

the resources of his art have failed to arrest the fatal course of the disease, he has yet the satisfaction of being able to smooth the passage to the grave by the removal of suffering and of pain. To be a worthy disciple, however, of such a calling, he must not fail in the days of his pupilage to be diligent. He should also early cultivate an amiable and gentle deportment towards his patients, and that consideration for suffering which above all other attributes should and does distinguish the practitioner of medicine. Roughness of manner and eccentricity, natural or assumed, have ever been regarded by all right-thinking men as misfortunes to their possessor, and as amongst the worst qualifications for a medical practitioner. There can be no excuse for rudeness of behaviour in him who is called upon to soothe and comfort the sick and suffering. The importance of a kind look or benevolent expression is by no means to be underrated, even as a curative agent. And what can be more cruel than to add to physical suffering the sorrow that must arise, at least in sensitive minds, from a harsh and unkind demeanour?

Before these remarks are in the hands of those to whom they are more immediately addressed, it is probable that most, if not all, of them will have chosen their place of study. On whatever school that choice has fallen, let them bear in mind, that if they are true to themselves, they cannot fail of becoming capable and useful members of that noble profession, that has numbered in its ranks some of the best and greatest men that have ever existed. If we delight in honouring those who destroy, what should be the reward of those who save!

WHILE the recent reports from the Continent show that the visitation of cholera has been more severe in Russian and Prussian Poland than was anticipated, it is some comfort to learn that in its travel westward it has diminished in severity, and that at Berlin it has been less fatal than in any of the great towns which it had previously attacked. It is still more consolatory and hopeful to know, that in the metropolis and in most of the provincial towns, energetic measures are being taken to ensure, as far as possible, the health of our population. For the first time we have the gratifying spectacle of the College of Physicians and the Board of Health working with one accord to defend our population from this dangerous enemy.* The latter body, taking counsel of misfortune, have at length condescended to allow that the College of Physicians ought to know something of physic and disease, and to have a hand in their administration and prevention. The Cholera Committee of the College and the Board of Health are now cordially labouring together for the public good.

We are no alarmists, and would deprecate any proceedings likely to produce a public terror. Nothing increases the horrors of pestilence so much as panic. But prudent preparation will only beget confidence, and even if it should prove unnecessary as regards cholera, it will still be useful. The mere rumour of invasion has recalled our fleets, produced the greatest activity in fortifying our coasts and harbours, and embodied an extensive militia. But we are now threatened by a foe which travels on the wings of the wind, which requires no bridge of steam to cross the seas, but whose deadly course has hitherto been unimpeded by any of those hindrances

with which man or the elements can bar its progress. We cannot even fight the plague when it appears amongst us; the most, and indeed all, that we can do, is, that no pestilential nuclei shall be offered for its development and extension. Filth and foul air are the forts and strongholds from which this enemy sallies forth to its ravages. We must take what care we may to destroy these harbourings before the arrival of the enemy.

But in the case of preparation for a martial enemy, great expense is incurred, which, if no enemy be intended, proves an entire waste of the public funds. Not so in the case of cholera. However distant cholera may remain, we have our typhus, small-pox, and scarlatina, not to mention lesser pests, all of which feed on the same pabulum, and occupy the same strongholds, as Asiatic cholera. If our preparations fail, or are unnecessary, as against cholera, they will still tell with wholesome energy against the domestic scourges of our cities and populous towns. If our mortality returns do not show a lessened virulence in cholera, should it again visit this country, they will still show a triumph over our indigenous zymotics, grand in proportion to the preparations now making. Every community should, then, be up and doing, acting everywhere as though the advent of cholera were certain, and as though its ravages were to be prevented by their exertions. It is to what BACON called the God-like part of our science, the preventive agencies, and not to physic or specifics, that we must look, as the means of disarming this terrible foe of the human race.

Correspondence.

“Audi alteram partem.”

CASE OF EPILEPSY SUCCESSFULLY TREATED BY TRACHEOTOMY.

By W. J. MACKARSIE, Esq., Clay-cross, Chesterfield.

(Communicated by MARSHALL HALL, M.D., F.R.S., &c.)

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As I think the following correspondence will prove both interesting and useful, I do not hesitate to send it to you without alteration. I will forward the interesting case itself, with all its details, for your next number.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Grosvenor-street, Oct. 4, 1852. MARSHALL HALL.

