

hoped that Professor Keith's demonstration may result in the discovery of hitherto undetected examples of progeria and ateleiosis. I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Reading, Feb. 1st, 1913.

HASTINGS GILFORD.

THE PATHOGENICITY AND VIRULENCE OF BACTERIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In a letter appearing in your issue of Feb. 1st Dr. E. C. Hort and Dr. W. J. Penfold drew attention to the importance of their work on temperature variations in animals produced by the injection of substances suspended in water. At the same time they criticised some of our recently published work, and wasted a lot of pity on us and numerous other workers in the same field. We might mention that at the time of our experiments we were fully alive to their work, and anticipating their criticism took full precautions to guard ourselves against error. The main points of their criticism are the use of guinea-pigs and the method of obtaining the water used.

With regard to the former, we found in our preliminary work that guinea-pigs that had become accustomed to the laboratory and which were kept with a constant supply of food maintained a very constant temperature, of course, having the normal diurnal variations. We drew no conclusions from single observations of rises within the ordinary limits. With regard to the other part of the criticism, the experiments on protein and bacterial fever are all in series, and the same amount of vehicle was used in each case as in Friedberger's experiments, and so at any rate the series are comparative, the same (!) error occurring throughout. Dr. Hort and Dr. Penfold's experiments are also capable of another interpretation, which we drew attention to at a meeting of the Pathological Section of the Royal Society of Medicine. Further, we should like to know the amount of calcium obtainable from a Pasteur Chamberland filter, which is made of aluminium silicate, by a water containing practically no carbon dioxide.

We are, Sir, yours faithfully,

F. H. THIELE,

Weymouth street, W., Feb. 1st, 1913.

DENNIS EMBLETON.

ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If Dr. Leonard Hill will read the verse before the ones he quotes from 2 Kings iv. he will find that Elisha was alone with the child. The account of the miracle must therefore have come from Elisha, for the child could hardly have described what took place. If Elisha had blown into the child's mouth, surely he would have said so. The account does not say that the child began to breathe, but that "the flesh of the child waxed warm." The narrator evidently thought that the child was restored by some transference of vital force, and, as he was also the practitioner, I do not see how we can read anything else into the story. I much doubt if artificial respiration is consistent with the views of physiology held by Elisha, and I do not think he would like the practice to be associated with his name.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Silverton, Devon, Feb. 4th, 1913.

O. CLAYTON-JONES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Dr. Leonard Hill asks in THE LANCET of Feb. 1st, in referring to Elisha raising the Shunammite's son (2 Kings iv. 34), why is not this, the best method of restoring a child, called Elisha's method of artificial respiration? I would suggest in reply that it has not been so called because it has been included amongst the number of the miracles performed by Elijah. Verse 32 states: "And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed." This is confirmed by 2 Kings viii. 5, where Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, is relating the miracle to the King, "And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life," &c. Bible commentators have suggested that Elisha so stretched himself upon the child in order probably to afford a channel for the Divine influence to pass. But to put the consideration of this aside for a moment, it is probable that in any case the "method" should be credited to Elisha's

predecessor, Elijah, for in 1 Kings xvii. 21, Elijah, in raising the son of the widow of Zarephath, "stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again."

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Feb. 3rd, 1913.

SEARCHER.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—At the annual general meeting of the National Medical Union, held on Jan. 28th last, it was resolved to convert the Union into a permanent organisation for medical men who decline service under the National Insurance Act as at present constituted. There is no other association at present which is definitely pledged to serve the interests of such men, or which might be of use as a rallying point for those who retire from service in the future.

Amongst the objects at which the Union is aiming are the following: 1. The bringing together of all those whose convictions have led them to remain in opposition to the present Act. 2. Mutual assistance amongst members all over the country. 3. The guarding of the interests of the members in every possible way. 4. To endeavour to uphold the honour and interests of the profession, which have been—and still are—gravely imperilled by recent events. 5. To secure efficient medical attendance for the industrial classes at reasonable remuneration.

It is hoped that all medical men who are in sympathy with the aims and objects of the Union will see their way to becoming members. The annual subscription is 10s. 6d.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

J. WEBSTER WATTS, Secretary.

5, John Dalton-street, Manchester, Feb. 4th, 1913.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As there has been some misunderstanding about the validity or non-validity of medical certificates issued by non-panel doctors to insured persons, I have brought the matter before the Commissioners, who have sent me the following courteous reply:—

National Health Insurance Commission (England).

Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.

SIR,—In reply to your letter of to-day's date, I am directed by the National Health Insurance Commission (England) to state that there is nothing in the National Insurance Act or any Regulations thereunder, or in the rules of any Approved Society, which would justify a society in declining to accept a medical certificate in connexion with a claim for sickness benefit on the ground that the certificate was not signed by a doctor on the local panel.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed) E. HACKFORTH.

The General Secretary, Medical Defence Union.

The profession will, I am sure, be glad to know what is the actual position in this respect.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

A. G. BATEMAN, General Secretary.

Medical Defence Union, Trafalgar-square, W.C., Feb. 4th, 1913.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There has been a question of ethics before the profession, and it has by common consent been referred to the British Medical Association, acting formally through their Representatives. The decision is that anyone who after Jan. 18th joined the panel, or before that date, whether acting according to his own judgment, or induced or "coerced" by force of circumstances or other influence, is to be regarded as having acted rightly. There can, I take it, be no other meaning.

1. It was stated in my hearing that a member of a hospital staff who had joined the panel had been requested by his colleagues to give up his hospital appointment. 2. Enclosed are handbills circulated in Kensington. As my name appeared on the panel at the post offices, they refer to me, as well as to others some of whom may still be members of the Association. The intention is evidently to injure, professionally and pecuniarily, those whom the Association has justified. In serious matters relating to professional conduct we were wont to look to the Royal College of Physicians of London. This seems a situation calling for their interference.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

GEORGE C. CRICHTON, M.D. Edin.

Longridge-road, S.W., Feb. 4th, 1913.