

## Letter to the Editor

department an essentially practical mind and an intimate knowledge of what was necessary in the installation of electrical equipment and the appliances required for the conduct of the work.

After thirteen years of diligent and unremitting attention to duty as assistant surgeon, and after holding for a brief period the senior position which he had deservedly merited, his professional career was unfortunately brought to an end by an illness which incapacitated him for further usefulness as a teacher. Realising that his disability would act as a hindrance to his powers as a lecturer, he decided to demit office rather than jeopardise the teaching of his subject in the medical school. Consequently, in July 1906, he resigned his hospital and university appointments. Dr Johnston faced the situation with admirable fortitude, and after a long period of rest he returned to work, applying his energies in other important directions. For nearly twenty-five years he took a very active part in various administrative posts, and the Royal Infirmary, the University, and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh reaped the benefit of his administrative and financial ability. In 1907 he joined the Board of Management of the Royal Infirmary, and for twelve years served the institution as a Manager, giving ungrudgingly much time and attention to its affairs. For over twenty years he was an active and valued member of the University Court. As Secretary to the College of Surgeons for ten years, he devoted himself with untiring application to the duties of that office, and his election as President of the College in 1917 was an honour duly merited by his previous services.

A. LOGAN TURNER.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### PAPILLOMA OF THE LARYNX AND TUBERCLE.

TO THE EDITOR,

*The Journal of Laryngology.*

DEAR SIR,—A week or two ago I was told, in the usual rather vague terms of medical rumour, that somebody had been saying that there was some connection between papilloma of the larynx and tuberculosis.

The suggestion naturally made no impression. One is familiar enough with the protean nature of laryngeal tuberculosis, and with papilliform outgrowths from a tuberculous nidus. But that what we may call clean papilloma should have been linked in any cause-effect relationship with tubercle seemed to me to be merely the result of one of those coincidences that have led to so many errors in medicine.

## General Notes

But I got a little shock a few days later when I received a letter from the mother of a lad who, in childhood, had been under my care for papilloma of the larynx, and who after several interventions had apparently been cured. The mother's letter contained the bad news that the boy, now 18 years of age, had developed pulmonary tuberculosis and that "the outlook was not favourable."

It would be interesting to hear whether this sequence of events has been observed by others. Perhaps the originator of the aforesaid rumour would give us his experience.

I ought perhaps to add that on further consideration there is really no reason why I should have been so bluntly sceptical regarding a relationship between papilloma and tubercle. Papillomata (to say nothing of the other neoplasms) seem often to be an expression of the effects of irritation. The cancer-producing paraffins, for example, induce simple papillomata before the cancerous change appears; inveterate dirt on the fingers will induce a crop of schoolboy warts; arsenic also, and even some shaving-soaps, may bring out a family of papillomata on the skin. Then, to be sure, there are those post-mortem warts which, rumour again informs me, are attributed to the action of the tubercle bacillus. Quite a coincidence this last.

And so the suggestion of a relationship between laryngeal papilloma and tuberculosis is not so wild as at first sight it seemed to be.

But since papilloma formation is apparently only a system of some kind of irritation, that irritation is not necessarily, of course, always tuberculous. And, by the way, does not simple papilloma of the larynx sometimes precede epithelioma?—I am, Yours very truly,  
DAN MCKENZIE.

## GENERAL NOTES

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26th to 29th August.

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