

minded men on our side, but to make an all-round defence of everything that has been done is mere folly.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Birmingham, Nov. 28th, 1892.

LAWSON TAIT.

"DEATH FROM IRRITATION OF ASCARIDES."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I think I may claim to have strong testimony to support Dr. Beaven Rake's contention in your last issue of the important part which human entozoa play in the etiology of disease. I have just completed a voyage in charge of 557 Indian coolie emigrants from Calcutta to Demerara that occupied eighty-seven days. Last year, from symptoms I observed in a similar cargo bound to Jamaica, I was led to suspect the general presence of round worms in Indian coolies. Gripping pains, obstinate sickness and the presence of whitish shiny stools streaked with blood and passed with great frequency, and tenesmus, and the fact that these stools were extremely offensive, quite unaccompanied by dysenteric collapse and formed the commonest symptom observed, all appeared to point to this cause. This year, within a fortnight of embarkation, I weighed every coolie, and then administered santolin to each emigrant above two years of age, which produced 989 round worms. The largest number produced by any individual was thirty-seven, but I have good reason to suspect that large numbers escaped my tally, both in the preliminary sea-sickness which attacked the entire shipment and also from their belief that a second dose of medicine would be the inevitable result of such a confession. Allowing a two months' interval to elapse, I again weighed every coolie on board the ship, and I was able to prove a net increase of 2420 lb., which, taking 110 lb. as a fair average weight for an adult, represented twenty-two extra labourers on board. This result, though doubtless due to the generous dietary provided by the Colonial Governments in some part, may, I think, be not unfairly attributed to the fact that this large number of round worms had been expelled which would otherwise have caused grave interference with the digestive functions and prevented the due assimilation of food products. In conclusion, I would mention that in one case, a child aged two, who died, no symptom save debility could be discovered, and upon making a post-mortem examination a round worm was discovered in the small intestine, but no further evidence of visceral disease.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

PERCY RENDALL, M.D.

Devonshire Club, St. James's, S.W., Nov. 28th, 1892.

"MEDICAL AID ASSOCIATIONS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have always been disinclined to enter on a newspaper controversy, which as a rule results in so little good, but I cannot allow the assertions of Dr. Leslie Phillips and others to pass unchallenged. As to the working of medical aid associations in other towns I know nothing, but I must emphatically deny that the Manchester United Friendly Societies' Medical Association, of which I am one of the surgeons, trade on the services of their medical officers and make a profit out of their work. The published report and balance sheet of that Association for last year show a balance to their credit of £14 9s. 2½d. (no interest at all having yet been paid on money borrowed for fitting up surgeries &c.)—not much of a profit for twelve months' work. I am confident that the first use to which a larger balance will be put will be to increase the salaries of their surgeons (in the case of one this has already been done unasked) or to lighten their work by opening another surgery, thus dividing Manchester into four districts instead of three, as at present. No canvassing for families is carried on here, the only eligible ones being those of members of one of the societies forming the Association, and as far as I have been able to see the only reason for combination is the benefit of the members, as under the present system they obtain the services of a medical man who devotes himself entirely to attendance on them, and with whom the question of expense does not arise, he being able to obtain anything necessary for their efficient treatment for the asking. Looking at the matter from the club's point of view, I quite agree with

this. Medical men admit that the remuneration from clubs is too small to expect proper attendance, and from my experience as an assistant—which has been extensive—I should not care to be treated as a club patient in the usual way. No profit is made out of our attendance on midwifery; the whole of such fees, together with those for vaccination and reporting infectious cases, belong to the surgeons. Further, no "covering" of unqualified men can occur, as there are no assistants.

I entirely fail to see in what way my conduct can be considered "infamous in a professional respect." Nothing could be more contrary to my intentions, and when it is shown that I am acting in any way derogatory to my profession I will resign without any coercion from the Medical Council, who will, I feel sure, first consider many other matters—really disgraceful to the profession of medicine before they are induced to interfere in this. There can surely be nothing wrong in my preference of an appointment worth almost double that of an ordinary assistant, or in being responsible to a lay committee and paid by them. The medical staffs of all hospitals are controlled in like manner, and the appointments to large works, collieries and unions are held under both such conditions. So far I have been treated with every consideration, and am perfectly uncontrolled so long as my duty is done towards the sick members; and I certainly cannot be dismissed without three months' notice, unless for gross misconduct. I honestly believe I am practising my profession in a perfectly honourable and legal manner, and am free from the jealousy and ill-will found amongst my medical brethren in private practice, caused by the struggle to obtain patients. At any rate, I prefer my present position to running a sixpenny dispensary, or a private club (admission fourpence per family per week), or acting as assistant to another man, working like a slave, entirely for his interest and profit, for a mere pittance, and having one's opinion and treatment regularly and unceremoniously set aside and the impression conveyed to patients that an assistant is altogether an inferior being; or if perchance he should become too popular, some excuse for dismissal is soon found, and this to a married man is a serious matter, all chance of a livelihood in the same neighbourhood being quite out of the question through the terms of a stringent agreement. I should also be glad to know in what way my attendance on a number of united clubs differs from that of any other medical man on a single one, the contribution per member for the medical attendance being exactly the same in each case. Naturally I should, in common with most men, prefer a lucrative private practice, but to a young medical man without means this at the outset is impossible; but in simple justice, judging by my own treatment so far by a medical association, he might do worse than accept one of their appointments, which, with stated surgery hours, rules as to the sending of messages, holidays &c., is in some respects preferable to private work.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Manchester, Oct. 24th, 1892.

VERNON MOSSMAN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Brevity is so important to us all that I must ask you to excuse me if I imitate, in a minor degree, the curtness of such succinct phrases as "systematic robbery" and "grotesque indecency," and request my opponents to translate my terse expression into more diffuse and polite language. Most of the letters of the malcontents are simply nonsense. Here is a quotation from one of them: "He [the surgeon] is the *paid servant* of some person or persons not connected in any way with the medical profession. This is a most undignified and indefensible position." Thus this correspondent, in order to prove his own conduct infamous, calmly insults the medical staff of the Army, the Navy, the Poor-law Unions, County Councils, and many other bodies. The next sentence in the same letter accuses me of incompetency because (not having capital) I cannot get a larger income in private practice than I have at present. I confess I can produce no reasoning which could make an impression on this gentleman, and I therefore pass by his three letters without further notice. Another correspondent asks me to master the facts in the case of the gentleman who received *only* £250 a year after five years' service, though the writer must know that the officer referred to was paid much more than the "market value" of medical men with such, and so recent, qualifications. If the advertisements are an index the L.S.A. of recent standing can be employed for £60 a