

infer therefrom that we shall object to any increase of the curative resources of asylums. Such an absurd imputation, I think, refutes itself without any remark. We, of course, believe that a portion of brain destroyed by embolic softening, or by a clot, can no more be restored by any possible resources of medicine than can an amputated limb be made to grow again from the stump. We believe that the wasted brain cells in general paralysis can no more be restored than can an organ destroyed by cancer be renewed, though we do believe that the essential morbid action in general paralysis might possibly by some form of treatment be arrested, just as cancer may possibly admit of arrest by medical means, though in neither the one case nor the other do we know what those means may be, if perchance there be such.

If we say that idiocy is incurable, that destructive lesions of the brain are also incurable, that a large percentage of cases of epilepsy, after resisting the efforts of the general practitioner for years, are incurable when sent to us, that much chronic insanity is in the same position—we also assert that acute insanity is eminently curable, nearly as much so as pneumonia, and that there are cases of all intermediate grades of curability between these, and that in the intermediate area, and indeed throughout, there is abundant room for further research and an enlargement of our curative resources; and in saying all this are we not saying precisely what the general practitioner says about all cases of disease that he has to treat?

I am, Sir, yours obediently

County and City Asylum, Hereford, T. A. CHAPMAN,
Jan. 29th, 1883. Medical Superintendent.

* * * Our correspondent is wholly wrong in his assumption that we have any wish to depreciate the earnestness or clinical enterprise of the medical superintendents of asylums. We only condemn the prevailing tendency to treat insanity as in the main "incurable."—ED. L.

THE HOUNSLOW TRAGEDY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Whilst thanking you for your insertion of my letter on the above, may I ask you to publish the enclosed from the brother of poor Dr. Edwardes.

I am, Sir, yours truly,
33, Soho-square, Jan. 31st, 1883. JOSEPH ROGERS.

[COPY.]

DEAR SIR,—I write to thank you most warmly for your kind and practical letter in THE LANCET of the 27th inst. The fact that the medical profession appears to be as unanimous in its approval of the finding of the jury as the public generally is an inexpressible consolation to us who mourn, for I consider that only medical men can view such a case as it should be viewed. But it is my duty to write to you at once in reference to the fund proposed to be raised for the benefit of Mrs. Whitfield Edwardes and her children, in order to acquaint you with the fact that, fortunately, they are amply provided for. Mrs. Whitfield Edwardes desires me to express to you her deep sense of your consideration for her.—Believe me, dear Sir, yours most sincerely,

ED. J. EDWARDES, M.D. Lond.
17, Orchard-street, Portman-square, W., Jan. 31st, 1883.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN GLASGOW.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the communication which you have published on this subject your correspondent gives a very fair account of the controversy. In one of his statements, however, there is a *suggestio falsi*, which is doubtless unintentional. He says that "almost the only exponent of the official side of the question was Dr. J. B. Russell, who fought stoutly for his notification clauses. *Professional opinion, however, was dead against him.*" The words in italics (which are mine) may be correct in so far as they apply to the opinion expressed at the meeting of the Philosophical Society, but there are, I venture to say, not a few medical practitioners

in Glasgow whose opinions coincide with those of Dr. Russell in this matter. I admit that if the settlement of this vexed question rested with the medical profession alone it is probable that the householder would be compelled to report, but over-ruling the voice of the medical profession there is the force of public opinion. On this question it is yet an unknown quantity, but I believe that in the end it will be found ranged on the side of those who think that special knowledge should be coupled with an increased weight of responsibility.

At present there are many practitioners in Glasgow who report to Dr. Russell the cases of infectious disease which fall under their notice. My own experience, which, although not large, has been well observed, has made me conscious of the fact that patients, and the friends of patients, are generally intelligent enough to understand the reasons I am in the habit of giving when I inform them that I intend to report their cases to the sanitary office. I am not aware of the practice of others in this respect, but I never report a case without first informing the patient, or the patient's friends, that I am about to do so. That I meet with opposition in the performance of this duty, for I consider it to be such, is a matter of course, but as a rule it is an opposition born rather of surprise than of stupidity. Dr. Russell, who is invariable in the courteous consideration which he shows for the interests of medical practitioners, sends to those who desire them stamped and addressed envelopes, and printed forms, which simplify matters as much as possible. For my part, I am grateful to him and his carefully instructed and intelligent district inspectors for ready assistance in cases of fever, and I am conscious of having in no degree impaired the dignity of my profession, or injured in any particular the interests of my patient, by calling for their aid in the prophylaxis of disease. I should most certainly, however, consider that my position as a member of the medical profession would be seriously lowered in dignity and usefulness if the law were to tell me to stand aside while the uninstructed took the initial step in the best and most scientific part of medical practice.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Glasgow, Jan. 28th, 1883. ROBERT MACPHERSON.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am directed by the Council of the Irish Medical Association to forward you the enclosed copy of a resolution passed by them.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

THOMAS GICK, Assistant-Secretary.

[COPY.]

"Resolved: That this Council repudiates the unfounded imputation upon Dublin physicians contained in a statement publicly made by Dr. Littlejohn, Medical Officer of Health for the City of Edinburgh, in a recent letter to the *Glasgow Herald*, to the effect that 'the profession [in Dublin] protests loudly against a loss of fees where any of their patients, however badly housed, are removed to hospital so as no longer to be a source of danger to the community.' That this Council expresses its surprise and regret that Dr. Littlejohn should have publicly attributed such motive to the members of his own profession in Dublin, without attempting in any way to substantiate the accusation. That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Dr. Littlejohn and the weekly medical journals."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE horse influenza, or "pink eye," is causing owners much concern here, and in some cases very heavy loss. Mr. Clement Stephenson, Consulting Veterinary Surgeon, read an able paper on the affection the other day in this city. Mr. Stephenson holds to the view that it is a virulent form of an old disease. It gave much trouble in 1881, but the visitation at that time was mild to the present one. Mr. Stephenson refers the origin of the present outbreak to the arrival of a lot of foreign ponies from Hamburg in October, when one of the animals gave unequivocal signs of the disease.