

## Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

### THE USE OF A MYDRIATIC IN DOUBTFUL CASES OF GLAUCOMA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There is a point in the review published in THE LANCET of July 26th of Dr. W. G. Sym's recently issued book on "Diseases and Injuries of the Eye" to which reference, I think, may usefully be made. In discussing the differential diagnosis between iritis and glaucoma in doubtful cases, the question is raised of resorting to the instillation of a mydriatic, and for this purpose the reviewer recommends homatropine, "which in the event of an error can be counteracted with eserine." A mydriatic of such potency, feeble though it be in comparison with atropine, is nevertheless, I believe, to be quite unnecessary; first, because a maximum dilatation of the pupil is, for the purpose, not required; secondly, because of the time which must necessarily elapse before the action of the myotic, eserine, can be effectual. The safest mydriatic, under the circumstances, is undoubtedly cocaine. The dilatation is more rapid than with any other similar alkaloid; the dilatation, although not of a maximum degree, is ample for the purpose; and thirdly and chiefly, myosis, if necessary, can be induced by eserine within half an hour after its instillation. The danger of homatropine, even in the hands of the expert, has been proved by the recorded cases of acute glaucoma supervening after its routine use. The value of homatropine is mainly as a cycloplegic, the duration of the effects of which is limited in comparison with atropine. It would be well, therefore, if its use were confined to this purpose. On the other hand, cocaine as a mydriatic, employed as well for examinational and diagnostic purposes, is both safe and effectual, and is naturally the safest, under all circumstances, in this regard for those who are not experts. The insistence upon this point I have frequently urged in my classes at the West London Post-Graduate College.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Wimpole-street, W., July 26th, 1913.

PERCY DUNN.

### MIND AND BODY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was much pleased when reading Sir Berkeley Moynihan's address in THE LANCET of July 26th, with his reference to the personal factor of the operator on the mind of the patient. Under the title "The Theory of Medicine as Contrasted with the Art," it forms the subject of a deeply interesting article in the report of the Boston City Hospital, Mass., from the pen of Dr. D. W. Cheever. I may be excused for making the following quotation, especially as it gives the pith of Dr. Cheever's advice: "The sick body means a sick mind. .... What benefits it? Hearty interest—cheerful contact—hopeful words. Especially in a chronic case, he will succeed best who reads character as well as symptoms, and ministers to the soul as well as to the body."

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Dublin, July 26th, 1913.

GEORGE FOY.

### AN ANALYSIS OF 35 CONSECUTIVE CASES OF BRADYCARDIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The addition of 24 more cases of bradycardia to the 35 noted in my paper on the above subject, published in THE LANCET of July 19th, alters to some extent the relative frequency of incidence of the four forms noted. These 24 cases have been collected since the writing of this paper, but the unavoidable delay in returning proofs prevented my adding them in the form of an addendum. The addition of these cases makes a total of 59 cases. The relative frequency now reads:—

	Cases.	
1. True bradycardia ... ..	23	= 38.9 per cent.
2. Missed beat ... ..	10	= 16.9 "
3. Auricular fibrillation ... ..	22	= 37.2 "
4. Heart-block. Auricle active ... ..	4	= 6.7 "

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Manchester, July 23rd, 1913.

C. EDGAR LEA.

### THE LADIES' PLATE AT HENLEY REGATTA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is now nearly seven years since a manifesto was issued in the public press at the instigation of a well-known footballer, deprecating cross-country running for boys. It was signed by some half-dozen members of our profession of such eminence that their *ipse dixit* alone might have been expected to gain for it unchallenged acceptance. I do not remember that the slightest notice was taken of it, excepting, of course, the counter assertions of prominent athletes that the danger alluded to was exaggerated or even imaginary; nor, so far as I am aware, has the slightest mishap occurred as the result of the ignoring of this *ex-cathedra* statement.

This is by no means the only protest of its kind that has appeared in the lay and medical press. I believe I am right in saying that as far back as 1867, an eminent surgeon appealed to his own experiences and to those of his professional brethren, in support of his contention that many a ruined constitution is to be laid to the account of the strain incurred in the University Boat-race. Since then the matter has never been allowed to drop, but a controversy has been resumed from time to time, now, as in this instance, against rowing, now against all forms of strenuous athletics.

It will be in no wise a reflection upon Mr. Shepherd Boyd's powers of persuasion if his protest shares the fate of its predecessors—an inevitable fate in my opinion. Whether his argument is based upon a real danger or not, I do not expect that anybody in authority will be in the slightest degree influenced in the direction of reform. The schoolboy's craze for competitive athletics is dependent upon what may almost be termed a physiological necessity; and even if Mr. Boyd and others of his opinion could advance substantial evidence in support of their warning, the schoolboy would not listen to them, nor for that matter would those who regulate schoolboys' athletics.

I have always held a brief for athletics, and I am bound to say that increasing experience does not lead me to alter my views. Nevertheless, I am to a certain extent in agreement with Mr. Boyd. I regard rowing as quite apart from all other forms of violent exercise, not so much because of the extreme exertion involved (I doubt if the strain is any greater than that of running a hard "quarter"), but because an oarsman is stimulated to do really more than the limit of his physical power. Once in an eight, a man merges his individuality in his crew; and although were he himself alone concerned he would give in, he cannot do so because of the duty he owes to his seven colleagues. (Who that has rowed in a desperate race will not agree that he has felt that to go on means death, but that even death seems preferable to the indescribable disgrace of stopping?) Such an exercise for boys is for this reason, and for this reason alone, undesirable.

To continue the consideration of rowing, I would go further than Mr. Boyd; I would like to see a better control of the rowing at the 'Varsities. It is, I suppose, pretty well realised that, stimulated by the glamour associated with university rowing and the persuasiveness of the boat captains, almost every freshman who is not an excellent performer at some other branch of sport takes to the river. And how many continue after the first couple of terms? Some mercifully realise their unsuitability for this form of exercise; some are broken—broken in a few weeks. For whereas the *élite* of the 'Varsity rowing world are in the hands of experts, the humble members of a Lent boat or "Togger" are looked after by some junior rowing official whose ignorance of physiology runs parallel with his obstinate refusal to study idiosyncrasies. If constitutions are ruined by rowing, the blame is much more likely to be due to the "training" than to over-exertion in racing.

Mr. T. A. I. Howell invites opinions on the subject of training, since, he says, there is no doubt that school crews will continue to compete at Henley. Of course they will continue to compete. Eton, Radley, Bedford, Shrewsbury would scoff at the idea of not being strong enough to meet college crews, let alone of abandoning rowing altogether. It might be possible for them to preserve their traditions and yet restrict rowing to boys of a certain age and of unquestionable physique. One would like also to see the training divorced from the coaching. Place the latter in the hands