

your contract attendances; and do not, under ordinary circumstances, adopt any other method of vaccinating." We assume that the writer's attention was directly drawn to this long-standing warning eighteen months after he commenced departure from the Instruction. (b) We have no wish to defend the system of arm-to-arm vaccination as opposed to calf-to-arm; but we believe we are right in saying that the 20 per cent. departure from the instructions was agreed to in order to widen the term "under ordinary circumstances" for the purpose of public vaccinators who had difficulty in the matter of arm-to-arm vaccination. (c) We endeavoured to explain that the Act of 1867, being based on stationary arm-to-arm vaccination, it would require new legislation to abolish it. The amount of the percentage is governed by the words "under ordinary circumstances." We agree that under present circumstances there is often distinct hardship. (d) The main point about the supply of calf lymph by guardians to which we directed attention is that direct payment for such lymph by guardians is illegal. We are glad to learn that, notwithstanding this, auditors are not instructed to surcharge; but their not doing so does not get rid of the legal opinion which prevents direct sanction of the practice. (e) We hope, with our correspondent, that many of the present difficulties will shortly be overcome and, if possible, even before they can be dealt with under new legislation.—ED. L.

"A NON-MEDICAL CORONER ON HYDROPHOBIA."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I am indebted to the courtesy of THE LANCET Office for a copy of your valuable journal of the 14th inst., and am much astonished to discover that in one of your annotations (p. 1400) I am singled out for attack under the above heading. I find myself represented as having on the 3rd inst. remarked at an inquest which I held on a poor man who had first poisoned and then hanged himself, he being clearly at the time of unsound mind, "that it was a most distressing case and was largely a result of that terrible disease hydrophobia." Thereupon the writer of the article jumps to the conclusion that I had suggested that the poor man's death was directly due to the frightful ailment in question. I forthwith obtained copies of our three local papers containing reports of this inquest in order to see what I was supposed to have said. I enclose cuttings from each for your perusal. In two of them you will see that whatever I did say was not considered sufficiently startling to merit any mention; but in the third the inquest is made more of, and it is here, and here only, I find the words you quote. Even supposing this report to be *verbatim et literatim*—which it is not—the words do not, I submit, necessarily lead to the conclusion you have drawn. More especially if the sentence immediately following is read, which is: "It was a wonder that deceased's friends had not had him put under restraint when they found how deranged he was." But, as a matter of fact, in the very few remarks I did address to the jury, and which were scarcely needed to enable them at once to agree upon the verdict which I suggested, if I specifically referred to the disease at all, it was simply to point out the terror which the mere thought of it inspired and to emphasise the evidence as to the poor man's weak brain by pointing out that the fact of his having been bitten some fifteen years ago by a dog (whether mad or the reverse we knew not) had, according to his wife's account, been enough to seriously prey upon his mind for so long a time. It is quite possible that the reporter may have failed to grasp the drift of my short observations. The most experienced members of the reporting staff are not always told off to attend the general run of inquests. I think, however, it is a little hard that what I said should be so twisted about as almost to throw some doubt upon my own sanity. Were I favoured with the chance of a moment's conversation with the eager correspondent, "medical" or otherwise, who is responsible for your remarks, I would say to him after the manner of Mr. Chucks: "Allow me to observe, my dear

man, in the most delicate way in the world, that before publicly reflecting in this way upon *anyone*, and more especially upon a man holding an official position, it would be fairer, first of all, to verify your facts by a reference to the individual whom you fancy you have caught slipping."

But for my respect for your journal and my regard for the unhappy "non-medical coroner" I should not have troubled you at such length. May I venture to hope that you will in your next issue give such prominence to this letter as will equal that with which you favoured the paragraph which has called forth this disclaimer.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

HUGH G. DOGGETT,

Bristol, Nov. 18th, 1896.

Coroner for Bristol.

PUBLIC VACCINATORS AND THE NEW SUPERANNUATION BILL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It will interest many of your readers who are Poor-law medical officers to have an authoritative decision upon the question of the fees as public vaccinators that those fees shall not count in making up their annual returns under the Poor-law Officers' Superannuation Act of 1896; hence I beg to enclose a copy of the reply I have just received from the Local Government Board on this point.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

E. RICE MORGAN

(A Public Vaccinator).

Morriston, R.S.O., Glamorganshire, Nov. 18th, 1896.

[COPY.]

"Local Government Board, Whitehall, Nov. 17th, 1896.

"SIR,—I am directed by the Local Government Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th inst., and, in reply, to state that, in their opinion, a public vaccinator who is paid fees under a contract with a board of guardians cannot be regarded as an officer as defined by Section 19 of the Poor-law Officers' Superannuation Act, 1896.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"W. H. KNOLLYS, Assistant Secretary.

"E. Rice Morgan, Esq., Morriston."

MEDICAL ADVERTISING IN THE LAY PRESS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The subjoined, which appears in all the Scotch daily papers, is a fair sample of the fashionable *puff oblique*.

LORD KELVIN'S HEALTH.—Lord Kelvin, who has been suffering from facia neuralgia, has so far recovered that he hoped to be in Glasgow yesterday evening, but Dr. Ferrier, who has been attending him, prefers that he should remain in London for another week.

It is perfectly absurd and unfair, in these days of keen competition, professional starvation, and throat cutting, to lampoon and vilify honest, struggling young men for honourably making known their existence, when this and kindred practices are constantly indulged in, and connived at, in the higher ranks of the profession.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

D. CAMPBELL BLACK.

Douglas-street, Blythswood-square, Glasgow, Nov. 9th, 1896.

"HOSPITAL ABUSE."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The profession generally unite in thanking you for your leading article on Reform of Hospital Administration on Nov. 7th. I may say that I am daily receiving letters from general practitioners complaining of the effect of the competition of hospitals on their incomes. Unfortunately, they do not send me particulars or I would send them on to your Special Commissioner. We have heard a good deal about the abuse of the out-patient departments, but the growth of the "casualty" department has not been much noticed. A few figures concerning that department will show your readers what an enormous number of people in London frequent it. No one will, I think, contend for one moment that all or even a portion of these cases are so urgent that they are bound to go to the hospitals for relief. It must be apparent to anyone who studies the figures that all sorts and conditions of people who happen to be suffering from divers ills that flesh is heir to seek gratuitous treatment at our great hospitals. This is a serious