

doos burn their dead. For a considerable distance we can see the huge columns of smoke and hear the wails of the relatives, the lugubrious sound of the cymbals, and the crackling of the blazing wood."

As regards the famine, the same drama of horrors, with the more or less spectral details, possesses the stage. The famine belt is roughly computed to be 1,300 miles long and 400 miles wide, while a fresh food supply is impossible until September. Add to this as evidence of almost incredible vitality that individual adults not infrequently descend in weight to less than fifty-six pounds. "Mere skin-covered skeletons," is the graphic phrase employed.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### The Object of the Berlin Leprosy Conference.

NEW YORK, Feb. 16, 1897.

To the Editor:—In a correspondence with Dr. Goldschmidt, December, 1895, a plan was devised by the writer for the formation of an International World's Committee, composed of delegates of all governments. This plan was submitted to Dr. Hansen, who approved of it, and submitted it to the Norwegian government through his chief, Dr. Holmboe. The answer came back that before Norway issued the invitation, it was necessary to obtain a general opinion of the leading leprologists. Dr. Hansen said that his government would probably ask a credit of parliament for the expenses of the Congress.

The Provisional Committee was formed of Goldschmidt, Hansen and Ashmead. The plan was explained to the public in medical newspapers, and was brought to the attention of the leprologists through private correspondence. It seemed to be generally approved. It remained to determine the seat of the Congress. Here there was a divergence of opinion. Some were for Bergen, others for London. Moscow was proposed also, especially as there was to be there a general medical Congress.

When we had brought the matter so far, suddenly Dr. Ehlers started a committee of his own. It seems that before we had thought of a Congress he had, perhaps two years before us, revolved in his head, "while investigating leprosy in Iceland," a plan for some kind of palaver, or learned talk, between *renowned* leprologists who, giving their opinions either in German, or English, or another language, would by their eloquence destroy the scourge of leprosy. Anyone will admit that there was not much originality in the idea.

He succeeded in forming a committee in Berlin, and persuaded Dr. Hansen to go with him. They issued an invitation to a debate.

Our idea was, and always has been, that the only way to combat and eventually destroy the dreadful scourge, was the isolation of lepers, enforced by law. In one generation, leprosy not being hereditary, the victory would be complete. Remedy for the disease there is none. Experimentation with the bacillus for twenty-five years has resulted in nothing. The disease is certainly contagious, and spreads only by contagion, directly or indirectly. Therefore isolation alone can conquer, and no learned talk, no amusing communications of experiences, are of any use. Any man who really, as a physician and a philanthropist, wants truly to fight the dreadful enemy, must stand for isolation. Salaries may be gained, high positions may be occupied, commissionships may be enjoyed, the honor of being sent as delegates to conferences, or other palavers, may be obtained, and, though a number of *renowned* leprologists, whose works are *known*, will become still more

*renowned* and their works still better *known*, yet leprosy will continue to gnaw at the vitals of the race.

Dr. Ehlers speaks of the "capacity of discussing a good cause." This is, in his opinion, all that is wanted in Berlin. As if that good cause had not been discussed by men even greater than Dr. Ehlers himself for 2,000 years!

We wanted to *do something*; they come together to talk.

Dr. Ehlers says that the governments are only invited to send delegates, but that these delegates will have no special function in the Berlin Conference.

That is, every active means against the disease must be avoided like poison, and nothing but talk is to take place, absolutely nothing but talk. It is a conference to amuse us fellows, us leprologists, not at all to destroy the most horrible punishment that ever nature has put upon mankind.

Dr. Ehlers says that he has "no use for governments," because they have always neglected the holy name of hygiene. But we wanted only that, and did not think, and do not think now, that anything can be done except by "stirring up the governments." Does Dr. Ehlers really believe that talking is better than "stirring up the governments?" Can the disease be stopped in Iceland in any other way than by the operation of the Danish government? Will they stop it by the talk and reciprocal compliments in Berlin? The doctor himself in his *known* works, says that in no other way can leprosy be conquered in Iceland except by isolation. But these things seem to be expected to happen, only a hundred years after the Berlin Conference has met, and the great talking has come to an end.

Until our great grandsons see that happy ending, let us talk and discuss, and enjoy the company of all the *renowned* leprologists, and praise their celebrated works. Talk is the order of the day.

