

little children are left to face the dangers and inclemencies of a world at war.

That being so, a subscription list for their benefit has been opened under the auspices of the Otological and Laryngological Sections of the Royal Society of Medicine, London, a movement which merits, and we are sure will obtain, the hearty support of all oto-laryngologists not only in the British Empire, but also in the United States of America, where Broeckaert's name and scientific eminence are well known.

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Subscriptions may be sent to Mr. Mark Hovell (President, Laryngological Section, Royal Society of Medicine), 105, Harley Street, London, W., England, or to the Editor of the JOURNAL OF LARYNGOLOGY, RHINOLOGY, AND OTOTOLOGY.

They will be acknowledged in these columns.

## NOTES AND QUERIES.

### SHAKESPEARE AND RHINO-LARYNGOLOGY.

The last volume of the "Transactions of the Medical Society of London" has just reached us. It is numbered xxxix, 1916. It is a goodly tome, and it is one which we are likely to keep on account of a contribution which makes the book not a dear one to those who are not Fellows of the Society even when purchased at the price of 10s. 6d. We refer to the Annual Oration by Sir StClair Thomson on "Shakespeare and Medicine," which was delivered on May 1 last, *i. e.*, the first day of the week devoted to the celebration of the Shakespeare Tercentenary. It was a happy thought which prompted the Orator to show the interest of our liberal profession in our country's greatest poet and philosopher, and it is a particular satisfaction to note that an address dealing with the whole gamut of human existence was composed and delivered by one of ourselves, for it will go far to remove the unworthy reproach of "narrow-mindedness" so often levelled at specialists.

Larger works have been written on the medical knowledge of Shakespeare but few have given us so much pleasure in reading. Many of them are a weary agglomeration of quotations, more or less connected with matters medical. In this Oration a wise selection has been made under the headings of "Shakespeare as a Medical Seer"; "Medicine in the 16th Century"; "the Physicians in the Plays"; "Quacks"; "Shakespeare's General Medical Knowledge"; "Shakespeare's Medicine of the Period"; "His Medical Knowledge of some particular subjects (Consumption, Fresh Air, Syphilis, Cancer, Obstetrics, Public Health,

Mental Diseases, Epilepsy, Surgery and Vivisection”) and “His views on Sympathy, Hope and Prognosis, Mirth and Distraction, Alcohol and Abstinence, Tobacco and Sleep, Old Age and Death.” This very list shows how “myriad-minded” was the poet, and it is no wonder that the Orator calls him “one of the masters of medicine.”

Sir Sidney Lee, one of the greatest authorities on Shakespeare, in proposing a vote of thanks, said that the address was “eloquent and humorous and illuminating, charmingly delivered and charmingly composed.” It must therefore appeal to all medical men, and our own readers will be particularly interested in the following quotations which refer to the throat and nose. On page 284 we read:

“*The Voice*.—Appreciation of sweet voices, both male and female, is thus expressed:

“I thank you for your voices—thank you—  
Your most sweet voices.

*Coriolanus*, ii, 3.

“Her voice was ever soft,  
Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.

*King Lear*. . .

“The breaking of the voice at puberty is described:

“And speak between the change of man and boy  
With a reed voice.

*Merchant of Venice*, ii, 4.

“The change of the voice in those who have been subjected to castration is thus referred to:

“My throat of war be turn’d,  
“Which quired with my drum, into a pipe  
Small as a eunuch, or the virgin voice  
That babies lulls asleep!”

*Coriolanus*, iii, 2.

Personally, I have taken great interest in what I thought was the discovery of a reference to singer’s nodules in the line:

“For my voice I have lost with hallowing and singing of anthems.”

*Henry IV*, Part II, i, 2.

But when I discovered that the confession emanated from Sir John Falstaff, and realised—as we shall hear from his own lips later on—that he was addicted to indulgence in wine and had been exposed to syphilitic infection, then I felt that the loss of voice was not entirely due to anthem singing, but was more likely the result of tertiary laryngeal syphilis in an alcoholic subject!

“The description of the thin voice of old age is well known:

“His big manly voice,  
“Turning again towards childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound.

*As You Like It*, ii, 7.

“Syphilis was generally called the ‘French disease,’ but it was also termed the ‘Neapolitan disease,’ and the nasal speech produced by tertiary perforation of the palate is referred to, metaphorically, in the complaint of the wind instruments of the musicians:

“*Cto*. Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i’ the nose thus?”

*Othello*, iii, 1.

