

passed gradually up the Rhine; and there is nothing very remarkable in its spreading in that direction, the Rhine being, as everybody knows, one of the most frequented lines of communication that can exist. There are large and wealthy commercial towns and a rich agricultural population on both sides of this river, with good public roads, besides the traffic by steamers on the Rhine itself. But the cholera, according to the author, did not take this path, because there was a constant intercourse and communication of the people; but followed merely the valley of the Rhine. Hence, concluded the author, there must have been, at the period in question, very decisive influences, either of a local telluric nature, or some other agency, which induced the disease to take this course, and prevented it from deviating either to the right or left, in spite of there being, in one of these directions, a communication quite as great as in any part of the Rhine itself. Cholera prevailed at Coblenz, but it did not pass up the Lahn to Ems, although these places are distant only five miles, and in summer there is considerable intercourse between them.

There was cholera at Bingen, but it did not reach Kreuznach, about nine miles distant; and there is active communication between the two places. The cholera was at Mainz, but it did not reach Wiesbaden, four miles off; and a great intercourse exists between the two places. Cholera was also at Mannheim, but it did not go up the Neckar to Heidelberg, about ten miles distant, although Heidelberg has with no other place so much communication as with Mannheim.

These data, said the author, are very important. The cholera evidently followed the valley of the Rhine; but it did not propagate itself to the country on either side. It did not follow merely the course of the water; at least, it did not go up any of the secondary rivers just mentioned, although on their banks there is a constantly moving population.

The cholera, then, on its propagation from Cologne, did not follow the great lines of communication, as far as this was a communication by land, but it followed the line of communication by water, merely as related to the principal valley of the Rhine, and did not enter any lateral valley.

The author, besides giving a series of cases illustrative of the fact that a place may have the most active intercourse with another place infected with cholera, and yet remain free from that disease, adduces strong evidence, based upon the first cases of cholera at Frankfort, in favour of the transmissibility of the cholera poison through the medium of soiled linen. The continuous line of propagation by this means appeared so complete, that he adds: "These cases, and others of a similar nature, have convinced the physicians of this town, even those who formerly had been absolutely anti-contagionists, that this contagion is not perhaps the principal mode of propagating this disease, yet there exist undeniable cases of contagion; and that it seems, the excrements, or the linen and clothes, particularly when polluted, are capable of propagating the disease."

ON THE PREMONITORY DIARRHŒA OF CHOLERA.  
BY G. TODD, ESQ., OF WEST AUCKLAND.

[This paper was also read, in the absence of the author, by Dr. McWILLIAM.]

Mr. TODD began by stating that it has been a generally observed fact ever since epidemic cholera became known to the medical profession, that the greater proportion of cases are preceded by a distinct premonitory stage, varying in duration and intensity. Cases, however, do occur in which the premonitory stage is of such short duration as not to attract notice; and such cases have been frequently brought before the medical profession as proofs of cholera without any preceding diarrhœa. Careful inquiry of all such cases, Mr. Todd considered, will establish the existence of a well marked premonition. In favour of this proposition, the author adduced the investigation by Dr. MacLoughlin of twenty-one cases of cholera without premonitory diarrhœa, contained in the Return of the Registrar-General between July 1853 and July 1854, the results of which were, according to Dr. MacLoughlin, that fifteen of the twenty-one cases had had a diarrhœa of some hours' duration before the accession of cholera; and that the remaining six cases were either not cases of cholera, or cases where nothing was known of their previous history. The author calls in to the support of his view, in addition to his own experience, that of various writers on cholera in this country, in various parts of Europe and India.

Dr. Weber, Mr. Tucker, Dr. Greenhow, and Dr. Richardson, took part in the discussion that followed the reading of these papers.

The Society then adjourned to the first Monday in November.

## EDITOR'S LETTER BOX.

### THE DECISION OF THE ANNUAL MEETING AT YORK.

LETTER FROM SIR C. HASTINGS, M.D.

SIR,—It appears to me that you are adopting a very questionable course by inserting letters in the JOURNAL which take a very erroneous view of the decision of the annual meeting at York; and I may go further, and say, that I doubt whether it will be considered honourable on your part thus to have recourse to means, which have obviously for their object the injury of the Association, of which you are the paid and responsible officer.

I have only to refer you to the address of the Executive Council, published in last week's JOURNAL, to prove to you that the impression conveyed by those letters is not supported by facts.

I am, etc.,

CHARLES HASTINGS, *President of the Council.*

Worcester, September 19th, 1855.

