

Correspondence.

Medical Education.

CHICAGO, Jan. 29, 1900.

To the Editor:—The very comprehensive and elegant editorial on "Medical Education," in THE JOURNAL of January 27, must commend itself, on the whole, to every teacher of medicine. It is a startling, if not disgraceful, fact that we have, during the past twenty years, seen the army of specialists grow, while the regular practicing physician has sunk into corresponding insignificance or obscurity. It is now the ambition of far too many medical students to become specialists in one department or another, where they can practice medicine "handsome and out of the wet."

From the standpoint of the schoolmaster, however, there are a few assumptions in the editorial which might lead to erroneous conclusions. In the first place it is a mistake to assume that any American medical school proposes, or ever proposed, to put the student of medicine to the serious work of original medical research and investigation. Doubtless this erroneous assumption comes from the fact that it has been proposed, and successfully tried, to put the student in the position of an observer and investigator, and in this manner to teach him the elements and facts of medical science in an unforgettable manner. This method is followed out in many of our laboratory guides in chemistry and physiology, as for example in "The New Physics," by John Trowbridge of Harvard University (D. Appleton & Co., 1884); in the "Text-Book of Chemical Physiology and Pathology," by W. D. Halliburton (Longmans, 1891); and in "A Manual of Physiology," by G. N. Stewart (Bailliere, Tindall & Cox, 1895), not to mention other efforts of equal value. In every one of these manuals the author attempts to guide the student, by a series of directions and questions, to such operations and reflections as will inevitably lead him in the course of a few hours or even minutes to apperceive those related facts on which the science rests, the discovery of which consumed years and sometimes centuries of professional energy and experiment. Such exercises present the fact or facts to the student with all the vividness and intensity experienced by the original discoverer, and in this way he is led, in the course of a few weeks, through all the experiences of the medical profession.

In the next place the editorial erroneously assumes that there are certain inviolable principles at the foundation of medicine. It is a fact that certain principles do underlie the homeopathic system, but medicine is an inductive science, resting on a multitude of facts and phenomena, each one of which can be verified *ad libitum*. In this respect medicine differs from the deductive systems of homeopathy, theology, and law. Certain verifiable facts on which medicine rests have been correlated into theories from time to time. These theories have stood the test, some of more and some of less time and criticism. Many of them have ranked with the so-called principles of the deductive systems of homeopathy, theology, and law, but they are not in any sense principles, and the science of medicine does not rest on them. Any day a new interpretation or a new combination of the verifiable phenomena on which our dearest theory rests may be proposed by some unheard-of stripling. If this interpretation be truer and explain the verifiable facts more completely or rationally, then the new theory displaces the old, and our text-books, which follow the canonical nomenclature, must substitute new "principles" for the superannuated.

In the third place, it is an error to assume that there can be any effective teaching of the science or art of medicine in *ex cathedra* presentation of the theories or "principles" in which the verifiable facts of medicine and their relations have been conventionally expressed. The abstract expression of even the most simple correlations of unknown phenomena make no true nor lasting impression on the mind of the student, but given the experience of discovering the concrete phenomena and the further experience of correlating them and expressing this correlation even imperfectly, the student readily grasps the extended theory in all its details and keeps it ready as a part of the formulæ or machinery of his mind. Should he in time forget this theory, or should its expression become confused in his mind, he can go back to the memory of his experiences

or experiments and rebuild it and then make use of it with any matter at hand.

BAYARD HOLMES, M.D.

Pre-Columbian Leprosy.

NEW YORK CITY, Jan. 25, 1900.

To the Editor:—In Dr. Kinyoun's able report on leprosy, as a delegate to the International Leprosy Conference, Berlin, published in the "Annual Report of the Supervising Surgeon-General of the Marine-Hospital Service of the United States," for the years ending 1897 and 1898, there are two errors to which I beg to call attention. On page 27 (1897 report), he says: Ashmead (New York) claims to have demonstrated that leprosy existed in America in the pre-Columbian period, and submits photographs of bone lesions which have been discovered in the ancient Peruvian graves. Further, this hypothesis is borne out by the specimens of Peruvian pottery of the Incan period."

