

DR. CORFIELD, Medical Officer of Health for the district of St. George, Hanover-square, reports that although the death-rate of the parish is still low, scarlet fever had made its appearance, and was spreading. Several persons suffering from the disease had been taken to the Fever Hospital. Preventive measures are being actively carried out in the district under the direction of the sanitary authorities.

THE late Mr. W. J. Hutchinson, Newcastle-on-Tyne, made the following munificent bequests in his will:—To the Newcastle Infirmary, £25,000; to the Newcastle Dispensary, £10,000; to the Ingham Infirmary, £1500; to the Children's Hospital, the Lying-in Hospital, and the Eye Infirmary, £500 each. Many other charities also are recipients of grants under the will.

THE Committee of the Hospital for Women, Sheffield, have received a most generous gift from Mr. Alderman Jessop, an inhabitant of the town. This gentleman has purchased a large house and grounds, at a cost of about £12,000, and has presented the whole to the Committee for the purposes of the charity.

THE epidemic of scarlet fever appears to be spreading all over the metropolis. There are now 206 patients laid up with the disease at the Homerton Hospital alone, both sides of which—small-pox and fever—have been utilised for the reception of patients with scarlatina.

THE German war medal has been conferred, through the German embassy, on Mr. Barton Smith, M.B., C.M., house-surgeon to the Dorset County Hospital, for services to the wounded in the war of 1870-71. Mr. Barton Smith was attached to the English National Society.

THE Society of Public Analysts held a meeting on the 17th inst., Professor Redwood in the chair, when it was resolved to elect Prof. Redwood president for the ensuing year, and Dr. A. H. Hassall and Mr. J. A. Wanklyn vice-presidents.

WE are glad to learn that Dr. Lankester's health has somewhat improved. Dr. Lankester has had the benefit of the advice of Drs. Pavy and Brunton.

THE Obstetrical Society of Philadelphia has elected Dr. Graily Hewitt one of its honorary members.

## Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

### THE MEDICAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your remarks upon female medical education you have called attention to the second-rate character as teachers of those gentlemen who, according to your article, have proffered their services to the new school. You have hinted that the hospitals to whom these obscure teachers are attached should take some action to rid themselves of such colleagues, and have foretold the speedy overthrow of the entire scheme.

Speaking for myself, I have no intention to disclaim the character of a second-rate teacher. On the contrary, when I was asked by my late friend and colleague, Dr. Anstie (rather from friendship than on any other account), to become one of the teaching staff, I urged that very circumstance in excuse, and only yielded at last because others drew back. My chair, however, will be a humble one. As regards those teachers who, from undertaking subjects

connected with the winter session, are more immediately concerned, I do not think that, in candour, it can be said that they are either obscure or less favourably known than teachers at other schools. I know that it is true of them, as of myself, that they have been expressly solicited to undertake their duties, and have consented to do so, at the sacrifice of personal convenience, for reasons other than those which your article seems to suggest.

I would willingly leave it to those whose names carry weight to vindicate our common motive. Perhaps time will vindicate it best. Yet since it is known that Dr. Anstie took from the first an active part in the formation of this school, and it so happens that the subject was often discussed between us, I am anxious, in regard to his memory, that the view which he took and which actuated others in co-operating with him should not be misunderstood, and least of all by the readers of THE LANCET. Dr. Anstie regarded the establishment of a medical school for women in the light of a legitimate experiment, and when the appeal was made to him he deemed it only fair and generous to respond to it. The requisite machinery being provided, he was for offering, on the part of the profession, such help as was needed, and without which it was obviously impossible for the experiment to be carried out. That he had arrived at no preconceived opinion as to the success or failure of the scheme, that he had no settled conviction as to the physical fitness or otherwise of women for the work they sought, I very well know. He only desired to give them a trial fairly and without prejudice.

Whether the examining bodies and others, whose concurrence is equally essential—I do not say for the success, but for the performance of this experiment,—will see the matter in the same light, or whether their opposition will take the shape of ignoring the pupils and persecuting the teachers, remains to be seen. The position taken by THE LANCET is not the least among the many difficulties with which these brave scholars will have to contend; yet schemes opposed as much at first have succeeded ultimately, and success here would be but another illustration of the truth, already familiar to our art, that *à priori* arguments of overwhelming force and dexterity are sometimes altogether upset by the result of a simple trial.

