

## Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

## HOSPITAL SUNDAY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—On Sunday next, June 15th (Hospital Sunday), the inhabitants of London and its suburbs will be asked to contribute, at the various churches and chapels, in aid of the Metropolitan Hospitals and Dispensaries. In 1873 the first Hospital Sunday collections were made in London, and produced £27,700. Last year the fund reached close upon £34,000, showing a satisfactory increase. We have within the metropolitan area 2024 places of worship, and their congregations are asked to give, on this one Sunday in the year, their aid to 102 hospitals and 51 dispensaries, which annually provide for the treatment of fully 74,000 in-patients and 920,000 to 930,000 out-patients. The well working of such a large and beneficent charity as this is cannot fail to attract universal interest, sympathy, and attention. The population of London may reasonably be estimated at 4,000,000, and when it is found that of these something short of 950,000 persons are forced by the poverty of their circumstances and surroundings to seek gratuitous dispensary or hospital treatment, I feel that the managers of the Hospital Sunday Fund have urgent claims on the sympathies of all. Let me, therefore, ask the various congregations on Sunday next to give liberally to provide during the year for the sick and suffering poor in our hospitals. From those who may be absent from church or chapel I shall be glad to receive donations at the Mansion House, it being only by a simultaneous and hearty action on Hospital Sunday that we can hope to raise a sum which shall be worthy of a rich and prosperous city.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

R. N. FOWLER,

Mansion House, London, E.C.

Lord Mayor.

## THE RECENT TYPHOID EPIDEMIC AT NICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It may, I think, be of interest to your readers and to all who are in any way concerned for the prosperity of the health stations on the Riviera to be furnished with an accurate account of the epidemic of typhoid fever at Nice in the autumn of last year. To the exaggerated reports which appeared in many newspapers, both in England and the Continent, it was in great measure due that the visitors to Nice and along the whole of the Riviera last season were far fewer than usual. It is to be regretted that the Medical Society of Nice did not at once make known the results of the inquiry they instituted, since that would, I think, have done much to quiet the general anxiety on the subject. They have now, however, published them in their organ, the *Nice Médical*, and I ask for space to print the report in a condensed form at the same time that I forward to you a copy of the original.

On Nov. 23rd, 1883, a subcommittee was nominated to draw up a set of questions which were sent to all the medical men practising in the city, to which sixty-three returned replies. Eight stated that they had observed a greater number of cases of typhoid fever than usual in the previous autumn, and sixteen others added that they had during the same time seen several instances of fever of a remittent type, similar to though not identical with typhoid. In the town itself 156 cases of true typhoid had been noted in private practice; 73 in the civil hospitals and 38 in the military hospital, or altogether 265. In addition to these, 43 cases of remittent fever had been observed in general practice in the town. A few only of these cases had occurred in June, July, and August, but the greater number in September and October. The disease reached its maximum of prevalence in October; it still continued, though with lessened frequency, in the first half of November, but diminished with great rapidity in the second half of that month.

Of the 156 cases, 84 occurred in persons in comfortable circumstances, and 20 among the working classes, hospital cases of course excluded. Of the 156, 116 took place among the resident population or among strangers resident in Nice

for more than six months, and twelve among persons who had dwelt there for a shorter time. The cases were pretty equally distributed throughout the whole city, the barracks in the Place St. Dominique being the only spot that could be regarded as a focus of the disease.

The general sanitary condition of the dwellings in which fever cases occurred is stated in 132 out of the 156 cases, and is said to have been good in 65 instances; apparently good in six, tolerable in 38, and positively bad in 23. In 18 of these last cases the bad condition of the privies or water-closets is especially noticed. The majority of cases were isolated, but once three cases occurred in the same family, two in five, and two four times in the same house, throughout in the same family.

With reference to the general character of the fever, among the cases occurring in the town it was benign in 53, moderate in 9, severe in 24, and dangerous in 31, out of 120 in which this point is referred to. The mortality in the town was 16 out of 156, or 10 per cent.; 10 in 73 in the civil hospital, or 13 per cent.; and 3 in 38 in the military hospital, or 8 per cent.; or, in other words, the total mortality was 29 in 265, or 11 per cent.

If one assumes the number of cases not reported by the few medical men who made no report to have been 35, we arrive at a total of 300 cases and a mortality of about 33; neither a large number nor a high mortality for a city whose population, exclusive of visitors, is between 70,000 and 75,000. It will, moreover, be observed that the epidemic began at a time when those who resort to Nice in quest either of health or of amusement had already quitted it, and that it had almost ceased before the return of the greater number, for at the time of the publication of the report on Dec. 7th only six cases had occurred in the town since Nov. 14th, and none at all in the military hospital.

At Nice, as often happens elsewhere, good has come out of evil. The conviction has forced itself on almost all that perfect frankness is invariably the best policy, and that the endeavours to conceal a known evil issue only in gross exaggeration of its extent. It has further awakened the authorities of the city to a perception of the need for immediate action in order to improve in all respects the sanitary condition of the town. The eminent engineer, M. Durand Claye, has been called in to advise as to the thorough drainage of the town; an enterprise, the difficulty of which will be at once appreciated by all who bear in mind that the Mediterranean is a tideless sea.

A special subcommission of the municipality has been formed under the name of Commission d'Hygiène et de Publicité, to study all questions connected with the sanitary state of Nice, and the publication of its vital statistics. The creation of a *bureau d'hygiène* has been resolved on; such as exists at Havre, Rheims, Nancy, and other towns in France, and which answers to the sanitary authority in England, and controls the work done here by the medical officer of health and his subordinates.

It must not be forgotten that sanitary science and boards and officers of health were unknown in this country fifty years ago. We must not then criticise too severely the imperfect projects of our neighbours, nor wonder that the steps of him to whom a road is altogether new should sometimes falter. But, more than this, we are bound, at least to my thinking, to do our best to help every effort, and not, when in quest of health and pleasure we go to regions where both are proffered with a lavish hand, act as though we owed nothing in return, and murmuring at ignorance we do nothing to enlighten, and complaining of defects we do not seek to remedy, waste in idle dissipation, or in ignoble sloth, the wealth and time and talents lent to us for others as well as for ourselves. I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Bolton-row, W., June 6th, 1884.

C. WEST.

## "INGUINAL v. LUMBAR COLOTOMY."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your impression of last week, under this heading, you observe it is open to doubt if any other surgeon than Mr. Thomas Bryant has placed on record thirty-six lumbar colotomies with a very large percentage of successes. In the fourth edition of my work on "Diseases of the Rectum," at page 299, I state that I have performed lumbar colotomy thirty-nine times for the relief of cancer of the rectum. Since 1881, the date of my book, I have added twenty-six to