the auspices of Dr. F. Mouat, but his plans were completed before 1859-60, and the health of the prisoners has not improved since he left India. Cholera is as deadly at present among the civil population (and, I believe, among the military also) as it has ever been, and no persistent efforts have as yet been made to mitigate the frightful ravages of this disease among the natives of Bengal.

Yours faithfully,

Grosvenor-street, December 6th, 1875.

C. MACNAMARA.

MILITARY MIDWIVES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your impression of the 27th inst. I observe a letter from Staff Surgeon Nelson, R.M.A., upon the propriety of providing well-educated midwives for the army, in order to secure the comfort and well-being of our soldiers' wives and infants during labour, and to render them independent of the ignorant "Gamps" who are always to be found infesting garrison towns.

So far back as 1869 I formed a school for army midwives, in connexion with the training department for civilian midwives, at Sir P. Dun's Hospital, Dublin, to which is attached a large and flourishing midwifery department, I was encouraged and aided in this work by H.R.H. the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief; the then head of the Army Medical Department; my esteemed friend Doctor Dane, the then P.M.O. of Ireland; and also by my Board of Governors.

The school has been for the last five years in a most prosperous condition, and has recently been placed upon a firm basis by the patronage of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen. It is in active operation throughout the year. Since its foundation in 1869 up to the present date, I have educated 271 well-informed midwives and ladies' nurse-tenders, and these are now scattered over the empire with their respective corps.

An Army Midwives' Class is now under training.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD B. SINCLAIR, A.M., M.D.,
King's Professor of Midwifery, Univ. Dub. Medical School,
once Assistant Surgeon to the Royal Scots.

Dublin, Nov. 1875.

ON DILATATION OF THE FEMALE URETHRA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Mr. Teale's recent paper on the Treatment of Vesical Irritability in the Female by Dilatation of the Urethra, shows that he and I have unconsciously been working in parallel grooves for some time. I was not aware of Mr. Teale's practice when, in 1871, I adopted a very similar proceeding at the Hospital for Women, Soho-square, to which institution I was then surgeon. Failing to cure cases of painful micturition by other measures, I adopted the plan of rapid dilatation of the urethra with the finger guided by a director, in some cases using a pair of ordinary polypus forceps to commence the dilatation. My idea was that, in some cases, there was a fissure of the mucous membrane analogous to fissure of the anus, but this I was never able to prove, though the rapid dilatation almost invariably produced a tear in the subpubic portion of the mucous membrane, which might, in some cases, be the continuation of a fissure. In a course of lectures on Diseases of the Female Urinary Organs, which I delivered at Soho-square in February, 1873, I narrated many cases illustrating this practice, and from the number of American surgeons who at that time visited the hospital and saw my practice, I imagine that the introduction of the practice into America is due to my example. I can fully confirm Mr. Teale as to the benefit conferred on many cases by the treatment and its failure in others, and I have never seen permanent incontinence result, though my patients have often been unable to retain the urine for twenty-four hours. I have, however, never pushed the dilatation quite to the extent practised by Mr. Teale, having been content to take one finger as my limit.

In another direction, however, I have pushed on some-

what beyond Mr. Teale, and that is in the application of topical treatment to the female bladder. In cases of chronic cystitis, with purulent urine, I have detected, as I believe, an ulcerated condition of the mucous membrane (for with the left forefinger introduced into the bladder it is easy with the other hand to bring the whole of the mucous membrane into contact with it), and I have then applied a strong solution of nitrate of silver by means of a mop, securely fastened on a wire, and passed through a small vulcanite speculum introduced into the urethra. The effect of this has been, in many cases, to render the urine acid and clear in twenty-four hours, and the tolerance of the remedy by the bladder is remarkable. The solution I have employed has been as strong as three drachms to the ounce, and I have never seen any harm follow even where little permanent good was done.

Yours obediently,

CHRISTOPHER HEATH, F.R.C.S.

Cavendish-square, December, 1875.

THORACIC ANEURISM IN ITS RELATION TO SYPHILIS IN THE ARMY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I regret having been absent when the interesting subject of Thoracic Aneurism in its relation to Syphilis in the Army was discussed at the Medico-Chirurgical Society. Permit me now to say a few words on a subject in which I feel much interest.

