

some assistance to the large body of general practitioners, and that is: let every patient attending a hospital or charitable institution produce as his passport a certificate signed by a medical man and a responsible householder—the first as evidence that the patient's case *requires* hospital treatment, and the second that the case is a deserving one. There are vast multitudes now daily attending our hospitals whose advice costs them from two to three shillings, besides the loss of time and unpleasantness of dreary waiting, which they prefer to undergo rather than pay for the services of their nearest medical man. Many club patients, too, elect to follow the same course, and some believe they do their club doctor a kindness by going to the chemists and obtaining advice and medicine, if the time is not during the doctor's regular hours.

On the question of club and cheap dispensary work I think that the dignity of the profession would better be maintained if contract prices were offered for *individual* services, such prices to be regulated according to the means of the patient and the amount of service rendered, as it seems to me *infra dig.* to accept so many members at so much per head per annum, when some of those members are earning from three to five times as much as others; and some—indeed, many—make use of their club card to call upon the doctor on the smallest trouble.

In conclusion, let me say that we sadly want a stronger fraternal feeling in our professional work, and I think in every neighbourhood the “brother chips” should have a little more social intercourse, meet occasionally, and discuss and settle these vexed questions of charges, &c.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Mitcham, S.W., Nov. 14th, 1888. HENRY LOVE, M.B., &c.

“ALLEGED EXTRAVAGANCE OF HOSPITALS.”

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The hospitals of London owe you a debt of gratitude for your leading article upon Mr. Michelli's paper, not excepting the Seamen's and St. Mary's, which may very well ask to be saved from so doubtful a friend.

Several of your contemporaries which have given currency to the observations you condemn could find no space for the correction every reputable hospital is capable of affording, so that your exposure of Mr. Michelli's facts is the more welcome. Unfortunately, THE LANCET is scarcely read by the classes most likely to be led astray; otherwise, we might hope for a better and more widely disseminated knowledge of the bearings of the hospital question, and for a more correct appreciation of the value or worthlessness of individual institutions. It appears to me that Mr. Michelli's paper supplies the last illustration of the meddling which is not wholesome criticism, and of the over-hasty generalisation which is prolific of fallacy. No doubt some spurious “hospitals” exist of whose authorities every charge he formulates is true, including the expending of 50 per cent. of their receipts in commissions, printing, and stationery; but when this statement is levelled against the hospitals as a body, without an effort to discriminate, we do not err in stigmatising it as pernicious nonsense. The writer of the paper on Hospital Extravagance is more reckless than courageous. He shows absolute indifference about the consequences of a most astounding accusation which he is at no pains to verify, yet he is afraid to adduce one single instance in support of his assertions. Other people, who have a longer intimacy with hospital administration, can be as righteously severe over the extravagance of the system, or want of system, which obtains—as shown in the multiplication of hospitals and the keen struggle for existence forced upon valuable institutions by the unrestricted competition of the unworthy; but they are at least alive to this—that the work of the London hospitals, as a whole, deserves well of the community, and that it is indispensable. Yet Mr. Michelli, who claims to have gained his experience “as resident during over eleven years in two of the most important metropolitan hospitals,” delivers his attack with a light heart upon friend and foe alike, and appears as blind to the difficulties he is placing in his own path as he is indifferent about those he would impose upon others. Unhappily, only too many people are quick to seize upon any excuse for not giving, and when Mr. Michelli has succeeded—as you predict will be the case, though we must hope not to the extent you fear—in lessening the

volume of subscriptions, he will have reaped the reward his paper entitles him to. But both he and the Hospitals Association—without whose aid his paper would never have seen the light—must take heed to their ways if they would not incur the charge of being false to the course they affect to serve.—I am, Sirs, your faithful servant,

Dec. 26th, 1888.

B. BURFORD RAWLINGS.

ON THE ATTACK OF LEAD BY SOME KINDS OF WATER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the course of my work I have met with a very interesting example of the attack of lead by drinking water. The water came from a gathering ground in the north of England, and contained very little mineral matter—viz., only 4·13 grains per gallon, consisting of—

Silica	...	...	...	...	0·61 grains.
Chloride of iron	...	...	...	...	0·10 „
Chloride of magnesium	...	...	...	...	1·04 „
Sulphate of magnesia	...	...	...	...	1·20 „
Sulphate of lime	...	...	...	...	0·83 „
Sulphate of soda	...	...	...	...	0·35 „
					4·13 „

There was also a little free acid capable of saturating 0·14 grain of lime per gallon of the water. Experiment showed that this water dissolved lead very rapidly—so rapidly, indeed, that a few hours' standing in a lead pipe caused such contamination with lead as to render the water unfit for use. The water came from the neighbourhood of Sheffield, and the remedy which ought to be applied is the addition of a small proportion of lime to the water.

I am, Sirs, yours obediently,

J. ALFRED WANKLYN.

Westminster Chambers, Victoria-street, Dec. 28th, 1888.

MEETING OF EDINBURGH MEDICAL STUDENTS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—At a meeting of senior medical students of the University of Edinburgh, held yesterday in the Oddfellows' Hall, the following motions were put to the vote and carried.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

WM. LYON MACKENZIE,

University of Edinburgh, Dec. 19th, 1888.

Chairman.

“1. That this meeting desires to express its disapproval of the discourteous and undesirable disturbances which have recently been made by a small section of the students in the professorial classes.

“2. That this meeting also protests against the misleading accounts and unwarranted exaggerations of the disturbances that have been reported in the public press, and resolves that notices of these resolutions be communicated to the principal medical and other newspapers.”

* * The above was inadvertently omitted from our last issue.—ED. L.

THE DISCUSSION ON CHRONIC ALCOHOLISM AT THE PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Will you allow me to correct your report of my remarks on Chronic Alcoholism at the Pathological Society, which have been so condensed as to fail to present the results I put before the Society? I compared the cases of cirrhosis of the liver which had been found in the post-mortem room at Guy's Hospital between the years 1875 and 1886 inclusive, in the reports of which the patients were definitely stated to have been chronic drunkards (89 in number), with the 130 cases of cirrhosis which had occurred between 1875 and 1883 collected by Dr. Price, and those previously collected by Dr. Fagge. The results in the main agreed, except that granular kidneys were found in one-fourth of the cases in which the livers were less than sixty ounces, and in one-sixth in which they were greater than sixty ounces; the corresponding figures in Dr. Price's tables being one-tenth and one-fourth. In