

"INTRAVENOUS INJECTIONS IN SYPHILIS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Mr. Chopping's answer¹ to my letter in THE LANCET of March 4th does not appear to me to be complete. This may be due to my objections to the intravenous treatment not having been put clearly enough. My contentions are as follow: 1. The intravenous injection of mercury has not been proved to have any advantage over other methods as regards either rapidity of disappearance of symptoms or convenience. 2. It is obvious that in private practice it is almost impossible to carry it out even if the patient consented—which is very doubtful. 3. Mr. Chopping says in his letter that "we are only able to judge of effect by quantity administered" and hence "it is very important to know if possible the exact quantity of mercury introduced into the circulation." In answer to this I would venture to state that if symptoms of mercurialisation were the same in all individuals, such measurement of the dose administered would be scientific. But, as we know very well, there are very great differences in the way different persons react to mercury, and our only guides in its administration are the symptoms produced, together with the rapidity of disappearance of syphilitic lesions. The same dose of mercury administered in whatever way will not cause the same effect in all patients, and therefore I consider the exact dosage to be of minor importance.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Finsbury-square, E.C., March 24th, 1899. C. F. MARSHALL.

PUERPERAL FEVER AND NOTIFICATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The enclosed slip has been issued to all medical practitioners in this city, and is now attached to all books of notification forms issued—as a help in deciding the meaning of the term "puerperal fever" for notification purposes.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

D. S. DAVIES,
Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Department, Prince-street, Bristol,
March 27th, 1899.

[INCLOSURE.]

CITY OF BRISTOL.

THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE (NOTIFICATION) ACT, 1889.

Puerperal Fever.

A Committee of the Royal College of Physicians of London has recently endorsed the view that the expression "puerperal fever" should be taken to include "septicæmia, pyæmia, septic peritonitis, septic metritis, and other acute septic inflammations in the pelvis, occurring as the direct result of childbirth."

The Council of the Obstetrical Society of London suggests the following inclusive definition of the term "puerperal fever." That is: "Septicæmia and pyæmia, including peritonitis and all cases of acute pelvic inflammation occurring in connexion with childbirth."

Issued for the information of medical practitioners.

D. S. DAVIES, M.D.,
Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Offices, 40, Prince-street, March, 1899.

"THE HEALTHIEST CITY IN THE WORLD."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Englishmen are apt to believe that there is no place like England for the English people and that when the race is propagated outside the English shores it degenerates. Now the English race has ousted the aborigines and has taken possession of Tasmania for just about a century and a great part of our people are native-born from British parents, yet I throw down the challenge to those who hold the above views to beat the following figures. The population of Hobart and its suburbs is 40,500. During the last year 561 people died, or about 14 per 1000, but of this number 385 were over 65 years of age, or 9.50 per 1000 of the total deaths, which leaves only 4.50 per 1000 for deaths from all other causes—such as infancy, accidents, &c. As an officer of health for one of the suburbs I take a great interest in these figures and would like to hear if they can be beaten by any other British town. Especially my challenge is upon only 4.50 deaths per 1000 under 65 years of age. *En passant* we have no system of deep drainage, excreta being removed once a week in pans.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Hobart, Feb. 16th, 1899. HARRY BENJAFIELD, M.B.

¹ THE LANCET, March 18th, 1899, p. 795.

THE WOUNDED DERVISHES AT OMDURMAN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As it is impossible to reply to assertions made in the lay press will you allow me, as one who passed over the battle-field immediately in the rear of the British troops after both engagements, to contradict most emphatically the assertion that no aid was given by our medical officers to the wounded Dervishes? As far as we were able during the brief halts which took place on our march into Omdurman every assistance that could possibly be given with due regard to the needs of our own men was freely rendered by my field hospital and by the medical officers who were in charge of the stretcher-bearers and camel cacolèts. Whenever we halted for any space of time and none of our own people claimed our attention my men were constantly giving water and extemporising dressings (often at great personal risk) to the many wounded Dervishes who lay about. Moving slowly, as we were compelled to do, having so many stretcher cases to take into Omdurman, I had the fullest opportunities of seeing the behaviour of the Egyptian native servants and saises towards the wounded, and only on one occasion did I see anything approaching "harsh" treatment adopted towards the wounded, and that was when a Dervish deliberately hurled a spear at an officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps who had been a moment before giving him water.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

M.O. IN CHARGE OF NO. 1 FIELD HOSPITAL.

March 27th, 1899.

VACCINATION AND SMALL-POX IN RANGOON.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Appended you will find an extract from a letter from my brother in Rangoon which may interest you. It is about the epidemic of small-pox at present raging in Rangoon: "I wish some of your conscientious objectors at home were here during the present epidemic to see the effects of vaccination. Not a living soul in Rangoon who has been vaccinated comparatively recently—say, within the past five or seven years—has had anything worse than a very mild attack, while dozens are dying every day from it; and yet lunatics at home resist vaccination. I have had much trouble with our men, many of whom refused to be vaccinated, so one day I made arrangements with the medical man and when he came I locked the doors and saw that every man unprotected either by recent vaccination or by inoculation (the desperate native method) had to choose between vaccination or dismissal. It is tyranny, of course, but see the result. We have over 150 men and with small-pox raging all round not one of them has taken it. I wish all the anti-vaccinationists of the country had been in Rangoon for the past month. Those who had not been converted promptly, would soon have had their toes to the daisies."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

T. McC.

March 25th, 1899.

NOTES FROM INDIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

A Solution of the Question of Mixed Races.—The Progress of the Plague.—The Steam Bath Treatment for Plague.—The Government and Scientific Experiments.—The Plague Commission.

ALTHOUGH the Eurasian question is not a medical one it is of perennial interest to all Anglo-Indians. Whatever we may think of the coarse methods and crude civilisation of the advanced guards of Russian colonisation we must admit that their solution of the question of mixed races is politically, at any rate, a most diplomatic one. It is said that half-breeds are recognised as Russians, and once Russians their descendants of whatever degree are Russians also. It follows, therefore, that colonisation progresses and becomes founded on a sure and substantial basis. In most parts of the world half-castes are recognised as loyal to their superior caste authority. Instead therefore of doing everything to alienate them, looking down upon them, and belittling them on every possible occasion, the Russian raises all those who have Russian blood in them