

## MEDICAL PSYCHOLOGY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am desirous of calling the attention of yourself and of the profession to what I consider a great evil, believing that by so doing I shall be taking the most direct means towards obtaining a remedy. It is a well-known fact that medical psychology is a branch of the profession which is rarely made the subject of study, except by a very small proportion of medical men; students seldom make it a part of their curriculum, partly because it is not required by the examining boards, principally because their work is already so varied and great; but when it is considered that the period in which they are engaged in their hospital duties is the only part of their lives in which the majority have an opportunity of acquiring any knowledge of mental disease, while almost every medical man is called upon occasionally to take a prominent and responsible part in these painful cases, I think it is clearly necessary that every opportunity and facility should be afforded to those students who can be prevailed upon to make use of them. But is this the case? Far from it. There are four large lunatic asylums in or near London, and at only two of these are students admitted to see the practice. Having seen an advertisement from one of these (the Bethlem) in THE LANCET, in which it was stated that the fee for three months' attendance on the practice and lectures was £3 3s., and concluding with an intimation that the "medical officers would enter students and give all necessary information," I went down a short time since for the purpose of making some inquiries preparatory to entering my name. I was shown into a room, and sent my card to Dr. Hood, who came in shortly afterwards, and appeared rather surprised when he heard my business, as he said I should find all the "necessary information" in the advertisement. I had scarcely time to ask him half a dozen questions before he left me abruptly and not very courteously, but not before I had obtained sufficient information to convince me that I should be wasting both time and money by attending the Bethlem Hospital. In answer to my question as to when the lectures spoken of in the advertisement would commence, he replied that it was *very uncertain* if any lectures would be given, as it entirely depended upon the number of students who entered. The days for attending the practice are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, at twelve; and when I ventured to ask what length of time was occupied in going round, he answered, to my great astonishment, "Oh! about half an hour; *never longer*."

And these, Sir, are the opportunities offered in London to become acquainted with a class of diseases which are becoming more and more rife in this country, and with which every one of us, it is almost certain, will often meet and have to deal, in practice. Surely this half-hour's *race* round the wards on three consecutive days in each week, with the *remote chance* of an occasional lecture, is not seriously regarded as a means of acquiring a knowledge of psychology; it must rather be a little farce got up for the express purpose of signing the schedules of those amongst us who intend entering the army or the Hon. East India Company's service.

Before concluding, I ought to add, in justice to the staff of St. Luke's, as well as for the information of others, that I subsequently paid a visit to this hospital, where I met with a gentlemanly reception from Dr. Stevens, and was informed that I could go round the wards with Dr. Sutherland on Mondays, at eleven; with Dr. Monro on Thursdays, at two; and with Dr. Stevens any morning, at ten; and that Dr. Sutherland would deliver a course of lectures on Insanity in May or June; while the fee was the same as at Bethlem—viz., £3 3s. This is more satisfactory; but why should this be the only one of our metropolitan asylums where the student may acquire some knowledge of mental diseases? The others have, indeed, "dwindled down from magnificent national institutions to mere local caravansaries."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
St. Mary's Hospital, May, 1858. STAMFORD FELCE.

## PROPOSED MEDICAL CLUB.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your article in last week's journal on the establishment of a Metropolitan Medical Club deserves the consideration of our profession. The subject is one I have myself thought very lately of broaching in your columns. It is better calculated, I believe, than all the Medical Societies, as they are called, put together, for maintaining that unity of feeling so

essential in a calling which has to encounter much lukewarmness in the outer world, and the members of which are unhappily too often divided by petty jealousies amongst themselves.

Why should we not have our social lounge, with its proper adjuncts, a *restaurant*, smoking-room, and well-stored library of general as well as professional literature? Indeed, I cannot see why there should be any of the latter. I am sure most would be content, on such an occasion, to sink the shop altogether. Country members who may happen for a few days to be in town; young devotees of the profession, who have more time on their hands than they can conveniently fill; elderly practitioners, who want a quiet dinner with a friend, or a leisure hour to themselves and their paper or cigar, would herein find their wants supplied. Young doctors would not have to dine with clerks, *et id genus omne*, in common eating-houses about town, nor to hesitate between spending their lonely evenings in quiet but dreary lodgings, or killing time at the theatre or cigar divan.

Hoping the subject will receive further attention, and with best wishes for the success of this scheme,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ONE WHO FLOATS ON THE WATERS OF  
MODERN BABYLON.

May, 1858.

## WAR TO THE PUMP.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Although I entirely concur with you that a destructive war should be immediately waged against all street pumps, drawers of the poisoned hard water from the shallow land springs of the metropolis, there are some few pumps drawing soft water from the deep sand and chalk springs which ought to be protected.

For your information I name the street pumps in Piccadilly (opposite St. James's Church), Russell-square, Berkeley-square, Old-street, and Lombard-street, as drawing soft water from the deep springs. I do not at present remember any others, but probably this communication will induce further information.

In addition to the many dangerous sources of pollution to the land springs pointed out by you, the serious leakage of the gas-mains, I may say nearly all over the metropolis, seems to have escaped the attention of the medical authorities. This dangerous and growing evil should be investigated and remedied.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Berners-street, May, 1858.

FRED. BRAITHWAITE.

## SCOTLAND.

(FROM OUR EDINBURGH CORRESPONDENT.)

THE Bill introduced into Parliament, for the better regulation of the Scottish Universities, like every system of reform at first, has its antagonists in a class with whom sole privileges have been too long vested, and the sweets of patronage hereditary during the control of successive Town Councils. The proposal in the Bill to recognise in the Senatus Academicus the same power as that now possessed by the Town Council only, is regarded as a gross usurpation of civic authority and a dangerous innovation upon an old custom. That a General Council, consisting of professors and graduates, should have the power of appointing four assessors of the seven to represent the University Court, whereas the Council can elect only three, has excited a lively demonstration on the part of the municipal body, and stimulated them to crush this neophyte of the numerous converts to the real necessity of such a measure. The Town Council, in a recent meeting, agreed with marvellous unanimity to oppose this attempted infringement on their rights of patronage, and moved a number of indignant resolutions in reference to the Bill. In the third resolution, the Council thinks fit to recognise the Senatus and graduates of the College as "a new and untried body of men, who are removed from popular control, and will not be amenable to public opinion;" and subsequently, in a speech by Mr. Brown Douglas, that gentleman stated, "in regard to the Reid Fund, which was entrusted to the professors, they all knew very well that it was mismanaged." A great deal of allowance can be made for a body of respectable mercantile men, who imagine they are in the "right place" when regulating the government of a University. Science bending before broadcloth is commercially pleasant, and to limit their power in the proposed