

NOTES, LETTERS, ETC.

CANNON BALLS IN CHRONIC CONSTIPATION.

MR. FRANK SMITH (Bath) writes: It may interest your readers to know that Dr. Hermann Sahli's method of massage is not altogether new to this country. About fourteen years ago, when living for a little time in London, I spent a good deal of time in the various gymnasia, and took occasional lessons in the noble art of self-defence of an old "pro," since dead, whose method of training was unique and thoroughly unorthodox in many particulars, but he was allowed, even by "the fancy," to be a "deep un." The professor's treatment for what he delicately termed "stoppage of the innards," was to make his pupil lie on his back and roll a light dumb-bell to and fro and up and down the bare abdomen the first thing in the morning after having taken a sip of cold water. This treatment, which was for a long time a professional secret, usually had a better effect than any internal remedy.

SULPHIDE OF CALCIUM IN ELEPHANTIASIS.

DR. P. D. ANTHONISZ (Ceylon) writes: Elephantiasis of the extremities, and also of other parts of the body, is endemic in this island, especially in the southern and western provinces. I have given the subject a little consideration after the cause of the disease was found out by Dr. Manson, of China, who attributes it to the presence of *filaria sanguinis hominis*. The manner in which the parasite enters the body is supposed to be by the sting of the mosquito, which carries it in its proboscis, or by impure drinking water.

Various modes of treatment have been tried; ligaturing the principal artery of the extremity affected, bandaging, strapping, and an endless variety of ointments containing iodine, mercury, etc. None of these remedies have been of any use. Dr. Manson's discovery suggested to me that the right mode of subduing the disease would be by preventing the parasite from multiplying in the body, which, according to Dr. Manson, it does with amazing rapidity. I experimented with carbolic acid and salicylic acid, but without result. My thoughts next turned to sulphurous acid. Knowing how easily this acid is decomposed, I resolved to give it in combination with lime in the form of sulphide of calcium.

I tried it first in the case of a young woman, who came to me with recent inflammation of the leg with considerable swelling; and enlarged and painful glands in the groin. She was slightly strumous. I ordered one-grain pills of the sulphide of calcium, with an ointment for the groin of two grains of iodoform with an ounce of lard or vaseline. To my great surprise, the swelling subsided in less than three weeks, and when she called for some other ailment three months after, I could not say which had been the swollen leg. She took for the first week one-grain sulphide of calcium pills twice a day, and after that two-grain pills twice a day until the swelling subsided. This induced me to give the remedy a more extensive trial. Two lads, about 17 years of age, who had the disease for several years, were put under a like treatment. One of them had a foot so swollen that he was obliged to have a shoe for it very much larger than the other. After having been under this treatment for about a year and a half, the swollen foot was almost the same size as the other.

Several cases were treated in this manner by some of my medical friends—Mr. Thomas amongst others—and the same results followed in their hands. At the present moment I have a man, between 50 and 55 years of age, who had both his legs enlarged, one of them being nearly as large as his waist, and the other only a little smaller. It is now more than a year since he has been put under treatment, and at the present time his legs are nearly the size of his thighs. I am in hopes of effecting a complete cure in another year or so. The duration of the disease in this case is about thirty years in one leg, and about twenty years in the other.

I would like to hear that this practice for elephantiasis is tried in other countries where the disease is common. The remedy should be persevered in for a lengthened period, and not given up until the disease subsides. It is necessary to suspend the use of the sulphide of calcium when it affects the stomach and causes irritation, going on with it again after the irritating effects have subsided.

THE HAIR IN ANÆSTHETIC LEPROSY.

DR. THOMAS CHAPLIN (Anerley Park) writes: In your review of Sir Risdon Bennett's book on the *Diseases of the Bible*, the following passage occurs: "Surely one certain characteristic of the disease given by Moses himself, namely, that the hair in the plague is turned white, is almost decisive that true anæsthetic leprosy was intended." Permit me, in the interests of scientific truth, to say that white hairs are not a characteristic of anæsthetic leprosy. I speak from knowledge, having, as physician to a leper's asylum, closely observed that disease during sixteen years.

. While giving our correspondent every credit for accurate observation, the fact that the hairs on the anæsthetic patch are frequently white, or at least decolorised, has been too frequently remarked by reliable authors to allow us to accept his dictum as other than an expression of an exceptional experience. See, for instance, the description of J. Hillis (quoted in Ziemssen's *Handbook*, p. 313, by Professor Neisser: "[The white spots] are to be interpreted as local atrophic processes, and lead, also, to the loss of pigment in the hair situated within their confines." See also Fagge's *Med.*, ii, 743, etc. Cf. Kaposi in Hebra's work.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO VIVISECTION.

MR. C. T. DENT writes: With reference to an answer to a correspondent on p. 1368 of the *JOURNAL*, will you kindly take note that Mr. Stephen Paget, F.R.C.S., 57, Wimpole Street, has succeeded me as Secretary of the Association for the Advancement of Medicine by Research. All communications relating to the objects of the Association should be addressed to him.

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The Children of Silence. By J. A. Seiss, M.D. Philadelphia: Porter and Coates.

Transactions of the Sanitary Institute of Great Britain. Vol. VIII. Congress of York, 1886-87. London: Offices of the Sanitary Institute.

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