

the ship's officers and crew. The men were a good deal exposed and huddled together and dissatisfaction exists, it is understood, as to the arrangements generally. It is of course impossible to avoid the effects of storms and rough weather, but young soldiers are not by any means good sailors, and the discomforts of the men—to say nothing of the sufferings of the unfortunate women and children—on these short voyages are often great. The fact is that these troopships are generally overcrowded, which would not matter so much in summer weather, when nearly all could be on deck, but it seriously adds to the discomforts of a rough voyage. It would be far preferable to make two voyages in the place of one, though that would cost more; but that is better than the remote effect which expressions of dissatisfaction have on recruiting.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

"THE SENSITIVENESS OF THE PERITONEUM."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Sherrington has three things yet to learn—that mere assertion is not argument, that mere abuse is no reply, and that insinuation based on misrepresentation is a very unworthy weapon in controversy. Let me briefly recite the matter as it now stands. It is absolutely proved that sometimes the human peritoneum is extremely sensitive, and therefore my original thesis that conclusions derived from animals cannot safely be applied to human beings, even on so illustrious an authority as that of Haller, is established. It is further proved that there are conditions of the peritoneum when it is sensitive and others when it is not, and my second thesis is therefore also established that it is not safe always to argue from one human being to another. Probably in such a matter it is equally unsafe to argue from one condition to another of the same human being. As to the point which Dr. Sherrington says is material to me, because it makes him decline to pursue with me further any discussion whatsoever—a conclusion I regret—it is clear that his insinuation means that I have deliberately withheld from my list the name of some person whose opinion on the subject would have been important. If such a name has been omitted, it has been due to the unintentional mistake of my secretary. What Dr. Sherrington makes me say is as follows: "In the preamble to his last communication his circular letter of inquiry is prefaced by the statement that it has been forwarded to all the surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland whose names are familiar in connexion with abdominal work." But what I really did say is this: "As a method of obtaining evidence I asked my secretary to issue the following circular to all the surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland whose names are familiar in connexion with abdominal work. Unfortunately, he did not preserve a copy of the list; but it contained over thirty names." I had to put the last sentence in because I never saw the list, the circular having been sent out when I was away for my Christmas holiday, and it is perfectly possible that important names were left out by accident. Be that as it may, a list of over thirty covered a great deal of ground and the answers received show clearly that the question is not one to be solved by a quotation from Haller.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

The Crescent, Birmingham, Jan. 30th, 1893. LAWSON TAIT.

ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE, EPSOM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It gives us great pleasure to send you a copy of the recommendation from the Committee of Management of the Conjoint Board which has been approved and adopted by both the College of Physicians and the College of Surgeons. This recognition of Epsom College must be a great boon to pupils passing through the school prior to entering on their curriculum at the hospitals. All the elementary book work will now be got over during school life, at a time when lads need most aid in grasping the subjects they are learning, and during a period when the continuance of school discipline and the

responsibilities falling to the seniors are so invaluable in the formation and consolidation of character. We hope to be able to send our students to their freer hospital life better prepared to meet the inevitable temptations they must be exposed to. The advantages thus afforded will further benefit those boys who most require help. No important changes will be required in the course of study carried on at Epsom College. Able boys who can look forward to taking a medical degree at London University or at Oxford or Cambridge have for years past been successfully trained in the requisite subjects for the Preliminary Scientific Examination; but those who for various reasons have sought to qualify in other ways for a medical career have hitherto been obliged to leave us before they could receive the full benefits of our curriculum, at far too early an age and with too immature powers to receive hospital instruction with profit. What will, we hope, enlist the sympathy of every member of the profession, especially that of the teachers in our great medical schools, is that such boys will now during the whole time of their University or hospital life be free to learn those great subjects and see that practice which is in the future to fit them successfully to follow the pursuit of a profession to which they propose to devote their lives and in which a healthy ambition will make them seek to rise to distinction.—We remain, Sirs, yours truly,

C. HOLMAN, Treasurer.

T. N. HART SMITH, Head Master.

Soho-square, W., January, 1893.

Royal College of Physicians, London, S.W.,
Jan. 29th, 1893.

