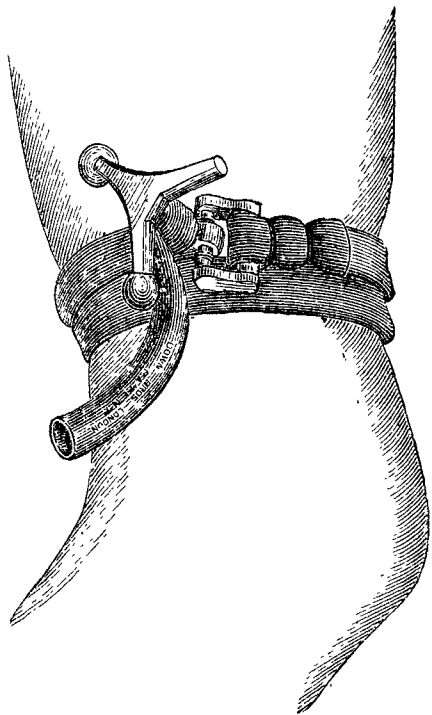


doing away with the ordinary leather cover, which may become a receptacle for dirt and infection. The entire surface of the appliance is of celluloid, and it can therefore be washed daily. Owing to the hollowness of the pad, and the thinness of the coating of the spring, the truss is extremely light, and especially is the surface presented by the pad to the hernial ring smooth, elastic and comfortable. Peculiar attention has also been paid to the shape of both pad and spring, and the instrument appears to be calculated to adapt itself to the body and fulfil its purpose.

#### SAMWAYS' TOURNIQUET CLIPS.

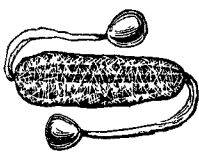
THE tourniquet forms a very important part of the armamentarium of the surgeon and any improvements which tend to render its application at once simple and efficacious are to be commended. The tourniquet before us, patented by Messrs. Down Brothers, certainly comes within that category. The band is of strong rubber and by a simple arrangement can



be fixed at any point without twisting. The clip by which fixation is effected is of two patterns—the anchor pattern and the grapnel. Whichever may be used equal security against slipping can be secured. Its simplicity and the ease with which it can be applied to and removed from the limb will render it acceptable to most surgeons.

#### FAVETS' LOOFAH FLESH RUBBERS.

WE illustrate below what will prove to many a useful adjuvant to the morning douche—"the Loofah Flesh Rubber." It has for its object stimulation of the cutaneous circulation, slowness of which in those of feeble hearts subtracts so largely from the utility of the daily bath, and manifests itself by coldness of the hands and feet and a general feeling of



chilliness. By the use of these patent flesh rubbers these unpleasantnesses may be avoided. While it is a valuable aid in the bath it may be used for dry friction. The rubbers are supplied in various forms to suit different skins.

They may be had plain with tape throughout double and handles, or with towellings and fancy attachments at both ends, and they may be half covered or entirely with towelling, which can be removed if desired. They will be found useful for stimulating the circulation in the lower extremities. They may be obtained from the patentee and manufacturer J. Favet, Seething-lane London

#### THE TREATMENT OF MYXŒDEMA.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—That considerable interest is taken in the method of treatment of myxœdema which I have found so beneficial in a case under my care at the Royal Free Hospital, as noted in THE LANCET of Oct. 15th, is shown by the large amount of correspondence I have since had on the subject. Among other questions I have been asked whether the thyroids were given raw or cooked, how they were prepared, how procured, from what animal they were obtained. The glands I have used were from the sheep, but I do not think it matters whether sheep's, pig's, or bullock's thyroid is used, except that the latter is larger than is required for the purpose. I found both the hospital butcher and my own butcher were quite ignorant as to where or what the thyroid gland was. They knew the thymus by the name of the throatbread, and sent that at first. The simplest plan to get the thyroid was to have the larynx and trachea with the muscles sent entire soon after the animal was killed. As the part is of no value to the butcher, he should be able to supply it for quite a small sum. The thyroid gland can easily be separated from the other parts. In the sheep the lobes are rather smaller than in man and the isthmus is rudimentary. The lobes can be easily distinguished from the muscle by their oval shape and darker colour, although this varies in different cases. I have throughout given the glands raw, except at the very outset, when they were cooked by mistake. I cannot say whether they would have any effect if given thoroughly cooked. That could only be found out by experiment; but I can see no objection to very slightly cooking them—for instance, by frying. It is highly probable that thorough cooking would entirely destroy their effect. The mode of preparation in my case has been simply to mince the gland finely and give it either plain or with a little brandy. The addition of the latter was found to make it more acceptable to my patient, and also diminished the tendency to nausea which she experienced when she knew she was having something raw. Currant jelly might make it more palatable. As mentioned, I gave my patient two whole thyroids (four lobes) every day at first, but found this was too much, as the pulse rate after a time was much increased. I do not think it will be necessary to give the patient more than one thyroid every other day.

Some may prefer to employ a home-made extract of the gland, which may be prepared by mincing up the thyroid, placing it in a mortar with a little crystallised sugar and glycerine, rubbing it up with a pestle, then adding a little water and, after allowing it to stand an hour or two, filtering through muslin or calico. It is, of course, possible that a stable thyroid extract may be obtained which will in practice be found more convenient than the process I adopted. The important point is to have shown that the thyroid gland contains something which, given by the mouth, has as distinctly curative an effect as hypodermic injections of thyroid juice.