(COPY.)

Clay-cross, Chesterfield, July 1, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—Having read your papers in THE LANCET, in reference to the new mode of treatment of epilepsy, I have recommended it to a patient of mine, who has been for several years under the first members of the faculty at Manchester without deriving any benefit, and who expresses himself perfectly willing to submit to the operation of tracheotomy. Before operating, I take the liberty of naming the case to you, feeling that any suggestions you might kindly offer would greatly aid me; and, if not too much trouble, perhaps you would inform me what instrument you particularly recommend, and where I may depend on obtaining it. I wish to perform the operation in the early part of the week, the patient being very anxious I should do so. I feel deeply solicitous as to the result of the operation, and shall have great pleasure in communicating it to you, as no doubt, from the nature of the case, you will feel interested in it, should only relief be afforded.

Apologizing for troubling you, I remain, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
Dr. Marshall Hall. W. J. MACKARSIE.

July 2, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—Pray read these papers carefully, and determine whether the case be LARYNGEAL. Unless that is done we must not

* The observations of Mr. Grainger, reported at page 331, are somewhat alarming, and are well entitled to attention.—ED. L.

think of the operation. I shall wait to hear from you again, and shall be most happy to assist you every way. Excuse haste, and believe me,

W. J. Mackarsie, Esq.

Yours truly,

MARSHALL HALL.

Clay-cross, Chesterfield, July 3, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your kind favour received this morning, allow me to state that my patient, respecting whom I wrote to you, has suffered from epileptic fits for some years; the attack is *sudden*, throwing him forcibly upon the ground; he then struggles violently until he can take a full, free inspiration. For two or three minutes there is continued *crowing*, from the glottis being spasmodically closed; but immediately on his having a free inspiration, the fit leaves him, and he is then in a perfectly comatose state for some time. During the fit the face is much congested, the throat swollen, and the veins much distended. Of late his mental faculties have gradually become much impaired, and if there is any probability of its affording relief, his friends are extremely anxious that tracheotomy should be performed.

If not too intrusive, may I ask your opinion as to my adopting it? Any suggestions you may kindly offer will be much appreciated. I shall await a line before taking any further step; and thanking you for your kindness, remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Marshall Hall.

W. J. MACKARSIE.

July 6, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—The advantage and propriety of tracheotomy are precisely in proportion to the laryngeal closure and obstruction to respiration. You are the judge of this; but, from your description, I am inclined to *recommend* it as most promising. In one case the diagnosis was wrong, and the remedy could of course avail nothing. All in medicine depends on diagnosis—is it not so?—and not in this case only. I have thought of a most simple mode of operating, which I will describe when I hear from you again. All, except this operation, is explained in my Croonian Lectures for 1850, 51, 52, which will be published in one volume by Messrs. Longman & Co., next week.

Yours, my dear Sir, very truly,

W. J. Mackarsie, Esq.

MARSHALL HALL.

Clay-cross, Chesterfield, July 8, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—In accordance with your kind favour last received, I again communicate with you in reference to my proposed operation of tracheotomy. I have seen the patient more than once since I heard from you, and what I have been able to ascertain as to his symptoms prior to, and when suffering from, the fits, strengthens my impression as to the propriety of the operation.

As I stated in my last, when seized with the fits, he falls instantaneously, and for two or three minutes appears quite unable to breathe, during which period he struggles and foams at the mouth. When he can first draw breath it is accompanied with a crowing sound; but so soon as he can breathe *freely*, the fit ceases, and he then lies for some time in a perfectly comatose state.

In the hope that it may, to some extent, benefit him, I am very desirous of performing the operation the early part of next week; in a district, however, so remote as this from the metropolis, it would be difficult for me to procure the necessary instruments, except directly from London, and as I could wish they should be good, and such as *fully* accord with your *modus operandi*, if not too great an intrusion, I should esteem it a favour if you would furnish me with the address where I can best obtain such instruments, and I will request a friend in London to procure them for me. I shall feel great pleasure in noting the progress of the case, and in furnishing you with any particulars of apparent interest.

I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

Dr. Marshall Hall.

