about in the medium. When, however, one of these amœbæ is placed in pure water, plus food and plus an auxetic such as tyrosin or creatin in solution, it immediately undergoes cell division of the normal type and will continue to reproduce itself through many generations. The old impression seems to be disproved, therefore, as far as these classes of cells are concerned.

I may add that auxetics or substances which increase their action (augmentors) have been detected in all the industrial commodities which cause cell proliferation or predispose to cancer—namely, soot, tar, tar oils, pitch, certain petroleum fractions, grease, vaseline, aniline dyes, tobacco and its smoke, certain arsenic compounds, manure, briquettes, &c. One must therefore agree with Mr. Mansell Moullin's most important suggestion that the chemistry of the environment of the cells in the tissues ought to be taken into consideration when investigating the biology of tumours.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

The John Howard McFadden Research Fund,
London, S.W., March 27th, 1914.

H. C. ROSS.

RIDING ASTRIDE FOR WOMEN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your annotation on the above subject is of interest to me, who as an old horseman of many years' experience have watched the development of the cross seat for ladies. I have never heard of local evils clearly traceable to this seat. The main objections are insecurity, which you mention but do not account for. I think not only the lack of the "crutches" but also the conformation of women tends to this; their thighs, as a rule, being round and fat, cannot grip the saddle like the long flat ones of the average man. The same formation in a man often gives the "washball seat," the opposite of a firm one. The high knee rills used by some ladies only partly remove the insecurity in leaping. "Dragging" is rare, but may happen in a cross saddle to lady or man if the stirrups are too large or too small, the safety bar is stiff, and in certain falls. In side saddle the modern apron habit and detachable stirrup make this risk negligible. Many hunting ladies have reverted to side saddle because of its infinitely greater safety.

You do not mention, but may agree in, the very common opinion that a good lady rider looks 80 per cent. better in side saddle than cross, and cross-saddle is really only suitable for young girls and spare females of an age to despise appearances. The only objection to side saddle is for the horse, as while the extra weight is largely compensated by the said weight being further back and less on the forelegs, yet the other trouble of sore backs from careless grooms and bad riders is always clamant and requiring attention and prevention.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

W. STEVENSON, M.R.C.P. Edin., F.R.C.S. Edin.
Crieff, N.B., March 26th, 1914.

THE LOCAL INCIDENCE OF ENLARGED TONSILS AND ADENOIDS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your review in THE LANCET of March 28th on my paper on the above subject, published in the annual report of the school medical officer for East Sussex, writing as to the high percentage of cases among children in rural districts, you state that "the probability would seem to be that

dirty and carious teeth are commoner in the relatively backward country districts and that enlarged adenoids and tonsils depend frequently upon chronic infection from the mouth."

The percentages found for different districts in the county varied from as high as 9 for some rural districts to 2.2 for Portslade, a poor working-class suburb of Hove, the fall in the percentage rate approximately coinciding with the increasingly urban quality of the district.

With regard to the explanation offered in your review, I would point out that no more care is bestowed on children's teeth, either in the matter of dental treatment or in the use of the toothbrush, in the urban than in the rural districts, and also that those who have inspected country children are constantly being struck by the fact that children in "backward" country districts who show signs of neglect and poor nutrition are possessed of remarkably good teeth.

The above-mentioned incidence rates are certainly remarkable, and some of your readers might offer explanations. A possible factor may be the difference in the type of population found in urban and rural districts.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Ipswich, March 28th, 1914.

GEORGE FINCH.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF SMALL-POX.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Referring to the review of my book on this subject in THE LANCET of March 21st, may I be allowed to correct something which I did not say, but which your reviewer implies that I did?

He speaks of "the proper authorities" as being the Local Government Board and the county council, thereby limiting, by inference, the application of my book to this country. That is not the case. No special country is mentioned or intended. The principles indicated are of world-wide application.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

March 26th, 1914.

W. MCC. WANKLYN.

THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATES AND SICKNESS BENEFITS.

Mr. Runciman, in replying to a deputation from Approved Societies at Dewsbury on the subject of allowing sickness benefit for the first three days of sickness, said that already expenditure under the Act had exceeded what had been estimated by millions. He went on to say that the loose giving of medical certificates had penalised societies and the national scheme, and that the sooner it was put an end to the better, whether by an extended system of medical referees or by the setting up of a State Medical Service. He intimated that existing conditions could not be allowed to continue, and that the Government was watching the matter with grave anxiety. Mr. Runciman is probably aware that the medical profession is also alive to the march of events, and will have to be consulted as to future schemes.

LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE FOR LONDON.

The Election Committee of the Metropolitan Counties Branch of the British Medical Association, which undertook the arrangements for the election of a Medical Committee for the County of London,