REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF PRISONS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The writer of the article on the Report of the Commissioners of Prisons, in your last issue, has fallen into error with regard to the number of prisoners who were found to be insane on admission into prison. The total number of inmates of the local prisons of England and Wales who were found to be insane during the year ended March 31st, 1889, was 349. Of these as many as 290 were recognised as being insane on admission into prison. I state in my "Notes" that 30 "sentenced" prisoners were found to be insane upon reception, and I give a table showing the number of insane prisoners received with sentences varying from three days to five years. Your reviewer takes this number (35) as being the number of prisoners found insane upon reception, and, deducting it from the total of 349, arrives at the conclusion that in 256 cases the insane condition was not detected by the prison medical officer upon admission. I should, perhaps, point out that these persons are not under my view, but are under remand, or are awaiting trial.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

R. M. GOVER.

The Lancet, Nov. 23, 1889.
methæmoglobinuria, from the fact that the blood pigment present in the urine during an attack showed the spectroscopic appearances due to methemoglobin. It seems, however, that this addition to the ordinary nomenclature of myself, and which has since been published in The Lancet, that the pigment excreted was in every instance oxyhæmoacid urine. In addition we found that occasionally acid exposure to cold, so that following on the same lines the case would then have to be called "paroxysmalâhematinuria." That this double change through the stage of methemoglobin to that of acid hæmatin was really expected, supposing that each attack was of similar severity; while the considerable flow of urine after an attack, which was also noticed in our case, appeared to be due to a diuretic action exerted by the haemoglobin during its disposal of the profession by the managers of the Metropolitan Asylum District is not used because it is not generally known that such facilities exist, I trust by your drawing attention to it members of the profession will be induced to apply for these appointments.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
R. A. Birdwood, M.D.,
Stockwell, S.W., Nov. 14th, 1889. Medical Superintendent.

PAROXYSMAL METHÆMOGLOBINURIA.
To the Editors of the Lancet.

SIRS,—At the last meeting of the Clinical Society Mr. Barton brought forward a case of what he terms paroxysmal methæmoglobinuria, from the fact that the excreted pigment present in the urine during the attack showed the spectroscopic appearances due to methemoglobin. It seems, however, that this addition to the ordinary nomenclature of myself, and which has since been published in The Lancet, that the pigment excreted was in every instance oxyhæmoacid urine. In addition we found that occasionally acid exposure to cold, so that following on the same lines the case would then have to be called "paroxysmal hematinuria." That this double change through the stage of methemoglobin to that of acid hæmatin was really expected, supposing that each attack was of similar severity; while the considerable flow of urine after an attack, which was also noticed in our case, appeared to be due to a diuretic action exerted by the haemoglobin during its disposal of the kidneys.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
York-road, S.E., November, 1889. S. Monckton Copeman.

SOUTH-WESTERN FEVER HOSPITAL, STOCKWELL.

To the Editors of the Lancet.

SIRS,—An advertisement recently appeared in your columns offering registered medical men, under stated conditions, opportunities for the clinical observation of the diseases treated in this hospital. In response to that invitation, no one has applied for the appointment of clinical assistant. At the same time, one hears a good deal of a demand on the part of the profession for the admission of students to the fever hospitals for educational purposes. Now the depth of colour of the urine should be great when the quantity was least is only what might be expected, supposing that each attack was of similar severity; while the considerable flow of urine after an attack, which was also noticed in our case, appeared to be due to a diuretic action exerted by the haemoglobin during its disposal of the kidneys.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
York-road, S.E., November, 1889. S. Monckton Copeman.

NOTIFICATION OF DISEASES ACT.
To the Editors of the Lancet.

SIRS,—I have just seen the letter in your issue of the 2nd, signed S. Gourley, on the above subject, urging that the list of infectious diseases to be notified should be extended so as to include contagious venereal diseases. As one of the members of Parliament who opposed this Bill, may I say that Mr. Gourley's desire is fortunately impossible. The Act is strictly limited to infectious disease, and no contagious disease can be brought under it. Certain diseases are mentioned as being under the Act, and any other infectious disease may be added to the list by the joint consent of the local authority and the Local Government Board. But no contagious venereal disease can be included in the list. I have the assurance of Mr. Ritchie himself that it is utterly impossible. A new Act of Parliament would be required, and no one is likely to bring in a Bill for that purpose. If anyone were to do so, he would find he had entered on a hopeless task, and one which would raise a storm of opposition.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Nov. 14th, 1889. Walter S. B. McLaren.

LIVERPOOL.

(HOME FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Hospital Sunday and Saturday.

The annual meeting of the supporters of the Hospital Sunday and Saturday Funds was held on the 8th inst., and the treasurer was enabled to make the gratifying announcement that the total sum realised this year was £300 in excess of that of 1888. But it was short by £2000 of the year 1874, which was a year of prosperity, and marks very clearly that the falling off was due rather to the commercial depression than to any diminished interest in the medical charities. The increase over last year and other circumstances augur favourably for the Hospital Sunday and Saturday of 1889, which will be its twentieth anniversary.

The Royal Southern Hospital.

In accordance with a time-honoured custom, the newly elected mayor (Mr. Thomas Hughes) attended St. Barnabas Church in state last Sunday, when a sermon was preached by the Very Rev. Dean Lefroy, and a collection was made for the Royal Southern Hospital, which is situated near the church, and of which the incumbent is the honorary chaplain. After the service the mayor, accompanied by some of the members of the City Council, visited the hospital, and went through the wards. The collection amounted to £135, and several special donations of £10 each were promised for the nurses' home.

The Royal Infirmary.

The recently adopted rule in the Royal Infirmary, which required all the surgeons to be Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, has considerably limited the number of candidates, and at the last two elections Mr. Rushton Parker and Mr. F. T. Paul have been allowed to the infirmary, the latter as having been surgeon to the Royal Southern Hospital for some years past, as well as having held other appointments, including that of resident medical officer to the infirmary. These unopposed appointments possess great advantages in one respect. They save the annoyance—a very serious one both to the candidates and the trustees—of canvassing; and the surgeons are spared a very considerable expense in advertising, printing copies of testimonials, &c. The contests of former days, moreover, were not calculated to raise the profession in the estimation of the public.