

## Letter to the Editors

Greatly, however, as we shall miss Syme the laryngologist, even more shall we, who knew and loved him, miss the man and his personality. He was always at his best in his home circle. He had a very cheery family of six, of whom he was the cheeriest. He was a most kind and thoughtful host, had a great sense of humour, and a hearty, jovial laugh. A strong, energetic man himself, he was considerate of his fellow-workers; he had a great sense of compassion for the "under-dog," in whom he always found a redeeming feature. His work, like his golf and tennis, was characterised by boundless energy; he swam in the baths every morning before breakfast, summer and winter. His life was very full and he enjoyed it to the end. On the day before his death, he played two rounds of golf, and swam in a stormy sea. The great consolation left to a wide circle of sorrowing friends is that he died quietly and without pain; he was thus spared the suffering which his own good work had so often succeeded in preventing in others.

Dr Syme leaves a widow and six children, two sons and four daughters, two of the latter being married. The elder son, Dr W. S. Syme, has been happily associated for some years with his father's work, both in hospital and in private practice. To Mrs Syme, and to her family, the deepest sympathy will go out from the many friends and colleagues of her husband.

GAVIN YOUNG.

## LETTER TO THE EDITORS

### THE TREATMENT OF LUPUS BY RADIUM.

TO THE EDITORS

*The Journal of Laryngology and Otology.*

DEAR SIRS,—In the August number of the *Journal* there appears an article by Sir St Clair Thomson on the subject of lupus of the upper air passages. No doubt in an opening address on the subject of tuberculosis, Sir St Clair's object was to stimulate discussion rather than give a comprehensive view of the question of lupus itself. And perhaps that is why he made no mention of the varying forms which lupus may take in these regions, and of the complications which may ensue. But when he says that the whole local treatment of this complaint can be summed up in the words "galvano-cautery," no laryngologist who has made a special study of the subject could possibly agree with him.

## Letter to the Editors

Personally I am a great believer in the galvano-cautery in its proper place, and yield to no one in my appreciation of its value as a therapeutic agent, but I know its limitations.

Lupus may cover the whole of the mucous membrane of the upper respiratory tract, and if I or anyone else were to treat such a case by the galvano-cautery and convert the surface of this widely diversified area into "good firm scar-tissue," then it would be very unfortunate for the patient so treated. The fact is that only small patches of lupus are suitable for treatment by this method. If larger areas are cauterised the mucous membrane is destroyed, and the nose and pharynx become dry, crusted, and devoid of secretion, and the mobile parts stiff and rigid.

Some structures are incapable of being treated by the galvano-cautery, such as the lacrymal ducts and sacs and the Eustachian tubes. And it is inadvisable so to attack the Eustachian orifices, the fossæ of Rosenmüller, or even the superior surface of the soft palate; attempts to do so are necessarily "blind," or nearly so, and scarring of the Eustachian cushions resulting in deafness is likely to follow any small manipulative error in so narrow and remote a space. I have seen few cases of extensive lupus which did not involve the parts I mention.

On the other hand, with the able co-operation of the medical officers of the Radium Institute, I have been able to deal successfully, by means of radium, with the very cases which are so obviously beyond the reach of the cautery.

Again, in the case of the larynx, I have only to mention two instances in order to emphasise the value of radium. They were two young women who had been unable to phonate for three and four years respectively, and whose larynges were completely enveloped in lupus granulations complicated by interarytenoid tumours. Under radium treatment the first recovered her singing voice in six months, while the second was able to phonate in six weeks and soon regained her voice entirely. These recoveries have been maintained, and I believe them to be unique in their rapidity and completeness.

I have shown cases illustrating all these points at the Section of Laryngology of the Royal Society of Medicine. Three years ago I published in the *Lancet* an exhaustive article on this subject in collaboration with Dr Oscar Teichman, late of the Radium Institute. This paper was the result of a careful research into the treatment of cases of lupus which had passed far beyond the reach of the galvano-cautery. Three years later I am happy to be able to say that radium therapy for lupus has passed beyond the experimental stage and can now be regarded as a form of treatment of proved value and outstanding merit in the worst manifestations of the disease.

## General Notes

There is one important proviso in my statements, and that is that radio-therapeutists do not pretend to be rhino-laryngologists, and that close co-operation between the two is essential to obtaining good results; but the results when obtained are well worth the trouble.

I should be pleased to forward a reprint of the article in question to anyone interested in the subject.—Yours faithfully,

MORTIMER WHARRY.

136 HARLEY STREET, LONDON, W. I.

## GENERAL NOTES

ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE.

1 Wimpole Street, London, W. I.

*Section of Otology.*—*President*, Mr Somerville Hastings, M.S. *Hon. Secretaries*, Mr Nicol Rankin, M.C., M.B., 56 Harley Street, London, W.1, and Dr F. C. Ormerod, M.D., 13 Welbeck Street, London, W.1.

The Opening Meeting of the Session 1928-29 will be held on *Friday*, 2nd November, at 10.30 A.M. Members desirous of showing patients or specimens should communicate with the Senior Hon. Secretary at least twelve days before the meeting.

*Section of Laryngology.*—*Hon. Secretaries*, Mr Lionel Colledge, F.R.C.S., 2 Upper Wimpole Street, London, W.1, and Mr M. E. Vlasto, F.R.C.S., 26 Wimpole Street, London, W.1.

The Opening Meeting of the Session 1928-29 will be held on *Friday*, 2nd November, at 5 P.M. Members desirous of showing patients or specimens should communicate with the Senior Hon. Secretary at least twelve days before the meeting.

During the Session 1928-29 the Sections will meet on the following dates:—On *Friday* 2nd November, 7th December, 1st February, 1st March, 3rd May (*Annual*) and 7th June.

The Section of *Otology* will meet at 10.30 A.M. and the Section of *Laryngology* at 5 P.M.

\* \* \*

### CONGRÈS FRANÇAIS D'OTO-RHINO-LARYNGOLOGIE.

The Annual Session of the French Congress of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology will be held on the 17th October at the Faculty of Medicine, Paris, under the presidency of Dr Bourgeois of Paris.

\* \* \*

### THE SEMON LECTURE, 1928.

Professor Dr Marcel Hajek, Vienna, has been invited by the Semon Lecture Board to give the Semon Lecture of the University of London. The address, entitled "Laryngology and Rhinology and General Medicine," will be delivered in the Hall of the Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, at 5 P.M. on Thursday, 1st November.

\* \* \*

### BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, CARDIFF, 1928.

Members of the Association visiting Cardiff for the first time with a preconceived idea that the city—from the very nature of her leading