

LYMPH-GLAND JUICE IN THE TREATMENT OF CANCER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Will you permit me to indicate a new principle in the treatment of malignant disease which may afford important results? The nuclear particles of epithelioma are, as everyone knows, carried by the lymph to the adjoining glands, which arrest them and so prevent a general blood-contamination. Individual examples of this lesion (which only retrogressive pathology would confuse with carcinoma) manifest a remarkable difference in the speed with which these glands are infected. Thus ordinary "cancer of the tongue" establishes active growth within the glands in six weeks, often less; whereas epithelial lesions on the foot or hand set up no secondary gland metastases for at least several months, and those on the external genitals hardly for a year. A mammary carcinoma beginning close to the axilla involves gland enlargement almost simultaneously. One arising at the sternal border does not implicate those organs for eight or ten weeks later.

Turning to another cancer variety, true sarcoma, we find that the lymph glands are never distally infected at all, although many of the cases are remarkably virulent, and it is impossible to doubt that nuclear fragments are carried to them in large numbers. There is no gland deposit with a sarcoma unless either by direct infiltration or concurrently with general blood contamination. The case cited at p. 87 of my "Recurrence of Cancer" proved that there had been irritation of the lymph glands sufficient to induce enlargement and greatly to modify structure, yet without the survival of any malignant protoplasm. I am therefore impelled to the conclusion that it is the function of the lymph-glands, not only to arrest, but *actually to destroy*, the protoplasm of cancer. In the ordinary course of events this takes place only up to a certain point. Eventually the gland is overpowered by stress of numbers. But under some circumstances, as above indicated, the resistance is long-continued and the number of infective particles killed must be considerable.

On the supposition that a natural secretion is the active agent Messrs. Warrick Brothers have made for me an extract of fresh lymph-glands warranted to contain, as far as possible, the vital qualities of the living organ. I have administered this to sundry cases with apparent benefit and never with any bad symptom. A gentleman seen in July, 1897, going down hill very fast with advanced cancer of the stomach, and very unlikely to survive beyond November or December, had his life prolonged until last April. I hope later to furnish further details. I have no facilities whatever for physiological research. The object of my letter is to appeal to some competent physiologist to take the matter up and to test it in the laboratory. He would require to ascertain whether a secretion of the gland, as I suppose, is the active agent; or whether, on the other hand, the destruction is effected by a phagocytic action of the lymph-cells. Medicine is learning more and more to seek its best weapons in the natural secretions of the body itself. The above principle tallies with the most recent lines of advance.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

HERBERT SNOW.

Gloucester-place, Portman-square, W., Oct. 9th, 1898.

"SPHINCTER STRETCHING IN CONSTIPATION."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Mr. Sidney Vines's letter in THE LANCET of Oct. 8th brings into prominence the treatment of constipation by free sphincter stretching. It is a method well known but too little practised. If carried out in suitable cases it greatly assists and in many cases absolutely cures perplexing constipation. In my book on Diseases of the Rectum, sixth edition, I have devoted a chapter to Persistent Constipation considered from a Surgical Point of View. In a letter of this kind the subject is too lengthy to enter into fully.

In children constipation is often caused by a congenitally small but otherwise normal anus. Sometimes the child has only just missed an imperforated anus and in these cases there will be found a rigid narrow ring just inside the anus.

In adults fissure is a common cause of constipation. It starts the trouble in this way. The fissure sets up a spasm with hypertrophy of the sphincter and the hypertrophy in time causes the sphincter to become indurated and so it loses its elasticity, which does not recover even if the fissure is healed by palliative methods. Treatment by free dilatation or division of the sphincter—which causes it to return to its normal condition—will often cure bad constipation arising or kept troublesome from the above causes.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

HERBERT W. ALLINGHAM.

Grosvenor-street, W., Oct. 10th, 1898.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In answer to the inquiry of Mr. Sidney Vines in THE LANCET of Oct. 8th I beg to inform him that during my residence of two years in Los Angeles, California, I learnt that sphincter stretching in obstinate cases of constipation in adults was by no means an uncommon procedure. I myself have adopted this method in two cases with satisfactory results. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Macclesfield, Oct. 12th, 1898.

J. WESTMORLAND.

"VITALITY."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Harry Campbell has answered his own question, "Whence comes the augmentation in the sum of vitality?" by telling us "from the food and oxygen conveyed (to the organism) from without." I know nothing about "the sum of vitality" and cannot conceive how food and oxygen can give vitality or add to it. I do not know how to measure or weigh vitality, which I believe to be without weight and immeasurable. I have said nothing about the creation of force, but have endeavoured to show why vitality cannot be derived from non-living matter or from force.

Dr. Harry Campbell asks, "What becomes of the vitality of an organism after death *unless it be transmitted (transmuted?) into some chemical, physical, or kindred force?*" I do not know, but in the present state of knowledge must deny the possibility of any such transmutation. The instant Dr. Harry Campbell or anyone shows that any such transmutation does occur I shall, of course, give up the idea of vitality and very much besides of what I now believe to be true. I certainly hold that no living matter in nature possesses structure—not even that "destined to develop into a Newton or a Shakespeare."

"Structure" as referred to by me in various papers and books has been *seen* by myself and can be *seen* by all who can use the microscope. "Structureless" is that in which no structure can be discerned when examined in the same way by the same magnifying powers.

I think I have proved that all "structure" in living nature has been formed from *Structureless Living Matter* and that the arrangement, character, composition, and action of all structures, tissues, and organs of all organisms are determined by changes in the living matter caused by the *direct action* of vital power upon the matter. Tissue, structure, does not form or add to itself, but living matter may form it and many other things. Muscle, nerve, fibrous tissue, &c., were all once in the state of structureless living matter.

Lastly, I do believe that the "immaterial" does act, has acted, and will continue to act upon the "material" in every particle of matter that is alive, even though, as Dr. Harry Campbell assures your readers, by "many great thinkers" my "position" has "been regarded as untenable" and by himself as "wholly illogical."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Oct. 9th, 1898.

LIONEL S. BEALE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Having read Professor Virchow's Huxley Lecture and also Dr. Beale's recent papers on Vitality one wonders what the author of the latter will have to say on one of Dr. Virchow's particular propositions: "The cells of living organisms are composed of organic, chemical substances which are not themselves alive but the mechanical arrangement of which determines the direction and power of their activity." Dr. Beale in his papers would lead us to infer that with Paracelsus he believes each living unit has a