My position is directly contrary to all this, as Dr. Kinyoun might have found out by simply reading my article (The Question of Pre-Columbian Leprosy: Photographs of Three Columbian Skulls and Some Huacos Pottery) published in the first volume of "Mittheilungen und Verhandlungen der Internationalen Wissenschaftlichen Lepra Conferenz zu Berlin," 1897. On page 73. I say: "There is no evidence in any bones that I have examined in America of any such thing as pre-Columbian leprosy; not a pharynx of a mummy shows a melting of bone, not a hand shows mutilation; no tuberculation of the tissues of the face, not a nose dropped in, nor can we find evidence of the importation of East Asiatic customs. Outside of the evidence on pre-Columbian potteries, deformations of faces, never of fingers and toes, is there the slightest evidence of the pre-Columbian leprosy. As to the deformities on huacos pottery, I exhibit here two photographs, each containing five potteries. These are from Chimbote, Peru., excepting one, the largest, which comes from Tepen, Peru. All these specimens are pre-Columbian, undoubtedly. In the first photograph, the one containing the figure lying on its belly, with amputated feet, the other four figures have also amputated feet, which of course, is not seen in the photograph. The figures are represented as kneeling, so by turning them around, the fact of the amputation appears. The flaps are shown, and the two bones on each leg. Whatever disease is represented in these faces must have been very frequently accompanied by some disease of the feet requiring amputation; and not of one foot, but of both. One of these figures is shown in the act of dressing the stump, with a cup containing some medicine; his other foot can not be seen, as he is sitting on it. In many of these faces, the nose has been eaten away, that is the cartilaginous part of it. In no instance does this eating away of the nose show any resemblance to the eating away of the nose by leprosy. The bones are never represented melted away, but are always present, only the soft part is gone. In many of these figures there is also a partial or total loss of upper lip, that is, the lip is eaten away, not drawn away by cicatrization, as would be the case in leprosy.

"In one of these figures we see a drawing-back of the head; this is accompanied by loss of nose and partial loss of upper lip. Whatever disease appears in the face, it is reasonable to suppose afflicted the spine. Tuberculosis (lupus) alone could have worked in that manner. If it was not this, it was then syphilis: but it could never have been leprosy.

"In two of our figures there are extreme prognathism, and evidently a diseased condition is meant. Could leprosy have produced that! Never."

Dr. Kinyoun's second mistake is in attributing to Dr. Buzzi, some remarks which followed the reading of my paper. It was Dr. Polakowsky, of the Berlin Anthropological Society, who discussed the question of pre-Columbianism of leprosy in America, taking my side against Dr. Virchow, who had attacked it.

ALBERT S. ASHMEAD, M.D.

Office Treatment of Female Generative Organs.

KEARNEY, NEB., Jan. 27, 1900.

To the Editor:—In THE JOURNAL of January 27, Dr. Milo Buel Ward has sounded the bugle-call of reform in that pernicious practice of office treatment of female generative organs.

How often do we see, in the present day, poor victims of that so-called tinkering local treatment week after week, with instruments that have been used on patient after patient, with only the cleaning that soap and cold water is able to give; admitting that proper sterilization has been done, the delicate endometrium has been subjected time and again to the ravages of the cotton probang? It is true, as Dr. Ward says, that the application of medicine to the vaginal vault for diseased appendages is quite as scientific as it would be for us to wash our faces in a bichlorid solution for the cure of post-nasal catarrh. Would that this article might be printed in abstract form and mailed to every physician in the land, and especially to the country practitioner, who does so much of this, never stopping to think of the many poor victims he sends out into the world, injured rather than benefited.

F. A. PACKARD, M.D.

Association News.

Rates for the Atlantic City Meeting.—The AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION'S Committee on Transportation has for some time been in communication with the different passenger associations for the purpose of securing reduced rates to the June meeting. The Committee has asked a one-fare round trip with fifteen-day extension for that occasion, and at present has a preliminary report, but will present a full report through THE JOURNAL, probably in the next issue.

Section on Laryngology and Otology.—A most excellent program for the meeting in Atlantic City, June next, is announced for this Section. The list of papers to be presented is now complete and the program is full. Those who are to read papers are urged to send their abstracts by May 1, so as to give the Committee ample time to suitably arrange the topics for publication. C. R. Holmes, chairman; J. A. Stucky, secretary.

Books Received.

Acknowledgement of all books received will be made in this column, and this will be deemed by us a full equivalent to those sending them. A selection from these volumes will be made for review as dictated by their merits, or in the interests of our readers.

GENERAL AND LOCAL ANESTHESIA. By Aimé Paul Heineck, M.D., Clinical Instructor in Genito-Urinary Diseases, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Chicago; Clinical Instructor in Gynecology, Chicago Clinical School; Clinical Instructor in Surgery, Northwestern University Woman's Medical College. 124 pages. Price \$1. Chicago: G. P. Engelhard & Co. 1899.

THE URINE AND THE CLINICAL CHEMISTRY OF THE GASTRIC CONTENTS, THE COMMON POISONS, AND MILK. By J. W. Holland, M.D., Professor of Medical Chemistry and Toxicology, Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia. Sixth Edition, Revised and Enlarged. 12mo., 41 Illustrations. Price \$1, net, Cloth. Philadelphia: P. Blakiston's Son & Co. 1899.

MANUAL OF DISEASES OF THE EYE. By Edward Jackson, A.M., M.D., late Professor of Diseases of the Eye in the Philadelphia Polyclinic and Colleges for Graduates in Medicine. 12mo, over 600 Pages, with 178 Illustrations from Drawings by the author. Philadelphia: W. B. Sanders. 1900. W. T. Keener, Chicago Agent.

KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL REPORTS: Being the Annual Report of King's College Hospital and the Medical Department of King's College. Edited by Nestor Tivard, M.D., F.R.C.P., W. Watson Cheyne, F.R.C.S., F.R.S., John Phillips, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., and W. D. Halliburton, M.D., D.R.S. Vols. iv and v. 8vo. Cloth. Price \$1.80. London: Adlard and Son. 1898-99.

HERMANN LUDWIG FERDINAND VON HELMHOLTZ. By John Gray McKendrick, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.S.L. and E. 8vo., cloth. Pp. 300. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1899.

MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL TRANSACTIONS. Published by the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London. Vol. 82; Second Series, Vol. 64. 8vo., Cloth. Pp. 478. London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1899.

LECTURES ON THE PRINCIPLES OF SURGERY. Delivered at the University of Michigan by Charles B. Nancrede, A.M., M.D.,

LL.D., with an Appendix Containing a Résumé of the Principal Views Held Concerning Inflammation. by Wm. A. Spitzley, A.B., M.D. Illustrated. 8vo., Cloth. Pp. 398. Price \$2.50, net. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. 1899. W. T. Keener, Chicago Agent.

SYSTEM OF DISEASES OF THE EYE. By American, British, Dutch, French, German, and Spanish Authors. Edited by Wm. F. Norris, A.M., M.D., and Charles A. Oliver, A.M., M.D., of Philadelphia. Vol. iv: Motor Apparatus, Cornea, Lens, Refraction, Medical Ophthalmology. With 51 Full-page Plates and 211 Text Illustrations. 8vo., Cloth. Pp. 950. Price, \$20. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1899.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION FOR THE YEAR 1897-98. Vol. i, containing Part 1. Pp. 1280. Washington: G.P.O. 1899.

MANUAL OF ORGANIC MATERICA MEDICA AND PHARMACOGNOSY. An Introduction to the Study of the Vegetable Kingdom and the Vegetable and Animal Drugs Comprising the Botanical and Physical Characteristics, Source, Constituents, Pharmacopoeial Preparations, Insects Injurious to Drugs, and Pharmaceutical Botany. By Lucius E. Sayre, B.S., Ph.M. Second Edition, Revised. With Histology and Microtechnique. By William C. Stevens. Illustrated. 8vo., Cloth. Pp. 684. Price, \$4.50. Philadelphia: P. Blakiston's Son & Co. 1899.

WATER AND WATER SUPPLIES. By John C. Thresh, D.S.C. (London); M.D. (Victoria); D.P.H. (Cambridge). Second Revised Edition. 8vo., Cloth. Pp. 438. Price \$2. Philadelphia: P. Blakiston's Son & Co. 1900.

BLANK BOOK FOR AUTOPSY-PROTOCOLS. By Aldred Scott Warthin, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Pathology in the University of Michigan. Ann Arbor: George Wahr. 1899.

THE LUTE AND LAYS. By Charles Stuart Welles, M.D. 12mo.; Cloth. Pp. 104. Price \$2. New York: The Mac-Millan Company. 1899.

Deaths and Obituaries.

VANDYKE G. SCHIBNECK, M.D., a graduate of the University of Maryland (medical department) died at Hagerstown, Ind., January 30, aged 55 years. He was a native of Frederick County, Maryland, took his medical degree in 1882, and practiced in Baltimore until about twelve years ago, when he removed to Indiana.

GERARD F. MASON, M.D., died in Charlestown, W. Va., of general debility, on the 30th ult. He was born in Virginia in 1815, and took his medical degree at the Jefferson Medical College in 1841, locating in Charlestown early in 1842, where he continued to practice until about four years ago.

HORACE VAUGHAN, M.D., Middletown, Conn., died January 22. He was born in Delaware in 1859, was graduated from the Jefferson Medical College in 1888, and was a member of the Delaware State Medical Society.

R. B. SKINNER, M.D., Barton, Vt., born in 1834 and graduated from the medical department of Harvard University, class of 1858, died recently. During the Civil War he served as a surgeon of the 3d Militia Regulars of Vermont, and later was a member in the legislature in that state.

E. T. PAINTER, M.D., Redlands, Cal., aged 44, died January 22. After graduating in medicine he took a post-graduate course in Berlin and Vienna, and was later connected with a Pittsburg medical journal, moving to Redlands in 1891.

ERNEST GEORGE METCALFE, M.D., Long Island College Hospital, Brooklyn, N. Y., 1872, died at his home in that city, from renal disease, February 2. He was for four years a lunacy examiner in the charities department and from 1886 to 1888 was a civil service commissioner.

A. J. AXTELL, M.D., Bloomington, Ind., born in 1827 in Pennsylvania, died January 25. He began the study of medicine in 1847 and in 1852 was Captain of Co. A, 97th Volunteers.

G. S. LAUTERMAN, M.D., Bellevue, Ohio, died January 29, from blood poisoning. He was 55 years old, was at one time mayor of his city, and during the Civil War served in the 3d New York Light Infantry.

FRANK HODGKIN, M.D., Chestertown, Maryland, died in Wilmington, Del., January 31. He studied medicine in Chicago and had practiced medicine about six years.