

of my treatment is based on a combined psycho-electrical method, in which the principle of direct suggestion is brought to bear as strongly as possible, I am not in a position to judge as to the efficacy of different sized static machines. But, as a matter of fact, I am referring now directly to the physical efforts produced and fairly attributable to the electricity, having in mind cases which have been treated by both small and large machines without direct suggestion.

I admit that we are entirely in the dark as to the auto-suggestive effect that the use of electrical apparatus brings about in the case of many sensitive patients. Has it not indeed been said that some 90 per cent. of electro-therapeutic cures are due to suggestion? An over-estimate no doubt.

The points that could profitably be discussed just now are, (1) how far increased therapeutic benefit is obtained in the case of nervous patients by increasing the size of static machines above an 8-inch plate apparatus; (2) how far the patient subconsciously makes use of the machinery as a peg on which to hang his self-suggestions and expectation of cure; and (3) to what extent tension and quantity respectively influence the results obtained.

Whilst my experience has shown me that without doubt successes can be scored by a combined psycho-electrical method that cannot be obtained with the use of either static electricity or suggestion used alone, the better definition of the part played by the physical agent, which unquestionably has an immediate effect on circulation and general tone, must be of obvious assistance to all practical neurologists.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

London, W., July 24th, 1914.

EDWIN L. ASH.

A NEW TEST FOR MORPHINE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Since the publication of the new reaction for morphine, an annotation on which appeared in THE LANCET for July 25th, I find that one of a somewhat similar character has recently been described by M. Denigés using copper sulphate instead of metallic copper. It is referred to in "Le Guide pour les Manipulations de Chimie Biologique" (Paris, 1910), by Bertrand and Thomas. As I was unable to find any mention of it in any English or German works on the subject I concluded that the whole of the reaction was new—an error I haste to correct.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

T. H. OLIVER.

The Cancer Research Laboratory, University of Manchester, July 28th, 1914.

THE SURGEON'S POLE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I solicit the aid of your readers in solving a problem which has hitherto failed to arrest the attention of the many who have been interested in the origin and use of the barber's pole. In several books, Brand's "Popular Antiquities" and Hone's "Every-day Book" amongst others, there is the statement that Lord Thurlow in the House of Peers, on July 17th, 1797, said that "By a statute still in force the barbers and surgeons were each to use a pole." The barbers were to have theirs "blue and white striped, with no other appendage; but the surgeon's, which was the same in other respects,

was likewise to have a gallipot and a red rag, to denote the particular nature of their vocation."¹

In THE LANCET of August 12th, 1905, p. 498, "Lucus" suggested that the red lamp might be a derivative of the red rag, and the same thought may have entered the heads of others who may have given any attention to the origin of old trade signs, but the point I want light upon is *this statute*, mentioned by Lord Thurlow. Where is it to be found, seen, or verified? In the "Annals of the Barbers" there is an allusion to a surgeon's sign. On Oct. 2nd, 1724, a quack named Thomas Cooke was examined; "the Court directed him to take down his surgeons sign." Was this sign the pole which Lord Thurlow's statute referred to? Perhaps some antiquarian-minded reader may afford me the information which I have failed to reach.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Carlisle, July 28th, 1914.

H. A. LEDIARD.

THE INTRAMEATAL TREATMENT FOR SUPPURATIVE OTITIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is a good many years since I was able, through your courtesy, to advocate this treatment for the first time in THE LANCET. There was at the time over-enthusiasm for the radical mastoid operation, and in my opposition to that operation as a routine treatment for otorrhœa I was in a minority of one at the Otological Congress of 1899. The one statement of my opponents that I found difficult to meet was that the good results shown by my method of treatment would be temporary. Knowing how often cases relapsed after the radical operation had been performed, I could only "wait and see."

I have recently seen four of my old cases, now perfectly well, on whom I performed otectomy more than six years ago; one of them ten years ago. These cases had all been under treatment before they came to me, and one, a lady aged 68, had been advised to have the radical operation performed. Two of them had cholesteatoma, a condition that the books say calls for the radical operation. However, by means of my antrum syringe (already described in THE LANCET) I was able to wash away the masses, and there has been no recurrence for some considerable time. One of these cases has almost perfect hearing. These cases are only selected in so far as they happen to have recalled themselves to my recollection. Irrigation with or without otectomy will rarely fail to disinfect the aural cavities if carried out as I advise. Re-infection is possible, no doubt, after any treatment, but I know that very few of my cases have had any serious return of trouble. It is some years since I have found it necessary to perform the radical mastoid operation, but I have seen a good many cases in which this operation has been performed with unsatisfactory results.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, W., July 31st, 1914.

F. FAULDER WHITE.

CLARET AS A BEVERAGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read with pleasure the very able annotation under this heading in THE LANCET of July 25th. Such views, advanced by so competent an authority, cannot but do good in making better known the qualities of this most wholesome and palatable wine. I venture to remark, however,

¹ Hone's "Every-day Book," vol. i., p. 1269.