not on proprietary foods or dried products; that if the milk is not boiled for a long time during four months in the year it cannot be used (except immediately) without great risk of diarrhoea; that if it is so boiled there are a certain, but not large, risk of producing scurvy and a much larger risk of interfering with the infant's health in a less obvious manner. It is unscientific to run either of these risks. There is only one true solution of the problem—to use a perfectly pure, clean milk and to keep it in sterile, closed vessels at a low temperature. This, however, is a counsel of perfection. In the meantime there is a counsel of imperfection—namely, to pasteurise the milk and to keep it under the conditions above indicated. For the classes who can hardly be expected to do this the only plan is to provide infant milk depôts and to teach them their value.

I will not enter into the question of preservatives. We have not yet at our command a sufficient number of observations and so I shall content myself with calling Mr. Cecil Revis no harsher name than "somewhat previous."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

J. M. FORTESCUE-BRICKDALE, M.A., M.D. Oxon.

Clifton, Bristol, Oct. 1st, 1904.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I desire to reply as briefly as possible to the letter of Dr. F. W. Forbes-Ross, which appeared in THE LANCET of Oct. 1st, p. 979. He considers the question of boiled milk and scurvy "the classical example in medical circles of 'a little knowledge being a dangerous thing.'" May I remind him that it is precisely those who have devoted most attention to the scientific aspects of infant feeding who are responsible for the contention that the boiling of milk gives rise to scorbutus. I will quote but one authority—Dr. L. Emmett Holt: "How great was the danger of scurvy from a prolonged use of sterilised milk as a diet was first prominently brought out by an investigation into the causes of scurvy by the American Pediatric Society. Sterilised milk was the previous diet in 107 of the 379 cases in this report, being second in importance only to the proprietary infant foods. Again and again cases have been cured by simply changing the diet from sterilised to raw milk, so that there seems to be no escape from the conclusion that the heating really produced the disease."¹ I hope that Dr. Forbes-Ross does not include Dr. Holt among those whose "little knowledge is a dangerous thing." He states that in 15 years he has never seen a case of "scurvy rickets" due to boiled milk. But scorbutus in infants frequently results from a diet of boiled milk and I am constantly seeing cases.

In my "Nutrition of the Infant" I have devoted considerable attention to this subject and, without desiring to claim any degree of infallibility, I venture to think that the facts discussed in the chapters on "The Heating of Milk and the Resulting Changes" and "Scorbutus" are not to be got over by dogmatic statements in regard to the incidence of such a curious disease as "scurvy rickets." I would ask those interested in the question to read the report of my evidence before the Inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. For one of the members of the committee began his examination with the question—"Will you think me troublesome if I ask you to go categorically over what you have said to us?" But Dr. Forbes-Ross is not content with boiled milk. He recommends the use of dried cow's milk dissolved in water. It is really distressing that so many members of the profession will so persistently refuse to really consider the extreme importance of the food of the infant in regard to structure and development. He gives 15 reasons for advocating the use of this powder. I will content myself with a single objection. It is not a *food* for infants. And in connexion with this I would refer him to my letter published in THE LANCET of July 16th, 1904, p. 173. In hospital and private practice I have had a great number of infants under my care. Not one of them has developed zymotic enteritis or anything like it. Not one of them has been fed on "boiled" or "sterilised" milk. The difficulties of meeting the requirements of the infants among the poorer classes are serious. But we shall not succeed in surmounting these difficulties by ignoring them.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, W., Oct. 1st, 1904.

RALPH VINCENT.

AXIS TRACTION FORCEPS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—There appears in Dr. G. E. Herman's work, "Difficult Labour," Chapter XXV., in the section *re* forceps describing the mode of attachment of the traction rods: "Theoretically they *should* be attached opposite the equator of the head, but this is opposite the middle of the fenestræ." It has occurred to me for some time that this could be accomplished by means of a transverse rod with rounded edges and surface, joining the two sides of the blades crossing the middle of the fenestræ, the traction rods to be attached to their centres and able to be detached for cleansing purposes, and the traction rods to be attached to the outer sides as in Dr. C. J. Cullingworth's forceps. In order to make the instrument light the handles should be made of aluminium. I shall be glad of your opinion.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

R. E. W. JENNINGS, M.R.C.S. Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond.
Grays, Essex, Sept. 24th, 1904.

* * We think that the apparatus is feasible but that it presents certain disadvantages of which the most notable are (1) pressure on the head, and (2) the liability of the head to bulge into the fenestræ.—ED. L.

LAYMEN AND ELECTRICAL TREATMENT.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—If you are not too weary of this correspondence perhaps you will allow me to complete up to date the history of the patient with exophthalmic goitre referred to by me in THE LANCET of Sept. 17th. She subsequently got very marked and lasting benefit as the apparent result of about three months' treatment by the constant current, administered, alas, by her own mother.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Wimpole-street, W., Oct. 5th, 1904.

E. STANLEY SMITH.

THE MEDICAL MAN, THE CORONER, AND THE PATHOLOGIST.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have read your annotation on the above in THE LANCET of Oct. 1st, p. 961. I have also seen published in other journals accounts of the incident to which you allude. There is one point which has not been touched on in any of the reports I have seen. The juryman asked the coroner if the employment of the "pathologist and toxicologist" in question meant any extra expenditure and the coroner replied that no additional expense would be incurred thereby. If the coroner is correctly reported he said what he should have known was untrue. The staff of a hospital supported by voluntary contributions receive no fee for post-mortem examinations nor for their subsequent attendance at the inquest. The introduction, therefore, into the case of the "pathologist and toxicologist" is an extra expense to the ratepayers.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Oct. 5th, 1904.

CORONER.

CHARITY VOTING REFORM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Having been very busy I have only just read Mr. Sturges's letter in THE LANCET of Sept. 10th, p. 793. Will he kindly state what the effect has been on the incomes of the various institutions he names? Has the abolition of the voting system increased or diminished the incomes?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Oct. 2nd, 1904.

A CONSTANT READER.

TRIALS OF SMALL MOTOR-CARS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of Sept. 24th an annotation appeared under the above heading in which you state that the cars in the Hereford trials were arranged in four classes according to price, varying from £150 to £200. I beg to inform you that five cars competed costing less than £150,

¹ "Recent Progress and Present Problems in Pediatrics." An address delivered before the Cleveland Medical Society, Oct. 26th, 1900.