Notwithstanding a somewhat lengthened period of military service, I confess that I should hesitate to attribute the occurrence of aneurism of the aorta to one particular morbid influence. Granting that degeneration of arterial tissue, consequent on syphilis, may tend to induce aneurism, I would, nevertheless, consider that long-continued habits of intemperance—not necessarily periodical, or great excess in drink—is a more frequent origin of the disease.

Space does not here permit me to enter into the question which of these two exciting causes exercises the most pernicious influence on the circulatory system in civil, as well as military life. I feel, however, disposed to think that in cases of disease of the heart and its vessels, both among soldiers and civilians, syphilis does not bear so important a part as alcohol. Very frequently, indeed, the connexion between drink and such diseases has come under my observation, and the same remark applies, in a lesser degree, to acute rheumatism; but, speaking from memory, I cannot recal one autopsy for aneurism in which a marked impairment of constitution, traceable to syphilis, was evidenced. Then, how are we to distinguish between the morbid influences of syphilis and intemperance when, as so very often is the case in the army, they go hand in hand? Difficult, if not impossible.

A third and important exciting cause of this class of disease—pressure from military clothing and appointments—is a well known and acknowledged fact, which needs no comment.

It must borne in mind, that patients affected by aneurism not unfrequently attribute the origin of their complaints to some sudden strain. This circumstance points rather to pre-existing arterial degeneration from one or other of the two first-named causes. The last one—the soldier's dress—I should say, shows its evil consequences more in the generation of hypertrophy and valve disease.

It has, for some time past, been my impression that both aneurism and heart disease are much more frequently met with in the army of late years—that such diseases are on the increase.

Looking back for a period of nearly thirty years, death from aneurism was, in my own experience, infrequent. During an interval of five years which I passed in a line regiment not one occurred, and a considerable interval elapsed after I joined the Guards before the contingency arose. And yet formerly, when long service was the rule a soldier remained much longer under the observation of the medical officer.

If my theory be correct, to what cause may the circumstance be attributed? Was the old coatee and its deplorable adjunct of a military stock less injurious than the tunic? Certainly not. Or were the habits of the men better?

I would rather rest my inference on the ground that ever

since the Crimean war the physique and morale of the recruit have deteriorated; that, consequently—and to a marked extent of late years—the men are incapable of resisting in the same measure the various prejudicial influences to which they are subjected either by military duty or by evil propensities.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

FRED. ROBINSON, M.D.,
Scots Fusilier Guards.

Claverton-terrace, St. George's-road, S.W.

THE UTERUS OF HARRIET LANE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to correct one mistake in your report of the "Note on the Post-mortem Diagnosis of a Nulliparous Uterus" which I read at the last meeting of the Obstetrical Society. The measurement of this uterus at the fundus was not one inch and three-quarters in width, but one inch and a third.

Again: It was not from the special character of this particular uterus that I thought it impossible to form a positive opinion with regard to the existence of a previous pregnancy, but because I hold that to be a general rule. My contention at the late trial was that there was no *proof* of a previous pregnancy; but that, on the contrary, so far as appearances went, the uterus indicated rather the opposite. I am generally credited by the newspapers with having given a positive opinion that this uterus had not borne a child; whereas, the only positive opinion I gave was that no one could tell whether it had or not; but I inclined to the opinion that this had not, and I gave reasons which, in the present state of our knowledge on the subject, I believe are fairly warranted, especially in a doubtful case where issues of life and death are involved.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

George-st., Hanover-sq., Dec. 1875.

ALFRED MEADOWS.

SANITARY CONDITION OF UPPINGHAM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am desired by the Sanitary Authority of the Uppingham district to forward you the subjoined report of their medical officer and engineer for publication.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM H. BROWN,

Uppingham, 8th December, 1875.

Clerk to the said Authority.

REPORT

"To the Chairman and Members of the Rural Sanitary Authority of Uppingham.

"GENTLEMEN,—Hearing that the masters of the Uppingham School will probably meet on Friday next, when we presume they will take into consideration the re-opening of the school, we deem it our duty, as the reports we are preparing are not finished, to present an interim statement.

