

A Grave Menace to the Public Health; A Correction.

NEW YORK, Sept. 24, 1898.

To the Editor:—In your issue of September 17, p. 666, the statement is made in a letter signed by "T. S. Dabney, M.D.": "Eight hundred marines were camped for many weeks at Guantanamo and their health remained excellent, and why? Because the surgeons of the Marine-Hospital Service not only understand preventive medicine, but they *practice* it."

I beg to correct the inference that the United States Marine Corps is under the medical supervision of the Marine-Hospital Service. The latter organization was established for the care of sick and disabled sailors of the merchant service, a "mercantile marine," as it is sometimes termed, thus, doubtless occasioning the misunderstanding.

The United States Marine Corps is part of the United States Navy, and is cared for exclusively by the officers of the medical department of the United States Navy. The writer would have been strictly within bounds if he had applied to them the statement that "every man in that service is qualified for the work he is assigned." Not only in our home ports, but on foreign stations their success in preventing inroads of communicable disease is noteworthy and commendable. Furthermore, the officers, seamen and *marines* of the United States Navy are, first of all, cleanly in personal habits; second, obedient to orders and observant of sanitary requirements; and third, not given to whining (for *lactopeptin*, etc.) and complaining because of the hardships incident to the service, three essential conditions in time of war. Very respectfully,

ALBERT L. GIBON,
Medical Director, U. S. Navy (retired).

Gonangiectomy.

DUNNING, ILL., Sept. 22, 1898.

To the Editor:—In one of my recent articles published in the JOURNAL I used the word gonangiectomy, meaning by it an excision of a portion of the vas deferens. As it seems to be a new word, and since I have had a number of inquiries as to its root words or derivatives, I take this means of answering, and give first, the Greek, then the English equivalent, with diacritic markings for pronunciation; then the word as compounded, with its definition, "Lidell & Scott's Unabridged Greek-English Dictionary." The translation may not be absolutely literal:

γονή, gona: semen.

ἀγγείον, aggeion: a vessel.

ἐκτομή, ectoma: excision, or cutting away.

As compounded, gonangiectomy: excision of a vessel carrying semen.

Very respectfully,

GEO. W. JOHNSON, M.D.

Secretary, Department of Health.

FAIRFIELD, IND., Sept. 24, 1898.

To the Editor:—Some of the papers of our land have had much to say of sanitary conditions, and made attacks upon the medical department, the truthfulness of which will be brought out or refuted by investigation.

Present reports from surgeons themselves prove the fact that they have done noble work, also that many embarrassing conditions arose not due to any lack of service upon their part, but because of limited authority, being handicapped by officers of other departments, and without medical knowledge.

All general orders must come from the Secretary of War and in such trying times it seems quite enough for him to give attention to other duties. In truth, this department should be directed by the Secretary of the Board of Health, who should a member of the cabinet and a physician. Let it be his duty to look after sanitary conditions, camps and boats, give general orders to surgeons, and see that this Department

is equipped for efficient work, and care for the noble men, "our soldiers."

Not only is there a demand for this additional cabinet member during war, but he would fill a long-felt want in times of peace, and prove a valuable addition to the president's family.

Yours respectfully, THOMAS L. COOKSAY, M.D.

Instruments for Fen Cho Fu Hospital.

SIOUX CITY, IOWA, Sept. 19, 1898.

To the Editor:—Thanks are due to the JOURNAL as well as Dr. Webster of Chicago and Dr. Green of Dubuque, Iowa, for so soon as their gift of surgical instruments arrives at Fen Cho Fu Hospital, Dr. Atwood will no longer have to amputate limbs with a saw made of a piece of band iron. The appeal through the JOURNAL and the response by the doctors sends the instruments.

Very respectfully,

MARY A. ATWOOD.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

Yellow Fever in the South.—In special dispatches in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 26, four undoubted cases of yellow fever to date, with two deaths and one recovery, were reported from Jackson, Miss.: seven cases and one death from New Orleans, and ten cases from Oxford, Miss. There are no cases in Alabama and the quarantine is entirely in the hands of the State authorities. Refugees fleeing from Jackson are not permitted to stop within the State of Alabama.

Health in Michigan.—Reports to the State Board of Health for August give diarrhea, rheumatism, neuralgia, bronchitis, and cholera morbus as the five most prevalent diseases for the month. Compared with the preceding month, dysentery, cholera morbus, cholera infantum, typhoid fever, diarrhea and inflammation of kidney increased in area of prevalence.

Health in Chicago.—The report of the Department of Health for August gives the total number of deaths during the month as 1977, a rate of 1.22 per 1000 as compared with 1.21 per 1000 for the corresponding month in 1897, and 1.40 for August 1896. The principal causes of these deaths were: Diarrheal diseases, 261; other acute intestinal diseases, 231; diseases of the nervous system, 234; consumption, 184; heart diseases, 84; pneumonia, 78; cancer, 63; typhoid fever, 45; diphtheria and membranous croup, 41; bronchitis, 37. Those under one year of age numbered 595; those between 1 and 5 years, 251.

A Warning Against Antifebrin.—An inquest was recently held in London on the body of a young man who died from taking powders containing an indeterminate quantity of antifebrin. The powders were taken for the relief of headache. Antifebrin, like most anilin derivatives, is a drug which should be employed with especial caution. It is official under the name of acetanilid, and its potency is sufficiently indicated by the fact that the maximum dose assigned to it is only three grains. There have been many cases of poisoning from the injudicious administration of this remedy, the symptoms produced by it being of the anilin type. The patient usually complains of giddiness, noises in the ears, throbbing in the temples, and a dull, heavy pain in the head. The face becomes livid, the lips are blue, and the pupils are contracted. This is followed by symptoms of collapse, the face and extremities are cyanosed, the skin is covered with cold, clammy perspiration, the pulse is feeble, and respiration becomes shallow and frequent. There is no specific antidote, and after the administration of a brisk emetic the sufferer should be kept in a strictly recumbent position, and plied vigorously with stimulants. The effects are usually of considerable duration, and in one case the patient was not out of danger for fourteen hours. We are informed that there is a considerable demand for powders of this description, the pur-