with the administration of the Act, the training of the sick and obstetric nurses, their pay, &c., and I have suggested three grades of sick nurses, with six, eighteen, and thirty-six months' training respectively, their pay being £60, £80, and £100 respectively. Obstetric nurses with a minimum of three months' training to have £60 per annum, both classes being prohibited from accepting fees and gratuities from patients and their friends. The schedules also contain rules and regulations for both the nurses and the medical men. The bill is intended as a compromise, and is drafted on the principle that its working would be largely carried out by voluntarily nursing associations, with "grants in aid" from boards of guardians and local authorities.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

April 27th, 1897.

ALEX. MCCOOK WEIR.

"NEW SANITARY BY-LAWS FOR LONDON."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your commentaries upon the proposed new sanitary by-laws of the London County Council in THE LANCET of April 24th you criticise By-law 7, in reference to gulleys being placed outside buildings and waste-pipes discharging over them, saying on page 1165, "With new buildings there can be no difficulty," and again, "New buildings must not be allowed to offer any difficulties." If reference be made to the London Building Act, 1894, it will be found that new buildings erected in existing streets—and this applies to the whole of existing London—may be made to cover the whole of the ground area of the premises, and my experience is that this is taking place. I have a number of examples in which this has taken place during the two years the Act has been in force. If, therefore, under the Building Act, it is possible to cover in all the ground space, and owners avail themselves of the opportunity, how is it possible for the new sanitary by-laws to be enforced?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

JOHN F. J. SYKES,

Medical Officer of Health of St. Pancras.

Camden-square, N.W., April 26th, 1897.

"NOTES ON ONE YEAR'S SURGICAL WORK."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Mr. Symonds, in THE LANCET of April 17th, reports that of four cases of flat foot two were treated by excision of the metatarso-phalangeal joint, and that "by this means the inner aspect of the foot was shortened and a permanent arch was formed." I am wholly unable to see how such an operation can have this result. I could understand if it led to the effacement of an existing plantar arch, because it involves destruction of a joint necessary for proper action of the flexor longus pollicis muscle, which "is the real sustentaculum tali." I am here adopting the words of Mr. Barwell in THE LANCET of Jan. 30th, where, in another very happy expression, he speaks of the arch as "a by-product of function"; and I note them with satisfaction as expressing principles on which I have for many years been insisting in these columns, in "The Human Foot," and elsewhere. To those principles the operation recorded, and presumably recommended, by Mr. Symonds is altogether opposed.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Gloucester, April 23rd, 1897.

T. S. ELLIS.

THE ALLEGED INCREASE OF INSANITY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have carefully studied the special report of the Lunacy Commissioners recently laid before Parliament and admit that insanity, as such, especially in lunatic asylums, may possibly not have increased so much as the number of registered lunatics. I also thoroughly appreciate the thirteen reasons put forward by the Lunacy Commissioners to account for the increase in the number of insane persons; but still it cannot be denied that in thirty-seven years the number of lunatics has increased from 37,762 to 96,446, and will probably continue to increase. Even if these numbers do not constitute "a serious menace to the race," there still, according to my views, remains to the State, and especially to so rich a State as England, the right and duty to seek out and adopt measures for the purpose of limiting as much as possible this increase of

insanity, more especially as pauper lunatics will probably, as time goes on, make still further claims to assistance. The thirteen reasons brought forward by the Lunacy Commissioners to explain away the continual increase in the number of lunatics do not take into account heredity and abuse of alcohol. These chief causes for the breaking out and further increase of mental disorders remain unchallenged, and as long as they are not combated by the State the number of lunatics, together with mental disorders, will continue to increase. Most scientific specialists in England will be disposed to concur in these views.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

DR. F. SCHLANGENHAUSEN.

Villach, Carinthia, April 20th, 1897.

HOSPITAL ABUSE.

(BY OUR SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.)

VIII.—THE ROYAL LONDON OPHTHALMIC HOSPITAL.¹

The Crowd of Patients and Students from all Parts of the World.—The Guinea Fee Limit.—The Difficulty of Dealing with Poor Patients willing to Pay.—A Partial Check on Abuses.

IT is a general complaint in the provinces, but more especially in the smaller towns, that the London hospitals compete disastrously, not only with the local general practitioners, but even with the consultants. Where there is a serious illness or the necessity for an important surgical operation, the patient often has not sufficient faith in the ability of the general practitioner and shrinks from the expense of applying to a consultant. Perhaps also his faith in the provincial consultant is hardly any firmer than his faith in the provincial general practitioner. Hence the tendency, which easy railway communications have greatly increased, to go to London for superior advice. At Leeds, for instance, I was told of a case of a boy who suffered from tuberculosis of the foot. His parents had heard that Sir James Paget was attached to the staff of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, so without further inquiry the boy came up to London. He was under the impression that he would at once be seen and cured by this eminent surgeon. On reaching London he presented himself at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and forthwith asked to see Sir James Paget. The attendants expostulated in vain. The boy took a seat and patiently remained there for four hours. He returned the next day and for several days, and it took some time before it was discovered that the money spent in the journey to London would have sufficed to pay for expert advice in Leeds.

Of the various diseases for advice for which patients can easily come up to London diseases of the eye hold a prominent place. Generally there is no immediate urgency, so that the patient can select his own time for the journey, and as his general health is not impaired he can travel without risk or inconvenience. The temptation in those cases to go to London is all the greater, as the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital enjoys a world-wide reputation. This was the first institution of the kind founded, not merely in England, but in Europe. It was established in 1804, and then called the "London Dispensary for the Relief of the Poor Afflicted with Eye Disease." The following year the hospital was opened, and during the first twelve months over 700 patients were treated. In 1821 the foundation-stone of the present building in Moorfields was laid. The number of patients, however, increased so rapidly that a new wing had to be added in 1869, and now a special appeal is made for the purpose of erecting a still larger and more suitable building in the City-road. In 1895 there were 28,474 patients treated at this hospital, an increase of 1982 on the previous year. Of this number 2184 were in-patients, of whom 825 were operated on

¹ The previous articles on this subject were published in THE LANCET on the following dates: (1) Sept. 26th, 1896, Plymouth and Devonport; (2) Oct. 10th, 1896, Exeter; (2 continued) Oct. 17th, 1896, Exeter; (3) Oct. 31st, 1896, St. Thomas's Hospital, London; (4) Nov. 14th, 1896, Liverpool; (4 continued) Nov. 21st, 1896, Liverpool; (4 continued) Dec. 12th, 1896, Liverpool; (5) Jan. 2nd, 1897, Manchester; (5 continued) Jan. 9th, 1897, Manchester; (5 concluded) Jan. 23rd, 1897, Manchester; (6) Feb. 6th, 1897, Leeds; (6 concluded) Feb. 13th, 1897, Leeds; and (7) April 17th, 1897, Coventry.