

cation, who adopt the term as a euphemism. Most of their symptoms are mental, arising from the consciousness of sin and moral degradation.

All persons who treat these locally as spermatorrhœa, and endanger their patients' lives by passing instruments, I shall refuse to consider as *confrères*; I shall encourage the patient to try and get back the fees he has paid; I shall decline to explain my treatment; and I shall not invite them to the post-mortem examination, although Dr. Dawson may consider such conduct as "bad taste." I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS K. CHAMBERS, M.D.

22B, Brook-street, Grosvenor-square, July 10th, 1861.

* * Here this correspondence must terminate.—Ed. L.

LATERAL PRESSURE AND THE VENOUS CIRCULATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Believing my theory of the circulation of the venous blood to be correct, and knowing it to be original, I sought the earliest opportunity to place it before the profession. This I was enabled to do by your kindness in inserting a letter from me entitled "Lateral Pressure and the Venous Circulation" in your journal of Sept. 17th, 1859, and a subsequent letter on the same subject in May, 1860.

Having thus, as it were, registered my claim to what I consider a rather important discovery, I have been from that time casting about for something in the shape of experiment to corroborate my views, but without effect. Disease has, however, come to my aid, and, "though in a negative manner," afforded that which my ingenuity was unable to supply.

In the beginning of last year I was sent for to see a woman who was seized with what her friends considered to be a fit of asthma. She was suffering extremely, but the dyspnoea bore no resemblance to that of asthma; it was of that gasping character that attends congestion of the lungs from impaired action of the heart. Her countenance was painfully anxious, the skin deadly cold and of a bluish hue, and the pulse weak and intermitting. Stimulants were administered; the attack soon yielded under their influence,—to return, however, with increasing severity at intervals more or less apart. For some time she was free for a week or two together from these seizures, but latterly they recurred much more frequently. Ultimately, œdema pedum and dropsy into the pectoral cavities took place, and she died.

On examining the body after death, the pleural cavities were found to contain a considerable quantity of fluid. The lungs were healthy and crepitant. There was fluid also in the pericardium, and several yellow, leather-like patches were observable on the surface of the heart, indicating fatty degeneration. The walls of the ventricles were thinner than natural, and their cavities enlarged, particularly that of the right ventricle. The muscular structure was also much degenerated. This condition of things accounted readily enough for the death.

But what attracted more particularly my attention, and has induced me to write to you, was the abnormally distended state of the veins of the heart. No longer occupying their usual position beneath the serous covering of that organ, they stood out from its surface like whip-cord, tense, prominent, and full, whilst closely by their sides lay the shining empty arteries. Now, it was evident that this abnormal condition of the veins depended upon one of two causes: either on an altered condition of the veins themselves, which offered an impediment to the circulation of their contents, or on a deficiency of the moving power upon which that circulation depended. The scalpel soon showed—if my theory of lateral pressure be correct—that the latter was the case. The coronary arteries were ossified throughout their whole extent. This atheromatous condition had deprived them of their expansive and contractile power; they no longer dilated under the systolic impulse of the heart, and consequently their influence on the adjacent veins was gone. Now, had the circulation in the veins depended on a *vis-à-tergo* supplied by the heart, they would not, in my opinion, have been thus distended, for the force that had so completely emptied the arteries would have sent the blood onward to the patulous auricle. The veins, though full, would not have been so beyond what is usual; but let their circulation depend, as I imagine it does, on the dilating and contracting action of the arteries, and we readily perceive how with these actions suspended—as they were in this case—all motion of the blood in the veins should cease. If these views be correct, they will throw great light on the pathology of many diseases, parti-

cularly of those of a congestive character which wait on age. How far is the extreme pain of phlegmasia dolens referable to the pulsating artery impinging at every stroke of the heart upon the coats of the inflamed vein?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Savile-row, July, 1861. J. NICHOLS, M.R.C.P. Lond.

POOR-LAW MEDICAL REFORM ASSOCIATION.

(NOTE FROM MR. GRIFFIN.)

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You were good enough to give insertion last week to a letter from me relative to the anticipated examination on Poor-law Medical Relief by the Select Committee of the House of Commons; I regret to inform you that it is probable the inquiry will be postponed until next session, as the subject may take much longer time than was at first anticipated. I, however, should recommend gentlemen about to give evidence not to relax in their preparation, as the communication made to me as to the postponement until next session may be only a surmise.

The paragraph in my last letter recommending a per-case payment is, strictly speaking, not quite what I intended; as I ought to have stated that I should advise a fixed salary, triennially arranged on a calculation of the number of cases attended during the three preceding years, the amount per case to be not less than 5s. for the first 300 cases attended during any one year, and 2s. for each additional patient attended during the same time, with mileage in addition. This plan will, I believe, meet the requirements of both town and country districts.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
12, Royal-terrace, Weymouth, RICHARD GRIFFIN.
July 6th, 1861.

ELECTION TO THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg leave to express, through the medium of your columns, my cordial thanks to the one hundred Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons who did me the honour to vote in my behalf as one of the retiring members of Council.

It would not become me now to discuss the policy of following the advice given to the Fellows by the late Mr. Guthrie and Mr. South, respecting the infusion of new blood into the Council, which has resulted in my being made the first victim; it may, however, be remarked that neither of these gentlemen, themselves life members, has set the example of resigning. Moreover, it is on record, that since the Charter of 1843, when the Council first became elective, twenty-two of its members, out of the fixed number of twenty-four, have, up to the year 1859, either died or resigned, so that during sixteen years the members of the Council have been under a continual state of transition, in passing from the *life* to the *elective* system.

Had I, on this occasion, instituted an organized canvass, or requested my friends, as others have done, to vote for myself alone, the result would have been very different.

During the period I had the honour of a seat in the Council, I am conscious of having always voted for whatever appeared to me to promote the welfare of the College, or tended to raise the character of the surgical profession. In retiring from the Council I shall always entertain that respect and esteem for its members which their characters and talents so justly merit.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Bernard-street, Russell-square, July, 1861. JOHN BISHOP, F.R.S.

INJURIES CAUSED BY LIGHTNING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In continuation of some remarks which you have published under the above head in THE LANCET of the 8th inst. (page 572), I have to record another instance of death, and one of injuries not fatal, produced by lightning. The similarity which these cases present to those which I have already detailed in the above-mentioned place is most striking. On both occasions two persons were standing together under an umbrella near trees; in both instances one was killed and the other escaped with life; and in both the immunity experienced by the survivor would strangely appear to be due to metallic articles worn upon the person.

On Wednesday, the 5th inst., between eleven and twelve