difficulty might be got over effectually if every householder would mix a tablespoonful of disinfectant in a pail or two of water, and flush his drains with it daily. By this means extensive dilution would be effected, decomposition arrested, the noxious smells of sewer gases materially obviated, and the sewer rendered wholesome for the public security and for the sewer men who have to enter it frequently. There are 12,000 houses in the Lewisham district alone, and I think it is evident that the general adoption of the above treatment would be most effectual, both in preventing disease and in destroying noxious odours.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

F. EACHUS WILKINSON, M.D.,
Medical Officer of Health for Lewisham District.
Sydenham, August 29th, 1883.

"LENGTH OF INCISIONS IN OVARIOTOMY."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Two points in Mr. Battle's letter require comment. His insinuation that the cases which make up Mr. Owens' list are probably the result of a picking of cases, for the purpose of getting good results, is based on ignorance of the fact that it is quite as impossible to pick out cases for recovery as it is to predict the rainy days of a coming week.

He formulates a question of a not very intelligible kind in the words, "Does practical experience prove that long, firm cicatrices cause any inconvenience to patients after the operation?" It is not the firm cicatrices which cause the trouble, but the loose ones, and they are numerous. Every inch, every fraction of an inch, which a surgeon can spare from his incision will increase the comfort of his patient in after life.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

Birmingham, Aug. 27th, 1883.

LAWSON TAIT.

SUDDEN DEATH FROM FRIGHT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following case appears worthy of being placed on record:—

G. E. H.—, aged seven years, the son of a sweep, had been witnessing a fight between two gipsy lads, when, as the contest became exciting, he suddenly fell backwards and was dead in a few moments. I was called in by the police immediately after death, and found the body, which was still warm, lying on its dorsal aspect on a soft patch of grass. The features had a placid expression, and his soot-smearred face exhibited the traces of recent tears. It was stated that there was no one nearer to the boy when he fell than the two belligerents, who were about ten yards' distance.

The history which I elicited was as follows:—The father had been a soldier in India and elsewhere for twenty-one years prior to taking up his present occupation, which he had followed for the last three months only. The mother had died suddenly a year ago, and was the subject of a coroner's inquest; but the cause of her death I have, in vain, tried to discover. The deceased was an only son. His sister, aged four years, seems delicate, and I learn that his half-brother and sister are robust and healthy, and have no neurotic tendency. He was of a remarkably affectionate disposition, and was easily excited by the slightest unusual occurrences. The boy had had his dinner a quarter of an hour previous to death, and had kissed his father before leaving home as usual.

Agreeably to the coroner's order, I made an autopsy forty-eight hours after death. The body was plump, and the external aspect on examination showed no marks of injuries or contusions. Head: The dura mater was not adherent to the brain, neither was there any sign of fractures or effusions of fluid. The brain weighed 42 oz., was well formed, firm, and with convolutions and sulci well marked. The puncta vasculosa were a little more than ordinarily prominent. The several ganglia and ventricles of the brain were normal; minute examination betrayed no rupture of bloodvessels or extravasations. The examination of spine showed no dislocation or other injury in the region of the atlas and dentata or elsewhere. The medulla oblongata and cord were apparently healthy. Chest: The right cavity showed a few old pleuritic ad-

hesions; left pleura and cavity healthy. The lungs were normal, though a little gorged with blood; the pulmonary veins contained some fluid blood; the pericardium was healthy, and its secretion was of the normal colour, quality, and quantity; the right auricle was much distended, almost to bursting, with dark grumous fluid blood; the right ventricle was about one-third full of the same; the superior and inferior cava and hepatic veins were also much distended with dark fluid blood; the left auricle was full, but not so distended as the right; the left ventricle also contained a little fluid blood. The pulmonary veins were filled with fluid blood, and the two left veins terminated by a common opening in the left auricle. The heart's septum was normal, and its valves competent, and there was no evidence of rupture or disease. The liver was normal and healthy, the hepatic veins being filled. The kidneys were normal. The urinary bladder was half filled, and was perfectly healthy. There was no sign of injury to the abdominal walls. The diaphragm, peritoneum, spleen, pancreas, and supra-renal bodies were perfectly healthy and in their normal positions.

I gave my opinion at the inquest that death in this instance was due to strong emotion, the emotional impulse being transmitted from the brain to the cardio-inhibitory centre in the medulla, and thence along the inhibitory fibres of the vagus to the intra-cardiac ganglia, thus arresting the heart's action (in diastole). I proceeded to make the post-mortem examination with a prejudiced mind that perhaps the death was due either to external violence on the head or pit of the stomach, or rupture of the heart or some blood-vessel; but after a minute and patient examination I found that I could only arrive at the opinion already given.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

London, S.W.

J. E. COONEY, L.R.C.P.

"THE VALUE OF ETHER IN COLLAPSE."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I gather from Mr. Caiger's letter in THE LANCET of August 25th, that the value of ether in collapse is somewhat of a new discovery. I was not aware of the fact when I used it eighteen months ago in a severe case of flooding caused by placenta prævia, the particulars of which I append. I received a message from a fellow practitioner who was ill, asking me to attend a midwifery case for him. On arriving at the house, bag in hand, I found the woman on the bed in such a state that for a moment or two it was doubtful whether she was alive or dead. However, she was alive, and I immediately injected half a drachm of ether. Its effect was magical, so I gave another injection of the same quantity. After this ether and Bonjeau's ergotin were injected together into the buttock; this produced contraction of the uterus, and brought the head down to close the os, where it was maintained in position by abdominal pressure. Shortly afterwards I turned and delivered, and the woman made an excellent and rapid recovery.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

HERBERT H. MEYERS, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
Woodstock-road, Finsbury-park, August, 1883.

LIVERPOOL.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE WEATHER.—AUTUMNAL AILMENTS.—PREPARATIONS AGAINST CHOLERA.

THE heat has been very intense in Liverpool during the past fortnight, causing the usual autumnal complaints, especially diarrhoea. Many persons have suffered from colds, probably from imprudent exposure to open windows. As there is such frequent communication between Liverpool and the Mediterranean, the prevalence of cholera in Egypt has caused some uneasiness here. But even had a case unfortunately been brought to the Mersey, every preparation had been made to prevent its spread.

THE INFIRMARY FOR CHILDREN.

A great deal of interesting medical and surgical practice is to be seen at this infirmary. Dr. Armstrong has had a large number of cases of empyema in children during the