tificat out of the Parish Register book, where it was thus recorded:—*April ye 20, 1650, was buried Emme, the wife of Thomas Toplace, who was found delivered of a child after shee had lain two hours in the grave.*"

Sue* informs us that it is the custom of certain ignorant women, who enshroud those dying pregnant, to shut up in the coffin with the corpse a needle, scissors, and thread, which, he says, is a proof that experience has convinced them that women can be delivered after death.

Believe me, Sir, yours, &c.,

Upper Wimpole-street, April, 1872.

J. H. AVELING, M.D.

CAUSATION OF ENTERIC FEVER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The interest as to the causes of the illness of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales having not as yet quite died out, I think that a statement of the following facts may perhaps prove acceptable to the readers of your journal.

A short time since, when passing along the principal street of the town of Tiverton, my attention was attracted by some men working at a drain which they had opened across the road, and on looking into it, I saw a large collection of dark-coloured fluid possessing all the well-known characteristics of highly concentrated sewage. On inquiry, I found that the drain, having become obstructed, had burst, and that an overflow of sewage had taken place into the well supplying the house with water, the bad taste and odour of which had first directed attention to the defective condition of the drainage.

A few days afterwards, I was much surprised at being requested by Mr. Reed, of Tiverton, to visit with him in consultation no less than three well-marked cases of typhoid fever in the house from which the drain alluded to proceeded, and also to learn from him that a fourth case of the same disease had just been removed to his home at a distance, in the person of a young man employed on the premises. Mr. Reed moreover informed me that in the house immediately opposite, and connected with the same drain, two cases of typhoid fever had also occurred, upon which he was also in attendance; and I have since ascertained that the occupants of that house, finding the water of the well from which they were usually supplied disagreeable both as to taste and smell, had applied for water to the house opposite, and had made use of the water from the well also contaminated by an overflow of sewage. From a defect in one drain we have thus no less than six well-marked cases of typhoid fever, to which no other cause can be assigned. They all progressed favourably and terminated in recovery without any serious intestinal complication, the period of incubation having been about twelve days.

The narration of their occurrence may, I think, prove interesting, as showing that typhoid fever may without doubt be occasioned simply by an overflow of sewage into water used for drinking purposes, and without any admixture of the excreta of individuals already affected with that disease, no other cases having previously occurred in the immediate vicinity.

I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

HENRY DOWNES, M.D.,

Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals.

Tiverton, Devon, April 6th, 1872.

THE HANWELL ASYLUM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In reference to a letter on this subject, which appeared in your last number, signed "M.D. Cantab.," allow me to state that I am not the assistant medical officer alluded to, nor am I a candidate for the resident medical officer's appointment, vacant by the retirement of Dr. Begley. Whoever may aspire to Dr. Conolly's mantle, I only hope he may find it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Middlesex Lunatic Asylum, Hanwell, W.,

J. HAWKES.

April 20th, 1872.

P.S.—My reason for making the above statement is that many of my professional friends and others are apparently under the impression that I am seeking the post.

* Op. cit.

MILITIA SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Looking at the undecided answer of Mr. Cardwell to Sir E. Lacon, it is rather puzzling to determine what steps to take in the matter. Are the surgeons expected to take the initiative, and send in their claims at once, or wait until the new scheme is matured? Time is of vital importance to those who, like myself, will have to seek for an opening for practice, and we cannot under such circumstances know our fate too soon. If we cannot get something more positive from the Secretary for War, I would suggest that two meetings be organised, one in London for the southern, and the other in Birmingham for the northern counties, to take steps for drawing up a memorial, and appointing a deputation accompanied by our M.P.s to wait upon Mr. Cardwell and fully represent our case.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

April, 1872.

MILITIA.

GLASGOW.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

It appears that something of the nature of a *coup d'état* is being attempted in regard to our sanitary affairs. A committee of the Police Board has submitted a report recommending the dismissal of the whole medical sanitary staff, and the appointment of one medical officer who would devote his entire time to the duties of the department. Rumour has it that the proposed alteration has been instigated in the interest of one of the present subordinates, who, it is averred, will most probably receive the appointment. It must strike everyone that, if a reorganisation of the department be needed, it might have been carried out with a little more consideration for the feelings of the present medical officer. A reform begun by ignoring his existence is initiated under too questionable auspices to enable us to augur much good from it. Dr. Gairdner has never displayed tenacity of place; he is, besides, a gentleman of acknowledged attainments in sanitary science, and has admittedly discharged his duties with efficiency. He has published a very pointed and dignified remonstrance. That his official connexion with the sanitary office, however well-qualified he may be for the duties, is somewhat derogatory to his status as Professor of Medicine in the University, and consequently prejudicial to his professional and social position, is, I believe, the general opinion of the profession in Glasgow. Should he lose the appointment, he will not thereby lose in the estimation of his professional brethren.

The buildings of the new University Hospital are making very slow progress, on account of want of funds. The University authorities have displayed an inexplicable want of energy in the matter. The citizens of Glasgow have ever responded promptly to an appeal for such an object as increased hospital accommodation, provided the appeal were properly made. The governing body of the University must have a large amount of patience if they are content to see the subscriptions come in, as at present, in dribbles. They cannot but see that the great distance between the places of systematic and clinical tuition is not only productive of much inconvenience to the students, but is most prejudicial to the medical school.

The alterations in the medical organisation of the Infirmary, made some years ago, have now had so far a fair trial. The throwing open the privilege of giving clinical lectures to all the physicians and surgeons has, I understand, been attended with excellent results. Whether the regulation respecting continuity of tenure of office will have equally beneficial effects remains yet to be seen.

23rd April, 1872.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE Annual Report of our Infirmary mentions that, owing in part to the improved cooking apparatus, the very great consumption of stimulants had been considerably diminished. In the former year £459 0s. 6d. was spent in