

Medical Societies.

ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1852.—MR. HODGSON, PRESIDENT.

ON THE OCCASIONAL ORGANIC UNION OF CONTIGUOUS TEETH. By S. J. A. SALTER, M.B., &c.

(Communicated by THOMAS BELL, Sec. R.S.)

The object of this paper is to enumerate fresh examples of the so-called "bony" union of contiguous teeth; to explain the true nature of that union, as exhibited by microscopical scrutiny; and to suggest the probable mode of its formation.

1. The fresh instances here recorded are, a united dens sapientiæ and supernumerary tooth of the lower jaw; a cuspidatus and lateral incisor of the lower jaw united; and a specimen exhibiting the lateral and central incisors of the lower jaw in the same condition. These are particularly described.

2. In the next place, the nature of the uniting medium is shown to be dentine and not crusta petrosa, (as stated previously by written on this subject.) This is demonstrated by microscopical drawings of sections of the teeth.

3. The probable mode by which this abnormality is produced is explained thus: The pulps of the teeth form in their usual place and usual relation, with this one exception, that that portion of the capsule which should separate them is wanting. The result is, that they come in contact, and when the soft dentinal elements commence calcifying they unite, and the tubes of the two teeth are continuous. There is no enamel between the teeth where the crowns are in contact.

The author further remarks, that all the teeth, and in both jaws, have been subjects of this peculiar condition. The paper concludes with a few practical remarks—that, in the majority of cases, the union could not be discovered while the teeth were in the mouth, and that, even where it could be discovered, both teeth must necessarily be removed together should extraction of either be required, as there appears no means of separating them.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE PROPOSED LAWS OF THE NEW MEDICAL COLLEGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some months since, I attended a meeting held at the Hanover-square Rooms, for the formation of the Medical Benevolent College, with the intention of subscribing my mite towards the attainment of so desirable an object; but I soon saw and heard quite sufficient to determine me to keep my money in my pocket, as I found that a good part of the subscriptions would be expended in building a church, and in paying a large salary to a chaplain. In this opinion I am confirmed by a copy of the "Laws," which I have just received; in every page, and in nearly every rule, I perceive the cloven feet of the church of England.

In No. 1, "There shall be a chapel of the church of England."

No. 3, "Incumbents in whose churches sermons have been preached in aid of the funds." (Nothing said about dissenting chapels.)

No. 17, The Bishops of London and Winchester are to be visitors.

No. 34, The head master is to be a clergyman, and is to appoint the assistant-masters, (who of course will be ditto,) and is not to be removed without the consent of one of the visitors, who, by-the-by, is the gentleman who has rather an objection to remove Puseyites.

It thus appears that, no matter what religion the father may have been, his children are to be brought up to the church of England.

Hoping you will give insertion to the foregoing,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

May, 1852.

A BAPTIST.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The remarkable letter of your correspondent, "M. D., and 'an Admirer of Religious Freedom,'" contained in THE LANCET of May 22nd, cannot fail to have been read with pain.

Although unwilling to intrude myself again upon your valuable space with reference to the Medical College, which is

continuing to receive such able and substantial support on all sides, I cannot refrain from immediately expressing my disapprobation of the spirit of acerbity in which the "M. D." has written. What does he mean by the offensive terms, "priestly tyrants," "stupid and bigoted," &c. &c.?

Now-a-days, I believe it to be generally admitted that no institution, of a charitable description and the like nature, wherein religious observances are necessary, such as are especially required in the education and training of the young, can be worked, practically, with success, under the attempted combination of the principles of church and dissent. Witness the Infant Orphan Asylum, which, after the fruitless effort of a few years, became divided from this cause into two separate establishments. Hence, the Council of the College have, in my opinion, wisely decided that this benevolent undertaking should be based on the principles of the established church.

I am a perfect stranger to the proceedings of the Council, beyond having seen their by-laws, but I cannot apprehend that there would be the slightest objection to those non-conformists, whether old or young, who may become inmates of the College, and conscientiously object to the forms of worship therein observed, performing their religious duties after their accustomed manner. Neither do I see anything in the by-laws contrary to this view of the matter.

Let it not be supposed that I entertain other than feelings of Christian toleration and cordiality towards the large and influential body of dissenters, amongst whom, indeed, I can enumerate some of the members of my own family. I am myself a churchman, and I hope a sincere one, but the man whom I have every best reason most to love and respect in this world is a dissenter.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

G. BURY.

Whetstone, May, 1852.

ARTIFICIAL DILATATION OF THE OS UTERI.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am sure your sense of justice will accord me a little space, to answer the charge of misrepresentation made against me by Mr. Gilmour, in your last number.

