

of the general practitioners was read at the conference at the last meeting. As to the charter for the College of Surgeons, I did not understand that there was any contemplation of any charter being given to the College of Surgeons; but it was proposed that there should be a charter of incorporation granted to the College of General Practitioners.

694. Then that relief which was to be given in the way of reciprocity to persons educated medically in Scotland or in Ireland was contemplated, not by a direct admission to the register, but indirectly, by the right of being admitted to the different bodies through whom they might become registered?—*It was so.*

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

“Audi alteram partem.”

DISEASES OF THE SPINAL SYSTEM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The note of your “Old Admirer,” at page 301, should have had his real signature; he need not be ashamed of it, whoever he may be. But he misunderstands the meaning which I propose to attach to certain terms ending in *ode*, (from *ὄδῃς*, signifying *fulness*, as in *hæmatode*). A patient affected with the disease called tetanus subsists in two conditions—one, the *unexcited*, when he is only tetanode; the other, the *excited*, when he is tetanic. The former is compatible with recovery, the latter rapidly destroys.

The tetanode state, or the tendency to spasm in the disease, must not be confounded with predisposition to the disease, as, I think, has been done by your “Old Admirer,” who, I trust, will continue his attention to the subject.

Your correspondent may have suggested the reason for the failure of all attempts to realize the type of tetanus in experiment: the condition implied in the predisposition may be essential, and it is absent.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Sept. 9th, 1848.

MARSHALL HALL.

AVOIDANCE OF EPIDEMIC DISEASE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I do not presume to give an opinion respecting the validity of the theory of the electric origin of epidemics which has lately been discussed in your journal, but you will perhaps allow me to suggest the most simple and obvious means by which, in the language of Sir James Murray, “men may be saved from being made the vehicles of currents which are quite capable of deranging the mechanical order, the chemical action, and the physical function of every atom and organ of the human body”—namely, by wearing gutta percha soles to their boots and shoes, and using walking-sticks, if they must use any, of the same material. The insulation of beds and of buildings will obviously be an insufficient protection without the addition of some means compatible with locomotion.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Sept. 2nd, 1848.

G. P.

EFFECTS OF CHLORINE GAS IN PHTHISIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In a letter addressed to you, and published in THE LANCET of Saturday, August 12th, by an individual who signs himself *Iarpos*, I am accused of stating that phthisis is unknown to the workmen at Rollox, on account of the chlorine that is extricated in the manufactory carried on there. Now I have made no such assertion. The following is the paragraph alluded to:—“The same influence of chlorine in pulmonary diseases has been observed by Mr. Tenant, of Glasgow, who informs us that all the men who engage themselves to work in his manufactory, if they have coughs, are rapidly relieved when gradually introduced into the chlorine house: and of late, people labouring under phthisis and asthma have taken lodgings in the neighbourhood of his works, for the sake of the atmosphere of chlorine emanating from them.” Nothing is here said of the immunity of the workmen at Rollox from phthisis; the assertion is simply this, that workmen labouring under pulmonary diseases, “if they have coughs, are rapidly relieved when gradually introduced into the chlorine house.” I never was at Rollox, and made the statement on the authority of the late Mr. Tenant, to whom the works belonged; and I had no reason to doubt his statement, more especially as my friend Dr. Christison’s work on Toxicology contains the following statement respecting

the influence of habit in enabling individuals to breathe without injury an atmosphere loaded with chlorine:—“I have been told,” writes the doctor, “by a chemical manufacturer at Belfast, that his workmen can work with impunity in an atmosphere of chlorine, where he himself could not remain above a few minutes:” and the doctor adds, “It is not probable that the trade is an unhealthy one, for several of this gentleman’s workmen have lived to an advanced age; one man died not long ago, at the age of eighty, after having been forty years in the manufactory; and I have seen, in Mr. Tenant’s manufactory at Glasgow, a healthy looking man, who had been about forty years a workman there.”*

I have no doubt that persons predisposed to phthisis, who enter the chemical works at Rollox, or any similar manufactory, will suffer, and even in a degree adequate to bring them “to the tomb,” but there is a great difference between the inhalation of chlorine gas, so concentrated or “abundant as to darken the air,” and its inhalation in a largely diluted state. I have no hesitation in asserting that chlorine, when inhaled in conjunction with aqueous vapour, has produced considerable comfort to phthical patients, although I am not disposed to regard it as a curative agent. As a topical expectorant, calculated to relieve dyspnoea, its value has been proved by others as well as myself, and among them, Sir James Clark.† My experience of the use of chlorine, in the proportion of one fluid ounce of the aqueous solution to two fluid ounces of water, sufficiently warm to rise readily in vapour, and to carry along with it the chlorine, when inhaled twice a day, has been considerable. Inhaled in these proportions, it promotes expectoration without an effort, and leaves the patient more comfortable than before using it. I have no faith in chlorine, beyond the temporary beneficial effect which I have just stated, but I consider such an effect to be important in a disease which has hitherto resisted, with a few exceptions, every attempt to cure it.

With respect to the second assertion, as *Iarpos* expresses himself, it was, as I have already stated, made on the authority of Mr. Tenant, without any opportunity, on my part, of ascertaining the veracity of the statement; I am, therefore, not answerable for its truth, as along with the statement I gave my authority. Some days since, in a conversation which I had with Mr. Griffith, late of Glasgow, that gentleman informed me that he had had occasion to pass Mr. Tenant’s works almost every day, for some years, and never suffered any inconvenience from the chlorine, although its presence in the atmosphere was very evident; nor did he ever hear of any one who had suffered from it. The injurious influence of the sulphurous acid generated in the manufacture of carbonate of soda, carried on in the same works, he believes to be more likely to injure persons in their immediate vicinity, than the chlorine. He had never heard of persons taking lodgings in the neighbourhood, for the purpose of benefiting by the chlorine in the surrounding atmosphere. He mentioned that every vegetable body in the vicinity of the works is destroyed; but that effect is more likely to result from the sulphurous acid than from the chlorine. He considers that the late erection of a chimney much higher than the former one has greatly lessened the influence of either gas.

I remain, Sir, your humble servant,

Welbeck-street, August 27, 1848.

ANTHONY TODD THOMSON.

THE NEW PROJECT.

[REPLY OF MR. PROPERT.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Without admitting the claim of any person to call upon me to answer the questions put by you on the subject of the proposed “Medical Protection Society,” I consider the only two that apply to me *individually* are the first and the fourth, to which I hesitate not to reply, that “I was not appointed a trustee without my consent;” and that “I disapprove of the chemists and druggists being made spies over the profession.”

With regard to the other questions, they relate to the official concerns of the society, with which I do not profess to be intimately acquainted, and must therefore refer you to the office of the institution, where I have no doubt every information may be obtained.

Without intending to become the champion of the society, I beg to express my conviction, that it will ultimately be productive of much good.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

New Cavendish-street, Sept. 12, 1848.

JOHN PROPERT.

* Treatise on Poisons, &c. First Edition, p. 588.

† Cyclopædia of Practical Medicine, vol. iv. pp. 348-9.