

ENTERIC FEVER IN INDIA.

The Anglo-Indian papers received by the last mail contain, we regret to say, intelligence corroborative of the truth of our remarks that the periods of maximum prevalence of enteric fever commonly corresponded with that of the heat in India, and that the seasons directly preceding and succeeding the rainy season, the monsoon, were those in which outbreaks or cases of enteric fever were wont to occur. We learn that there have been several fatal cases of this fever at Agra, Sialkote, and Rangoon. There have been between fifty and sixty cases, several of them fatal, in the York and Lancaster Regiment since their arrival at Agra. It will be remembered that this was the regiment shipwrecked in the *Warren Hastings* on its way to India, which exhibited such an admirable spirit of discipline on that occasion. The *Pioneer Mail* of the 26th ult. states that the cause is ascribed to the water, the supply of which is obtained from the water-works; but in that case it may be confidently expected that the prevalence of the disease will not have been limited to the York and Lancaster Regiment, but will have extended to other people obtaining their supply from the same source. There is frequently a diminished prevalence of the disease during the monsoon, with a subsequent rise; but we hope the worst of the outbreak is already over.

DEATHS IN THE SERVICES.

Ethelbert Henry Blake, M.D. Edin., A.M.D., Deputy-Inspector-General of Hospitals, at Bedford on the 6th inst., in his seventy-ninth year. He was appointed surgeon in 1841, surgeon-major in 1853, surgeon-lieutenant-colonel in 1861, and retired with the rank of Hon. Deputy Inspector-General in 1867. He served with the 98th Regiment in China (medal), was present at the storm and capture of Chin Kiang Foo, and was in the Eastern Campaign of 1854-55, including the battles of Alma and Inkerman, the siege of Sebastopol, and repulse of the sortie on Oct. 26th, 1854 (medal with three clasps, and Turkish medal).

Staff-Surgeon Henry Clerke, R.N., on the 25th ult., at Boulogne-sur-Mer, aged fifty-two years. He was appointed a surgeon in the Navy in July, 1868, staff-surgeon in December, 1879, and retired in September, 1881.

THE PLAGUE.

The great improvement which has of late taken place in regard to the prevalence of the epidemic in India continues, according to the latest reports from that country, and public confidence in regard to it is pretty well re-established. A report from Constantinople of the 13th inst. regarding the appearance of the disease in the Red Sea may, however, be of serious import if true. Bubonic plague is stated to have broken out at Djeddah on the Red Sea, six of the cases having proved fatal. The Turkish Government is taking active measures to arrest the outbreak.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

"URIC ACID IN THE BLOOD."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It may be that I am doing Dr. D. F. Shearer an injustice in thinking that he is not practically acquainted with the Gowland Hopkins method for the estimation of uric acid; but it appears to me that he has ventured on the dangerous ground of criticising a process that he has never employed. The process that I described for the estimation of uric acid in the blood consisted of two parts—an extraction process and an estimation process. The former part of the process stops short of the washing of the uric acid, during which there is a loss of from one to two milligrammes of the acid by solution. As I was never able to extract any uric acid from normal blood there was none to estimate, and consequently there was none to wash. The murexide test was applied in every case in which I examined blood for uric acid. It is true that I did not refer to those negative experiments in the Goulstonian Lectures, but the time at my disposal for the delivery of the lectures necessitated the omission of mention of a large number of experiments. It would have been as well if Dr. Shearer had stated on what calculation he based his assumption that an average

proportion of one part of uric acid in 1,000,000 of blood would be sufficient to furnish the uric acid found in the urine. The assumption is, I believe, incorrect. If the ratio of the urea elimination in the urine to the quantity of urea known to be present in the blood be taken as representing the ratio between the elimination of uric acid and its supposed amount in the blood, then human blood should contain from five to ten parts of uric acid in 1,000,000. The blood of birds would necessarily contain a much higher proportion than that, assuming that uric acid is present in the blood. Such quantities would readily be found if present.

I am, Sirs, yours very truly.

Weymouth-street, W., June 9th, 1897.

ARTHUR P. LUFF.

THE LATE DR. LOCKHART ROBERTSON.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As a colleague of the late Dr. Lockhart Robertson (as chaplain of the Sussex Asylum, Haywards Heath, 1859-1867), I was interested in the obituary notice in THE LANCET of June 5th. May I be permitted to mention the share which he took in the formation of the "After-care" Association on behalf of poor friendless female convalescents "on leaving asylums for the insane"? As the result of a conversation between Dr. Robertson and myself a meeting was held through the influence of the former, and by kind permission of Dr. Bucknill at his house, 39, Wimpole-street, on June 5th, 1879. There were present Dr. and Mrs. Bucknill, Miss Cons, Dr. Lockhart Robertson, Dr. D. Hack Tuke, Mr. W. G. Marshall, Dr. Harrington Tuke, &c. A paper on the subject of "After-care" printed in the October number of the *Journal of Mental Science*, was read by the Rev. H. Hawkins. It was moved by Dr. Lockhart Robertson, and seconded by Dr. Hack Tuke, that "this meeting do form itself into an association." The names of Dr. S. Williams and Dr. Savage were, at Dr. Robertson's request, added. It was also moved by Dr. Robertson "that Dr. Bucknill be invited to take the office of president," subsequently held by the late Earl of Shaftesbury and the Earl of Meath. Later in the same year Dr. Robertson again attended and spoke at a meeting at the President's house, and in 1881 he was present and spoke at an anniversary gathering at the house of Dr. Andrew Clark, 16, Cavendish-square. Dr. Robertson's various engagements prevented his attendance at meetings in after years, but at the time of his death he was one of the vice-presidents of the "After-care" Association. These few lines from a former associate in work may serve to indicate the interest taken by his distinguished colleague in the institution of the society.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

HENRY HAWKINS,

Hon. Sec. "After-care" Association; Chaplain of London County Asylum, Colney Hatch, 1867-97.

June 12th, 1897.

"A METHOD OF UNITING THE DIVIDED INTESTINE."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Under date May 22nd, 1897, I notice in THE LANCET a description by a London surgeon of a reputed new method of uniting a divided intestine. I desire to call attention through your journal to the fact that this operation was devised by me in 1891. It was published in 1892, a copy of which publication you can find in the library of the Society of Science, Letters, and Arts of London, England, which I forwarded at the request of the secretary of the society. I have demonstrated it from year to year to the students at the West Virginia University, performed it many times on living animals and the human cadaver, and it is now, and has been for some six weeks past, in the hands of the editor of the *New York Medical Journal* awaiting its turn for publication. I think the priority of the above-recorded facts should entitle this side with at least the first description of the operation without in any way detracting from the credit due to the originality of the excellent English surgeon.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

J. W. HARTIGAN, M.D., F.R.M.S., &c.,

Professor of Biology in the West Virginia University.

Morgantown, West Virginia, June 4th, 1897.

* * We presume Dr. Hartigan refers to the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education,