[Our idea of justice and editorial responsibility is this:—to insert letters on all sides of a question, or entirely to suppress discussion. When a member signs his name, the fact of his views being "erroneous" does not always justify their exclusion. However, as the supreme editorial power rests with the Executive Council, we hope before next week to receive precise instructions, so that, on the one hand, we may be excused by our correspondents for suppressing their letters; and, on the other, protected from the injustice of having dishonourable motives imputed to us for inserting them. We have not, since the meeting at York, suppressed one line which has been sent for publication from members holding sentiments opposed to our own; while we have only acknowledged *privately* nearly two hundred letters upon the York meeting and its results, because they were chiefly occupied with expressions of kindness towards ourselves. EDITOR.]

### DR. COWAN'S RESIGNATION.

LETTER FROM CHARLES COWAN, M.D.

SIR,—I will thank you to insert the accompanying letter in the next number of the JOURNAL.

I am, etc.,

CHARLES COWAN.

Reading, Sept. 18th, 1855.

*"To the Members of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association.*

"GENTLEMEN,—The very brief and somewhat abrupt terms of my resignation demand a few explanatory remarks as to the motives and purposes which have influenced me in the course I have thought it right to adopt.

"For some years prior to the meeting at Oxford, I had regarded the Association as practically effete, and as gradually verging to its extinction. Its continued existence seemed artificially sustained by the zeal and devotion of some few of its founders and earlier supporters, but by the great mass of provincial practitioners it was viewed with indifference and distrust. After some twenty years of large promises of good, and a vast expenditure of time and money, it had failed to become more than very partially the organ of those for whose union and co-operation it was originally established. The reason of this was clear. There was no real representative government, but the evidence of its absence in a most undesirable preponderance of individual influence; while our literary arrangements, and the business management of our affairs, were most imperfect and unsatisfactory. To remedy these fatal defects was the object of the resolutions at Oxford; and, though sanctioned at the time by a very insignificant majority, yet previous inquiries and all subsequent experience have demonstrated that they were in accordance with the judgment and feelings of a large majority of the Association.

"From that period, notwithstanding every discouragement and opposition from a small but central and influential body, the numbers of the Association rapidly increased; our finances pro-

portionately improved; and, under the able editorship of Dr. Cornack (the value of whose labours has been strangely underrated), our periodical gave promise of ultimately attaining a standard of excellence worthy of a representative Journal.

"Both at Swansea and Manchester, the policy advocated at Oxford was abundantly approved and confirmed; and it was hoped that, by the subsequent introduction of a strictly representative system, we might at length present an organisation which would secure the confidence and the support of the whole medical profession.

"These hopes have now been frustrated; and though, by convening a special meeting, or by waiting until the ensuing anniversary at Birmingham, it would not be difficult to reverse the decision at York, yet, so long as we are practically governed by a party who are *at heart* opposed to all true catholicity of organisation, so long will it be impossible to establish the Association upon a broad and enduring basis, to render it the exponent of professional feeling and wants, or to introduce into our proceedings more than a transient and deceptive harmony.

"Under these circumstances, I have, in common with many others whose convictions and experience are in unison with my own, thought it best to withdraw; for the double purpose of accelerating a vigorous and effective reaction, and also with the hope that the moment may be favourable for the organisation of an institution undefaced by the exclusive policy and manifold defects of its predecessor, and which shall be truly *British* in its whole design and constitution.

"Dangerous diseases want prompt and severe remedies; and the treatment now recommended and applied, however painful, I believe to be the only one likely to lead to lasting and favourable results.

"Apologising for the length of these remarks,

"I remain, gentlemen,

"Your faithful and obedient servant,

"CHARLES COWAN."

"Reading, Sept. 17th, 1855."

#### THE ADDRESS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

LETTER FROM HENRY DAYMAN, ESQ.

SIR,—The "Conciliatory" Appeal of the Executive Council to the members of the Association, published in the *JOURNAL* of September 14th, is like telling a small boy in a street fight to "go in and win", when he has already exhausted his strength in an imprudent encounter.

The York meeting has dealt such a heavy blow at the best interests of the Association, by virtually ignoring the memorial of 453 members, by depriving the Editor of the *JOURNAL* not only of the Secretaryship, which a former meeting had made a *bonâ fide* permanent appointment, but of his Editorial independence, and by opposing all attempts to improve our condition, that to call now upon the Association "to lay aside minor differences, and to cooperate nobly in the advancement of medical science", is an empty sound. The York meeting has itself destroyed the very means by which the "aspirations" of the Executive Council are sought to be fulfilled.

