

at which the principal medical officers discussed with their subordinates the measures to be taken. M. Hussenet, technical director of the manoeuvres, dealt with the general work to be done and with the operations of the service in the field, and General Hurstel also addressed the assembled officers. Another medical officer explained the working in detail of the system of the advanced stations. The troops employed for these operations were furnished principally by a territorial regiment, which began work in very heavy rain. The bearers were instructed and trained in the methods of finding and carrying away the wounded, with proper precautions, to the dressing stations, and a medical officer from the auxiliary hospital at Laon was present and gave instructions in the use of new wheel ambulances, and showed how 400 wounded would be treated at Laon. After the exercises of the bearers, came trials of special apparatus, including the tortoise tent, which can shelter 28 wounded and has for support and base the wagon which carries it. It was brought into use with great rapidity. The Herbert tent, which is a veritable field hospital, required about three hours to instal, perhaps through the inexperience of the men. These and other operations and trials have been very successful and the men have been well exercised and trained in the conduct of the medical service and equipments on the road and in the field."

THE LATE MAJOR T. W. A. FULLERTON, I.M.S.

The brother officers of the late Major T. W. A. Fullerton, I.M.S., are subscribing to place a brass tablet to his memory in the cathedral at Allahabad. It is also proposed to raise a fund to secure a further memorial in the shape of a lancet window in the cathedral. Contributions for this object may be forwarded to Colonel R. D. Murray, I.M.S., Oak Park, Naini Tal, North-West Provinces, India.

THE NAVAL MEDICAL SUPPLEMENTAL FUND.

At the quarterly meeting of the directors of the Naval Medical Supplemental Fund, held on Oct. 8th, Inspector-General W. Harris Lloyd, R.N., in the chair, the sum of £50 was distributed among the several applicants.

HASLAR HOSPITAL.

An advanced course for senior naval medical officers was commenced at Haslar Hospital on Oct. 14th. The course will last six weeks, 24 days being devoted to practical work.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AND MEDICAL REFEREES UNDER THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT, 1906.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I regret that my absence from London has prevented my seeing before the leading article in THE LANCET of Sept. 28th, p. 906, referring to my letter which you kindly inserted on Sept. 21st. As the question is one of very great importance to every class of medical practitioner I venture to ask you to allow me to state at somewhat greater length the opinions I have formed after a very large experience of medical examinations under the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897 and some of the reasons which have induced me to form them. Your article was largely based on the Regulations which appear in Order No. 484, which apply to appeals from the decisions of certifying factory surgeons, whereas my letter was intended to apply to the Regulations in

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Order No. L. 11, which deal with the examinations of medical referees in Workmen's Compensation cases, where the facts as to the amount of injury or disability are in dispute.

The question of the decisions of certifying factory surgeons is a very small one in comparison with the great question as to awards and assessments in disputed claims for compensation under the Act, which are already amounting to a very large number in all classes of employment. Bearing in mind that under the new Act the decisions of the medical referees are to be "final and conclusive" I think everyone will agree with me that the fullest possible information as

to the medical history of every individual case should be placed before the medical referee. My experience is that it is impossible to obtain from an injured person a trustworthy medical history, and this I say without any innuendo against claimants as a whole, a large majority of whose injuries are *bonâ-fide*, or against workmen as a class. I say it because it is practicably impossible for an injured person of any rank in life who has not had medical training to give a history of his case without magnifying trivialities and perhaps omitting to detail points which have an important bearing on the case.

I therefore consider that the medical attendant of the workman should certainly be present at an examination of a workman by a medical referee, but I do not think that, at any rate, the great employers would be satisfied with a decision when the medical referee had examined a workman in consultation with the workman's medical attendant and in the absence of the medical practitioner "provided and paid by the employer" and upon whose previous report the case was being contested. Having this in view I suggest that the employer should, if he thinks fit, be able to be represented by a medical man at an examination made by a medical referee. With all due deference to your legal adviser I am advised that the paragraph on Forms A and B, to be sent by the medical referee to both employer and workman, would fully permit an employer or workman to be represented at the examination by a medical man, it being: "Any statement made or submitted by you will be considered."

