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NEW SERIES.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE EDITOR AND GENERAL SECRETARY TO 37, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON.

A FRIEND TO JUSTICE. Address a letter to the Editor of the *Times*. The circumstances cannot be adequately treated in a medical journal. England treats her soldiers, including officers, shabbily on their return home in wounds or sickness. As soon as a poor fellow is out—which often means, can be got out—of the regimental surgeon's hands, he is no longer considered any charge to the Government. This is the mean and scurvy treatment which is now being meted out to brave men whose blood has been shed, and whose constitutions have been hopelessly shattered in their country's cause! Many of these poor fellows are glad to crawl off to their homes, and their relations are equally glad to welcome them: but bye and bye, the invalid finds himself a burden to his friends, and he has to seek shelter in the hospital or work-house. Even in the case of officers, hardships of this kind have arisen. If our "Patriotic Fund" means anything at all, it means that the country should supply the wants of its defenders:—and one of these wants is hospital accommodation for invalids and convalescents sent from the Seat of War.

THE MEDICAL SYSTEM OF THE TWO SERVICES. Next week we intend to continue our remarks upon this momentous subject.

DR. GRANTHAM'S Cases of Puerperal Convulsions next week.

BOOKS RECEIVED. [*An Asterisk is prefixed to the names of Members of the Association.*] 1. *SIMPSON [James Y., M.D.] *Obstetric Memoirs and Contributions*. Edited by W. O. Priestley, M.D., Edinburgh, and H. R. Storer, M.D., Boston, U.S. pp. 857. Vol. I. Edinburgh: 1855. 2. DREW [John, M.D.] *Practical Meteorology*. pp. 291. Plates. London: 1855. 3. JOHNSON [George, M.D.] *On Epidemic Diarrhoea and Cholera: their Pathology and Treatment*. pp. 294. London: 1855. 4. BEGGIE [J. W. M.D.] and STRUTHERS [John, M.D.] *Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late Richard James Mackenzie, M.D. With portrait*. pp. 44. Edinburgh: 1855. 5. *Seventh Report of the Somerset County Pauper Lunatic Asylum*. pp. 65. 1854.

THE NEW CHARTER OF THE LONDON COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS. The reason why the proposed charter has not been obtained is supposed to be the indifference regarding it which prevails among the chiefs of the College. It is not a measure which is calculated to injure or excite the jealousy of any other medical body; and if asked for could hardly be refused.

MR. SYME'S supposed control over a versatile contemporary is not a subject of interest except to the initiated, and its discussion in our pages would not edify; moreover, the statements as to B— are based, we suspect, on merely hypothetical foundations. Mr. Syme's reputation was established in Scotland long before he wrote Clinical Lectures for Mr. Wakley.

SCOTUS. Dr. Henderson, a Homœopathic practitioner in Edinburgh, and Dr. Gregory, president of the "Mesmeric Curative Association", are both Examiners for the degree of M.D. in the University of Edinburgh. This is as true as it is sad to tell.

SANITARY LEGISLATION.

NO. I. PREVENTIVE MEDICINE.

EVERY one, who has carefully studied the mortuary returns of the metropolis during the successive years of the present century, must have been forcibly impressed with the gradual and progressive increase in the mortality occasioned by several diseases of the zymotic and epidemic class. An examination into the prevalent causes of death in the chief provincial cities and larger manufacturing towns leads to the same result; whilst further inquiry elicits the fact that the diseases which are thus so fatal to the inhabitants of towns are either of rare occurrence, or at the least much less fatal, in rural districts. Physicians, acquainted with the prevailing types of illness both in town and country, have observed that, whilst a sthenic character of disease for the most part predominates in the latter, the diseases of

the former are remarkable for debility and want of tone. A relaxed condition of the mucous surfaces, as indicated by the extreme prevalence of diarrhoea, catarrh, bronchitis, and leucorrhœa, is more or less characteristic of large sections of the people resident in London and other large towns. Blood diseases, neuralgic affections, especially gastralgia, and a kind of cachexia difficult to describe, but sufficiently obvious to the practitioner, and which renders all diseases more difficult of cure, prevail commonly among the miserable occupants of the rookeries of London and the wretched courts and alleys of provincial cities.

It would thus appear that, whilst art and science, education and intelligence, wealth and commercial greatness, have been increasing year by year, the social condition of the poorer classes, so far as this is indicated by their tone of health and the amount of mortality, has been declining; the maladies to which they are liable have been assuming more and more of the pestilential character for which the diseases of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were noted, and, like them, have likewise become less amenable to the therapeutic art. It is now almost universally admitted that it is to local and incidental, not to essential causes, that our towns and cities owe this sad pre-eminence in unhealthfulness; and it has been proved, in a number of well-attested instances, both that the amount of disease fluctuates with certain external circumstances, for the most part easily controllable; and that every well-conducted effort to improve the sanitary state of towns has met with ample success. Here then is opened a new, a wide, and a most important field for the labours of the legislator, the philanthropist, and the physician—the latter terms being convertible so far as the members of the medical profession are concerned, for they have ever shown themselves in the van of progress, and been ever ready to alleviate human suffering, or to promote the physical amelioration of mankind, without reference to fee or reward. It is due to the medical profession that the facts we have thus briefly referred to have been brought to light, and that a new branch of the medical art—PREVENTIVE MEDICINE—has within a few years been called into active existence, or we should perhaps rather say revived; for many facts and opinions which seem to us to be novelties were well understood by the older physicians. This art, as legitimate a branch of medicine as that of healing, is also fully as important, inasmuch as it is at least equally useful to prevent the development of disease by the removal of its causes, as to cure it when these have produced their consequences on the health of individuals. Preventive and curative medicine are indeed but sister branches of the same tree; but their inquiries lie