

the arterio-sclerosis of the temporal artery in cases of old-standing migraine. It would explain the development of the intravascular aneurysm of the coronary found post mortem by Alexander Morison.⁵ An extension of the dilated area would explain the flushing of the face and distressing sense of throbbing in the back of the head and neck which Oliver says occurred in one of his cases almost contemporaneously with the præcordial pain. Finally, the view here enunciated is consistent with the vaso-motor view of the mechanism of migraine and asthma, affections connected by the closest ties with the "functional" form of angina pectoris.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
FRANCIS HARE.

RESEARCH IN MEDICINE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The practicability of making pecuniary provision for research in its medical aspects forms the subject of the leading article upon my scheme for the promotion of scientific research which appeared in THE LANCET of May 6th last and it is again dealt with in the leading article under the above heading in THE LANCET of Sept. 9th. As I perceive that the opinions expressed in the latter article are in accord with my own as to the impracticability of making such provision in the form of stipends for the workers engaged in research I may, I think, appropriately refer to my scheme, which defines conditions and organisations designed to render it practicable to expend moneys in the provision of pecuniary incentives to research, subject to results being attained that would warrant their expenditure.

The article on the scheme is for the most part one of general comment. I did not, therefore, at the time it appeared make a point of communicating with you in regard to such cases as those in respect to which you apprehend a difficulty in connexion with the scheme, where applicants applying under its provisions for grants for discoveries having practical applications have availed themselves of the results of the researches of others. In relation to such cases permit me to mention that the grants are not proposed to be made *ex debito justitiæ* any more than are grants of patent rights under the Patents Acts, to which so much of the scheme is analogous. It has been devised to subserve the interests of discoverers in so far only as the subservience of their interest may be made subsidiary to public interests. But in considering to what extent the interests of discoverers may be affected by the allocation of moneys, according to the principles of the scheme, to a specified purpose, the terms in which the discoveries are defined for which the grants may be obtained must be taken into account. In exemplification of this let it be assumed that moneys are to be allocated in relation to a specified disease from which the mortality is great. The grants may be restricted to new scientific discoveries which have effected or contributed to a diminution of that mortality. They may also be extended to those discoveries which materially advance the knowledge of the nature or causation of the disease. And it is especially noteworthy that the scheme admits of discoveries in respect of which applications for grants are made being investigated in the light of after-acquired knowledge, for no limitation is imposed as to the time within which an applicant for a grant may, under Provision 6 of Clause 28 and Clauses 36 to 41 of the scheme, furnish evidence of the merit of his discovery and of its having fulfilled a prescribed condition. Having regard to the conditions under which such grants might be obtained they could be made sufficiently large, subject to the restrictions specified in the scheme, to offer strong inducements to many to pursue researches directed to their attainment.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
WALTER B. PRIEST.

Verulam-buildings, Gray's Inn, W.C., Sept. 19th, 1905.

BREECH PRESENTATIONS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Among my early cases of midwifery were a succession of primiparæ with breech presentation and I was soon struck by the high proportion complicated by the well-known extension of the child's two lower limbs at the knee-joint. This induced me to examine the statistics and they certainly show that this complication is far commoner in

primiparæ than in the multipara. For example, the St. Thomas's Hospital Reports for 1901 show 49 cases of single-birth breech presentations; 13 were primiparæ and in eight at least of the 13 (i.e., in over 61 per cent.) there was impaction due to extended legs. Of the 36 multiparæ three only (i.e., 8·3 per cent.) were complicated in the same way. I have failed to find the point mentioned in the books, and it seems to me to be of practical import. For given a primipara with the breech presenting, one is apt to refer the protraction of labour to the fact that we are dealing with a woman in her first confinement, while in over 60 per cent. of similar cases mentioned above delay was liable to arise from the splint-like action of the extended limbs.

Now, while it is better not to interfere with a breech presentation if the child's limbs are flexed at the knee-joint and the os cervicis is being dilated, the sooner, on the other hand, the extended legs are reduced the better. Hence we welcome any sign which will give us an early clue as to the state (flexion or extension) of the child's legs. As a rule, little or no information on this point is obtained by abdominal palpation. However, in nearly all my later cases I found the following sign to be very valuable. It depends on the extension of the child's legs causing increased convexity of the spine, especially of the lower dorsal, lumbar, and sacral regions, thus bringing these parts within easy reach of the examining finger. In fact, the lower lumbar spines may be said to have been presenting in some instances.

Given, then, a primipara, and as a rule we are called when the membranes are ruptured and the os cervicis but little dilated, if we note that the child's lumbar spines are abnormally easy to define we will be very suspicious that we are dealing with a case of extended legs. Impaction will probably follow unless the extension is reduced. I hope the sign mentioned may be useful in leading to earlier recognition of the condition for this would induce earlier interference to the obvious benefit of the mother and child.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ROBT. E. ROBERTS, M.B., B.Sc. Lond.

Ynysddu, Monmouthshire, Sept. 21st, 1905.

INSPECTION OF NURSING HOMES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Through absence from town I have only just seen Dr. Glynn Whittle's letter on the above subject in THE LANCET of Sept. 16th, p. 852. I am still of the same opinion that the registration of trained nurses and the inspection of nursing homes are two distinct questions, and that any Bill dealing with the former should not be over-weighted with the latter. I also hope that when any successful effort at professional organisation resulting in the control and coördination of trained nurses is carried through many of the evils pointed out by Dr. Whittle as existing in nursing homes will disappear, or the homes themselves will disappear. In either case the inspection of nursing homes, which will prove a costly and difficult matter, concerns the public and the medical profession, and legislation, if called for, should be promoted apart from any proposal to register trained nurses.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Sept. 25th, 1905.

C. J. Wood.

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE EXAMINATION OF THE SPUTUM FOR TUBERCLE BACILLI.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—We are not taking part in some sport similar to "a grocer's Derby." It is not altogether in how short a time the tubercle bacillus may be demonstrated but what is the technique that in the hands of workers without special training and without special facilities will secure that result with some degree of certainty when we examine sputum not obtained in sanatoriums for consumption but in the daily round of private practice that is the question. From personal experience and recent private correspondence I find that the routine examination occupying about ten minutes, which I ventured to suggest, is successful in this. Not that I am pleased with it taking "ten minutes." With someone to time me, with laboratory appliances, with the moral certainty that the sputum before me is a rich culture of tubercle bacilli, and with no respect