

supporting the suggestion; and, there seeming to be no difference of opinion, the chairman, Mr. Gregory Smith, did not put it to the vote, but for himself and the meeting expressed the pleasure they should feel at my attending the next Saturday, to introduce the subject of stammering, and the operations I had performed.

These are the grounds on which I considered, and still consider, that I was invited by the members of the Westminster Medical Society to read the paper I have since published. In dedicating my pamphlet to the society (with all fitting respect to its members collectively and individually), I did not conceive I was appropriating any distinguished honour to myself, much less did I imagine I was laying myself open to the charge of dishonesty. Not being a member of the society, I cannot understand what their books would consider an invitation; but from the account I have given, which I declare to be rather an under than an overdrawn statement, I am sure no one can correctly term it a permission, which implies that the wish to figure before the society originated with myself, which was certainly not the case. If the term *invitation* be objected to, I was certainly *asked* to read my paper by the chairman, with the concurrence of what I have been told was a full meeting of the society.

Without meaning the remotest disrespect to the Westminster Medical Society, I may state that if I had ever held the least intention of asking permission of any society to read a paper before them, I should assuredly have selected that which holds the highest rank in the metropolis, which I believe is generally conceded to the Royal Medico-Chirurgical.

Those members of the Westminster Society whom I have conversed with since the close of the discussion, upon asking them the question (and from being present during the whole proceedings they were competent to judge), have told me that they certainly considered I had been invited, and that the term *permitted* applied to members of the society, who send in their papers for the approval of a committee, previous to their being submitted to the society at large.

I am quite willing to have my conduct and statements canvassed in an open and honourable manner, but I trust you will see the unfairness of giving place to anonymous attacks on my reputation and character by parties who admit that they are not members of the society, and did not witness any of the proceedings, yet do not hesitate to publish their own crooked conclusions as being irrevocable. I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

JAMES YEARSLEY.

29, Sackville-street, May 28, 1841.

** No reply that is anonymous need be forwarded to us for publication.

OPERATIONS FOR STAMMERING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Allow me to offer a few remarks on the results of the operations practised by Mr. Yearsley for the cure of stammering. The first authorised announcement of his "discovery" appeared in the "Medical Gazette" of the 12th of last March; and Mr. Yearsley, in his letter to the editor of that journal, stated that in the previous December he operated on two children for deafness, and some time after, "as the cure of deafness advanced," he learned from their parents "that both children had been stammerers from their infancy, but that the cure of stammering had ensued immediately on the excision of the tonsils." He also stated, that since the cases above-mentioned he had operated on upwards of forty, "all of whom immediately felt themselves relieved of their impediment:" a sort of damper, however, on the benefit of the discovery was subsequently added, viz., "that after their relief patients have yet to learn the proper use of the vocal apparatus."

Mr. Yearsley having premised in his letter that he was actively engaged at that time in collecting materials for a more lengthened explanation of his views upon the subject, I waited for his promised publication, being determined to put in force his recommendation for the cure of the unhappy affection in question, provided his theory proved correct, and his practice decidedly successful; but of both I entertained great doubts, having for the last fourteen years pointed my attention to impediments of speech in general, treating these nervous affections, as the profession is well aware, medicinally, and partly philologically. Upon carefully perusing his publication, I found he offered no other solidity, as to theory, except the two cases above alluded to, and another of a Mr. Butler, who was "one of the earliest cases he operated on;" and whose formidable case, and next to miraculous cure, appears in Mr. Yearsley's publication, page 8. In order, therefore, to personally satisfy myself as to these theoretic cases, I visited Mr. Butler, who, so far from being cured, is as bad as before he was operated on: his letter, which I inclose, acknowledges that while his throat was sore and inflamed he spoke with ease; "but no sooner had the part healed" than his old habit returned.