He freely taxes me with professional ignorance. At all events I do not sin alone; for immediately following his letter is one from "Alpha," who is decidedly as disposed to call the practice in question "malpractice" as myself.

The misrepresentation is this. Mr. Gilmour says: "He talks of the whole structure of the uterus being in a state of rigidity similar to that rigidity of the os uteri mentioned by writers."

Now, I said no such thing. My words are: "The truth is, that in such cases the whole structure of the organ is physiologically in the same state." I did not say "of rigidity," for I am not a believer in the book doctrines respecting rigidity, especially as affecting the os uteri exclusively, and therefore could not have made an assertion so absurd.

Again, Mr. Gilmour states: "My entire paper never once alludes to the propriety of using artificial dilatation in rigidity of the os." If that were not his subject or object, the title of his communication, nay, every word of it, belies his attempt to cancel or stultify his meaning. Why then does he quote Celsus—a splendid authority certainly in progressive science, and especially in midwifery—in support of the practice, and a host of other men of later days, whose doubtful recommendations have passed into the habits of every village apothecary and aged midwife in the kingdom, until the thing has acquired the force of a demand.

My words in reference to irritability of the parts have been grossly misunderstood. I said, "for this in many cases of protracted labour is no overcharged description of the state of parts;" then not certainly in their natural condition.

When a man loses his temper, and makes general and random charges of ignorance, it is generally understood to signify that he has the worst of the argument. Mr. Gilmour thinks me scurrilous: now I will not say he is so; but venture to quote a letter that I have received from Mr. John Brierly, M.R.C.S., of Staley-bridge.

"I have just been reading your admirable paper in THE LANCET, &c. I hope it may direct men's minds to a better practice than the one too much in vogue, and secure the safety and welfare of many a poor creature whose sufferings are, I should fancy, quite enough naturally without being increased artificially by the meddlesomeness of the person called in to watch her safe delivery. How often has the expression been that such and such a person never had his hands off his patient for hours."

Sir,—I repeat it, that however it might be otherwise accounted

for by Mr. Gilmour, women have been led to expect manual interference so generally as to cause a man either to degrade himself by adopting a practice he believes to be unnecessary and bad, or, in making too frequent examinations, *pretend* that he is doing something; either alternative being hateful; or there is another with the ignorant, who form the bulk of female kind; he may be deemed unfeeling because his habits are not those of other less scrupulous and popular practitioners.

In country districts, and also among the bulk of the people in town, we hear too frequently of such things as those to which Mr. Brierley alludes; and I know they are too general, even among men calling themselves educated. It was because I feared that the practice which your correspondent "Alpha," equally with myself, styles "malpractice," would be sanctioned and extended by Mr. Gilmour's letter, in a publication not merely universally read by the profession, but by thousands out of it,—it was for these reasons I wrote to denounce, not Mr. Gilmour, whose name I avoided, but that practice. As to his calling me offensive epithets, that is his own affair; they are degrading only to the party descending to employ them. I am not responsible for his want of courtesy and taste, and should only prove a similar weakness in myself in being annoyed at his unnecessary personalities.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

JOSEPH A. SMITH, M.R.C.S.

Glossop, Derbyshire, May 24th, 1852.

REMARKABLE FORM OF BULLOUS DISEASE OBSERVED IN NEW-BORN INFANTS AND CHILDREN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was much interested on reading Dr. Barnes's account of a "Remarkable Form of Bullous Disease in New-born Children," published in *THE LANCET* for May 15th.

During the summer of 1851, I was somewhat puzzled at meeting with two cases of eruptive disease, of a bullous character, in children four or five days old,—to me quite different to anything I had ever seen before. I will not encroach on your time and space by giving a detailed account of them, as they corresponded so nearly to Cases 2 and 3 recorded by Dr. Barnes: in one there was little or no constitutional disturbance, and I simply gave a grain of grey powder and one of carbonate of soda twice a day, and had the parts well sprinkled with a powder, consisting of one part prepared calamine to three of wheat-flour; in the other case the bowels were disordered and griped, and the grey powder was combined with a stomachic, using the same local application for both. In a few days they perfectly recovered, and are now strong, healthy children. The mothers were both ladies of average health, residing in healthy situations, and attended by good and experienced nurses; so that the eruption could not have been produced or modified in character from neglect or want of cleanliness.