These quotations are sufficient to show that the Orator has what Shakespeare might have called “a pretty wit,” and they will, we trust, stimulate our readers to obtain the volume and study the full address.

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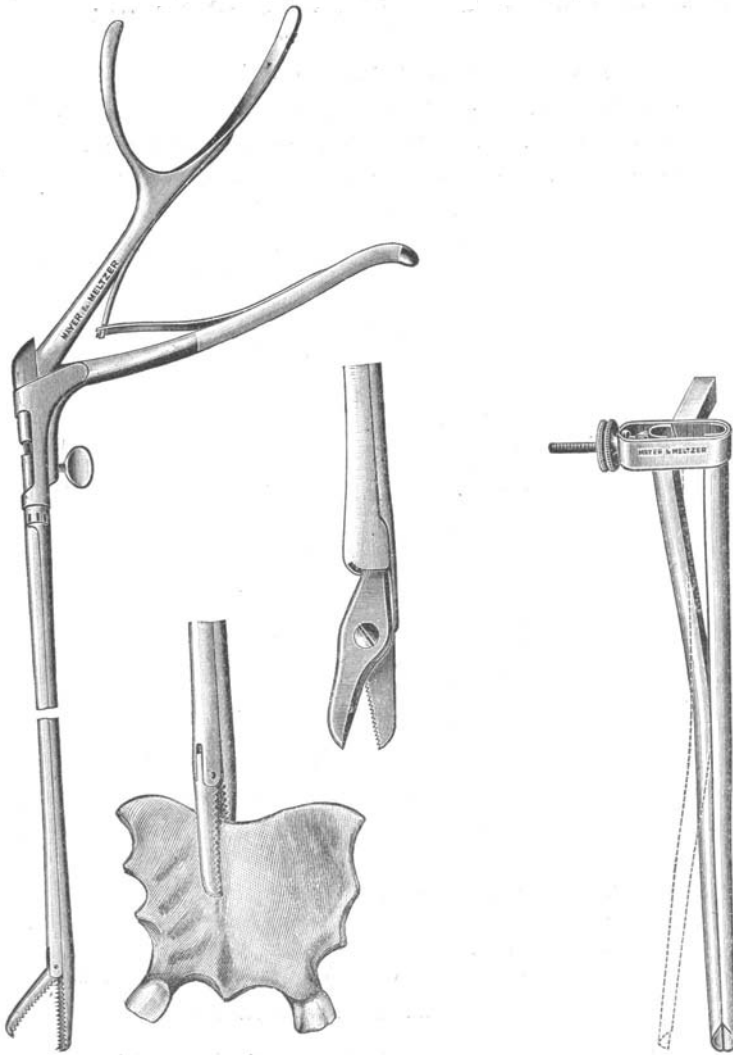
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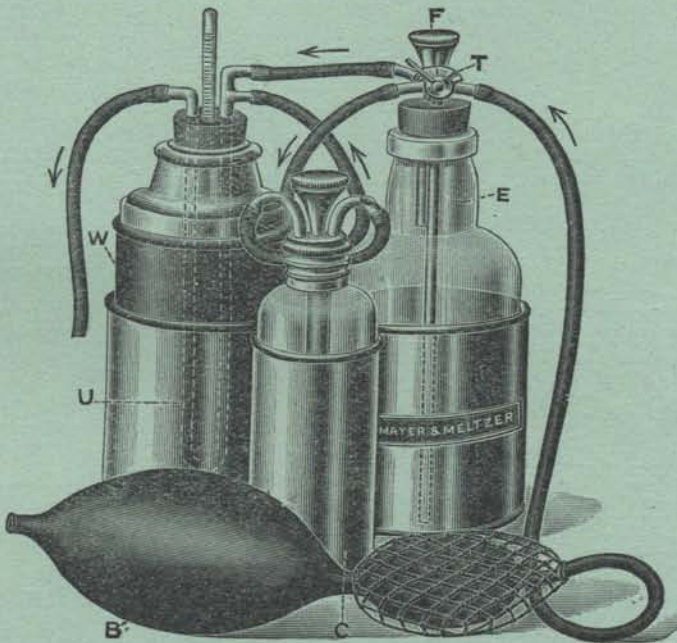
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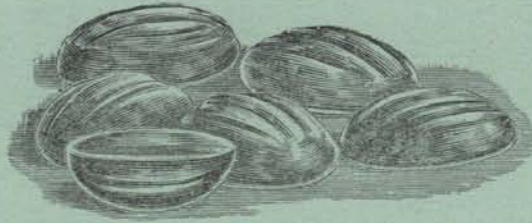
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