Dear Sir,—Your Council and yourself will be glad to hear that the recommendation of the Committee of Management of Dec. 19th last, about which I wrote to you—viz.: "That instruction in chemistry, physics, practical chemistry and elementary biology at Epsom College be recognised as fulfilling the requirements of the new regulations for admission to Parts I. and III. of the First Examination"—was adopted by this College at the quarterly comitia on Thursday last and will now become law at the Conjoint Board, since it had been previously adopted by the Royal College of Surgeons on the 12th inst. For any further information you may require on this subject application should be made to the secretary at the Examination Hall.

I am, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

Dr. Holman.

EDWARD LIVEING, Registrar.

PSOROSPERMS AND CANCER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Having been unavoidably prevented through illness from attending the last meeting of the Pathological Society, my attention has only just been drawn to a remark made on that occasion by Mr. Jackson Clarke. Mr. Clarke is reported to have said that he "regretted the retrograde step taken by Drs. Ruffer and Walker when they abandoned the idea of spore formation" in cancer. May I say that this remark is entirely gratuitous on the part of Mr. Jackson Clarke, since no one can be said to have abandoned an idea when his observations have not even led him to entertain it? There are many other statements in Mr. Clarke's paper which call for comment. As I understand, however, that his specimens have been referred to a committee, and that the subject will come up for discussion again this year, I will defer discussing Mr. Clarke's observations until this report is duly issued.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Westminster, S.W., Jan. 28th, 1893.

M. ARMAND RUFFER.

THE THYROID TREATMENT OF MYX-CEDEMA: THE SELECTION OF THYROID GLAND FOR ADMINISTRATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The many interesting reports which have been published in your pages and in other journals regarding the recent treatment of myxœdema seem to me to be defective in one important particular—namely, in the absence of details as to the proper selection of the thyroid gland for administration. I have seen no notice of the fact that in the sheep the thyroid gland is very frequently the seat of disease, often of a gross and palpable kind, usually cystic in character. I have now under treatment my fifth case of myxœdema, and all my patients, with the exception of the first, have been treated by

the method which we owe to the ingenuity of Dr. Hector Mackenzie—the administration of the raw gland directly by the stomach. During the months that this has been going on I have dissected at least a hundred thyroids, and I find that over 50 per cent. show more or less evident indications of deviation from normal structure. The cysts to which I refer are usually situated about the hilum or point at which the vessels enter the organ, though I have found them in all parts of the gland; they vary in size from the bulk of a pin's head to that of a small bitter almond, and their contents are yellowish, sometimes greenish-yellow. Several of these I have submitted for full examination by Dr. Joseph Coats, and his report I hope to embody in a contribution to the *Glasgow Medical Journal*. The practical bearing of these facts amounts to this: that in administering to a patient a remedy so new, of an organic, animal nature, having powers of which we so far know so little, but the energy of which is so obvious, it becomes the physician's duty to see for himself that the glands supplied are healthy. As druggists and others can scarcely be expected to be judges of normal structure it is scarcely fair to our patients to rely on unskilled selection of such a powerful agent, the remote effects of which we cannot as yet properly estimate. My own practice is as follows: On certain days the butcher, directly he returns from the slaughterhouse, sends me several windpipes ("thrapples" our Scotch butchers call them), with muscles &c. attached. The glands are at once dissected out and freed from connective tissue and are then cut longitudinally into fine slices, a process which will certainly reveal any abnormality. The healthy glands are then sent off, sometimes by post, usually by messenger, who comes at an arranged hour. The patient or her attendant then at once minces the gland into very small pieces and it is taken in a little warm soup or beef-tea, in which its presence is quite unnoticed.

Apart from the presence of cysts the variation in the size and appearance of the thyroid gland is remarkable. It is occasionally very large, dark brownish-black or bluish-black in colour and obviously engorged with blood. Such a gland I have found to weigh eighty-seven grains, and there should be no hesitation in rejecting an organ presenting such an appearance. The smallest gland I have seen weighed twelve grains, was very pale brown in colour and rather fibrous in structure. Occasionally the gland is finely lobulated or granular on the surface after dissecting off the connective tissue; most usually it is smooth, glistening, almost jelly-like on the surface, chocolate-brown in colour, and yields a considerable quantity of juice in cutting or mincing. The average weight of a normal gland I should put at about thirty-five to forty grains. It seems to me that these are interesting practical facts which will be appreciated by your readers, especially those (and already they are extremely numerous) who are adopting the thyroid treatment in myxœdema. Practitioners all over the country are apparently hunting out their old and half-forgotten cases to bring them the relief and emancipation (the latter a most appropriate term) which the new treatment affords; they will perhaps pardon me if the caution inculcated in the foregoing sentences seems superfluous or uncalled for.