"We find that the condition of several of the school-houses is such as to necessitate material alterations in their sanitary arrangements. With a view to facilitate such alterations Mr. Rogers Field, your engineer, has, in accordance with your resolution, placed himself in communication with Mr. Tarbotton, engineer to the schoolmasters, and he has every reason to believe that means are being taken by the school authorities to expedite the necessary works. Until, however, these are completely carried out, so as to enable us to report to you that each individual house in connexion with the school is in a perfect sanitary condition, we think it desirable that you should not in any way countenance a premature return of the scholars.

"We are, gentlemen, your obedient servants,

"ALFRED HAVILAND,

Medical Officer of Health to the Rural Sanitary Authority of Uppingham;

"ROGERS FIELD,

Civil Engineer.

"4th December, 1875."

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I see by your leading article in reference to the above case that you say "the witnesses relied entirely upon the evidence afforded by the wisdom teeth" to determine

the age. In justice to myself I think it right to say that I specially examined the ossification of the several parts of the sternum, as well as the *dentes sapientie*, in order to assist me in arriving at the probable age, which I gave as *about twenty-five years*.

Again you say—"It is certainly surprising that neither side made any attempt to demonstrate the presence or absence of *lineæ albicantes* upon the abdomen." This, too, is a mistake; and I am quite sure you will be amused by the observation from the Lord Chief Justice in reference to my evidence on this point, that he did "not see what that had to do with it!" It is not my fault that other very important evidence was not given, which would go very far to establish, beyond any reasonable doubt, the fact of pregnancy. I tried to confine my observations closely to the exact questions put to me. Suffice it to say, that I had taken care to give my reasons fully in my reports to the prosecution, and in reply to my observation thereon, Sir John Holker said, "there was ample evidence," or something to that effect—as proved by the result of the trial. I have been requested by several persons to report my evidence as to pregnancy *in extenso*, which I will do. I believe my colleague in this case, Mr. Bond, has promised to send you a report.

Yours truly,

F. G. LARKIN.

Trinity-square, Southwark, S.E., December, 4th, 1875.

BIRMINGHAM.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE scheme propounded for the sanitary improvement of the town by the adoption of the Labourers and Artisans' Dwellings Act, to which attention was called in a previous article, is about to be increased in magnitude and importance. At their last meeting, the Town Council decided, on the recommendation of Dr. Hill, the medical officer of health, to deal with a large district contiguous to that already scheduled, and comprising not less than fifty acres of land. Narrow streets, close courts, houses built back to back, insufficient space, dilapidation, and bad drainage, combine to make this part of the town very unhealthy. While the average death-rate of the borough last year was 26.78, the death-rate in some of the streets in the proscribed area was 54, and in one street reached the frightfully high ratio of 73 per 1000. The proposal to extend the scheme originally suggested will involve a great outlay, but I believe that in the long run it will prove, as at Glasgow, to be a financial success, while the benefits it will confer on the town as a sanitary reform are simply incalculable. Dirt, drunkenness, disease, and death are costly companions, and they will not be banished from the town until the working classes have healthy homes, better education, and more rational sources of enjoyment and pleasure than the public-house and the liquor vault now afford them. Schools established under the Education Act are already raising the intellectual standard of the rising generation, but these will fail in their aim if the children are brought up in dirty houses and in squalid streets and alleys, and have not their physical condition also considered in the establishment of more numerous and extensive play and recreation grounds, at which the sports and pastimes that encourage the growth of healthy muscle and bone can be indulged in.

The Committee of the Midland Medical Institute have arranged with the authorities of Queen's College to occupy some of their rooms at a rental of £200 a year. It is far better that the medical reference library should be located here than at any place at a distance from the medical school. Students as well as teachers will alike benefit by the proposed arrangement.

The periodical collections for the Queen's Hospital in the various churches and chapels of Birmingham have this year realised over £5700, a larger sum than has ever before been collected on Hospital Sunday, and a sufficient answer to those who urged that the adoption of the "free system" would diminish the number of friends and supporters of the charity.

The late Mr. George Allarton, whose obituary you gave last week, was much respected in this town by many of the