I also called on the two boys, named William Russell and John Toplis, whose parents, as above stated, informed Mr. Yearsley that they had been stammerers from their infancy, but were cured immediately on the excision of their tonsils, and to my very great surprise, the uncle and aunt of the former declared the boy never stammered; and, to use the uncle's words,

"never was a case of stammering:" and recently I received the inclosed letter from the boy's father, in which he states that he had a thickness of speech, and was occasionally hard of hearing, of which he is improved; but he did not consider his son ever stammered. The other boy, John Toplis, I found labouring under a very marked imperfection in his speech, was partially deaf, and he stated, in presence of his grandmother, that when he was agitated, or "flurried," he frequently stammered also.

This investigation of mine being anything but satisfactory, and being convinced that Mr. Y. must have been misinformed, or did not quite comprehend the parents' account of the children "stammering from infancy," and being equally quite certain that Mr. Y. is incapable of asserting any contrary to fact, or to lead astray his medical brethren, I selected out all the cases vouched by him in his publication *as cured*; and I waited on some, wrote to others, and prevailed on some friends to visit the rest: the result of these inquiries, as to the *cured* cases, I beg leave to submit. In Mr. Yearsley's publication he gave an account of eighty-eight cases which he operated on; sixty-two of this number is stated as improved, or very much improved; seventeen he acknowledges received no benefit from his operations; and the following nine persons were pronounced as cured, viz. :—

1. William Butler, 31, Golden-square (late Tottenham-street), is the person whose letter I have inclosed.
2. { The two boys, } Mr. Russell's
3. { Toplis and Russell, } letter inclosed.
4. Frederick West—I have heard that this person is wonderfully improved.
5. John Wigton—I inclose a letter from his mother, stating that he was operated on *twice*, and "he is no better."
6. John Burroughs says he is greatly improved, but stammers as usual when nervous.
7. George Nixon—the same account.
8. William Barr—cannot be found at the address given, 25, Long-lane, Smithfield.
9. William Dixon, 29, West-square, Lambeth; the inclosed letter is from the proprietor of this house, who states that his son-in-law is named William Dixon, "but he never had the misfortune to stammer."

The errors of the addresses of the last two persons are, no doubt, typographical.

The report of the above cases not proving to me quite satisfactory, I visited several cases which appeared in Mr. Yearsley's book as improved, or so much improved as to give him "sanguine" expectations of decided recoveries; but I really cannot discover, with all that I and others have inspected, the slightest chance of such taking place. They all owned that, at first, they

felt relief, but when nervous or agitated, or, as some expressed their feelings, "flurried," they stammer as before: but it is an undeniable fact, that stammerers of the simplest species, or worst species of the affection, continue at times quite free from impediment; and they pourtray their infirmity only at moments when they feel nervous on the point of speech, they can at certain times, particularly whilst alone or unobserved, speak or read quite free from embarrassment, or tendency to stammer. Now this fact is at once an answer to Mr. Yearsley's erroneous supposition, that the affection arises in consequence of diseased and enlarged uvulas or tonsils, or both. Surely at the time a stammerer is speaking correctly, and free from sympathetic nervousness on the point of speech, neither his uvula or tonsils become small or corrugate, or does disease vanish from them during the time they are correctly speaking; but as to his supposition that these parts are diseased with stammerers, I positively can assert that I have, during the last fourteen years, rigidly examined both tonsils and uvulas, and all other parts of the mouths of upwards of one thousand persons afflicted with impediments of speech, and never yet detected one case of disease. Some of this number had large uvulas, and, perhaps, large tonsils; but not more so in the same ratio than others, who have both very much enlarged, and yet do not stammer. It is an every-day occurrence for medical men to observe in their patients both uvulas and tonsils of greater size than others, and yet they have no impediments of speech, or a tendency to such affections; but to revert to the fact, that it is only at certain times when stammerers feel nervous that they pourtray their malady, it is evident that the excision of either uvulas or tonsils is quite inadequate to cure these nervous affections, which become more or less mental, and more complicated in effects, after a certain period of life.

