

numerous before the discharge has assumed that appearance to the naked eye which we associate with pus; moreover, a large number of gonococci is never seen in conjunction with a large number of pus organisms, these (the pus organisms) being most numerous in the later stages. From my investigations I am led to infer that an inflammation caused by the gonococcus alone would be non-purulent and of the adhesive variety. The effect on the tissues invaded by the gonococcus is to convert the soil attacked into a suitable medium for the growth and development of pus organisms.

These facts are supported by the results obtained from cultivations of the gonococcus, where the difficulty of obtaining pure cultures on a suitable medium is increased owing to the tendency of other pus organisms to overgrow the gonococcus.

In conclusion, I would emphasise the necessity of combining the results obtained in the laboratory with ascertained clinical facts in order that we may arrive at conclusions which will stand the tests of time and experience.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,  
Mayfair, W., Aug. 18th, 1896. F. J. MCCANN.

### "THE REMUNERATION OF LOCUM-TENENTS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Having had twenty years' experience of principals and locum tenents, and making hundreds of such engagements every year, I may perhaps be permitted to reply briefly to your correspondent "Locum Tenens." He is quite correct in his contention that three guineas a week, board and lodging, and second-class fare is the minimum and usual remuneration for a substitute, and anything less than that rate is derogatory to a properly qualified gentleman to accept. All the blame, however, should not be laid on the principals' shoulders. During the past month I have had some forty applications for "Locum Tenents" at £2 2s. a week or less. On pointing out to the applicants that they are offering less than the usual fee, I have found that in most cases they erred in ignorance of the custom rather than from any desire to undervalue the services of their professional brethren, and they promptly offered the usual rate. Of the few who objected the less said the better. The remedy lies with the locum tenents themselves. So many young qualified men are, in their eagerness for work, ready to accept low fees that professional dignity and *amour propre* are too often forgotten and engagements accepted that should be declined. If these gentlemen will one and all refuse to accept less than the recognised scale and agents refuse to book the vacancies I feel sure principals will not be slow to recognise the justice of the locums' claims and a better understanding will be arrived at all round.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,  
PERCIVAL TURNER.  
Adam street, Adelphi, W.C., Aug. 24th, 1896.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—When your correspondent "Locum Tenens" has settled down and has his own practice he will perhaps be not quite so hard upon the practitioner who pays a locum-tenent only a couple of guineas "or even less" a week. It is not, he will then perhaps see, always "meanness" which dictates such a course. Many and many a man in these hard times cannot possibly afford more, and so he grinds on year after year without a holiday till at last the time comes when the alternatives are "go" or "breakdown." Surely there is small blame to him if he tries to find a competent, trustworthy substitute for the (after all) not absolutely starvation pay of two guineas a week and "all found." And as he himself is certainly going to travel third-class he may perhaps be excused for thinking that his locum-tenent might be content with a third-class ticket too. No class in the profession has so far suffered less in the general depression than have the locum-tenents—except perhaps the big men at the top of the tree—and it is a little trying to hear one of them now begin to cry out on us poorer practitioners as "mean" because we cannot pay a fee which was established as the proper and fair one in far other and more prosperous days. Of course, three guineas a week and "all found" considered in the abstract is not excessive considering the expense in

time and money of qualifying, but it compares very favourably indeed with the £300 or £400 and "nothing found" which, less professional expenses, constitutes the yearly income of so many hundreds of us.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,  
Aug. 24th, 1896. FAIRNESS.

### "DIRECT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—At the usual anniversary meeting held yesterday of the Colchester Medical Society the following gentlemen were unanimously nominated as candidates for the vacant seats in the General Medical Council: Dr. Rentoul, Dr. Drage, Mr. George Brown. No other names were submitted to the meeting, and it was held that as these gentlemen had in the past maintained the rights and interests of the profession they would not fail to uphold its true status and *esprit de corps* in the new position it was desired they should fill.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,  
GEORGE BROWN, M.D. Glasg., Hon. Sec.  
Headgate, Colchester, Aug. 26th, 1896.

### A CAREFUL JURYMAN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—THE LANCET of Aug. 22nd has a comment respecting a recent inquest held upon a man who received fatal injuries whilst returning home from St. Thomas's Hospital, where he had been treated for a scalp wound. Some members of the jury doubted the propriety of the house surgeon having treated this man as an out patient on the ground that had he in the first instance been detained in hospital he would not have met with the second accident (!). It is to be feared that the intelligence of the average coroner's juryman is not of a very high order, and this case recalls one, in which I was the medical witness, occurring at the Lambeth Court in 1893. The deceased was a woman who received fatal burns from the upsetting of a lamp which she was carrying while ascending a pair of steps in order to examine the water-cistern. There had been a leak in the cistern, and she used now and then to ascertain the amount of water present, fearing the supply might run short. Evidence was given to this effect and the coroner directed the jury to give a verdict of "Accidental death," but one sage member shook his head and "wished to have the cause of the leak investigated."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,  
Upper Tooting, Aug. 24th, 1896. EDWIN SMITH, M.D. Lond.

### THE NAILS AS AN INDEX OF DISEASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In a brief but interesting note in THE LANCET of Aug. 22nd, Dr. T. H. Davison records a case of "Temporary Arrest in the Growth of Finger Nails following Colles's Fracture," where the thumb-nail was exempted from the arrest, and he asks for an explanation of the occurrence and the exemption. The case seems to me to be one of more than passing interest. These transverse grooves in the nails are not uncommon after scarlet fever, typhoid fever, and attacks of many other acute illnesses; and they often serve as a guide to the date of maximum intensity. They serve also as evidence of a febrile complaint in cases where it is desired to know whether a patient has had scarlet fever or other disease. The precise explanation is disputed, and, as in other obscure phenomena, the nervous system is often supposed to account for it. But from many examples I have seen, which need not now be mentioned, I have formed the belief that it is to the bloodvessels or to changes in the blood we should look for the true explanation, and Dr. Davison's case undoubtedly supports this view. In his case the grooving of the nails was obviously due to an involvement of, or pressure on, either the vessels or the nerves by the callous at the seat of fracture or to involvement of both; but, had it been due to the nerves only, the first, second, and half the third finger nails only would have been affected, for it is these which are supplied by the radial nerve; but the nails of all four fingers were affected, and these are all supplied by digital branches from the posterior carpal arch, which is formed by the junction of the posterior