In my opinion, however, the ideal method for the employment of medical referees is that they should sit with the judge as assessors, they would hear the medical evidence on both sides, they would then examine the claimant in consultation and advise the judge on the purely medical points. The judge would not have to give his decision on a mere written report but would have an opportunity of questioning the medical referee and satisfying himself fully as to the medical aspects of the case. From my experience I do not think your point as to the workman being unable to have funds to pay his medical adviser would in practice be operative, as contested cases are always in solicitors' hands, and they continually arrange for a medical man to be present on behalf of the workman at the examinations of the practitioner provided by the employer, and in court medical evidence has now to be produced in every case where the amount of injury is in dispute. It would be much less expensive for the workman to have his doctor present at the examination of the medical referee when a final decision on the medical points would be obtained than for the medical attendant to leave his practice and come to court where much time would necessarily be lost.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully.

ALBERT BENTHALL.

Fellows-road, South Hampstead, N.W., Oct. 7th, 1907.

** Such a procedure as that suggested by Mr. Benthall would, we have no doubt, be satisfactory and would conduce admirably to a full and proper understanding of the case. We do not, however, quite follow the latter half of his last paragraph; our suggestion was that whereas under the old Acts the injured workman was usually helped to press his claim by a trade organisation, many cases will now be brought forward by workmen not so supported, the class to be benefited having been enlarged. The interpretation of the words "statement submitted" is one upon which everyone is entitled to his opinion. Apart from any authority, of which we are not aware, we do not think that the expression "statement submitted" necessarily allows the submission of a medical man to make a statement. "Making" and "submitting" seem to us to have been intended to distinguish between the statement made by the workman himself, possibly orally, and those "put in" by him in writing. The expression used is the same in both classes of rules and if we referred to the regulations laid down for appeals from certifying surgeons it was not because these supported the view which we advanced any more than do the others. We note, however, that in the regulations made under the first and second schedules of the Act the following passage occurs, R. 21, Par. 2: "The reference shall be accompanied by a general statement of the medical evidence given on behalf of both parties; and if

such evidence has been given before a committee or an agreed arbitrator, each medical witness shall sign the statement of his evidence and may add any necessary explanation or correction," and that statement seems to be used generally for a report or statement made in writing. The question is one of interest and will, no doubt, be raised and decided authoritatively before very long.—ED. L.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I note with surprise in your leading article on the giving of scholarships for research on the effects of alcohol by the National Temperance League that you heartily commend the movement. What value such a research, conducted under the auspices of a strongly biased syndicate and superintended by those who are well known to be prejudiced, can possibly have I for one entirely fail to see. The teetotal attitude towards science in the past has been very much like that of the Caledonian Sabbatarian who, when he was reminded that Christ regarded the Sabbath from a less narrow point of view than he did, replied that he knew it and did not think any the better of Him for so doing.

When science has appeared to support total abstinence well and good, but if not then so much the worse for science. A hundred fallacies are apt to creep into such an attempt as this to reduce to the limits of an exact science what is essentially an inexact one. It has been stated that frog and pigeon physiology has been the bane of clinical medicine, so likewise are these pseudo-scientific investigations instituted not really with a view of arriving at an impartial judgment but to bolster up a particular fad, and "At the outset this overwhelming difficulty presents itself that that which is harmful to one person may be indifferent in its effects upon another or even beneficial to him."

You lay stress upon the fact that only men who have the confidence of the profession are to be chosen, but the names published are those of well-known teetotalers. As well might one expect to arrive at an impartial judgment regarding, let us say, the question of vivisection by studying the results of a research carried out by the antivivisectionists. These investigators are to test the effects of alcohol upon a man's capacity for work, but the capacity for work (unless the man's whole life's work be reviewed) is not a determining factor in the case for over-activity and an apparently increased power for work may be as much due to an abnormal state as the opposite condition. Reaction-time experiments upon which so much stress has been laid give us no real information as to the ultimate benefit to be derived from the use of alcohol which in certain quantities temporarily slows or hinders the output of energy, but whether this is good or bad for the individual must be determined by experience alone. I can remember a food faddist who tried to live almost entirely on nuts, boasting that he could walk 40 miles without undue fatigue, but he died young after an illness due to the effects of this régime and no doubt his extreme energy was due to an altogether abnormal physiological condition.

