

pregnant, when Dr. Koch dilated the os and emptied the uterus. In 1910 she returned eight months pregnant and in labour. I assisted Dr. W. B. A. Moore (assistant superintendent), who in addition to delivering a dead foetus removed an inch of each tube. The woman recovered without a bad symptom. All diameters of the pelvis were uniformly contracted.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

J. BELL,  
Superintendent of the Civil Hospital, Hong-Kong.

## OPERATION FOR PROLAPSE OF THE RECTUM.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—With reference to an article by Mr. Leslie W. Dryland in your issue of Sept. 10th, p. 801, on prolapse of the rectum, and your annotation on the same, I write to state that I have performed a similar operation on two occasions.

The first was a middle-aged woman who had suffered from procidentia of the rectum for many years; it was about 6 inches long when fully down. After opening the abdomen in the left semilunar line I divided the peritoneum for about 2½ inches to the outer side of the left external iliac vessels and stripped up an outer flap of peritoneum to make a bed for the colon, removing the extra-peritoneal fat to allow the bowel to come into contact with the iliacus muscle. The edge of this flap was then stitched to a longitudinal band. This was about a year ago, and the result has been quite successful, the bowels acting normally and showing no tendency to prolapse.

Some time after performing this operation I came across a similar one described by Murphy in Kelly and Noble's "Operative Surgery," in which he speaks very highly of the procedure. Murphy makes a nest in the left iliac fossa for several inches of the bowel and stitches the peritoneal flap to the meso-sigmoid as well as to the bowel wall. The success attending the first case induced me to try it again a few months later in the case of a young woman, aged 30 years, who was three months pregnant. She had suffered terribly from the prolapse during her previous pregnancy and confinement and dreaded a repetition of it. At the time of my first seeing her the bowel always prolapsed several inches whenever she walked. A similar operation was performed and she went safely to term. During the latter months of her pregnancy there was a little prolapse of mucosa on defaecation, but if this persists it can be easily dealt with locally.

Colopexy in bad cases of prolapse is undoubtedly safer than amputation of the prolapsed bowel and appears to give quite as good results. Fixation of the bowel in the iliac fossa is unquestionably better than securing it to the anterior abdominal wall, the fixation being firmer, and there is no risk of leaving a weak scar, which is necessarily the case when the edges of the parietal peritoneum are not sutured together.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

SIDNEY BOYD.

Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, W., Oct. 18th, 1910.

## A REMARKABLE CASE OF INJURY TO THE EYE.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—The following account of an accident that is, I believe, unique in the history of the London and North-Western Railway Company, may be of sufficient general interest to make it worth recording.

On Sept. 22nd last an express engine-driver of the London and North-Western Railway Company came to my out-patient clinic at the Liverpool Eye and Ear Infirmary with the following story. Ten days previously he was driving the Irish Mail from Chester to Holyhead, and whilst running at a speed of 60 miles per hour down the line near Flint the window of the engine "cab" was struck by a thrush, which came through the thick plate-glass "like a bullet" and struck him in the left eye. He continued the journey to Holyhead, a distance of over 60 miles, and returned to Chester as a passenger by the next train, and had undergone some treatment at his home in that city.

I need not go into details as to the condition of the eye, but it is sufficient to say that there was a very small punctured wound in the sclerotic in the lower and outer quadrant of the

eye and the whole eye was intensely inflamed. The man himself thought that this wound had been made by the bird's beak, but I strongly suspected a fragment of glass, which was not, however, proved by the X rays. The eye improved considerably under treatment, and I decided not to meddle with the wound in the hope that the small fragment of glass would be extruded. This duly happened, and a very small splinter of glass was found lying loose under the lower lid by my friend, Dr. Cyril Dobie of Chester, three days after the man left the hospital, this being the second occasion lately that I have known of a fragment of glass being extruded from the original wound by natural process.

I am told that a cracked window from the impact of a bird is not an uncommon accident to express engines, but that there is no previous instance on record of a bird coming bodily through the window, at any rate, in the history of the London and North-Western Railway. The thrush, which I suppose weighs about 4 ounces, must have been travelling at a good speed in the opposite direction, and they probably met at about 90 miles per hour. Needless to say, the thrush did not survive. I think the man's pluck in continuing the non-stop run to Holyhead is worthy of great commendation.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

EDGAR STEVENSON,

Honorary Surgeon, Liverpool Eye and Ear Infirmary.  
Liverpool, Oct. 17th, 1910.

