have been anxiously considering how best to apply this surplus amount in a way likely to prove most in accordance with the feelings and wishes of the donors to the fund, and, after consultation with Dr. Fox as their official representative and with other friends, I have decided to send a contribution of £100 to the Library of the Bristol Medical School. I trust that this will meet with the approval of those of my professional brethren who showed me so much sympathy, and gave such practical assistance at a time of great anxiety. The recollection of this sympathy and kindness remains gratefully and indelibly fixed in my memory, while the worries and vexations attendant on the trial are forgotten. Thanking you, Sirs, for your support,

I remain, Sirs, your obedient servant,
Clifton, Nov. 14th, 1892. HENRY MARSHALL, M.D. Edin.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As a codicil to the letter from Dr. H. Marshall, will you allow me to add that, having also recovered my taxed costs from the plaintiff in the action brought against us, I have now received from all sources a surplus beyond my original expenses. With exceeding pleasure I have made a donation of £100 to the library of the new Bristol Medical School, and the small balance still remaining I am spending upon my wards in the Bristol Royal Infirmary. Deeply and increasingly grateful for the sympathy shown us at the time, it would not be honourable to profit by the generosity of our professional brethren, and I gladly, therefore, contribute to the equipment of an institution which at this moment is an appropriate object of pecuniary support.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Bristol, Nov. 16th, 1892.

J. E. SHAW.

"THE RADICAL CURE OF FEMORAL HERNIA."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have read with much interest Mr. Watson Cheyne's paper on the Radical Cure of Hernia published in THE LANCET of Nov. 5th. Since the autumn of 1888 I have performed the operation for the radical cure of femoral hernia as described by Mr. Watson Cheyne, with the exception that I have not thought it necessary to dissect up the whole thickness of the pectineus muscle, contenting myself with the pectineus fascia and a portion of the underlying muscle, the amount depending on the thickness and strength of the fascial covering. I was led to adopt this method for the same reasons which influenced Mr. Watson

Cheyne, and I have now operated on four patients. Three of them did perfectly well and did not require a truss or pad after the operation. My fourth case (October, 1892) was one of strangulation of five days' duration. The gut was very congested, but not gangrenous. I took only a thin layer of muscle, and perhaps fortunately so, since the wound, which had healed by first intention under one dressing, broke down again about the tenth day and a small faecal fistula was formed. The operation is sound in principle, presents no difficulties in performance and gives an excellent result.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, Nov. 10th, 1892. C. STONHAM, F.R.C.S. Eng.

FOREIGN BODIES IN THE BLADDER AND INDIAN SUPERSTITIONS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Surgeon-Major D. Davidson, civil surgeon of Satara, a short time ago, in communicating an unusual case of vesical calculus to THE LANCET, stated that the nucleus was formed of a small doubled-up twig, and added that he could not clearly ascertain how or why the foreign body had been introduced into the bladder. A few days ago I had a man under my care whose case may throw some light upon the subject. I removed a stone, weighing upwards of two ounces, from the bladder of the patient, a Jogi, in which the concretion had formed round a small piece of "amar-bel" (a species of viscum), a parasitic plant, with fine, smooth stems, which infests certain trees, and is, as its name, "the deathless creeper," would perhaps seem to indicate, regarded as being possessed of special virtues. The Jogi, or Yogi, is one who attempts to attain union with the Supreme Being by means of abstract contemplation. My patient explained that he was accustomed to cleanse his urethra with a piece of the "amar-bel" stem in order that he might fit it for the last passage of his soul out of the body in a state of purity, so as to avoid the necessity of another—or at least of a lower—birth, and that two years ago it had slipped back into the bladder. It is thought by Hindu Yog philosophers that the soul leaves the body by one or more of ten outlets (*dash-dvâr*), of which the eyes, ears, and fontanelles are pure, and the nostrils, mouth, anus, and urethra are impure. Sometimes, if there be a discharge from any of the impure passages at the time of death, the soul may take its exit by them and thus become defiled and takes a lower birth, hence the Jogi tries during life to minimise the evil by cleansing every road as much as possible. The modes of effecting this are described in various works, and some are remarkably curious. I am informed by a very enlightened Rajput noble that warriors do not take opium before going into action in order to acquire a little spurious courage, as some have supposed, but to induce constipation, so that, if fatally wounded, the sphincters may not be relaxed, and thus the soul may pass away by an upper exit. It is true that Krishna said to Arjuna in the Bhagavat Gita that one who was killed in battle would go to heaven, but it is as well to make sure of a safe journey for the soul a Hindu thinks. In judicial death by hanging there is of course the prospect of the soul having to leave the body by an objectionable channel, but in addition there is the certainty that the prisoner does not die on the earth and so his spirit becomes a pisach, a chut or demon. This explains what always seems to the spectator the unfeeling action of the friends of a Hindu when he is on his deathbed at which time they always place him on the ground in order that he may expire there.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

T. H. HENDLEY, Surg.-Lt.-Col., C.I.E.,
Jeypore, India, Oct. 25th, 1892. Residency Surgeon.

"THE ETHICS OF OPIUM AND ALCOHOL."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Let me give, without comment and very briefly, with reference to the discussion on the opium habit generally and of Dr. Mouat's extenuation of the practice in particular, at p. 1090 of THE LANCET of Nov. 12th, some experience of mine and of other medical officers during the China campaign of 1860 of the force engaged in which Probyn's and Fane's irregular cavalry formed a part. These splendid native horsemen were habitual indulgers in that narcotic, and as no provision had been made by the commissariat in