It was not a little remarkable that these cases presented themselves to my notice on two consecutive days; and as the appearances in both were so exactly similar, I considered whether it was probable that I could have conveyed the infection from one child to the other; but as twenty-four hours had elapsed from the time of my attending one of the patients during her labour, before I was summoned to the other, and further, as one resided seven miles from my house, and the other five, in opposite directions, it did not appear in any way probable that I could have been the means of conveying infection, even supposing the disease to have been of that character. I have not since seen a case in any respect resembling the ones above recorded.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Cerne Abbas, Dorset, May, 1852.

WM. F. COLES.

DR. H. BENNET ON MENSTRUATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Dr. Henry Bennet, in his concluding article on menstruation, says that one of the most frequent causes of partial amenorrhœa, in those in whom the function has been once established, are certain lesions of the ovaries, which give little other evidence of their existence during life. When partial amenorrhœa occurs, in the *absence* of those symptoms which Dr. Bennet says are diagnostic of uterine disease, does he conclude that there is lesion of the ovaries? And if so, what remedy would he suggest? This is not an uncommon occurrence, yet it is the only one for which Dr. Bennet does not suggest some mode of treatment.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Cork, May, 1852.

UPSILON.

THE MEDICAL BENEVOLENT FUND.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I cannot help feeling a little disappointed in reading the letter of your correspondent "Beta." In the sacred and noble cause of Christian benevolence that has so long and so successfully enlisted, not only the deep sympathy, but the untiring exertions of Mr. Newnham, it cannot but be a cause for gratitude to God that such extraordinary and unusual exertions have been so far blessed, as to give the hope that they have helped to soften the heart, and to open the purse, of many a professional and unprofessional brother who needed only to be kindly reminded of such distressing and harrowing cases as those relieved by the Medical Benevolent Fund, to give it their constant and cordial support.

I do not really think it was the intention or the wish of any one of those many intellectual and benevolent faces which I had the great pleasure to see assembled from every part of this great country, at the London Tavern, to hear that truly Christian nobleman the Earl of Carlisle advocate, with so much sympathy and eloquence, the claims which the widows and the orphans of our poor professional brothers make upon us—I say, I do not think it was the wish or intention of any one of those present on this interesting occasion, to forget the very valuable and laudable exertions of the late Dr. Baron, of Gloucester, or of Dr. William Conolly. We have all embalmed those names, and laid them up by the side of many others, in our minds, the recollection of which affords pleasure to us at all times. But Dr. Baron has passed to his account, and can no longer contribute in mortal flesh to aid our cause, nor could we hope to effect the same amount of good by confining ourselves to such remarks as would give the unmixed glory of such an institution to the memory of that individual. To make that institution beneficial in the highest degree, we must praise, not only the dead, but the living; nor can we afford to lose the services or the intercessions of many whose names will never transpire till the hearts of all are laid open. We must not forget, that it is neither Paul that plants, nor Apollos that waters, that can produce such fruit as that I saw presented to the Benevolent Fund last Thursday, for it is God alone who gives the increase; and I feel most thankful that we have not only had the use of Mr. Newnham's italic-loving pen, not only the benefit of his rare and earnest diligence, but the still higher advantage of his prayers for our success. You must not suppose I write this letter for the purpose of prominently bringing Mr. Newnham's name forward unassociated with others. Those of Mr. Daniell and Mr. Propert are equally dear to and valued by us all, and I feel it is too high a privilege to have such men in our ranks, to allow the smallest unkind allusion to their noble exertions to pass unnoticed.

I remain, Sir, your faithful servant,

C. M. BURNETT.

Westbrook House, Alton, 1852.

VACCINATION.—EFFICACY OF BRYCE'S TEST.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Perfectly agreeing with the remarks in your leader of the 1st instant, as to the causes of the unsatisfactory results obtained at present by vaccination, I would wish, beside calling the profession to a more rigid attendance to their cases of vaccination, and the directions laid down by Jenner, to remind them also of a test which I have always believed infallible. It is Bryce's, and was first suggested to his mind by recollecting some experiments that had been performed by earlier physicians in small-pox inoculation, and that it had been found by them, if a person was inoculated every successive day up to the appearance of the constitutional symptoms by which such inoculation was usually followed, that the pustules so produced invariably became so accelerated in their progress as in the course of twenty-four or thirty-six hours to be as fully developed as that which had begun nine or ten days before, and was the original cause of the fever.

Mr. Bryce, looking upon this acceleration of the pustule last produced as a proof of the existence of a variolous action in the system, and judging from the strong analogy between small-pox and cow-pox, saw no reason why the inoculation of the one should not be attended by the same results as the inoculation of the other; and if such phenomena did occur, he thought himself perfectly justified in attributing their appearance to a similar cause—viz., the existence of a certain specific action in the system.

"The truth of my opinion," he says, "was soon put to the test