Your obedient servant,

October 24th.

OCTAVIUS STURGES.

### MEDICAL CHARITIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me space for a few remarks on the above subject? I think it is one which still deserves the attention not only of the profession, but also of the general public.

I believe that the multiplicity of such charitable institutions does immense harm, first to the profession, and second to the recipients of such relief.

First, with regard to the profession, let me take one form of medical charity. A distinguished member of the profession in a town, for instance, sets apart certain hours of the day for gratuitous medical advice. Hundreds of patients crowd his consulting-room and obtain his advice who could well afford to pay an ordinary practitioner; but why should they when they can obtain advice for nothing? An incalculable injury is thus done to the younger members of the profession especially. The same remark applies to the out-department of our hospitals.

Now, with regard to the patients themselves, I hold that our great medical charities have a demoralising tendency on the community. The indiscriminate relief thus obtained must create a want of self-reliance and self-respect in the great majority of such persons. I think it will bear out what I assert when a member of the London aristocracy (as I have read) dressed himself in shabby clothes and presented himself at a hospital for the purpose of getting gratuitous advice. And then how many thousands, after spending their money on drink, obtain advice in the same way? But why should they not shatter their constitutions when they can have them repaired for nothing? They can earn plenty of money, but have been educated from youth up with the idea that, should sickness overtake them, some medical man must attend them gratuitously. The feeling of self-reliance is thus destroyed in one particular,

and the person goes on from one thing to another until all self-respect is lost, and he feels no compunction, after a time, in asking the parish authorities to furnish him with bread for the support of his existence. I hold, then, that medical men are much to blame in this matter, and that instead of doing good to the community, I believe they are doing a great wrong, as I said, not only to themselves, but to society at large.

No doubt there are plenty of instances where people cannot pay, but it is of the indiscriminate gratuitous advice that I complain; and, with regard to distinguished men having hours for gratuitous advice, it is simply a disgrace to the profession. There is no use deceiving ourselves by the sentimental saying, "Oh, these people cannot afford to pay a doctor." They can and do afford, perhaps, to pay several shillings for drink after receiving gratuitous advice. They have to pay the baker, the butcher, the tailor; but the doctor's reward is in heaven—at least that is the effect of our teaching. Why deny themselves their beer, &c., for the doctor, when they know that he works for nothing?

When we look at the condition of the medical men in the army and navy, we see how slow the public are to recognise their position—simply, as I have feebly endeavoured to show, because the profession do not respect themselves.

Why should the doctor be supposed to give his time and talents to the public for nothing? Does the lawyer, the clergyman, the tradesman do so? The public know that these must be paid, but the doctor—oh, they can get plenty of them for nothing. Who ever heard of a lawyer setting aside certain hours for gratuitous advice to the indigent? He knows too well the value of his education, makes the public pay for his skill, and is, in the end, more respected by the community; hence his position in the councils of the nation compared with the medical man.

I am sure hundreds of the younger members of our profession will agree with me in what I have said, for it is to them that the greatest injustice is done, and unless the evil be remedied we will still see those humiliating appeals in your columns, where widows of medical men are thrown penniless on the world. Such a result is brought about, in many instances I have no doubt, by our mistaken philanthropy.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
 Everton, Liverpool, Oct. 18th, 1874. J. WILSON STEELE, M.D.

## MR. STANSFELD AND THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is to be regretted that a Member of Parliament with the experience and reputation of Mr. Stansfeld should commit himself at a public meeting to the expression of opinions of the erroneousness of which more careful thought and examination must inevitably convince him. He has expressed his determination never to cease his opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts until these are repealed. He gives as a reason that the Acts were smuggled through Parliament, that they are immoral, unconstitutional, and hygienically a failure. The absurdity of stating that Acts have not had the advantage of public discussion which have been now ten years in operation, which have been reported upon by a special committee of the House of Lords in 1868, by a committee of the House of Commons in 1869, by a Royal Commission in 1871 (on which evidence of more than 100 witnesses has been published representing all shades of opinion, and filling a thousand closely-printed pages of large paper), which have been twice fully debated in the House of Commons, which have been thrust obtrusively and offensively into every household in the United Kingdom, is so manifest that those only would listen patiently who had determined to believe every misstatement agreeing with their own prejudices.

