

their science, which it is now so much the fashion to call in question and calumniate, may be effectually vindicated.

I am, etc., HUMPHRY SANDWICH.

Hull, Sept. 16th, 1855.

P.S.—Since the above was forwarded to you, I have read Dr. Cowan's amplified reasons for abandoning the Association, which do not appear to me conclusive. Admitting, for argument's sake, that "we are practically governed by a party, who are at heart opposed to all true catholicity of organisation", still the tokens of sure though slow advancement in the right path warrant the belief that, as a party, their days are numbered. On Dr. Cowan's own shewing, "both at Swansea and Manchester, the policy advocated at Oxford was abundantly approved and confirmed", with the gratifying result of "increased numbers" and "improved finances". In all this there was undoubted progress; and if that progressive policy was not crowned at York by the completion of a more definite representative system, the blame of a retrograde movement ought fairly to be divided between the absentees and the patrons of a defective organisation. Our hopes of accomplishing at York what, although ably argued, was feebly supported by votes, were for that reason only for the present frustrated. The expansive powers of the system are best measured by the results of well-attended meetings; and these all point, by a faithful adherence to constitutional measures of reform, to "lasting and favourable results". Meanwhile, the practical government by a party of exclusives must become more and more difficult every year, with our existing checks on mal-administration. For, in the first place, our whole system is based on the voluntary principle; and therefore a regard for the good opinion of the members generally, with a view to their continued attachment and support, must practically influence the conduct of the governing party. We have, secondly, a quasi-parliamentary arena for the redress of grievances, in the annual meetings, which is better than representation as far as it goes, because every one has the option to attend, speak, and vote on all questions. And, thirdly, the Association possesses in its Journal a ready organ, during the rest of the year, for the expression of opinion, and a safety-valve for the explosive steam of exasperated feeling.

The thanks of the Association are due to Sir Charles Hastings and Dr. Cormack—to the former, for undesignedly drawing attention to the value of the Journal as a safety-valve for the free expression of opinion; and to Dr. Cormack, as to a skilful editor, who has nobly acted on the safe principle of "inserting letters on all sides of the question", instead of on the unsafe one of "entirely suppressing discussion". Let the Association keep a sharp look out, and have an eye to the preservation of this vital point in our economy, in the choice of their future Editor.

THE MEDICAL BENEVOLENT FUND NO OBSTACLE TO RETIREMENT FROM THE ASSOCIATION.

LETTER FROM R. SMITH, ESQ.

SIR,—In the last number of the JOURNAL I find a letter from Dr. Ward, wherein he gives, among other reasons for not withdrawing from the Association, the following: "I should reproach myself, though a very sorry subscriber to its funds, if I were to do anything that would narrow the means, and curtail the benefits of the Benevolent Fund of the Association", etc.

Now, I am one of the seceders; but in withdrawing my name from the list of members of the Association, I never for an instant intended to discontinue my annual subscription to the Benevolent Fund, and I hope most sincerely that every one who thinks with me that it is useless to continue any longer a member of the Association, will nevertheless still contribute as usual to the Benevolent Fund, which I cordially agree with Dr. Ward "has already done so much good."

I am, etc., ROBERT SMITH.

Whitechurch, near Reading, September 24th, 1855.

THE LEGITIMATE ACTION OF THE METROPOLITAN COUNTIES BRANCH.

LETTER FROM T. O. WARD, M.D.

SIR,—In the existing conflict of opinions in the Association respecting the merits of the Metropolitan Counties Branch, I think it very important that no misapprehension should arise as

to the objects which I, as one of its originators, had in view at the time of its formation; and, therefore, I trust you will allow me to remove the impression on your mind, expressed in your remarks on my letter in the JOURNAL of last week, that in considering this Branch the active medico-political organ of the Association, I undervalued the representative principle in the constitution of the Association. This principle I have supported on all occasions; but whatever may be its extension, I still contend that the Association cannot act with the same promptitude and effect as this Branch, which consists of one hundred and seventy members, many of whom are on intimate terms with members of both Houses, and who can be called together at a few hours' notice to take cognisance of any subject affecting the interests of the Association or the profession.

The past history of the Branch shows that it does possess this advantage of locality, and that it is disposed to make a proper use of it; and, therefore, it appears to me that any jealousy of it is as unreasonable as that described in the fable of the belly and the limbs.

I am, etc., T. OGIER WARD.

Kensington, September 26th, 1855.

INVERSION OF THE UTERUS.

LETTER FROM W. H. BORHAM, ESQ.

SIR,—I am sure that yourself and readers must feel that it is quite time that this subject should be "extirpated by strangulation".

The reason why I replied to Mr. Wigglesworth's first letter was simply this. He said the "only" means were adopted in Mr. Coats' case which should be resorted to, and intimated that my suggestion of amputating was wrong. Mr. Wigglesworth has himself since refuted his own original strong opinion upon ligature by narrating a case which was successful by amputation; but, owing to the patient's imprudence, an untoward event happened, the result of which we are left to imagine.

Dr. Merriman has also shown that ligature is not the "only" and best means to be resorted to: reinversion he found successful; and I have adduced a successful case where amputation was performed: therefore I must still beg to differ from the opinions originally entertained by Mr. Wigglesworth about the ligature.

I am willing to give Mr. Wigglesworth the benefit of his "ambiguous" writing; but I should like to know by what rules of logic he can reconcile the following argument he adduces in his first letter. He brings forward a successful case "in which the womb was extirpated (by ligature) fourteen days after delivery": then follows his brilliant shield for delay: "But in Mr. Coats' case it would not have been desirable to do so so soon, as it would have been running the risk of shortening her life fourteen years." The operation is successful on A.; but we must not do it to B. in a like case. "Experientia docet" can be no longer a motto of Mr. Wigglesworth's.

The original question of Mr. Coats was about "recent inversion", and my reply was accordingly directed to that point as much as possible; and the opinions I expressed were suggested to my mind from having not long since had a case of recent inversion of the uterus in my practice, which most of your readers may have seen in this JOURNAL. The opinions I expressed on chronic inversion were based upon Professor Gedding's case, and therefore the operation would have been conducted upon the same principles.

Mr. Coats' last letter in many respects saves a reply from me; and I do not think your readers would be interested by my further replying to Mr. Wigglesworth's other questions, as last propounded, particularly as it is impossible to gain any induction by them, from the fact of their being hypothetical; but I would be most happy privately to reply to them by letter, if any member of the profession may desire it.

Finally, sir, I equally regret with Mr. Coats that any "warm personal remarks" should have taken place; at the same time your readers will absolve me from being the aggressive party.

I am, etc.,

W. H. BORHAM.

19 Cambridge Terrace, Hyde Park, Sept. 22nd, 1855.

[ERRATUM. In Mr. Wigglesworth's second letter, page 878, line 80, for "We may, however, say", read "He may, however, say", etc.]