## FIRST OPERATION UNDER ETHER IN EUROPE.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—I am collecting materials for a description of the first operation under ether in Europe, that performed by Robert Liston, Dec. 21st, 1846, and should be glad to hear from any surviving witness. At present Lord Lister is the only one known to me. The dresser, whose notes of the case are now before me, was Edward Palmer.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

F. WILLIAM COCK, M.D. Durh., F.S.A.

1, Porchester Houses, Porchester-square, W., Oct. 15th, 1910.

\* \* In the *Pharmaceutical Journal*, Vol. VI., No. 7, Jan. 1st, 1847, pp. 337-38, there is the record of two operations under ether by Mr. Liston at the North London Hospital on Friday, Dec. 18th, 1846. The first operation was that on Frederick Churchill, a patient with disease of the knee-joint, in which amputation was found necessary. The operation took place at 2 o'clock on Friday, Dec. 18th. The second operation was on an out-patient with a painful toe. This account was sent in by Mr. Ransome, the house surgeon of the North London Hospital. The medical staff at University College (or North London) Hospital at that time were Dr. C. J. B. Williams, Dr. A. T. Thomson, Dr. John Taylor, Dr. W. H. Walshe, Dr. E. W. Murphy, Mr. S. Cooper, Mr. Richard Quain, Mr. T. Morton, Mr. Durancé George, and Dr. Richard Quain. Surgical clinical lectures were given by Mr. Liston and Mr. Richard Quain.—ED. L.

## THE QUESTION OF A COUNTERBLAST.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Every member of the medical profession must receive a daily shock when he takes up his newspaper and searches for the news amongst the superabundance of quack medicine advertisements, each purporting to be an epoch-making discovery. To those whose sole literature is the newspaper such advertisements actually represent medical views. The readers believe that the statements therein made represent the progress of medical science. Surely some means can be adopted to enlighten these poor people who waste their money on quack remedies. It would be useless to attempt a crusade against these advertisements through the medium of the newspapers which publish them. Surely, however, we could reach a very large proportion of the population of our big cities by making use of the walls of the waiting-rooms of hospitals to issue a counterblast. Without mentioning any names, if this were thought inadvisable, a general warning could be posted up on these walls against the indiscriminate use of such medicines,

denying also any connexion between quack advertisements and the medical profession.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

County Hospital, Guildford, Oct. 15th, 1910. H. J. FARDON.

## PARIS AND THE RAILWAY STRIKE.

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

*Paris during the Strike: The General Food-supply.—The Milk-supply.—The Public Danger.*

THE great five days' strike is now practically over as far as Paris is concerned, but it will be some days before the total extent of the damage caused can be estimated. Already the actual loss to commerce is calculated at 50 per cent. of the ordinary daily income, and it is expected that it will take at least a week before a normal rate of business can be carried on.

### *The General Food-supply.*

Owing to the prompt measures taken by the Government as well as by private firms, the threatened danger of a shortage in the food-supply was averted from the first. Three-quarters of the provisions needed daily by the 2,270,000 people in the city comes by rail, but in the last 20 years the river service has increased enormously, as much as 600,000 tons of foodstuff being landed yearly on the Paris quays. The authorities had not waited for the strikers before establishing a plan of mobilisation of the Seine shipping. This, with the coöperation of carts bringing in the country produce and of orders forbidding the re-expedition to the provinces of cattle already in the stockyards at La Villette, put out of the question all cause for alarm on the score of famine.

The Prefecture of the Police requested M. Guichard, the Market Commissioner, to draw up a map of France indicating the points from which the chief supplies were obtained. This map enabled the authorities to direct their energies at once on the most important sources of supplies, and by Thursday night, Oct. 13th, within 48 hours of the commencement of the strike, a system of specially guarded food trains, as well as a boat service by river and canals, was in full working order. The strikers tried to incite to revolt the carters who bring the provisions from the stations to the market, but this attempt met with complete failure, some of the men being engaged for their military service (which seems to have a calming effect), and the others being accompanied on their wagons by an armed soldier.

Prices in consequence of these able measures for the most part remained normal, the only exceptions being butter, eggs, potatoes, and fish. The rise in eggs may be accounted for by the fact that the consignments usually coming in from the foreign markets are a little late this year. The rise in potatoes is attributed to the bad harvest, which has just induced the Government to allow the importation of American potatoes, which have hitherto been excluded from the French markets on account of their fear of the potato blight. The fish market was the only one seriously affected by the strike. On the 12th only 92,000 kilos from the Dutch, Belgian, and French ports arrived at Les Halles instead of the usual amount of 200,000 kilos, and this caused a rise in price of 20 per cent. The non-arrival was not entirely due to the lack of train service, for more than one car load arrived on Thursday at the Gare du Nord, but as no one was admitted to the platforms for fear of *sabotage*, the fish was allowed perforce to rot in the station. The bakers, who number 2200, declared that they had sufficient flour in stock to furnish their customers with bread for at least 11 days, and the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables was assured, to some extent at least, by the market carts which come in from the country every day.