So far from the Acts being immoral, the experience of the inhabitants in places where they are in force shows that they have proved the greatest gain to morality. The streets have become more orderly; open solicitation, formerly so common at all hours, has almost disappeared; and the half-naked, shameless prostitutes are no longer seen in the thoroughfares. The number of brothels has been largely reduced, the prostitutes diminished, and even the most

hardened and depraved improved in their outward appearance and condition. Large numbers have been reclaimed by means of these Acts, and still more have been deterred from commencing a life on the streets by the instrumentality of the persons employed in carrying them out. Young children have been rescued from houses of ill-fame and placed in homes or restored to their parents. So far from making a national provision for the encouragement of vice, the Contagious Diseases Acts have been the first attempt on the part of the Legislature to regulate and then repress the open shameless vice in the public streets, which Mr. Stansfeld would have us believe is not to be meddled with for fear that our sons would turn on us and say we encourage immorality.

Mr. Stansfeld states also that the Acts are unconstitutional. In this sense, probably, he would include all other sanitary laws, and would do away with compulsory vaccination or any measures for the prevention of scarlet fever and other zymotic diseases.

Mr. Stansfeld's main arguments against the Acts, however, are based on their being hygienically a failure. He states that venereal diseases diminished rapidly in the army and navy from 1860 to 1865, and that the reduction which has since taken place is due to causes independent of the Acts. If this be true, the reduction in disease should have taken place equally in military towns and seaports not included in their operation. What are the facts? In the year 1873 the number of men in the army at home constantly in hospital with primary venereal sore in places under the Acts was in a ratio of 4.42 per 1000, while in places not under the Acts the ratio was 8.86 per 1000. Here, too, the statistics are actually less favourable than the facts, for a very large proportion of the cases of venereal disease, especially of primary syphilis, included in the returns from the protected stations are known to have been contracted in places not under the Acts. But let any person really desirous of knowing the truth compare the existing amount of primary syphilis among the troops in London, York, Exeter, or among the seamen at Hull, Bristol, or Liverpool, with the disease at Canterbury, Portsmouth, or Plymouth, and he must be convinced of the great sanitary good effected by these Acts and of the fearful amount of syphilis existing in those towns where there are no preventive measures.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,  
 October 21st, 1874. A LOVER OF TRUTH.

## INTRA-UTERINE FIBROIDS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your notice of the pamphlet "On Intra-uterine Fibroids," by Dr. Marion Sims, your reviewer has fallen into the error of supposing that the "iron cotton" employed by Dr. Sims to arrest hæmorrhage is made with the tincture of the *perchloride* of iron. The "iron cotton" is prepared by soaking lint or cotton wadding in the liquor ferri *subsulphatis* of the American Pharmacopœia, the strength generally recommended being one part of the liquor to three or four of water.

I have for years employed the persulphate of iron in powder as a styptic, and I believe the subsulphate to be an identical preparation. The liquor ferri subsulphatis is quite as powerful a hæmostatic as the perchloride of iron, and, being but very feebly acid, is not nearly so painful an application; in fact, it causes scarcely any pain at all. Recently I tested the efficacy of the American preparation in a severe case of hæmorrhage from the rectum, occurring on the fifth day after the removal of some rather full-sized internal hæmorrhoids by the clamp and cautery. I was prepared to plug the rectum, but first tried placing some strips of lint soaked in the iron solution into the bowel, and I was pleased to find that the hæmorrhage was instantly arrested; there was hardly any pain, and the patient did well.

I would venture to suggest that the liquor ferri subsulphatis would be found more valuable than the liquor ferri perchloridi in uterine hæmorrhage, as being much less irritating. When the subsulphate solution has been kept some little while a deposit takes place, and it requires shaking, but this does not militate against its usefulness.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
 WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.  
 Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, W., Oct. 19th, 1874.