The recent acts of the Association have reversed its steps; and I cannot but think the present Address of the Executive Council contains expressions that have a tendency in the same direction. The Executive Council appear to think the name of the society of so little importance, that at all events any proposed change in it may remain an open question for twelve months. They say "the objects of the Association are universal, though its present name is Provincial." Here, sir, there is, as it appears to me, such a manifest disregard of an acknowledged axiom in the art of reasoning, namely, that the real and nominal "essence" of the thing should agree, that if this is not a piece of *retrograde ratiocination*, it is something very much like it. Nor would such a misrepresentation of the character of the Association, as is implied by the definition of the Executive Council, be without mischief practically; no one knows better than yourself that unless the name comes up to and includes the whole intention of the institution, the effect of such an imperfection would be to limit the operations of the whole body to the objects only which the term denotes; for ordinary and common-place minds have not the gift of applying a general meaning to a particular name.

As I have hitherto taken some part in the literary work of the Association, I have thus thought it right to state the grounds upon which I dissent from its present principles, and my reasons for separating myself from its communion. Many in common with myself had hoped that the time had now

arrived when the Provincial Association might gracefully have thrown off its sectarian character, and have become the parent of a British Medical Institution; but since this is not to be, it only remains for those who differ from the views of the Provincial Association to come out of its pale.

I am, etc.,

HENRY DAYMAN.

Milbrook, Southampton, September 18th, 1855.

#### THE "CONCILIATORY" ADDRESS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

LETTER FROM B. W. RICHARDSON, M.D.

SIR,—With much regret I, like many of our colleagues, feel myself bound to send in my resignation as a member of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association. In resigning the membership of a Society, in the progress of which I have taken a deep interest, and through which I have secured many valuable friendships, I feel it a duty to state my reasons for resignation.

Although one of the minority at York, and believing that the proceedings there are retrograde in character and simply calculated to break up the Association, I should not have resigned, but for the appearance of the extraordinary and suicidal address of the Executive Council, published in the *JOURNAL* of last week. Concerning this address, it is well to say a few words:—

1. I hold that the representative principle, introduced at York, is virtually negated by the election of the Executive Committee, which will, in fact, rule the whole Association, and the strength of which is concentrated at Worcester—three, the number sufficient to form a quorum, being resident in that city.

2. The statement that the proposed change of name is an open question, is contrary altogether to the feeling expressed and the meaning intended at York. The seceder of the adoption of the Code of Laws, who is also one of the framers of this address, said, amidst the applause of the meeting, that he hoped nothing more would be heard of the Laws for the next ten years. Now, a fundamental law is said to be "an open question".

3. The second paragraph of the address is quite opposed to the opinions of the majority at York. At the York meeting, it was expressly and most strenuously put forward that the *objects*, as well as the *name* of the Association, were strictly provincial. In the address, by a strange perversion of both terms and logic, universality is claimed for this provincialism; and the opinions of the minority of the York meeting, in regard to the social and political influence that might be obtained by the Association, are now employed by the compilers of the address for the purpose of conciliating their divided constituents.

4. When it was urged at York that, by extending the basis of the Association, the scientific character of the *JOURNAL* would be greatly improved, since contributions would then come to it from all parts of the world, the idea was scarcely permitted; now, the same reason is put forward in the address, as an inducement for members to continue in, and extend the influence of the Association.

5. The argument of the Executive Council in regard to the reception of the Memorial at a late period of the meeting, is quite inadmissible. That memorial, both from its extensive meaning and the number of the signatures attached to it, should have constituted the chief topic of the meeting; or, at all events, should have been introduced at the commencement of the discussion on the Laws. If it were intentionally held back, as many believe, the slight inflicted was unpardonable; if it were really held back by a blind adherence to routine, as the statement of the Council implies, the act is not more excusable.

6. The promise of reduced expenditure, for the purpose of lessening liabilities, is quite contrary to the extended objects and aspirations breathed in the preceding paragraphs of the address. If the reduced expenditure means, as is to be inferred from the seventh resolution passed by the Executive Council, that the *JOURNAL* is to be crippled by being limited to twenty-four pages, that step I for one believe to be retrograde and obstructive; for nothing but a good and powerful Journal can bind together the members of the Association, and extend its boundaries.

7. The last paragraph, praying for unity of the members, and the sacrifice of "*minor*" differences, is the most incomprehensible of all. I beg respectfully to remark, that the differences which divide the Association are anything but "*minor*"; they are *fundamental*—they are vital; they imply simply the