

The stomach had a tumour on the external surface of the lesser curvature, about the size of a walnut, but not connected with the interior.

The left ventricle was greatly thickened, the left auricle being dilated. The right auricle and ventricle presented nothing remarkable. The septum ventriculorum unnaturally thickened. The valves healthy.

ON THE TREATMENT OF FISTULA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The last number of your valuable journal contains a brief report of some cases of fistula treated by ligature. It is not my intention to enter upon the comparative merits of this plan with those of the operation by incision, although the inapplicability and insufficiency, as well as in many cases the protracted pain and hazard which accompany the former, must have been observed by every practical surgeon, neither do I wish to disparage the ingenious method by which the general use of (as I think) a deservedly obsolete practice is sought to be revived. My purpose in addressing you is to dissent from the opinion that the operation by incision is attended with any unusual danger, more especially hæmorrhage. The extensive experience of nearly twenty years, enables me conscientiously, and unreservedly, to affirm the reverse is the fact; in proof of which it is merely necessary to mention, that in two hundred and forty-eight cases, selected promiscuously, which were operated upon at the Fistula Infirmary in the manner I have for some years adopted, no fatal hæmorrhage occurred; and further, out of that large number, in twenty instances only was there any bleeding requiring attention. Many of these operations were witnessed by professional friends, who concurred in expressing their approbation of the simplicity, efficacy, and safety of the plan. Before concluding, I would add, that if the division of vessels of any size is requisite, (by no means a common occurrence,) no serious consequence can ensue if the simplest precaution be observed.

Respectfully requesting the insertion of these few remarks, I beg to subscribe, your obedient servant,

FREDERICK SALMON.

Old Broad-street, Feb. 25, 1844.

MR. LUKE'S TREATMENT OF FISTULA IN ANO.

To the Editor.—SIR: Allow me, through the medium of THE LANCET, to ask Mr. Luke for a little more detailed account of the cases of fistula in ano treated by him, by means of the ligature, as described last week, at page 221. For although the treatment seems in the cases reported to have been most successful, and probably would generally be so in cases where a small and single sinus existed at either side of the gut, yet I should scarcely expect such a result where there had existed a large abscess, occasioning considerable loss of substance, with a large cavity, and perhaps two, three, or more sinuses leading in different directions from it: cases by no means theoretical or imaginary, but which must have often come under the notice of surgeons of Mr. Luke's experience, and even of those whose experience is much less.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

H. BURFORD NORMAN, M.R.C.S.

Duchess-street, Portland-place, Feb. 25, 1845.

THE LIBRARY AT THE ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Knowing the readiness and ability with which you have so often advocated the rights of medical students, I venture to address to you a few lines on the inconvenience to which the members of the St. George's Hospital library are put, by its closure now, in the middle of the session, as it is pretended for the purpose of encasing the books, and examining the catalogue to ascertain how many are missing. It is now nearly three weeks since we have been excluded from the use either of the books or room; nor is there as yet any notice as to when we may expect to regain it. And instead of the librarian and council working doubly hard in order that it may be re-opened as soon as possible, the librarian only attends there now till four o'clock, or a few minutes after, daily, and does not come in the evening from six to eight, as was usual when it was open for our use. The consequence of this is, that much valuable time is lost between the lectures, and the pupils must now either buy the books they require, thus being put unnecessarily to great expense, or else be at a stand still and idle for want of them.

I remain, Sir, yours truly, ONE OF THE MEMBERS.

Feb. 1, 1845.

A DISCIPLE OF MESMER.

R—, an agricultural labourer, complains of being totally unable to extend his toes, or flex his foot on the leg, and of numbness of the skin of the inferior third of the front of the leg and back of the foot. The muscles of the antero-exterior part of the leg feel flabby, and are somewhat wasted. The account he gives is, that last Michaelmas, whilst thrashing with a hand-machine, the handle thereof caught his smock-frock and whirled him heels overhead; and falling with his leg bent beneath him he felt great pain and was unable to stand, &c. Thereupon his employer sent for a disciple of Mesmer in the village, who declared his leg to be broken, and applied to a notorious bonesetter at Wisbeach. The bonesetter backed the assertion of the mesmerizer (*par nobile fratrum*), and R.'s leg was "splintered up" for some weeks, and the bonesetter's certificate obtained. But from the examination and inquiries I have made, my decided opinion is that no fracture has existed at all. I believe the accident consists of an injury to the peroneal nerve which my readers will remember supplies the *tibialis anticus*, *extensor communis digitorum*, *extensor pollicis proprius*, *extensor brevis digitorum*, and by its musculo-cutaneous branch, the lower antero-exterior part of the skin of the leg and the back of the foot; in fact, all the parts are paralyzed.

JAMES ROBERTSON.

Upwell, Cambridgeshire, Feb. 15th, 1845.

UNION OF THE METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If you think proper, I shall feel obliged by your inserting in THE LANCET the following letter, which I addressed yesterday to Mr. Harding, of South Molton, honorary secretary for South Devon, in reply to his circular; and remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. C. JERRARD.

Honiton, Feb. 16, 1845.

"Honiton, Feb. 15, 1845.

"Dear Sir,—In reply to the circular which I received yesterday, I beg to state that I shall have much pleasure in seeing my name enrolled among the general practitioners, for the purpose of obtaining a charter of incorporation. I shall not, however, send my name for enrolment till I see the two metropolitan associations united—namely, the 'Association of General Practitioners in Medicine and Surgery,' and the 'Medical Protection Assembly.'

"As soon as I see this very desirable step taken, and their object publicly and specifically announced, I shall send you my name for enrolment, together with a subscription of two guineas, or more.

"I fear we are all too late. The metropolitan associations ought to have joined forces long ago. Hoping that my example may be adopted by others, I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

"J. C. JERRARD.

"To J. N. Harding, Esq., South Molton, North Devon."

* * Mr. Jerrard has, in all probability, overlooked the resolution which was lately adopted (Feb 10th) at the Medical Protection Assembly, on the motion of Mr. Wakley, and which is printed at page 191 of the present volume of THE LANCET. The resolution is as follows:—"That the general practitioners belonging to this Assembly be earnestly advised to enrol their names forthwith in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS, with a view to obtain from parliament a full recognition of the principle of representation in the government of the members of the medical profession of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

THE PREPARATION OF SODA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the number of THE LANCET for Jan. 18, of the present year, is an account of a new process for preparing hydriodic acid, by Mr. R. Phillips, jun., extracted from the *Pharmaceutical Journal*.

If I rightly understand Mr. Phillips, he states his process to have been suggested by one described in Dr. Kane's work, and which, in fact, was first proposed by me at the meeting of the British Association in Glasgow, and of which process I published a short account in the *Philosophical Magazine*, for July, 1841.

My process is for preparing both hydrobromic and hydriodic acids. Either the bromide or iodide of barium, in solution, being decomposed by dilute sulphuric acid; so that, by using given weights, a given amount of either of the hydracids may be obtained.