

Correspondence.

"Audī alteram partem."

METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL SUNDAY FUND.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—With reference to the list of collections now appearing the fierce storm on Hospital Sunday morning had a disastrous effect. The morning collection at St. Paul's Cathedral suffered considerably, but from another cause. Will your readers assist to make up the large deficiency by forwarding help to the clergyman or minister of their place of worship, or to the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House, E.C. ? It is sad, indeed, if our hospitals are to suffer so much by the caprice of our climate. *Bis dat qui cito dat.*

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Mansion House, E.C., June 21st, 1912. EDMUND HAY CURRIE.

CONTROL OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May we appeal through your valuable journal for help in securing the better protection and control of the feeble-minded, one of the most urgent social needs of the present day. The feeble-minded at present form from 10 to 20 per cent of our prisoners, 62 per cent. of the inmates of inebriate homes, 50 per cent. of the inmates of rescue homes, and 20 per cent. of the inmates of workhouses. The individual misery caused by our present treatment of them is unspeakable, and their cost to their country is immense, as they tend to increase more rapidly than the strong and healthy, and in their families mental deficiency reproduces itself continually. Thus one family, where the weakness first showed itself as moral defect, increased in two generations to 27 descendants, only four of whom were normal individuals, the others being either thieves, prostitutes, paupers, inebriates, lunatics, or feeble-minded.

For 17 years the National Association for the Feeble-minded has laboured to bring this evil before the public by demonstrating its influence as a potential source of racial decadence, pauperism, and crime. The Princess Christian's farm colony has been founded by it, for the permanent care of the feeble-minded, at Hildenborough, Kent, where colonists of both sexes, aged from 14 to over 30 years, are rescued from mischievous or vagrant lives, and are now usefully and contentedly occupied in farm work and other industries necessary for a community of over 120 inhabitants; and 24 other homes are affiliated with the association.

It seems now probable that the efforts of the National Association, and of many others interested, to secure better legislation for the care and control of this class may be shortly crowned with success. The Feeble-minded Control Bill drawn up by the association, and introduced by Mr. Stewart at the House of Commons on May 17th last, received strong support from Members on both sides of the House, and the production of the Government Bill on the evening before its discussion gave promise that legislation of some kind is likely to ensue. This position is, however, only secured by continually active and necessarily costly propaganda, and funds are immediately needed for this and for the work of permanent care. £6000 are needed to pay off the debt upon the five homes at the colony. For a sum of £3000 donors are entitled to name a house on the colony; for a sum of £250 to name a ward; for a sum of £100 to name a bed.

We appeal to all who are convinced of the importance of the association's task to support its efforts liberally during the present crisis. All donations in aid of this urgently needed work will be gratefully acknowledged by the Secretary of the Association, 72, Denison House, 296, Vauxhall Bridge-road, Westminster.

We have the honour to remain, your obedient servants,

WILLIAM CHANCE (Chairman).
CLIFFORD ALLBUTT. SHUTTLEWORTH.
AVEBURY. L. R. ROFFEN.
LOUISA TWINING.

JAMES HUTCHINSON STIRLING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In a leading article in your issue of April 13th, p. 1001, on "The Recreations of the Medical Man," you say that among "examples of active practitioners finding salutary recreation in subjects outside their professional routine we have James Hutchinson Stirling, whose 'by-work' (*πράξεργον*) was metaphysics, in which he rose (according to Viscount Haldane) to be the recognised expositor of Hegel to the English-speaking world." I think that Dr. Hutchinson Stirling's accomplishments in metaphysics deserve all the praise that you give; his *magnum opus*, the "Secret of Hegel," succeeds in interpreting the abstruse system of Hegel's philosophy. The work is of still further interest as it reveals so much of the author's personality.

But an obituary notice that I read shortly after Stirling's death three years ago, and also a review that I read of his recently published biography, state that he did not take up and devote himself to the study of philosophy till, at the age of 31, he became independent and retired from practice. If these statements are true, it can hardly be correct to present his study of philosophy and literary achievements as an example of the recreation of an active practitioner. It would be more appropriate to replace his name by that of Dr. Francis Adams, of Banbury, the translator of Hippocrates for the Sydenham Society.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

F. LUCAS BENHAM, M.D. Lond., M.R.C.P. Lond.
Semaphore, South Australia, May 22nd, 1912.

A DISPARAGEMENT OF CHOCOLATE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your annotation in THE LANCET of to-day's date you say "chocolate can only do harm, in common with all good foods, when eaten to excess." This statement seems to ignore the view generally taken by the dental profession that chocolate, like other sweetmeats, does a vast amount of harm, to the teeth at least, when eaten, even in small amounts, at the wrong time—that is, between meals or before going to bed. Unfortunately it is at these times that chocolate generally is eaten. If it were always taken towards the end of a meal followed by a detergent foodstuff such as fresh fruit what you say would no doubt be true. Should such a regulation be considered too inconvenient to follow, the advice given in Mr. J. F. Colyer's work on "Dental Surgery and Pathology" may be commended—namely, "'Sweets' as popularly understood should be forbidden."

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, W., June 22nd, 1912.

J. SIM WALLACE.

THE AFTER-CARE OF SANATORIUM PATIENTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The problem of after-care has received a good deal of attention recently in tuberculosis literature, but very few practical efforts have been made as yet to give effect to the numerous recommendations. In THE LANCET of March 9th last I endeavoured to show that the problem of after-care was largely identical with that of prevention, save that the patients were educated. The difficulty of finding surroundings under which relapses would be improbable is a great one for the section of the middle-class which supplies a considerable number of sanatorium patients—viz., the commercial clerk, office worker, warehouseman, teacher, and so forth. The ordinary lodgings and boarding-houses are as unsuitable as they well could be for the large number of such workers who are living away from home. Recently a very suitable open-air residence for arrested cases has been opened at Sussex House, Bishopswood-road, Highgate, in an admirable position, by an ex-sister of a consumption hospital and of several sanatoria, who has brought it to my notice. It is not desired to make any profit, but the hope is that the place will be self-supporting.

Should the plan prove successful it is the intention of the founder to organise similar homes in suitable positions elsewhere. As I consider the scheme to be an excellent one, I venture to bring it before those members of the profession