THE SURGERY OF THE KIDNEY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Whilst teaching anatomy in the dissecting-room of the London Hospital I have lately come across some variations in the relations of the pleura to the last rib that may be of interest, and possibly of use, to those engaged in the surgery of the kidney. I believe it is a practice in the operation for removal of the kidney to remove the last rib, or a portion of it, if necessary. In so doing, the relations of the pleura to the last rib is an all-important fact to keep in mind. In the majority of cases examined (about fifty) I found the pleura reaching down as far as the upper border of the last rib at its centre, but not adherent, being separated by a well-marked cellular interval, making it possible to remove the whole or part of the rib without opening the pleura. In a small minority of cases the pleura extended as far as the centre of the last intercostal space without coming in contact with the last rib. In about an equal number of cases the pleura lined, and was intimately adherent to, the greater part of, the inner surface of the last rib. In one case the pleura extended as far down as two inches and a half below the last rib, approaching behind the upper limit of the kidney on the left side. I must not forget to say that in this case I suspected eleven ribs, and, on counting, found that such was the case, the twelfth rib being quite rudimentary. I could detect no difference, as a rule, in the relations of the pleura to the last rib on the two sides of the chest. The last case cited would suggest the rule to invariably count the ribs before operating on the kidney.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

MAYO COLLIER, M.S. Lond.

New Cavendish-street, W., March, 1888.

"CONSTRUCTION OF HOSPITALS FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With reference to recent letters on the above subject, allow me to say that I have not found any difficulty either in heating or disinfecting temporary buildings.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

Homerton, E., April, 1888.

ALEX. COLLIE.

NORTHERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(From our own Correspondent.)

NEWCASTLE ROYAL INFIRMARY AND H.M.S. "VICTORIA."

THE huge ironclad *Victoria* is now quite ready to proceed down the river, and a happy idea occurred to someone that the vessel might be thrown open to the public at a fixed charge, the proceeds to be devoted to the funds of our Royal Infirmary. Fortunately the proposal was acceded to by the Admiralty and by the firm of Lord Armstrong, Mitchell, and Co., the builders, in whose hands the vessel remains, preparatory to her being handed over to the naval authorities. So she was thrown open yesterday (Easter Monday), and was visited by many thousands, and it is expected that the proceeds will reach quite £400. H.M.S. *Victoria* is one of the most powerful vessels of war in the British navy, and her armour, guns, and equipment in general are of the most formidable character. Her length is 340 ft.; breadth, 70 ft.; mean draft, 26 ft. 9 in.; displacement, 10,500 tons; and horse power, 12,000. It had been originally intended that the name of the ship should be the *Renown*, but in honour of her Majesty's Jubilee the name *Victoria* was substituted. One of the wonderful sights on board the vessel was her extraordinary heavy armaments. She will carry, in addition to guns of various smaller sizes, two 110-ton guns, the largest weapon of war we manufacture in this country. This gun is 44 ft. long, and the diameter of its bore is 16.25 inches. The projectile thrown from the gun is 1800 lb. in weight, and is fired by a charge of 960 lb. of powder. As the shot leaves the muzzle it travels at the rate of 2128 ft. per second, and it will penetrate 34 in. into an armour-plate. The gun is loaded, elevated, and lowered again by hydraulic power. The cost of the gun is £34,000, and a sum of £188 is expended each time a shot is fired. It

is pleasant, however, to know that this magnificent warship has commenced her career in aiding such a work of mercy as our Royal Infirmary.

DURHAM.

The Durham Rural Sanitary Authority, having reduced the salary of their medical officer (Mr. Alderman Blackett, at present Mayor of the city of Durham) from £150 to £100, the Local Government Board have written to say that they are unable to look upon the salary proposed as being sufficient to justify them in allowing repayment on account thereof from the Parliamentary grant. It is shown that when the salary was £150 the Local Government Board repaid half the sum; so unless the salary is increased again the result will be an additional burden of £25 on the local rates. The appointment of medical officer to the Durham Workhouse being vacant, Mr. A. M. Vann is a candidate for the office. Mr. Vann first became noted by the citizens of Durham for his arduous labours and unceasing attention to the sick poor during an epidemic which visited the town in 1884-5. His gratuitous labour and exertion at that time did not go unrewarded. The Urban Sanitary Authority not only appointed him their medical officer of health, but they awarded him £150 as some compensation for his willing services to the sick in time of need. The Watch Committee appointed him as their medical officer, and the Board of Guardians also appointed him to be district officer of the union.

NEWCASTLE CITY HOSPITAL FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The Mayor of Salford and the Sanitary Committee of that borough, together with the medical officer of health, have lately visited our new Hospital for Infectious Diseases. They were received by the Mayor of Newcastle, the medical officer of health, and our Sanitary Committee, who accompanied them in their inspection of the new hospital. Our Mayor has since received a letter of thanks from the Mayor of Salford for his hospitality, and an acknowledgment of the valuable hints received by the Salford deputation as regards the construction of the new Infectious Hospital.

SNOW BLINDNESS IN THE NORTH.

Several cases of snow blindness have been reported from the district of Upper Teesdale. Snow cutters in many instances have suffered severely from this cause, and in one case total blindness has followed.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, April 3rd.

EDINBURGH.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES BILL.

THE publication of the Government measure for the better administration of the Universities of Scotland has been greeted with singularly unanimous expressions of satisfaction on all hands. It was not to be expected that this would be the case, as the interests affected by the proposed measure are extremely varied, and it might have been thought in some cases mutually antagonistic. This reflects the greater credit upon the Scottish Secretary and the Lord Advocate, who are responsible for the present form of the Bill, and who appear to have succeeded in disarming opposition in all important quarters by the manner in which the Bill is drafted, and by the discriminative assurances in certain quarters by which its introduction to Parliament has been accompanied. Compared with the Bill of last year, there has been a great advance in proposals of a liberalising tendency; and the Bill as it now stands will, if carried, effect a complete and much-needed revolution in the University polity. It is not too much to say that in the transference of the administrative power from the Senatus, which consists solely of the professoriate, to a reconstituted and thoroughly representative and responsible University Court, the University will have changed its character from a private speculation to a great public institution, and its system of government from an irresponsible to a constitutional form. In the reformed University Court, as proposed in the Bill, the various constituent bodies of the University are to have a representation fairly proportional to their several degrees of importance, and it is particularly