

out, for which we have long been looking (and for which, if we ever attain them, we shall owe a large debt of gratitude to THE LANCET), and not to lose them, or even much delay their attainment, while fighting over minor matters. I am, at the same time, most desirous to secure our existing institutions from any unnecessary damage, and to give them all the share in medical education and government to which they can fairly lay claim. But they have been long in the field, and are quite competent to look after themselves. I hope that the three plans above referred to will very shortly be amalgamated (either by the machinery I have suggested, or by any other), and that the present session of Parliament will witness the passing of a Bill securing their primary and essential provisions.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

Clarges-street, April 26th, 1871.

T. HOLMES.

THE SPEEDY CURE OF GONORRHOEA BY LOCAL TREATMENT ONLY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you allow me to lay before the profession, through your columns, the highly successful results that I have obtained in the treatment of this disease by *local* means only. It has long been a matter of surprise to me that a complaint like gonorrhœa, owing its origin to a *purely local* cause, and usually unattended with any constitutional disturbance, should ever have been treated by any other than *local* remedies. Under the plan of treatment that I have adopted, I find that, as a rule, the discharge ceases on the third or fourth day, sometimes even sooner. In only two cases has it continued beyond a week, and in both these cases the patients admitted that they had not used the injection regularly. Never, in any instance, and I have always inquired particularly on this point, has the use of the injections been attended with pain or inconvenience. I wish to draw particular attention to this fact, as many authorities on this subject—Sir Astley Cooper included—caution us against their *early* use. The very unsatisfactory results that have hitherto followed this mode of treatment are, I believe, owing to injections of much too powerful and irritating a nature having been employed, and ought not, I think, to prejudice us against their judicious use. The injection at first employed should not be too strong—two grains of sulphate of zinc to one ounce of water I usually find answers very well. I generally direct it to be used four times a day, this being as often as most persons have the opportunity; but, when convenient, I think it desirable that it should be used more frequently. I always impress particularly upon these patients (and this cannot, I think, be too strongly insisted upon) the importance of continuing the use of the injection for a week at least after the discharge has entirely ceased, and that it should not be left off *suddenly*, but *gradually*. I believe that *gleet* and *stricture* will very rarely, if ever, occur after this mode of treatment.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Leeds, April 19th, 1871.

PHILIP FOSTER, M.D.

OUT-PATIENT HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The injury sustained by the general practitioners of the metropolis, and probably also of most of our other large towns, by the abuse of the out-patient department of hospitals and dispensaries has been, I fear, at present insufficiently realised, or there would have been no need for the earnest appeal for funds to meet the expenses of the committee appointed last year to inquire into and report upon the subject.

For myself, I can state that, though I have paid some attention to the kindred question of Poor-law medical relief, I had but an imperfect notion of the evils that were inflicted on the profession; indeed, it was not until I had been asked to second one of the resolutions at the late meeting in Berners-street that I was induced to look into the statistics of the subject, and then, to my astonishment, discovered that so vast a number as upwards of a million of cases of disease were annually seen at these institutions;

I state upwards of a million, because I have good reason to believe that a correct return would show even a much larger amount than the figures I quoted, this being (exclusive of the 200,000 cases of disease attended by the district medical officers) above a quarter of a million more than the total of all the cases attended by the 786 dispensary physicians in Ireland, where it has been asserted there exists great abuse of such relief.

To suppose for a moment that all this large amount is made up of really necessitous persons is simply absurd. A careful investigation would probably eliminate three-fourths, certainly one-half; it will therefore be evident that a very large sum of money is abstracted from the pockets of the profession, to be expended on feminine finery and indulgence, and, to a great extent, on coarse and debasing gratifications for males of the artisan and lower middle-class.

At the meeting to which I have referred, a resolution was adopted to memorialise the President of the Poor-law Board, &c. Now it appears to me that it would be far better to form an association, with the avowed object of persistently agitating for removal of these abuses. The action of such association I would not limit solely to the metropolis, for, as I have before stated, in several of our large towns exactly the same thing, though in a lesser degree, is complained of. Could five district medical officers even nominally attend the sick poor of the large parish of Birmingham if their duties had not been supplemented to a considerable extent by the gratuitous assistance of the numerous so-called medical charities of that town?

Granted such an association was formed, a subscription of 2s. 6d. or, at the most, 5s. would be amply sufficient to provide all necessary funds. These, my experience tells me, would be readily forthcoming if the facts of the case, as yet imperfectly appreciated, were brought fairly before the rank and file of the profession.

I could give many reasons showing the necessity for such combined action, but this communication has already exceeded the limit I had intended.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Dean-street, Soho, May 8th, 1871.

JOSEPH ROGERS.

CHLORAL HYDRATE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read with much interest Dr. Crichton Browne's notes upon "The Inconveniences and Dangers of Chloral Hydrate," and he may be pleased to read my memoranda of a case which I have had under my care during the last five weeks, as it in many points confirms his valuable observations.

Mrs. R—, aged twenty-four, the wife of a well-to-do mechanic, applied to me about five weeks ago complaining of violent headache and general debility. She stated that terrifying dreams prevented her from sleeping at night; she often woke up screaming. During the day she suffered from a continual throbbing of the head and pain down the spine. I prescribed a tonic mixture, two tablespoonfuls of which was to be taken twice a day, and the following prescription: chloral hydrate, one drachm and a half; syrup of tolu, six drachms; peppermint-water, six ounces: two tablespoonfuls to be taken at bedtime each night. I ordered good nourishing diet. The effect of the chloral hydrate mixture was to produce several hours' sleep the first night, and continued sleep every subsequent night for more than a fortnight. Her general health improved daily during this time. At the termination of it she complained suddenly of sore-throat, swelling at the parotid and submaxillary glands; her face became bloated out, and her face, shoulders, and chest were intensely red, suggesting the appearance of scarlet fever or a mild attack of erysipelas. I thereupon discontinued the night medicine, prescribing some castor oil immediately, and a mixture containing chlorate of potash and dilute hydrochloric acid; and cauterised the tonsils. She was well again in a couple of days. I ordered her again to continue the tonic, and as she had found such benefit from the chloral hydrate she asked to continue it. I again ventured, but only to see her a second time suffering from its effect in a more aggravated form, being now covered from head to foot with urticaria, with an intense scalding pain in the