

MR. HAMILTON ON SOME OF DRS. ELLIOTSON AND ALISON'S THEORIES.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Being a constant reader of your useful periodical, I beg leave to make a few observations on the discrepancy of treatment exhibited in the clinical reports of two of the most conspicuous teachers of medicine of the present day, viz., Dr. Alison, of Edinburgh, and Dr. Elliotson, of St. Thomas's Hospital, London. Whoever has perused with attention the cases of typhus, and other febrile diseases, recorded during the last winter, under the head of clinical lectures, delivered by these gentlemen, must be struck with the not less successful than simple plan of treatment pursued by the London teacher, compared with that of the Edinburgh lecturer. For the proof of this assertion, I need only refer to cases by these gentlemen, pages 563, 629, 655, of *THE LANCET*.

In the latter number will be seen a specimen of Dr. Alison's treatment of typhus, where the most powerful stimuli, viz., brandy, wine, ammonia, &c., are employed, a plan which, be it remembered, however necessary in the present case, he has been advocating in former cases, even on early admission.\* And in the same reports, in a preceding number, will be observed, with what advantage and earnestness Dr. Elliotson urges the use of calomel and opium, or mercurialising plan, in the cure of typhus. So sanguine, indeed, is he of the benefit of this practice, that he lately declared, he should consider himself accessory to the death of his febrile patient, did he not previously put him under the influence of mercury. In No. 336, p. 623, will be read with pleasure his case of peritonitis, to which he has now extended this simple but effectual mode of removing not only all febrile, but inflammatory and local diseases, with the occasional employment of the lancet. In proof of the success of this treatment in the latter description of cases, I need only refer to some cases of puerperal peritonitis, published by me in the *London Medical and Physical Journal*, nearly twenty years since, and communicated to Dr. Ramsbottom, teacher of midwifery, in January, 1812, as I perceive by the date of that gentleman's letters. Since that period, I have generally pursued this plan of cure in typhus, as well as most other inflammatory or acute diseases, and with the happiest effect. There can be no doubt, when timely adopted, but the disease will be arrested as soon as the mouth becomes affected, thereby

saving the patient the doubtful and lingering consequences of protracted suffering, and the practitioner the trouble of sending so many useless pills and mixtures, &c. So thoroughly convinced am I of the success of this mode of cure, that I could more than once have pledged my existence of its successful issue, provided pyralism could be produced before the case assumed a fatal result. Although there is nothing new in this mode of treatment, as may be seen by Dr. Elliotson's subsequent observations on his case of peritonitis, still accident alone pointed it out to me, by the unexpected recovery of a puerperal case of peritonitis, in which large doses of calomel had been used for the bowels without effect, when a violent and unexpected salivation ensued; and strange as it may appear, even Dr. Alison is not unacquainted with the success of this plan, as he mentioned his having employed it, as recommended by Dr. Hamilton, of Lynn, in a pulmonic patient, in whom he suspected hepatic disease, with speedy relief.

Begging pardon for the freedom with which I may have used the names of these eminent teachers, and abjuring all personal motives in doing so, I conclude, Sir, this hasty epistle, the object of which is to endeavour to confirm a mode of treatment, of the success of which experience has amply convinced

Yours, respectfully,

W. HAMILTON,  
Barnham, Suffolk, Feb. 14, 1830.

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INQUIRY FOR THE SECOND VOLUME OF DR. MACKINTOSH'S PRACTICE OF PHYSIC.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—I have been a subscriber to your invaluable publication since its commencement, and from the impartiality and independence which have always characterised it, I regularly consult it as a standard to guide me, not only as regards the very excellent information contained in it on professional subjects, but in the selection of new medical works. I was induced to purchase the first volume of Mackintosh's *Practice of Physic*, in consequence of the very favourable manner in which you reviewed it, and have been highly gratified by its perusal. But pray, Sir, what is the cause of the unusual delay in completing it? for it is now nearly two years since the first volume appeared. I have written to London repeatedly for the concluding volume, and find it is not yet out. Perhaps, Mr. Editor, you will be able to assign the reason in your next number, or you will much oblige me if you can state when it will be out.

Your very obedient servant,

BELIOPHILOS.

Westmoreland, Feb. 13th, 1830.

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\* See some former numbers of *THE LANCET*.