### *The Milk-supply.*

The chief fear was in regard to the milk in view of the dependence on it of the children and the sick. There was a considerable shortage on Wednesday and Thursday. Of the 870,000 litres of milk that come into Paris daily, about 200,000 litres are delivered at the Gare du Nord, and on Wednesday morning the dealers had to face a shortage of 90,000 litres. About 10,000 litres were brought into the city by a temporary cart service, and the Société Maggi made heroic efforts to supply its customers by means of

relays of motor drays as well as a boat service. Some of the dépôts of the Société Laitière Rothschild were obliged to refuse to sell to everyone, as they had only enough for families with children. At the hospitals Cochin and Lariboisière no inconvenience was felt, but the supply for the maternity hospital Baudelocque was not enough for its needs. There was considerable uneasiness on Wednesday at the different establishments of the Assistance Publique. At the Salpêtrière the daily distribution of 300 litres of milk was reduced to 150 litres. Many of these places, such as Berck, Angicourt, Saint-Firmin-Vineuil and Aulnay-les-Bondy, are provisioned from Paris, and the Assistance Publique was obliged to send 6000 kilos of victuals to the sanatorium of Angicourt by cart and supplies of coal to Brévannes by motor-dray. On the other hand, the directors were obliged to keep in Paris two convoys of sick children ready to be sent off to the sanatoriums of Berck and Romorantin, while it was equally impossible to despatch with their foster-mothers the little ones who were to be established in homes in the departments of the Nord, Pas de Calais, and La Somme.

Dr. Variot, the physician-in-chief of the "Hôpital des Enfants Assistés," in a letter written to the *Éclair* on the 14th expressed his alarm at the non-arrival of the specially prepared (*sur-chauffé*) milk which is sent from Normandy and sold at reduced prices for the benefit of the suffering poor. At the charitable organisation of the "Goutte de Lait de Belleville" they were obliged to send away 200 poor women who had come for the daily distribution of this milk, and the authorities are to be warmly congratulated on the prompt measures taken which caused this distressing state of things to last so short a time. By Saturday morning the milk was once more arriving in the ordinary quantities, though the customers in the Fifth and Sixth Arrondissements had to wait for their supply till 9 o'clock, as the supply had been sent *viâ* the Gare d'Austerlitz instead of the Gare de Vaugirard.

### *The Public Danger.*

In view of the different attempts which were made to endanger the public safety, it is nothing less than marvellous that the escapes have been so many and the casualties so few. Law and order have had to reckon, among the strikers, with a group of irresponsible persons openly glorying in their schemes for endangering the lives of their fellows, and no amount of foresight can entirely cope with the power for harm of the man who fears no consequences. Wherever preventive measures were possible they were quickly taken, and it is largely due to the vigilance of M. Briand and M. Lepine that France has not had to deplore more than one hideous catastrophe. During the strike the many acts of *sabotage*, usually discovered only just in time to avert a terrible accident, have been duly noted in the press. It is, perhaps, not so well known that similar attempts were being made for some months before the strike was declared. Naturally the railway companies do not care to publish abroad the details, but from time to time some indiscreet journalist elicits such facts as the signal cutting at the station of Maison Alfort or the attempted train wrecking at Jonchery, near Chaumont, when the lights were put out and a beam was laid across the track. It is also a fact well known in railway circles that in the suburbs surrounding Paris the cutting of the wires which control the signals, or the points, or the telegraph is a matter of frequent, some say daily, occurrence.

The Government has taken extraordinary precautions from the beginning. Several battalions of soldiers were quickly marched into Paris to guard the railway stations, where the police might be seen loitering about the doors in groups of from 10 to 15. Military engineers were employed in the railway electric works, and detachments of soldiers were distributed along the tracks at regular intervals to guard against the train wreckers. The two big demonstrations of the strikers which took place in Paris were so well guarded that the list of casualties was small, and even the numerous cases where the workers have been assailed by the strikers have not had any serious consequences.

On the whole, Parisians have shown a wonderful amount of *sangfroid*—from M. Lepine, strolling into the office of *L'Humanité* and gracefully introducing M. Hamard with his warrant to arrest the assembled editors, down to the little *midinette* philosophically trudging the five miles to her *atelier*. Save the timid souls who thronged the big grocery shops and