

THE
MARSHALL HALL METHOD
OF
TREATMENT IN CASES OF SUSPENDED RESPIRATION FROM DROWNING ;—
CHILDREN APPARENTLY STILL-BORN ;—&c. &c.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The attention of the Committee of the Royal National Life-Boat Institution has been recently called to the proposition of Dr. Marshall Hall of a new method of treating persons apparently drowned, which has been to some extent discussed in the columns of *THE LANCET*, and is now known by the designation of the "Marshall Hall Method."

The subject is felt by the Committee to be one of great—indeed, national—importance, since the restoration to life of numberless persons, both on the coast and in the interior parts of this country, must, doubtless, depend on the adoption of a proper treatment, or the reverse.

But more especially is the subject one of vital importance to the above-named Institution, since at its numerous life-boat stations the printed rules for observance, which are posted up in its boat-houses, are the sole guide to those persons who are called on to minister to drowning persons before medical attendance can be procured.

It thence follows, that the issue of instructions by the Institution, on this important subject, clothe it with a responsibility which may well make its Committee of Management anxious as to the character of those instructions.

Up to the present time the Institution has adopted the rules issued by the Royal Humane Society, whose extended sphere of operations might be supposed to give it all the advantages derivable from practical experience.

The promulgation of Dr. Marshall Hall's method, which the Committee are informed has already awakened much interest in the medical profession, has, however, led them to feel that it is their duty to obtain all the information on the subject which either science or experience has revealed, with a view to the re-consideration of those rules which the Institution distributes for information amongst our coast population, and on which the issues of life or death must so often depend.

I am accordingly directed by the Committee to request your co-operation by bringing the subject before the medical profession in general through the columns of *THE LANCET*, and thus to obtain for the Institution the advantage, so far as it can thus be obtained, of such individual or collective information as the profession may be able to afford.

The Committee believe that the above simple statement of the humane and important object which this Society has in view will be sufficient to elicit a general response from a profession whose whole sphere of duties is so intimately bound up with the welfare and happiness of mankind, and which has always largely extended its sympathy to humane and charitable undertakings in our land.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

14, John-street, Adelphi,
April 8th, 1857.

RICHARD LEWIS,
Secretary to the Royal National Life-Boat
Institution.

DR. MARSHALL HALL'S INSTRUCTIONS.

1. Treat the patient INSTANTLY, ON THE SPOT, IN THE OPEN AIR, EXPOSING the face and chest to the BREEZE (except in severe weather).

I.—TO CLEAR THE THROAT—

2. Place the patient gently on the face, with one WRIST under the forehead ;

[all fluids and the tongue itself then fall forwards, leaving the entrance into the windpipe FREE.]

If there be breathing—wait and WATCH ; if not, or if it FAIL,—

II.—TO EXCITE RESPIRATION—

3. Turn the patient well and INSTANTLY on his side, and—

4. Excite the nostrils with snuff, or the throat with a feather, &c., and dash cold water on the face previously rubbed warm.

If there be no success, LOSE NOT A MOMENT, but INSTANTLY—

III.—TO IMITATE RESPIRATION—

5. Replace the patient on his face, RAISING and supporting the chest WELL on a folded coat or other article of dress ;

6. Turn the body very GENTLY ON THE SIDE AND A LITTLE BEYOND, and then BRISKLY on the face, alternately ; repeating these measures deliberately, efficiently, and perseveringly FIFTEEN times in the minute, occasionally VARYING the SIDE ;

[when the patient reposes on the chest, this cavity is compressed by the weight of the body, and EXPIRATION takes place ; when he is turned on the side, this pressure is removed, and INSPIRATION occurs].

7. When the PRONE position is resumed, MAKE equable but efficient PRESSURE, with brisk movement, ALONG the back of the CHEST ; REMOVING it immediately before rotation on the side ;

[the first measure augments the expiration, the second commences inspiration.]

*** THE RESULT IS—RESPIRATION ;—AND, IF NOT TOO LATE,—LIFE !

IV.—TO INDUCE CIRCULATION AND WARMTH—

8. Meantime rub the limbs UPWARDS, with FIRM GRASPING PRESSURE and with ENERGY, using handkerchiefs, &c.

[by this measure the blood is propelled along the veins towards the heart].

9. Let the limbs be thus warmed and dried, and then clothed, the bystanders supplying the requisite garments.

10. AVOID THE CONTINUOUS WARM-BATH, AND THE POSITION ON, OR INCLINED TO, THE BACK.