I am, Sirs, yours very truly,
Glasgow, Jan. 31st, 1893. ALEX. NAPIER.

HOUSE-TO-HOUSE VISITATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I do not think that anyone can question the fact that a house-to-house visitation would be the quickest, most effectual and altogether the cheapest method of dealing with infectious disease. Still there are no doubt certain difficulties in the way of getting it carried out in the present state of sanitary law both on the part of the landlord and the householder. The landlord difficulty arises in two ways: (1) where owners of household property are predominant on the sanitary board; (2) where they are unwilling to carry out necessary alterations. The difficulty with regard to the tenant often arises from ignorance or blind opposition. The difficulty with regard to the tenant, I think, could easily be got over with a little reasoning and management. Most of the opposition would certainly be overcome if some notice like the following were left at each house:—

"CHOLERA.

"HOUSE-TO-HOUSE VISITATION.

"The country is this year threatened with an outbreak of

cholera, and it depends upon the sanitary condition of each house whether the inmates escape or not. The sanitary authorities therefore are willing to examine your house, if permitted, and state what defects exist, so that they may be corrected as soon as possible. It will be well for each household to seize the present opportunity."

The trial of such a plan cannot possibly do harm and it may be productive of much good.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
Surbiton, Jan. 30th, 1893. F. P. ATKINSON.

"TAKING THE OATH WITH UPLIFTED HAND."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your annotation last week on this subject you quote again the now well-known clause of the Oaths Act of 1888, which permits a witness so desiring to swear without question *in the form and manner in which an oath is usually administered in Scotland*. I would particularly direct your attention to the words in italics, as the administration of the oath does not exactly conform with them. Some weeks ago I desired to be sworn in this manner before one of the magistrates of the police-courts, and I had carefully acquired the words of the Scotch oath in case there should be any difficulty. But the magistrate and his clerk (who is the author of the manual which guides the police magistracy) seemed in such a hopeless state of ignorance as to the oath that to save the time of the court I took the oath by kissing the book. The following week, at the Central Criminal Court, before Mr. Justice Grantham, I found perfect arrangements made for administering the oath with uplifted hand, and since then at coroners' and magistrates' courts I have had no difficulty. But the oath administered, though in the manner, is not in the form of the Scotch oath. The witness, standing with his right hand uplifted while the usher recites the ordinary oath of the English courts, repeats after him the last four words, "So help me God." The English oath varies in the different courts in some clauses, but the body of it is as follows: "The evidence that you shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. So help me God." Administered in this manner the oath, apart from its claim to greater cleanliness, which is without question, is also, in my opinion, much more solemn and imposing than in the older method of "kissing the book."—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Brixton, Jan. 31st, 1893. G. D. KNIGHT.

SEA-SICKNESS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The pessimistic tone of the review of Dr. Dutton's work on Sea-sickness in your last issue is disappointing, more especially when the reviewer states "a considerable experience of sea-sickness makes us doubt whether or not on the whole drugs do not do more harm than good." I dissent entirely from this conclusion. Since I published an article on Sea-sickness in THE LANCET of March 6th, 1892, I have received further evidence of a most convincing kind as to the efficacy of chlorobrom. as a remedy for this ailment in long voyages. I have also heard from unsolicited sources that this solution is an exceedingly valuable prevention of sea-sickness in short trips, such as from Harwich to Rotterdam or from Southampton to Jersey. I intend to publish the evidence I have received at a later date, but in the meantime I have no hesitation in saying that this solution judiciously taken will prevent an attack of sea-sickness or cut it short, if it has already begun, even in those most predisposed to this terror of ocean travellers.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,
University of Glasgow, Jan. 31st, 1893. M. CHARTERIS.

MANCHESTER.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Small-pox.

No abatement appears as yet to have taken place in the small-pox epidemic. According to the report of the medical officer of health 56 fresh cases of the disease have been notified as having occurred within the city limits in the