It is also a curious fact, that from every different mode a stammerer resorts to in the hope of being cured, he at first experiences sudden relief, which continues for an uncertain time, and he then relapses (without his affection be properly and rationally treated). But a bad toothach, rheumatic affections of the jaws or face, slight tic-douloureux, ulcers on the tongue or inside of the lips, and other casualties, will cause a *pro tempore* cessation of stammering: therefore, in my humble judgment, the novelty of losing an uvula or tonsils, or both, together with the subsequent pain and inflammation, but above all, *the forcible mental impression that the operation is to eradicate their miserable affection*, produces that degree of relief observed by Mr. Yearsley, who, from want of experience in these peculiar nervous affections, is led to imagine that the alteration is a solid proof of the efficacy of his

operations in curing this miserable affliction: not less so, because it is not numbered in "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to." Your obedient servant,

JOSEPH POETT,

Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, London.

3, University-street, University College, London, May 22, 1841.

NOTE FROM SIR C. SCUDAMORE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In reply to the request of "An Old Subscriber," I beg to say that in my work on Inhalation, &c., I have stated all particulars which are most important, and further minutiae I shall have much pleasure in detailing, on the next occasion of my contributing an article on the treatment in question; for I am happy to observe, that every day's experience more and more confirms me in the high value of the remedial powers of inhalation. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES SCUDAMORE.

Wimpole-street, June 7, 1841.

* * * We cannot congratulate the writer on the credit which he will receive for this disinterested reference of his professional brethren to the tradesman who *sells his books* for a medical *recipé*, which might have been handed to them for nothing. But probably the manœuvre will *not take*.

NAVAL SURGEONS.

TESTIMONIAL TO SIR WILLIAM BURNETT.

A MEETING of the surgeons and assistant-surgeons of the navy will take place during the present month, for the purpose of considering the propriety of presenting to the director-general, Sir William Burnett, some worthy testimonial of their personal esteem, of their approbation of his conduct in the representation of their body, and of their satisfaction in his exertions and energetic zeal in promoting their interests at all times.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

At a meeting of the Council of University College, on Saturday last, Dr. W. H. WALSHE was appointed to the chair of Pathological Anatomy, rendered vacant by the retirement of Dr. CARSWELL last summer. Dr. WALSHE is the author of the very excellent article "Carcinoma" in the "Encyclopædia of Surgery."

THE SOCIETY OF ARTS have awarded their silver medal to Mr. Edward Bentley, chemist, 41, Moorgate-street, for his improved method of preserving the various vegetable substances used in medicine.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

A Medical Guide to Nice; with Remarks upon the Diseases likely to be benefited by the Climate, &c. By William Farr, M.D. London: Churchill. 1841. 8vo, pp. 177.

A Treatise on Pyrosis Idiopathica, or Water-Brash, &c. By Thomas West, M.D. London: Longman and Co. 1841. 8vo, pp. 108.

The Philosophy of Mystery. By Walter Cooper Dendy, Senior Surgeon to the Royal Infirmary for Children, &c. London: Longman. 1841. 8vo, pp. 443.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A correspondent has favoured us with the following suggestion, which we should be happy to comply with, if the duty of carrying it out did not fall more legitimately within the province of the medical associations. THE LANCET is read by the great majority of respectable practitioners in "every town" of the United Kingdom—hence the call upon them to petition in its pages will attract the notice of a greater number than could possibly be reached by the most extensive correspondence:—"I lament the apathy, in spite of the efforts of THE LANCET, which I see in the provinces; and I write this to suggest to you, as a last resource, the applying, by letter, to some practitioner in every town to ask his aid, or his refusal, to get his neighbouring brethren to sign a petition to both Houses, praying an investigation into our grievances, or assistance when a Bill is introduced. My conviction is, that unless something immediate is done, we shall be ten times worse off than ever, shortly, and shall find ourselves at the mercy of the druggists."

Communications have been received from Dr. Weatherill; Dr. Tweeddale; Mr. Curtis; A General Practitioner; Dr. Adamson; Dr. Elmore; Mr. Murray.

The letters of Mr. Gray and A Medical Student (Guy's Hospital), next week.

Chirurgi.—Yes, if it be not done for individual profit and reward.

The letters of Mr. Peppercorne and Mr. W. Morrison next week.

We do not remember to have received Mr. Laity's letter, will that gentleman be kind enough to write to us again upon the subject of which he speaks?