altitudes and in dry climates—under conditions, that is, which favour metabolism and cutaneous activity—alcohol, together with many other materials which in the opposite climatic conditions are either retained or forced to seek other exits, is freely excreted by the skin. And if he is it follows that flannel or woollen underwear seriously interferes with the capacity to take alcohol with impunity, a consideration which, if duly acted upon, might save many from the doleful necessity of echoing your correspondent's pathetic lament that he uselessly deprived himself of the pleasures of alcohol for a period of no less than ten years.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
LEONARD WILLIAMS.

York-street, Portman-square, W., Oct. 2nd, 1905.

A MINOR SIGN OF INFLUENZA.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Many of the slighter forms of influenza occurring during the last quarter have exhibited little or no rise in temperature; on the contrary, the latter may be subnormal. The individual feels ill and depressed for several days and may suffer muscular pain in different regions of the body. When he seeks medical advice the medical man probably finds nothing tangible. Now, in the majority, and particularly in those who have not complained of throat symptoms at all, there may be seen during the time, and perhaps for a fortnight subsequently, two narrow patches of congestion, symmetrical in position and usually only an inch long and less than a quarter of an inch in breadth. Each is dark-red and situated along the lateral edges of the soft palate or just encroaching upon the anterior pillars. In pale anæmic throats they are very manifest. I propose to call them "influenzal crescents." They are of assistance in the diagnosis of these indifferent states of health and are to be strictly differentiated from the influenzal throat proper. It looks as if the bacilli-laden air had struck the edges of the soft palate during its passage to the lungs.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Clacton-on-Sea, Sept. 30th, 1905. WALKER OVEREND.

THE HONOUR OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I am much your debtor, not only for the insertion of my letter of disclaimer and explanation anent the Bucci Medicine Syndicate in THE LANCET of Sept. 9th, but for the facilities for the fullest inquiry and criticism which the medium of your columns affords. Three weeks have elapsed and no response has reached me through the publicity of your journal or otherwise, and I feel that I may now fairly say with some finality, coupling this silence with the negative results which searching inquiries yielded at the outset of the prospectus, that the profession has no questions to raise in this matter nor the public any complaint to make.

I should like to make clear that in November, 1903, when the prospectus was issued, my solicitor, Mr. Sidney Newman, in whose hands I have been throughout and whose advice I have acted upon from first to last, gave the whole subject his fullest consideration and attention. Mr. Newman not only weighed the question of the disclaimer and the effect of the prospectus, which has been fully explained in my previous letter, but the propriety of applying for an injunction to restrain the firm from using my name and of entering action for damages were exhaustively investigated. As this latter process would have added some hundred pounds to my costs, he decided on financial lines to take no action, and I venture to think that subsequent events verified the astuteness of his decision, for shortly afterwards the concern went into liquidation and closed its doors and the proprietors could not be found. One of them, however, the author of the misuse of my name, recently figured in public at the Essex assizes, where in June last he was sentenced to 15 months' hard labour for frauds by means of worthless cheques at Walthamstow.

The conception of a disclaimer is not my own but in conformity with the view of the British Medical Association, which they have not till recently—July 14th last—revealed to me, and I can only repeat that to my own mind the evidence, as yet before me, amounts neither to a *raison*

d'être of a "disclaimer," much less of an "apology" from myself. In conclusion, I trust that my explanations are sufficiently clear, adequate, and satisfactory to vindicate the course I have pursued, but I am open to conviction and if any person should have any exception to take to my procedure I trust no time will be lost in making their reasons public.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Alexander-square, S.W., Sept. 30th, 1905. DENNIS VINRACE.

TETANIC CONVULSIONS CAUSED BY COCAINE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The paper in THE LANCET of Sept. 23rd by Dr. A. E. Russell recommending subdural injections of cocaine or eucaine in cases of tetanus induces me to put on record a case under my care in 1885 where tetanus was, in my opinion, directly caused by a hypodermic injection of the former drug.

On March 21st, 1885, at 3.30 P.M., I ligatured a large nævus on the cheek of an infant three months old. The father, who had been experimenting largely with cocaine, asked me to give a sixth of a grain hypodermically. This I did with a perfectly new and carefully cleansed syringe and a solution prepared by him. The operation was apparently painless but before the ligatures were tied tetanus set in. After finishing the operation and applying a dressing we put the child in a hot bath and gave a good dose of potassium bromide, which was repeated every three hours. Opisthotonos was well marked and spasms came on about every three minutes, the lips were livid, and the pupils were widely dilated. The spasms gradually became weaker and by 8 o'clock the child fell asleep, but the rigidity of the muscles of the neck and back lasted about 14 hours longer. It is evident that too large a dose was given but at that time the drug was considered an absolutely safe one.

It appears to me that the above case shows that extreme caution is needed in prescribing its use subdurally as a remedy for tetanus.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

VERE G. WEBB, L.R.C.P. Irel.
New Kent-road, S.E., Sept. 26th, 1905.

THE NOTIFICATION OF DIPHTHERIA.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Whilst thanking you for the replies to my queries, perhaps you will allow me to make a few observations upon your annotation. It appears to me that you attach too much importance to the position of B and C in the matter so far as the council is concerned. The crucial point is this: Parliament in compulsorily applying the Public Health Act to every local authority, expects its provisions to be enforced under the guidance of the *medical officer of health*; otherwise the Act becomes a farce. The opinion of a private medical practitioner should not deter a council from performing its duty under the Act. Notification is futile if the medical officer of health's instructions are disregarded in this outrageous manner and the health of the community is consequently endangered. Laxity in the administration of the Act incites others to disobey it. I stated in my letter that the clinical signs of the disease had disappeared when B and C saw the patient; it therefore follows that they would be absent when the second medical officer of health examined the case a week or ten days later. The defence could not maintain that the throat was for a time free from bacilli since B and C omitted to take a swab for bacteriological examination.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Oct. 2nd, 1905. LEX.

* * It is essential to a prosecution of the kind suggested that there should be proof, not of the existence of a certain disease, but of the person charged being aware of its existence. The parent who was informed rightly or wrongly by B and C that his child had not got the disease would not be likely to be convicted of being aware of its presence, unless, as suggested in THE LANCET of Sept. 30th, p. 978, he (the parent) was proved to have concealed from B and C points of which obviously he ought to have informed them.—ED. L.