

the gentlemen appointed inspectors, who should be required to give their whole time to the new duties. A few would suffice for Great Britain and Ireland.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Liverpool, Sept. 9th, 1905. GLYNN WHITTLE, M.D. Cantab.

THE VALUE OF LEAD AS AN EXTERNAL APPLICATION IN INFLAMMATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—When reading the accounts given in modern surgical text-books of the various treatments of inflammation I have been struck by the fact that I find no mention of the use of lead as a local application. To those who are not in the habit of thus using lead lotion it will, I think, be a surprise to find how this application appears to modify many inflammatory processes. I am in the habit of applying lead lotion (I generally employ it tepid) on lint covered over with oiled skin to lacerated fingers and other lacerated and bruised wounds, to inflamed joints after injury, to inflamed bursæ patellæ, and to large bruised surfaces, particularly if supuration is feared or threatened, and there is no doubt that the healing and absorption proceed as though the inflammatory action was in some way checked by the application. When there is evidence of inflammation spreading upwards from a wound hot fomentations to the wounded surface and lead applications to the reddened surface of the skin I invariably find markedly assist in lessening the spreading inflammation. It may be not unlikely that this remedy is frequently made use of, but our text-books of the present day are so full of the skilful discoveries of modern pathology and bacteriology that there is perhaps a danger of some of the older remedies being passed by unless their method of action can be explained and made to fit in with present-day explanations founded upon bacteriological research.

In view of these researches I do not pretend to suggest how lead acts when applied locally in these cases, but it appears safe to assume that in some way it assists the tissues in resisting the onslaught of whatever may have caused the inflammatory process. The recent knowledge which the study of bacteriology has afforded has so centred attention upon the important action of bacteria and their effects upon the tissues, and the supreme importance of combating these, that the possible importance of efforts being made to assist the invaded tissues to exert to their full extent the undoubted power which they possess to resist and to overcome the inroads made upon their defences has, perhaps, been thrown into the background. It is purely upon these defences and upon the power and opportunity which the tissues may possess for exerting to the full their defensive and protecting action that the success or otherwise of their defensive warfare against invasion must depend. The object of my communication is to draw attention to what appears to me to be the importance of paying attention to the aiding and strengthening of this defensive action, which is perhaps apt to be neglected in the modern rush to prevent or to destroy the hostile invaders and it certainly seems to me that in lead applications we possess one method which is at any rate worthy of mention and of sufficient value to make us pause to consider whether it is not worth while to pay some little more attention to the possibilities of measures which may assist the defensive powers with which nature has provided the tissues and which, all important as they are, appear to me to have received in modern investigation less prominence than they deserve.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
H. POOLE BERRY, M.B. Lond, M.R.C.S. Eng.,
Sept. 6th, 1905. Surgeon to the Grantham Hospital.

NORMAN KERR LECTURESHIP.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Twenty-one years ago the late Dr. Norman Kerr founded the Society for the Study of Inebriety. It has been thought by many of his old friends that the coming of age of the society would afford a fitting opportunity to perpetuate his memory. The council have therefore decided to found in connexion with the society and in recognition of his enduring work in relation to the study of inebriety a "Norman Kerr" lectureship. It is believed that many well-known persons would be ready to deliver such a lecture before the society, both in

honour of the founder thereof and for the furtherance of the investigations that he so ably inaugurated. It has also been suggested that a sum of £300 should be raised to form a fund, the interest of which should be available for the purposes of the lectureship. Towards this amount nearly £100 have already been promised. We feel sure that these proposals will meet with the approval of all the members and associates of the society and with others who knew Dr. Norman Kerr. All contributions towards the special "Norman Kerr Lectureship Fund" should be sent to the honorary treasurer of the same, Mr. McAdam Eccles, 124, Harley-street, W.—We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

HARRY CAMPBELL,

President.

W. MCADAM ECCLES.

Honorary Treasurer of Special Fund.

T. N. KELYNACK,

Honorary Secretary.

Sept. 11th, 1905.

RAINFALL IN AUGUST.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of Sept. 9th, p. 798, one of your Irish correspondents states that it rained continually on August 25th and 26th for 39 hours in the north of Ireland, with a record of 2.95 inches, and that "the total rainfall in Ulster for the month was 7.82 inches." As it is not indicated what part of Ulster he writes from your readers might assume the abnormal rainfall to be general throughout that province. It was not so, for here on the north-west coast of Donegal, Ulster, the total rainfall for August was 5.17 inches; for the last ten days of August (four rainless) the total rainfall was only 0.96 inch. In August, 1904, the record was 5.03 inches; in 1903, 6.27 inches.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

J. J. MACGRATH.

St. Helens, Dunfanaghy, Co. Donegal, Sept 9th, 1905.

THE SALE OR PURCHASE OF A MEDICAL PRACTICE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I be permitted to offer a few remarks on the above subject based on an experience of 30 years devoted solely to that particular branch of business and during which time a very large percentage of the transfers in England have passed through my hands? Without wishing to question your contributor's knowledge of the law I am sorry to find there are several suggestions as to clauses in agreement not at all in accord with present-day custom. Out and dried forms from text-books of many years ago may be all very well in the transfer of a commercial business but with the many peculiarities incident to the transfer of medical practices an agreement has to be prepared adapted to the requirement of each particular case and constant variations from stock forms are daily arising. I will deal with a few of the more important points in your contributor's article.

First, as to the sale or lease of vendor's house. In the sale of a medical practice the transfer of vendor's house is a most essential part of the goodwill and on no account should a purchaser sign any document without this being secured to him in the agreement for transfer.

Clause 2.—Your contributor assumes that appointments are not to be included in transfer. In probably 99 cases in a 100 all appointments are intended to be included, seeing they usually form a very valuable portion of the practice and a special clause is inserted providing for the vendor doing his best to transfer them, with a proviso for a reduction in price in event of failure. The word *customers* is never employed in the transfer deed of a medical practice.

Clause 3.—Covenant to introduce purchaser. Your contributor says: "Any debts due to the practice collected after date of transfer shall belong to the purchaser." This is an erroneous statement. All book debts due to vendor up to day of transfer belong to him and no matter when paid, whether to him or his successor, they are the sole property of vendor. In many cases a year's income or more is on the books at time of transfer and it would be manifestly absurd that these should be given away to the purchaser who has had no part in earning them.

Clause 4.—Outgoings during introduction will not, as a rule, include rent of house. In a long introduction the