To put our opinion in a few words: We want to have official delegates from every government, to meet at stated intervals, who will form a permanent committee.

We declare at once that we are contagionists, and that we do not believe that anything but absolute isolation can destroy a disease which afflicts nearly a million of human beings. Such a committee can not but be for isolation. In this respect, we are intolerant. We are also intolerant in this: We condemn every effort that is made against vaccination. We are for vaccination as we are for isolation. We confess to be entirely intolerant in this respect.

There is to isolation but one great opponent today, it is England. The maintenance of her 200,000 Hindu lepers, not to speak of her West Indian and other lepers, would be an enormous expense. England is opposed to isolation from utilitarian considerations. Recently, as Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson tells me, measures for the isolation of lepers in India were withdrawn from Parliament because of the opposition which he led against them. His opposition was certainly not of a scientific, and still less of a philanthropic character.

The Berlin Conference will meet, the Berlin Conference will go. It will have been very interesting; it will be, as Prince Bismarck said to the Battenberger, "a pleasant thing to remember afterward," but there will be at least (probably much more than) 200,000 lepers in India, 100,000 in China, 100,000 in Japan, 27,000 in Colombia, 5,000 in Russia, 3,000 in Brazil, 500 in Cuba, 500 in the United States and 159 in Iceland, the place where Dr. Ehlers has had his only experience of leprosy, and where he prepared himself for the palaver which is to take place in Berlin, October, 1897. There the world will be told by several *renowned* leprologists how the leper problem can be solved without isolation; but if the numbers quoted above are not increased at the time when all that science becomes public, I shall be very much astonished.

Very interesting theories will no doubt be expounded. If Dr. Wernich were living, he would, if he had not changed his

mind since he wrote on leprosy in Japan, explain how the disease arises from a depravity of digestion, caused by the excessive absorption of rice. He, I suppose, is one of the renowned leprologists whose works are known to Dr. Ehlers, and it is to be hoped, for the amusement of all the scientists who will meet in Berlin, that there are still other men living who possess no less imagination than Dr. Wernich.

We do not care very much about the greater or less renown of a leprologist; this is absolutely of no account in our business. We might say that Dr. Hansen is the greatest of leprologists, because he chanced to light on the bacillus. Yet the discovery of the bacillus has not saved one human being, has not diminished the sufferings of a human creature. If a thousand leprologists, as great as Hansen, meet, they will not do more than Hansen himself has been able to do. Not any of the known works of the learned gentlemen can do more than the discoverer of the bacillus has been able to do. All that the greatest of leprologists has been able to do, was done by isolation, imposed by his own government, and independently of the bacillus, and without palaver.

ALBERT S. ASHMEAD, M.D.

P. S. In a letter dated Nov. 16, 1896, to Dr. Goldschmidt of Paris, Dr. Ehlers, the Secretary of the Berlin Leprosy Conference Committee, said "that he could assure him that Dr. Hansen had never approved the project of Dr. Ashmead, and that the latter acted without any kind of authority from the Norwegian government, and even without the formal authorization of Dr. Hansen."

In a letter to me dated Sept. 4, 1896, Dr. Hansen says: "I should best like if you and Dr. Goldschmidt alone took the task of convoking the Congress on your shoulders; but should you think it very desirable to have my name, you may use it, but on the condition that the Congress is only regarded as arranged by us. If the Congress then will meet in Bergen, I hope still that the Norwegian government will pay the business matters; the best would be, if the participating governments each paid their tribute."

"If the Congress shall not be secured without its help, the government will probably ask a credit to furnish the Congress with a secretary, local (place), for the meetings, and other matters of business."

This shows conclusively, I think, that Dr. Hansen permitted the use of his name on our provisional committee, and gave us warrant to use the name of his government.

ALBERT S. ASHMEAD, M.D.

### "Independent Medical College" Mill.

TECUMSEH, MICH., Jan. 8, 1897.

