

I suggest that it would be more convincing in speaking of percentages if Mr. White would give us a really adequate presentation of, say, his last 100 cases in which he performed a permeatal tympanic exenteration where he believes most otologists would have resorted to more radical post-auricular operations. Let him state his case before the Otolological Section of the Royal Society of Medicine if he still thinks he has a case.

Mr. Hunter Tod's able communication to the *Lancet* (September 3rd, 1910), recording the results in fifty cases in which this type of operation was performed, is a model of clear exposition and accurate observation which any one might with advantage endeavour to imitate.

Mr. White's claims and his uncomplimentary references to the methods of leading aural surgeons might safely be ignored by me as by others, and I should not have troubled to challenge his contentions did I not recognize that Mr. White, however uninformed, is thoroughly in earnest and sincere in this matter.—I am, etc.,

London, W., Oct. 4th.

WILLIAM HILL.

SIR,—I was much interested in Mr. Faulder White's letter in your issue of October 1st about the beneficent results of otectomy. There are no doubt many cases of chronic aural suppuration with antral empyema, simple or coupled with a mild degree of bone disease, where patients might be spared the radical mastoid operation. Of course, every case should be dealt with on its merits. The minor operation would need to be vigorously tabooed in the presence of the slightest evidence of intracranial complication, active mastoiditis, extensive bony involvement, labyrinthine suppuration, tuberculosis, facial paralysis, etc., but there is in my experience a very large class of cases where chronic aural suppuration has its origin in, and is maintained by, antral empyema, diseased attic and ossicles, in which a complete clearance of the aditus, attic, and tympanum, followed by antiseptic treatment, yields the most gratifying results in every respect.—I am, etc.,

London, S.W., Sept. 29th.

CLAYTON FOX.

#### THE MEDICAL SICKNESS SOCIETY.

SIR,—In a letter which appeared in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of July 2nd last, Dr. E. D. Kirby asked for information about the rate of interest earned by the funds of the Medical Sickness and Accident Society and the average age of the members.

The rate of interest earned by our funds is £3 8s. 0d. per cent. per annum and has not appreciably varied for some years past. As we are compelled by the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act, and also by our own rules, to invest only in first-class securities, I do not think this rate can be increased.

The average age of the members was in 1898, 41 years 6 months; in 1903 it had risen to 42 years 1 month and in 1908 to 44 years 11 months, but many of our members are approaching the age of 65 years, on which, by our rules, they go out of sickness benefit, whilst those who join as new members are, for the most part, less than half that age. It is doubtful, therefore, whether the average age will rise much further.—I am, etc.,

F. ADDISCOTT,

London, W.C., Sept. 30th.

Secretary, Medical Sickness Society.

#### SPIRITUAL HEALING AND THE "GUILD OF HEALTH."

SIR,—However much Mr. Boyd may question the taste of the first paragraph of my former letter, I venture to think that his communication of September 24th fully justifies the statement to which he objects. In nearly a column of words in your issue of October 1st there is nothing tangible or really helpful to be found.

Mr. Boyd begins by asserting that he did not act "independently of medical control" in the case of myasthenia gravis, because, forsooth, he asked a medical friend about a disease the name of which he had obtained from a patient who stated that she was no longer under the care of any doctor. Does Mr. Boyd really think that such tortuous argument justifies him in undertaking treatment? Does he really consider that there is much difference between a society that "aims at forwarding a revival of spiritual healing," and one that exists to "put you in the way to obtain spiritual healing?" Is it decent to retort to a request for a definition of proposals of his own

making that I am as unable as himself to define the limits of spiritual healing?

I hardly like to suggest that Mr. Boyd is making use of this correspondence as an advertisement for his methods, but I am sure that until he repents, deals honestly with himself, and attempts to use his reason, neither the Guild of Health nor its warden will succeed in awakening the interest or enlisting the sympathy of thinking men.—I am, etc.,

London, W., Oct. 2nd.

CHARLES BUTTAR.

SIR,—I am content to refer your readers to the whole correspondence, which has followed my article published under this heading on August 20th; and to assert confidently that the Warden's letters have only made it clearer that we should not co-operate with this Guild.

I think the normal clergyman will share the regret that our common earnest desire for greater union should be handicapped by certain of their number attempting to "revive" so-called spiritual healing by the methods that I have criticized.

To give one more instance of these methods: my sister having written as a stranger to the secretary for some of the society's publications, received also their printed memorandum in which we find this statement: "We do not as a Guild supply healers, though we are ready to give any information we can about those who are engaged in that work." Here is the unqualified use of the word "healer," and a definite open offer to recommend my sister to a healer, whether he might be the warden or some clerical colleague; and I hold that it is most undignified for ministers of religion to use such a society in order to bring any stray patient, who may happen to hear of this guild, to them for healing.

I am speaking plainly, as this guild, according to its last report, had 53 clergymen, with 351 ladies, but no members of our profession, amongst its 429 members; and although certain clergymen have boomed Mr. Hickson and other lay healers, hitherto none have openly placed themselves at the head of such a society as this.

The last letter from Mr. Boyd offers most significant agreement with the statement of the Organizing Secretary who wrote to a lady inquirer: "We don't consider any disease, however incurable it seems to be, beyond the reach of spiritual healing." For Mr. Boyd never hesitated as to whether the case of myasthenia gravis was suitable for his treatment, but was satisfied that he was well qualified to treat it because he says: "I consulted a medical friend of mine who told me all that is, I believe, known about the disease!"

Further discussion of this guild would not serve any useful purpose, as obviously only the intervention of the bishops can check this bad precedent set by some of their clergy.—I am, etc.,

London, W., Oct. 3rd.

STANLEY BOUSFIELD.

We think that further discussion of the aims and methods of the "Guild of Health" would be unprofitable.

#### "SPIRITUAL HEALING."

SIR,—The Rev. F. Boyd says in your last issue that he cannot accept my limit of hysteria. I placed no limit to hysteria, but only to his ability to "heal."

Faith may remove mountains, but hysteria can remove continents!

His remarks about organic and functional disease I do not understand, but "the highest medical authority," whatever that may mean, will hardly assist his position.

The difference between organic and functional disease he, at least, is quite unable to distinguish, nor is he, as a clergyman, expected to be able to do so. Could he do so, it is time he changed his occupation. As for the proposal to act "in co-operation with some one who is qualified," that is absurd, as no medical man may cover an unqualified person.

The correct correspondence between "subjective" and "objective" phenomena is hardly to be expected from many, and the clergyman least of all; this disability is by no means derogatory to "the cloth."

The province of the clergyman is to minister to the spiritual needs of his flock when so needed, to help them to bear pain when such may be their sad fortune, to help them not to exaggerate their symptoms by undue subjectivity, and to "heal" them spiritually of spiritual ills if