In a recent work under similar auspices, entitled "Alcohol and the Human Body," it is never made clear to the reader whether the use or the abuse of alcohol is under discussion; it is to be hoped that in this investigation they will at least not confound the man "saturated with alcohol" with the temperate user of the same.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Old Burlington-street, W., Oct. 13th, 1907. A. W. FULLER.

MALARIA IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The little book which has just appeared on the above subject is necessarily limited in scope, as its true object is to show how malaria affects character and sometimes even influences the destiny of nations. But there are a few other points which are, I think, worthy of attention at the hands of medical men. A modern physician, in diagnosing a case of malaria, relies upon his thermometer, his

microscope, and the action of quinine. The ancient doctor used perforce his eyes and his fingers, which accordingly became so sensitive that symptoms were noticed which seem to have escaped modern observers. A study of these symptoms might throw light upon some problems of tropical and sub-tropical disease, for a physician like Galen had the accumulated experience of centuries to help him in forming his conclusions.

A large portion, perhaps some hundreds of pages, of the ancient medical writers describe fevers having symptoms suggestive now of typhoid, now of malaria. Of these fevers some may be Malta fever, many are doubtless remittent malaria, but most appear to be cases of typhoid in patients previously infected with the malaria parasite. Instances of this must have been extremely common in highly malarious districts like parts of ancient Greece and Italy. Further study of the Hippocratic treatises, which of course imply much experience previous to Hippocrates, convinces me that the Greeks of the East were familiar with malaria long before it became endemic in Attica. Will anyone try to discover whether malaria influenced the history of the Assyrians and the Persians?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Cambridge, Oct. 5th, 1907.

W. H. S. JONES.

MEDICAL EXAMINERS TO INSURANCE COMPANIES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS.—Complaints still continue to reach us from medical men who have been induced to take out policies in insurance companies by promises of appointments as district medical examiners to the companies. The fees they are led to expect do not accrue. Will you, therefore, kindly allow me through your columns to warn medical practitioners against all insurance companies which offer the position of district medical examiner in return for a policy?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

HUGH WOODS,

General Secretary, London and Counties Medical Protection Society, Limited.

Craven-street, Strand, W.C.

MOTOR DRIVER'S PALSY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I was recently consulted by a patient about what appears to be a new form of occupation or craft palsy due to driving a motor car. The patient's complaint was that on waking in the morning his left hand was firmly closed. He could extend the first two fingers with some difficulty but the last two had to be rubbed and forcibly extended before the spasm was overcome. There seems to be some discomfort at all times not amounting to pain. The only explanation which is forthcoming is that he has driven his car himself for the past year or two, and on driving with him I noticed that he maintained a constant grip with his left hand, all the levers being operated by the right. I have not come across this condition before, but perhaps some of your readers may have seen it and may be able from experience to say whether there is any cure for it short of giving up driving. It is conceivable that, just as occurs in writer's palsy, the voluntary control of the muscles might be abrogated without warning, the consequence of which might be a serious accident.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Putney, Oct. 12th, 1907.

DONALD F. SHEARER.

A DISCLAIMER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I wrote to you yesterday that through no fault of mine a sensational account of a lecture by me has appeared in the general press. I see to-day extracts from it put together as if there had been an interview. I cannot describe how profoundly sorry I am that this discreditable sensation has occurred and wish to tender my humblest apologies through your medium to all members of my profession. I may hold singular individual views but I have no desire to ventilate medical matters through the lay press.

I am, Sirs, yours respectfully,

Welbeck-street, W., Oct. 10th, 1907. BERNARD HOLLANDER.