To the Editor:—I inclose you what purports to be a medical journal. It certainly is the rankest thing I ever saw. Is it not likely that it is the child of the Wisconsin Eclectic Medical College? You will notice that the editor is J. Armstrong of Chicago. I have looked him up in Polk's Medical and Surgical Register of the United States, 1896, and find that he lives at 683 W. Van Buren St., but following his name is the little star that refers to the following note at the bottom of the page: "No report received in answer to inquiry regarding graduation." J. H. Randall, Ph.D., M.D., is given as associate editor, but his name does not appear at all in Polk's Register and I mistrust he is a myth. I am lead to this belief by comparing the name, with those given on page 14 in the article, "Report of Proceedings of the United States Medical Liberty League." It is stated that several persons met to organize the league in response to invitations of the faculty of the Independent Medical College, and in the proceedings the names of five M.Ds., are given, namely: J. Armstrong, Mary E. Sellen, C. K. Drumheller, A. J. Clausen, J. H. Randall. The first two are given in Polk's Register. Mary E. Sellen is or was a resident of Columbus, Ohio, and her school of practice is given as "Sci.," if any one knows what that is. The names of the other three organizers of the United States Medical Liberty League can not be found in Polk's Register anywhere in the United States.

I have no doubt that J. Armstrong and Mary E. Sellen are the prime movers and that they are the officers and members of the league. On the last page of cover is an advertisement of the Independent Medical College, which announces that "This school advocates a new and successful method of acquiring a medical education." The names of the members of the faculty are not given if there are any, but as the announcement is the baldest possible bid for the sale of diplomas without college attendance, and as the journal is avowedly opposed to all medical legislation, it is almost certain that J. Armstrong and Mary E. Sellen are "the journal," the league and the college, all in two. On page 16 are the opinions of doctors who have read No. 1 of the *Medical Liberty News* (this copy is No. 2) and have words of commendation for it. There are just six of them, and three of them have the suspicious and tell-tale star following their names in Polk's Register, and the names of the other three do not appear at all. The object of the "Liberty league" seems to be to organize and raise funds to oppose all medical legislation and in case any member of the league is prosecuted for illegal practice to help him with funds and prestige. On page — occurs this fine statement: "We also declare persistent and uncompromising warfare against the practice of *vivisection live animals*."

I send the pamphlet to you in the hope that you will put it into the hands of the proper officials and that they can by legal means shut up the "diploma mill" at least. Their journal and the "league" are beyond the reach of the law, I fear.

I am very respectfully yours, L. G. NORTH.

### Massage.

CHICAGO, ILL., Feb. 15, 1897.

To the Editor:—In the JOURNAL, issue of Jan. 9, 1897, there appeared a part of a serial article on "Massage," written by myself, which was "to be continued." As the continuation did not appear, I wrote to you about February 12 inquiring the reason thereof and received from you the following reply:

"Dear Doctor:—I have your letter of February and have to say that after publishing the first part of your article we had a protest from Dr. Douglas Graham, in which he claimed that a large portion of the history of massage was taken from his book, a charge which seems to be sustained, etc."

1. Now, as a matter of fact, I did quote Dr. Douglas Graham some and wherever I did I think I gave him credit for it. I did not put his name at the end of each line, but at the end of certain articles. If I should have neglected to do this in any instance it was an oversight and I beg pardon of Dr. Graham.

2. I challenge Dr. Graham to prove that the "Ancient History of Massage" as I have written it is *entirely original with him*, and I will prove to him that there are a score of books on the subject by other authors who use language similar or like it in part. Dr. Graham can not quote ancient history and call it his own.

3. Get a number of books on any subject (medical), as surgery, for instance, and does not one author quote the other or a dozen others?

4. I do not know as I quoted Dr. Graham any more than other authors; if I did, then he ought to be proud of it.

Since when is medical literature private property?

Respectfully yours, JOHN KERCHER, M.D.

### Embryonic Specimens Wanted.

BALTIMORE, MD., Feb. 20, 1897.

To the Editor:—During the last ten years I have appealed to physicians from time to time to send me the human embryos which fell into their hands, and have in this way procured some very valuable specimens. These specimens have been cut into sections, and are now being modeled and studied very carefully. Yet a number of important stages are still wanting, and I therefore ask through your columns that physicians send me any material which they may obtain.

The best method to preserve human ova is to place the unopened ovum, without handling, and as soon as possible, in strong alcohol. By this method the embryo within is well hardened for future microscopic study.