

ON THE SPEEDY INTERMENT OF PERSONS DYING FROM CHOLERA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

From the probability which exists of our being revisited by cholera, I am anxious to call the attention of the profession to the subject of this letter,—viz., the *speedy interment of the real or supposed victims of the disease*,—a subject at once interesting in a scientific, and important in a humane point of view. Having acted on the occasion of the last epidemic as medical officer to two Boards of Health, it may be right to state that the opinions now to be expressed were then entertained, and this *Whitehall regulation* was then questioned and opposed by me; and further, that subsequent reflection has served to convince me both of the inutility and inhumanity of such regulation.

The consideration of the cause and nature of death by cholera will suffice to show, that in such a case the most unequivocal evidence of *real death* should be present, previous to interment even being thought of, much less carried into effect. In corroboration of this opinion I would ask, is there any, and if there be such, what is to be held as such unquestionable sign of death? On the answer to this question my justification for mooted the subject must and does depend; I therefore affirm that, there is but one absolute proof of death,—i.e., the decomposition which follows it. If this be true, and it will hardly be denied that it is so, it follows that the interment of the body in *any case* previous to such change being apparent, is alike opposed to science, and a violation of humanity and its laws. Again, it may be asked, how long may *life be suspended*? I am not aware that any direct or satisfactory answer can be rendered to this query, and must, therefore, reiterate my assertion that the speedy interment of cholera-patients is wholly unjustifiable.

It was, undoubtedly, adopted with the view of protecting the living against infection, or contagion, which yet remains *sub judice*, so far as cholera is concerned, the great mass of evidence, at the same time, tending to the belief that cholera is not *essentially* a contagious or infectious disease. From my letters on the disease having been published in the Journal in 1832 and 1833, I will not at present occupy more of your space than is necessary to record my *protest* against a practice opposed to, and unsupported by, science, and repugnant to the best feelings of our nature,—affection, and veneration for the dead.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

GEORGE FIFE, M.D.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne,

Sept. 9, 1848.

Medical Intelligence.

APPOINTMENTS.

P. Martin Duncan, Esq., M.B., has been appointed Physician to the Essex and Colchester Hospital, in the room of Dr. Chambers, resigned.

John Cash Neild, Esq., has been elected Surgeon to the Bristol General Hospital, in the room of J. G. Wilson, Esq., resigned.

William Bird Herapath, Esq., M.B., M.R.C.S., has been elected Honorary Surgeon to St. Peter's Hospital, Bristol, in the room of Dr. Staples, resigned.

Charles Hall Clarke, M.D., has been elected Physician to the Bath United Hospital, in the room of Dr. Cardew, resigned.

SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES.

Gentlemen admitted Licentiates Thursday, August 24th:—William Player, Swansea; William Richard Hilton, Whitehaven.

Thursday, August 31st:—W. Wightman, Swinefleet, near Goole; Walter William Miller, Eye; John Baker Boley, Bristol; William Gillett Cory, Brighton.

OBITUARY.

Lately, at Orthez, in the South of France, in his 104th year, Dr. Dufour, having preserved his faculties to the last.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Proceedings of the State Medical Convention, held in Lancaster, April, 1848, and Constitution of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania then adopted. Lancaster, U.S. Penn. 1848. 8vo. pp. 20.

On the Employment of Chloroform in Dental Surgery, its Mode of Exhibition, &c. By Francis Brodie Imlach, Dentist, Licentiate of the College of Surgeons, and Member of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh. Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co. 1848. 8vo. pp. 9.

PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ASSOCIATION.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

Gentlemen whose subscriptions are in arrear are requested to bear in mind the addition to the 23rd Rule of the Association, unanimously agreed to at the late Anniversary Meeting:—

"If any Member's subscription remain unpaid twelve months after it shall have become due, the *Medical Journal* and other publications of the Society shall be withheld from such Member till his arrears be paid."

R. J. N. STREETEN, Secretary.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications have been received from Dr. W. B. Herapath; the Birmingham Pathological Society; Dr. Fife; Mr. W. S. Cox; Dr. Paxton; Mr. J. Gabb; Dr. Cowan.

Lynn Hospital:—We have received the report of cases treated at the West Norfolk and Lynn Hospital, and hope that whenever Mr. Cotton's convenience will permit we shall be favoured with a continuance of these valuable reports.