

whereas with morphia in salt solution there is neither pain nor inflammation. Rectal injections are given only at the last moment. Some patients prefer to be kept ignorant of their rate of progress, and I accede to their wishes, but I never use constraint or compulsion. The ideal way is for the patient to decrease every day by his own initiative, the *ensemble* of the treatment preventing any discomfort that might stand in the way. This constitutes a real re-education of the will which is the best guarantee against future relapse.

I may conclude by saying that with this treatment, so persistently advocated by me, unheeded by the profession but now shown to be absolutely scientific, and as it has been called "physiological," by Professor Gamgee, supplemented by the means I have alluded to, the morphia habit is absolutely curable. The profession should know that on the lines laid down in the contributions to THE LANCET by Professor Gamgee and myself, the morphia habit is, *in those who really intend to give it up*, a very easy and simple thing to cure. It is therefore the bounden duty of medical men who undertake the treatment of morphia patients to learn how to treat such cases, inasmuch as it is through medical ignorance and carelessness that the habit is first formed, and by medical incompetence in treatment that the patient is led to believe his case is hopeless and that that chronic discouragement is brought about which is the chief element of difficulty.

Montreux, Oct. 1st, 1908.

OSCAR JENNINGS.

DIVISION OF THE AUDITORY NERVE FOR PAINFUL TINNITUS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In reference to Mr. C. A. Ballance's case of division of the auditory nerve for painful tinnitus published in THE LANCET of Oct. 10th it would be interesting if he would provide your readers with a detailed account of the operation. Personally I should also like to hear from Mr. Ballance why he did not open and destroy the cochlea in preference to submitting the patient to the more serious cranial operation. The result in the case published by me in your issue of Sept. 19th has been so excellent (the patient having had no return of the tinnitus since his operation) that I should hesitate to proceed to division of the nerve before destruction of the cochlea had been tried. I note that Mr. Ballance's patient was free from tinnitus on May 24th, four months after the operation.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, W., Oct. 22nd, 1908.

MACLEOD YEARSLEY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was much interested in reading in your issue of Oct. 10th an account of an operation under the above heading by Mr. Charles A. Ballance. In his remarks Mr. Ballance says: "Attempts to divide the auditory nerve have been previously made, but I am not aware that the operation I have just described was employed in any of them."

May I point out that I had previously successfully performed the operation exactly in the way described by Mr. Ballance? We differ only in the means used to displace the cerebellum. The patient was a man, aged 42 years, under the care of Dr. A. P. Beddard, upon whose suggestion I undertook the operation. The operation was done in two stages on March 13th and 24th, 1904, and was completely successful. Mr. Richard Lake mentions my case in his instructive paper "L'Etat Actuel de nos Connaissances au Point de Vue des Interventions Opératoires dans le Vertige et les Bourdonnements d'Oreilles" (*Archives Internationales de Laryngologie*, 1904), and it is also referred to in that excellent work by Mr. P. Macleod Yearsley, "A Text-book of Diseases of the Ear."—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, W., Oct. 26th, 1908.

DONALD ARMOUR.

NOTES ON A CASE OF ACUTE GOITRE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In reference to the case reported by Dr. S. J. O. Dickins in THE LANCET of Oct. 24th, these fatal cases of goitre by sudden increased pressure on the trachea are more common in Cumberland than they seem to be in Sussex, and we are constantly alive to the possibility of such occurring

anywhere in this district. Intubation of the trachea or section of the isthmus is equally futile, and the only plan likely to succeed is liberation of the windpipe from pressure by immediate removal of half of the enlarged thyroid gland. I have tried tracheotomy years ago, also division of the isthmus, and am confident that the removal of the pressure is the only course to adopt. The soft trachea is so squeezed, compressed, and altered in shape that a very slight increase of pressure upon it will induce suffocation. When the trachea is hard, as it becomes with age, there is no fear of compression or suffocation.

Of course, any ordinary goitre will waste under the use of large doses of iodide of potassium, but it is not always safe to wait for this gradual method of absorption. In the *International Clinics* for 1896, Vol. IV., fifth series, p. 242, I contributed a paper upon the Operative Treatment of Goitre, and included in the remarks are some cases similar in their symptoms to the case Dr. Dickins has described.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Carlisle, Oct. 26th, 1908.

H. A. LEDIARD.

THE RELATION OF THE PHARMACIST TO THE PHYSICIAN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was much interested by reading your annotation under the above title in your issue of August 22nd, p. 576. It deals with the same subject and almost from the same point of view as I did in one or two letters (on Copyright of Prescriptions) that I wrote to you ten years ago. According to Dr. C. S. N. Hallberg, whose article in the July *Bulletin of the American Pharmaceutical Association* you quote, a prescription is designed only for a particular person, for a particular purpose, at a particular time; it is the utterance of the prescriber, who alone should direct and control its employment. This is the opinion I have always maintained, and I believe it to be quite reasonable and right. It is a physician's duty, in giving a prescription, to direct for how long it is to be employed; if he does not do so he might be held to be guilty of negligence. It is a dangerous abuse for the prescription to be used by other people or even by the same patient at another time without skilled advice. There are very few prescriptions at all that could be left with entire safety to the discretion of the patient.

For the last 12 months or so I have adopted a method which seems to overcome the difficulty, and perhaps some of your readers might be glad to adopt it also. It is the custom in this country for medical men to write their prescriptions on slips of paper, on which are printed their names, addresses, and hours of consultation. On each such slip I have had printed also, near the top, in red ink, the words, "Not to be repeated after days." The date is written immediately above. The scheme was approved by the Medical Defence Association of this State, and I understand that some other medical men have now resorted to it and have found it work well. I have had no trouble with patients. Most of those to whom I have explained it appreciate it as extra care and attention. Nor have any druggists, so far as I know, infringed the prohibition.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

F. LUCAS BENHAM, M.D., M.R.C.P. Lond.

Exeter, South Australia, Sept. 23rd, 1908.

THE CAUSE AND PREVENTION OF DENTAL CARIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If Dr. O. Clayton Jones had read the original communication referred to by Dr. Harry Campbell I doubt if he would have said that "every theory of dieting has been tried on the children of this generation without effect." For in that communication I wrote: "Now that we know the rôle of the foodstuffs in the etiology of caries it is possible for us to show how the disease may be prevented, and although it has been said that people would not adopt the method we advocate it is a fact that already many people have adopted it and when it has been commenced at a sufficiently early age the results have so far been absolutely perfect." The latter part of the above sentence refers to ten children who were brought up according to the method advocated, and every one of these children has perfect teeth. This may not appear to