

CORRESPONDENTS are particularly requested by the Editor to observe that communications relating to advertisements, changes of address, and other business matters, should be addressed to the Manager, at the Journal Office, 161A, Strand, London, and not to the Editor.

THE TELEPHONE *versus* INFECTION.

SIR,—If there be some doubt whether a district may be directly infected by proximity to a fever hospital, there can be none that it may be indirectly infected through the visitors to the inmates mingling afterwards with the inhabitants. This danger is probably less in those institutions which require the visitor to wear a special dress; but it might be nullified by having a portion of each ward separated off by an air-tight glazed partition, and fitted with one or two telephones. The visitor would thus see and converse with his friend, without risk to himself or his after-associates.

It may be said that the number of telephones required would be too large. But this does not follow; because visitors, under these conditions, would not impede the administration, and the hours might, therefore, be greatly extended. The services of convalescents would usually be available for putting the interlocutors in communication.

I am not aware that this plan has been suggested or adopted before; but, if it have, it will not suffer by further publicity.—I am, etc.,

RALPH W. LEFTWICH, M.D.

SIR,—In your issue of September 30th last, Mr. P. B. Pring asks for a remedy, in an old gentleman of 72, with gouty proclivities, for giddiness in the morning, accompanied by a sense of weakness in the legs. I would suggest, in addition to the excellent treatment recommended by "Rusticus" in the JOURNAL of October 14th, wherein he advocates a hot drink of coffee or tea, or milk, before leaving the recumbent position, that this be supplemented by extra pillows, and an occasional aloetic purgative. I write from experience of a somewhat similar case.—I am, etc.,

C. R. FRANCIS, M.B.

Clapham Common, S.W., October 16th.

DR. M. W. BRADLEY.—It is obviously impossible for us to attempt to decide upon the exact nature of the disease in question in view of the conflicting evidence in the case. But we are bound to say that the report of Drs. Heath and Page seems reasonable and fair. As to the precautions taken, there appears to be no doubt that, as soon as notification of the case was made, the proper steps were taken by the sanitary officers.

BRIGHT'S DISEASE.—An old lady, who lives in Massachusetts, heard that Mr. John Bright was going to visit the United States. "Well," said she, "I hope he won't bring his disease with him."

ASSISTANTS AND CHEMISTS.

SIR,—May I ask permission to publish in your columns my experience of assistants? When I first commenced with help in the way of an assistant, I had a pupil. I next tried a fourth year's student (university man) reading for final; and, lastly, I had a qualified man, possessing both medical and surgical qualifications. The first, knowing nothing, was not trusted to do anything beyond dispensing under supervision, and to make a second visit to any bad cases. The second could give real help in visiting, dispensing, midwifery, etc., but, because not qualified, was liable to prosecution if any case of death should occur under his charge. The third, or qualified, was free from this risk, but, being a qualified man, could not bear to be told anything, would only dispense for such patients as he saw himself; and, if any patient would not consult with him, but preferred to see the principal, would not fail to insult them, and say he considered himself quite as capable as anybody else. Now comes the question, which am I to employ? The first is almost useless; the last worse than useless, besides being expensive (my experience is of seven assistants). The second one can be made very useful, if there was not the risk of prosecution attending the employment of the unqualified assistant. In these days of prosecuting unqualified assistants in the interests of the public, how is it that so little notice is taken of the prescribing chemist? In the town (of 70,000 population) in which I reside, the chemists prescribe for more than double the number of people that the medical men do; and it is not at all uncommon to be told, when called in just at the last, in time to give a death-certificate, that Dr. So-and-so, naming some chemist, has been attending the patient.

Now, in the interest of the public at large, whether it is the more necessary to prosecute—the young man who has spent his money and time in fulfilling all the necessary requirements for entering the medical profession, but, perhaps for lack of means, cannot qualify, or he who has never entered an hospital in his life, or seen any medical cases except over the shop-counter, and whose medical knowledge consists in knowing what any old woman knows, and no more? Yet he, or his assistants, even down to the pupil or shop-boy, just entered the shop, can dispense drugs with seemingly perfect impunity. Surely, it is time that the law on this point should be altered.

No doubt, the experience of most medical men will accord with my own, of cases of malpraxis, especially in infants, which is so frequently occurring, thereby increasing the infant mortality, through the frequent use of powders, mothers' friends, cordials, etc. In these days of cheap physic, when prices are bartered down to such low figures by cheap provincial dispensaries, prescribing chemists, clubs, and paying hospitals, it is hard work for medical practitioners to earn a living. It is high time we, as a united body, should try to get a more just legislation for the medical profession, affording greater protection both to the profession, and, by so doing, to the public also. I enclose my card, and remain, yours,

HARD WORK AND LITTLE PAY.

NEMO (Wolverhampton).—Professor Humphry of Cambridge is a member of the Court of Examiners, and attends all its meetings; he is the only provincial representative at the Court.

HYSTERICAL APHONIA.

SIR,—In a recent issue of the JOURNAL, reference is made to hysterical aphonia. A case of the kind, lasting two years, came under my notice, which may not be without interest. Mrs. C., aged 28, suddenly lost her voice, two days after giving birth to her sixth child. She became a patient at the London Medical Mission Dispensary; failing to relieve her, I recommended her to seek relief at a special hospital. She did so, but returned to me without having derived any benefit. In the course of time, however, she was delivered of her seventh child; and, almost immediately after her confinement, her voice suddenly returned. Her infant was born with a fully developed canine tooth in the lower jaw.—Yours, etc.,

28, Colville Terrace, W., October 13th, 1882.

GEORGE SAUNDERS.

X.—The address of the person supplying the driving-gloves is Mr. J. Turnbull, Howgate, Hawick. The price is 2s. 6d.

ERRATA.—In Dr. Simon Fitch's surgical memorandum on "Tapping the Bladder", in our issue of September 16th, p. 522, for "seton catheter", read "silver catheter".—In Mr. Mayo Robson's paper on "A Proposed Substitute for Carbolic Spray in Antiseptic Surgery", published in the JOURNAL of September 2nd, the name of Dr. Churton (p. 421, second paragraph, tenth line from bottom of page), was incorrectly printed "Dr. Clouston".—At the heading of Mr. Bowly's original article on "A New Material for Casts and Models", the author was erroneously described as of "East Dereham, Norfolk". Mr. Bowly does not belong to that place; he holds the appointment of Curator to the Museum, St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

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BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

Cerebral Hyperæmia: Does it Exist? A Consideration of some Views of Dr. Wm. A. Hammond. By C. F. Buckley, B.A., M.D., formerly Superintendent of Haydock Lodge Asylum, England. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1882.

A Handbook of General Treatment for Cholera, with especial Reference to Cases resulting in Impoverishment of the Blood; a Condition known as "Anæmia", and commonly followed by Dropsical Symptoms. By Chas. J. Hancock, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., L.M., L.S.A.L. Bath: R. E. Peach. 1882.

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