In regard to my patient I may add she has now left the hospital, but attends there twice a week to have a thyroid gland. She looks and feels very well. One of my colleagues who was lately taken to see her without being told what the case was actually did not recognise it as a case of myxœdema. She has lost two stone in weight, having previously scaled over eleven stone. One of the most curious effects is the growth of hair on the crown of the head, where only a couple of months ago she was bald. The hair is growing so thickly that at present the scalp somewhat resembles a doormat. Her hands, which completely desquamated, are quite normal in appearance. Her face exhibits no sign of its former alteration. Her spirits are good and she is quite lively in her movements. I am glad to know that the treatment is being adopted in a considerable number of cases, not only of myxœdema, but in sporadic cretinism, and I look forward with confidence to its effects in uncomplicated cases. I may be allowed to point out that many cases of myxœdema are complicated by the coexistence of other diseases, and that in these only partial benefit can possibly result.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

HECTOR W. G. MACKENZIE, M.D., F.R.C.P.

Oct. 22nd, 1892.

# THE LANCET.

LONDON: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1892.

IN the history of medicine, full as it is of vague fancies and erroneous assumptions, there is one period which stands as the inauguration of a new epoch, which marks indeed the birth of ideas that have never ceased to influence our conceptions of animal function and its derangements. The lessons taught by the life of HARVEY and his work, which are annually commemorated in the College of which he was the greatest son, have seldom been more amply and fittingly brought home to us than they were by the orator of this year in his highly finished and discriminating address. In Dr. BRIDGES, as a representative of that branch of medicine which in the present day is recognised as an essential department of the State, and for which there is a future of almost unlimited expansion, the Royal College of Physicians of London found an orator who seems to have grasped clearly the conditions under which HARVEY laboured and the far-reaching efforts which have flowed from his memorable discovery of the circulation. As Dr. DICKINSON last year pointed out, and as was equally dwelt on by Dr. BRIDGES, the age in which HARVEY flourished was one of exceptional fertility in men of genius; but one of the most striking incidents in the career of the first of physiologists was the fact that he must have come under the influence of GALILEO, who was attracting students from all quarters to his classes at Padua when HARVEY went there to study. Dr. BRIDGES thinks, and with reason, that the doctrines of GALILEO, embodying the principles of physical science and forming the basis of the modern doctrine of the conservation of energy, cannot but have impressed the young English student, and may possibly have materially assisted him in his subsequent study of the forces at work within the living body. Whilst GALILEO, then, was breaking down the old dogmas and revealing the truths of mechanical science, it was reserved for HARVEY to dispel at one word the fantastic ignorance that prevailed concerning the primary facts of biological science. The fact that SERVETUS and COLOMBO on the one hand, and CESALPINO on the other, came so near doing what HARVEY did and yet remained so far away from the real explanation of the function of the heart and bloodvessels makes manifest the strength of the hold which preconceived ideas had upon them; whilst it also serves to show how great must have been the scientific spirit which could break away from those dominating influences and arrive at a first and bold generalisation after patient and diligent observation and experiment. HARVEY realised that the heart was a muscular organ and that the blood moved through the body "in a circle," because the facts which he saw were perceived through no hazy medium or authoritative dogma, but with the clear vision of an unprejudiced observer. To us, in these days, there must often come the occasion—not indeed fraught with such momentous issues, but like in essence—when the

principle underlying all HARVEY'S work must find its application. For it is the root-principle of all scientific work which can only be rendered of service when combined with an absolute freedom from bias on the part of the observer. Well and truly may Dr. BRIDGES say that scientific medicine dates from HARVEY.

In reflecting on the effects which this discovery had upon medical thought and practice Dr. BRIDGES dwelt upon the fact that it introduced vital functions within the sphere of law, and that it was adopted by DESCARTES as a main support of his mechanical philosophy of vital action—a doctrine which failed because of its narrowness. Still, as was pointed out, the immediate effect of HARVEY'S work did not result in any striking progress, because no attention had then been paid to the chemistry of the body, partly owing to its being lost sight of in too great concentration of thought upon vital "mechanics." When, however, chemistry was re-born in the eighteenth century, which also saw the rise of physiology (i.e., biology), then indeed was the full value and meaning of the circulation of the blood properly appreciated. We may smile now at the various "schools" (which were so happily sketched by Dr. BRIDGES) of opposing theories of the functions of the body and their application to its diseases, but we must not forget that they were each of them the expression of ideas arising out of the introduction into the study of vital actions of many new and true facts; and in the light of its past history it would be vain indeed to think that medicine will not traverse many another period of crude notions and partial theories before it can attain a sure position among the sciences. There are scope and range enough for many a discovery which may throw quite a new light upon certain phases of animal life and function, which may create a revolution in ideas similar in kind if not so vast in extent as the change instituted by HARVEY. Of one thing at least we may be sure, and that is that the principles which he laid down in all his research will, if adhered to with similar fidelity and single-mindedness, lead us nearer to that goal which ever seems to recede the wider knowledge grows—that, namely, which is the aim of all the sciences, the revelation of the Truth that lies hidden in the heart of Nature.

UNLESS legal redress is to be sought by those who think themselves aggrieved in the controversy which has arisen out of the recent meeting of the Church Congress, no harm would accrue to science or to morals by letting it drop for the present. No good comes of polemics conducted at such high temperatures; and the pyrexia of controversy is very like that of certain forms of continued fever—it requires time for abatement. Defervescence takes place only gradually and after the lapse of weeks; indeed, we doubt whether the discussions and processes of a law court—though doubtless acceptable to lawyers and interesting to the public—with all the leading *savants* and ecclesiastics as witnesses, would much further the progress of truth and justice in this matter; they would rather, on the contrary, tend to obscure the clear appreciation of the questions at issue. The wordy strife which has been going on in and since the Church Congress has been rough, but it has not been without its effect on all sensible and moderate people, and, after all, they are the people in this country who