

## A TRUMPERY ACTION FOR MALPRAXIS: THE VALUE OF A DEFENCE ASSOCIATION.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I have just emerged successfully from an experience in the county court and I am sure I shall be doing my professional brethren a service if I call their attention to it. An action for £50 damages was brought against me for improper treatment of a damaged hand. I only saw the patient on two occasions and then went for my holiday, but it turned out that months after the injury some stiffening of the fingers remained. I do not believe that the woman would have gone to the expense of an action if she had relied upon her own means, which were proved to have been 4s. 9d. per week, nor do I think that any solicitor would have taken up such a flimsy case. But there was another factor in this case—viz., the insurance money which the complainant received under the new Employers' Liability Act. This amounted to her full week's earnings for many months and then it was settled for a lump sum of £37. The point of this case is, Was this insurance money used in order to bring a trumpery action against her medical adviser? If this is the case it adds another terror to medical practice and is another strong argument in favour of every medical man joining one or both of our excellent defence societies. I should like here publicly to acknowledge my indebtedness to the London and Counties Medical Protection Society, of which I am a member, and which took up my case and so ably carried it to a successful issue. The courtesy, attention, and kindness which I received from everyone connected with the society I can never forget, and the moral support that it gives one to think that one is not left to one's self to fight one's own battle can hardly be calculated. I had two medical witnesses and they were so impressed with the advantages of membership of a defence society that they decided there and then to join. I trust that many more will follow their example and become members.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

W. WOODLEY STOCKER.

Willesden-lane, N.W., June 26th, 1899.

## THE INNERVATION OF INTRA-CRANIAL BLOOD-VESSELS.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—In his first Croonian lecture which was published in THE LANCET of June 24th I observe that Dr. Bradbury, in discussing the factors concerned in the production of sleep, states (p. 1690) "that the intra-cerebral blood-vessels have not been shown to possess any vaso-motor innervation." This is, I believe, true as regards the intra-cerebral vessels, but inasmuch as these are largely a continuation of the pial vessels which have been shown to be profusely innervated, it is more than probable that improved staining methods will show that the intra-cerebral vessels are likewise under nerve control. Obersteiner in 1897 found pial vascular nerves in a gold preparation and considered that the fact invalidated the theory of Leonard Hill and Bayliss. I stained the pial vascular nerves on many preparations in May, 1898, and also found pial vascular nerves bearing fully developed ganglion cells. These results were published in the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* for November, 1898, and again in the Morison lectures published in that journal in 1898 and 1899 and in THE LANCET in 1898.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Gulland of Edinburgh likewise found these nerves in July, 1898. These facts emphasise the importance of the vaso-motor factor in all cerebral states of work and rest, to which it no doubt bears the same relation that it does to the conditions of work and rest in any other organ.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ALEXANDER MORISON.

Upper Berkeley-street, W., June 23rd, 1899.

## "THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS MANUAL."

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I see in THE LANCET of June 24th that credit is claimed by the staff of the Volunteer Ambulance School of

Instruction for the method of lifting wounded now adopted in the new manual. This method of taking post and lifting has been the subject of conversation between medical officers both of regulars and of volunteers on many occasions during the last 10 years. The principle was also embodied in a scheme of drill which I offered to the St. John Ambulance Association in 1893. This scheme was brought to the notice of their committee but not adopted, one of the chief reasons being that they had just adopted a modified form of the drill then in use by the Medical Staff Corps. Under these circumstances it would be interesting to me to know on what grounds the suggestion of the present method is claimed by the staff of the Volunteer Ambulance School of Instruction.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

VALENTINE MATTHEWS.

Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, S.W., June 24th, 1899.

## THE HOSPITAL REFORM ASSOCIATION.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—Dr. W. Knowsley Sibley and Dr. Ernest Snape have been requested by the council of the above association to make an investigation into the methods adopted by the metropolitan hospitals for the purpose of discovering the circumstances of the patients who apply for medical relief. The council will feel grateful if facilities are given to make this investigation as thorough as possible.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

T. GARRETT HORDER,

Cardiff, June 24th, 1899. Hon. Sec., Hospital Reform Association.

## "STRAWBERRIES AND GOUT."

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I was much interested in your annotation on the above subject in THE LANCET of June 24th, as I have for some time considered that the indiscriminate banishment of strawberries from the dietary of the gouty is unnecessary. Strawberries are rich in mineral salts and yield on an average 3.40 per cent. of ash. The mineral constituents contain about 30 per cent. of potassium salts and about 42 per cent. of sodium salts, and it is the large amount of the latter which necessitates caution in advising the free use of strawberries to gouty patients. My own practice is only to forbid the use of strawberries to those patients who are liable to repeated recurrences of acute or subacute gout on account of the undoubted effect that sodium salts possess of accelerating the deposition of sodium biurate when the fluids of the body are fairly saturated with that substance. If, however, the condition of the gouty subject is such that there is no indication of an approach to such saturation of the fluids of the body, then it is both unnecessary and unscientific to forbid the use of so delicious and so useful an article of diet as strawberries.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Weymouth-street W. June 26th, 1899. ARTHUR P. LUFF.

## THE MIDWIVES' INSTITUTE AND THE BILL FOR THE REGISTRATION OF MIDWIVES.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I shall be much obliged if you will allow me once again to state that the Midwives Bill now before Parliament is not promoted by the Midwives' Institute nor did they "introduce" Lord Balfour of Burleigh's Bill as stated by Mr. Victor Horsley.<sup>1</sup> The Bill promoted by the Midwives' Institute was one introduced by Mr. Fell Pease in 1890, in consequence of which the Select Committee on Midwives' Registration was appointed. From that time the Bill has been in more influential and competent hands than ours and our part has been limited to sending a representative to the committees that have drafted the various Bills.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ROSALIND PAGET,

Representative of the Incorporated Midwives Institute on the Bill Committee.

Buckingham-street, Strand, June 27th, 1899.

<sup>1</sup> THE LANCET, Dec. 17th, 24th, and 31st, 1898.

<sup>1</sup> THE LANCET, June 24th, 1899.