

Before laying down my pen let me congratulate Sir George Johnson on his recognition in process of time of the fibrous thickening as well as the muscular. He may say with an earlier philosopher, "Whatever I said last Wednesday I do not say so now." This is wholly to his credit, but let it also be placed to the credit of the departed pathologists to whom we owe our knowledge of the arterial fibrosis, which, though not the whole matter, is a part of it which is now no longer a matter of dispute.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

W. HOWSHIP DICKINSON.

### "THE ASSOCIATION OF WORKERS IN ASYLUMS FOR THE INSANE."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I notice in THE LANCET of July 27th, under the above heading, that a meeting has been held at which Sir B. W. Richardson delivered an address. He is reported to have said that "education and training raised the status and increased the usefulness of nurses, and this experience will no doubt be repeated when the same conditions are applied to attendants on the insane." I cannot allow such a statement as this to pass unchallenged. For many years past the attendants and nurses on the insane have been carefully educated and trained. After a period of two years, during which the attendants and nurses have to attend a dozen lectures and the same number of clinical demonstrations in the wards of a hospital for the insane, they are examined, and, if successful, are granted a certificate of proficiency in nursing the insane. The superintendent of the hospital trains his attendants and nurses, but he has nothing to do with their examination. The written portion is conducted by examiners appointed by the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland, and the clinical and *viva voce* part by an examiner who is generally the superintendent of a neighbouring asylum. The severity of the examination is shown by the fact that at every examination a number of candidates are plucked. The result of the education, training, and examination has been to increase the usefulness of the nurses and attendants, who now take a more intelligent interest in the cases under their care; while, as regards their status, it is quite on a par with hospital trained nurses. Indeed, some of the latter are anxious to obtain the certificate, and a scheme is on foot for admitting them to the examination after a definite period of training. Altogether more than 1000 nurses and attendants possess the certificate which is granted by the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

FLETCHER BEACH,

Honorary General Secretary, Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland.

Welbeck-street, W., July 30th, 1895.

### THE HOSPITAL FOR DISEASES OF THE THROAT, GOLDEN-SQUARE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—We shall be obliged if you will kindly allow us to state in your columns that we have now entirely severed our connexion with the Throat Hospital in Golden-square.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

SUTHERLAND,

Lately President of the Throat Hospital, Golden-square, London.

R. COURTENAY WELCH,

Lately a member, and for nearly twelve years chairman of the Committee of Management of the Throat Hospital.

GREVILLE MACDONALD,

Lately Dean of the Medical School, and for eight years physician to the Throat Hospital.

Stafford House, St. James's, July 31st, 1895.

### THE PHYSIOLOGY OF DEATH BY ELECTRIC SHOCK.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS.—An annotation in THE LANCET of July 27th attributes death in electric shock to "stoppage of the heart." It is useful to inquire how and why this stoppage occurs.

Dr. A. M. Bleile (Ohio) has lately investigated the physiological events which in his opinion lead up to it.<sup>1</sup> Experimenting upon dogs with strong currents of stated strength he finds, on examining the heart immediately after death, that "the left side is completely relaxed and the right side intensely gorged with blood, as are also the large veins in the immediate vicinity of the heart. .... Incisions into the animal are not followed by bleeding, and the arteries are contracted down to a very small calibre." It was suggested, therefore, "that the current acted upon the arteries through the nervous centre which controls their diameter." To test this view dilatation of the arteries and fall of blood-pressure was effected by bringing the animal under the influence of nitrite of amyl. Under these circumstances a current of 0.24 ampères at 52 volts for three seconds (ordinarily a fatal dose) did not produce death. The conclusion arrived at is "that death in electric shock is really due to the fact that the current produces a contraction of the arteries through an influence on the nervous system, and that this constriction of the arteries throws in such a mechanical impediment to the flow of the blood as the heart is unable to overcome, and that where drugs are given to counteract this effect much larger doses of electricity than the ordinary can be borne." The experimental data on which this opinion is based are given in such detail that the experiments can be repeated and results verified. The paper is a useful contribution to the physiology of death by electric shock. It may be incidentally mentioned, however, that the absolute amount of mechanical energy used, as measured in "joules," does not necessarily bear any direct relationship to the physiological effects of an electric current. In other words, a weak current for a long time is a very different thing from a strong current for a short time, although in each instance the "joules" may be the same.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Brighton, July 30th 1895.

W. S. HEDLEY.

### THERAPEUTICS OF THE GOLD SALTS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Some few weeks ago, after applying to various wholesale chemists without any result, I enquired through your columns if solutions of the tribromide of gold combined with oxybromides of arsenic, &c., were manufactured, or could be manufactured, in England, being anxious to give them a therapeutical trial. I am glad to say that these preparations now have, at my suggestion, been placed on the English market by Messrs. Arthur and Co. of Berners-street, who have taken considerable trouble over the manufacture of these not easily made solutions. I believe, with an eminent American authority, that these solutions present the tri- and the oxy-bromides in the best possible form of administration, and they have in my hands already proved serviceable in cases of neurasthenia, nervous fibrillary twitchings, &c. I hope English practitioners will give these solutions a practical trial in the various neuroses, &c.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Hastings.

J. STENSON HOOKER.

### LIVERPOOL.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

*The Assizes: the Judge's Charge.—Important Medico-legal Case.*

MR. JUSTICE CAVE commenced the business of the Assizes on July 26th by charging the grand jury. With reference to the case in which Owen Green and Mary Ann Roxburgh were charged with manslaughter his lordship said: "According to the evidence the female prisoner struck the deceased man with the neck of a bottle after it had been broken upon the eye, destroying the sight of the eye and cutting the eyebrow. Under the circumstances it was deemed necessary by the medical men to perform an operation upon the man, sewing up the eyelid, and so on. For that purpose it was thought necessary to give him an anaesthetic. He seemed to be a proper subject for the administration of an

<sup>1</sup> A paper read before the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, Niagara Falls, N.Y., June 27th.