W. J. MACKARSIE.

10th July, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have written to Dr. W——, for the address of the instrument maker of whom he bought his trachéotome.

It should be of a good size, and a curved silver tube should be sent with it, which will be suitable to the orifice when made. I shall be anxious to know the progress and result of the case, and to communicate any further information in my power.

Pray return Dr. W——'s letter; and would it be too much trouble to send me copies of my two notes?

I am, my dear Sir, very truly yours,

W. J. Mackarsie, Esq.

M. HALL.

Clay-cross, Chesterfield, July 12th, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—I am exceedingly obliged by your kind communications in reference to my epileptic patient, and also for your writing to Dr. W——, from whom I this morning received a

note recommending me to Messrs. Weiss, of the Strand. I have written to them for a trachéotome, and on its arrival shall be anxious to operate; and I shall feel pleasure in reporting progress and result.

In one of your notes you alluded to a simple mode of operation you had thought of; if not too much trouble, would you favour me with a description of it?

I remain, dear Sir, yours very truly,

Dr. Marshall Hall.

W. J. MACKARSIE.

Clay-cross, 28th Sept. 1852.

DEAR SIR,—Understanding from your last that you would not return to town before the end of this month, I have delayed writing to you about my case of tracheotomy, which I performed *this day six weeks*; and although there were many anomalies in the case, and I have had many difficulties to contend with, still you will be pleased to learn that *he has not had one fit* since. I have kept minute notes of the case, and shall, when I know you have arrived in town, forward them to you. I really think this case ought to be published,—1st, on account of the beautiful success attending your most valuable suggestion, and 2nd, on account of the anomalies and difficulties encountered.

Waiting an intimation of your return,

I remain yours, very faithfully,

Dr. Marshall Hall.

W. J. MACKARSIE.

Clay-cross, Oct. 3rd., 1852.

DEAR SIR,—I enclose you a brief account of my case of tracheotomy. The man has now quite recovered, and looks more healthy than I have ever seen him. The attempt at the return of the fits is one most beautiful part of the case, showing the benefit of your operation; and again, although I have not observed it mentioned with respect to the faculties, which these fits always sooner or later impair, becoming improved by the fits being cured, still, I am led to believe, from this case, that the brain, although much impaired in *function* by their frequent recurrence, may, after a time, by the cause being removed, resume to a very great extent its normal action.

I grieve to see in the papers, that one patient has, within the last week, been allowed to die, without this mode of cure being put to the test. Although it will not cure *all* cases of epilepsy, still, where a fatal result is anticipated, and the breathing is laborious, no man ought to be afraid boldly to put in force your most valuable suggestion.

With many thanks for your kindness, allow me to remain,

Dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

Dr. Marshall Hall.

W. J. MACKARSIE.

RICH AND POOR; AND A WORD ON THE CARBUNCULAR EPIDEMIC.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Free-trade has done great things for the medical philosopher; it has annulled, in great measure, the relative advantages and disadvantages of classes of society of the bygone age, and has possibly modified some of the specific diseases. The rich may now be said to be merged into the middle class, as far as the supply of the earth's bountiful productions is concerned; the means of sustenance hitherto, or in former years, so unequal and different, are now on a more equal footing; the luxuries easily and only attainable by the wealthy, are now within the reach of almost every one; the pine-apple the foreign fruits and wines, teas, coffees, and innumerable other luxuries, are now, vulgarly speaking, dirt cheap.

I am anxious, nevertheless, to divide society into only two classes, the rich and poor; and I should again divide these, for medical purposes, into the prudent rich and the imprudent rich, and the prudent poor and the imprudent poor.

I make this classification for the sake of utility; the prudent rich and poor apply the means at their command judiciously for the preservation of life, and which have been dictated by a high intelligence of the knowledge of the influence of right and wrong, indulgence and conduct. As derangement of health, disease, and death, are traceable, every day, to the violation of the ordinary laws of life, it appears to me therefore, that the much used expression of the sanitarians, "preventible diseases," as applied to the surreptitious power of stench, &c., as manufacturing specific diseases, is really and truly a gigantic error. No one will deny but that the gratification of our tastes and desires, without limit or control, is an all-powerful element in the maturing of any individual diseases of an hereditary nature, and ultimately destroying the body, and that to a greater ex-