symptoms; the patient may die within 24 hours of onset. It seems to me that in these cases there are all the appearances of a blood infection pure and simple and that the condition is one of scarlatinal septicæmia.

To sum up, then, the bacteriological evidence, the very definite relation between the severity of the throat symptoms and the severity of the rash, the remarkable similarity of this disease to that of diphtheria, and the evidence supporting the view that the desquamating epithelium is not the infecting material, all these point to the disease being local rather than general. To this may be added the fact that the blood infection view cannot explain the onset and progress of the rash in a satisfactory manner.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully

July 18th, 1904.

A. H. GERRARD, M.B. Lond.

WHAT CONSTITUTES LIVE BIRTH?

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The definition of stillbirth, proposed by the Midwives Board and later authorised by the Privy Council, as quoted under the above title in THE LANCET of July 9th, p. 93, should not be allowed to pass without comment. The tests applied by midwives are to be "breathing or showing any sign of life after being completely born." This definition makes stillbirth and deadbirth identical, whereas historically and not uncommonly in books and in practice these terms are opposed. The stillborn is really the silent-born child (compare "the still days" of Passion week); these newly-born children are not necessarily pulseless, that is, asphyxiated in the true sense of that word. Further, "any sign of life" begs the whole question, for this requirement is an alternative far too indefinite to be allowed place in a logical definition. This easy vagueness gives ample scope for such casuistry as was exemplified in the oft-quoted case *Fish v. Palmer* (not reported), where a full-term child was born in 1796 and was stated by the nurse to have exhibited, as a sign of postnatal life, no other token than "twice a twitching and tremulous motion of the lips"; the jury decided for its live birth. Such a remarkable test case needed severe scrutiny and verification. I decided to trace its literary history with the following result. The English text-book authors all quote it from Beck, he quoted it from Fœdéré, who quoted it from *Le Moniteur*, whither it was copied and translated from *Lloyd's Evening Post* of July 15th, 1806. This was its original citation with three other identical accounts, presumably from the same pen, in three contemporary newspapers—the *Times* being silent. Since the learned reporter has long been disabled from making affidavits as to the accuracy of his report, the alleged decision must remain of very little forensic significance; indeed, it has never been cited by counsel. Decided cases, civil and criminal, show that the postnatal continuance of activity of the cardio-vascular system is the essential minimum for live birth. Mr. Justice Wright has personally assured me that he "has no objection" to the terms he is stated to have used in defining "separate existence in the theory of the law." Finally, may I quote, as a curiosity, a death certificate returned in 1896 in which the subject was stated to be "aged one minute"?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Inner Temple, July 11th, 1904.

STANLEY B. ATKINSON.

THE WHITE CROSS LEAGUE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The satisfactory results of the mission to the principal towns and cantonments in India undertaken by the White Cross League two years ago have made the committee desirous of complying with the request of the Bishop of Lahore, the president of the Indian White Cross Association, to send out one of its staff again this winter. The ready welcome given to the speaker sent out by the league by every branch of the service and the earnest coöperation of officers and men gave vivid proof of the spirit that is at work in the army in India and throws on us a fresh obligation to meet effectively so remarkable a response. It would be a serious thing to miss an opportunity to which so high an authority again invites us, yet it is impossible for us to accept the call on the strength of our present scanty funds. These are already inadequate to meet the growing demands upon our resources for work at home. We are therefore obliged to appeal for assistance to those of the public who are interested

in the moral welfare of our countrymen in India, which in these days of short service is closely connected with our home life and national health. No one who realises the moral strain which the national will lays upon our Indian army can hold himself unconcerned in its welfare or unaware of its perils. By assisting the league he may do something to discharge this responsibility towards those who have to maintain the nation's honour at such terrible risk. As the absence of one of its secretaries from England for five or six months will necessitate the employment of a substitute the total amount required will be at least £150. Any donation will be thankfully received by the committee and may be sent to the secretaries of the White Cross League at 7, Dean's-yard, Westminster, by whom any detailed information will be gladly supplied.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

A. LUCKNOW,
Bishop.

H. M. EVANS, C.B.,
General, Chairman.

ROBERTS,
Field-Marshal.

HENRY SCOTT HOLLAND,
Vice-Chairman.

J. WOLFE MURRAY,
Major-General.

G. A. LAHORE,
Bishop, President Indian
Army White Cross Association.

CONTAGIOUS ABORTION IN CATTLE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your note on the above subject in THE LANCET of July 16th you observe: "Professor Cave's results clearly show that contagious abortion can be prevented by the adoption of appropriate local antiseptic treatment for cows and, if necessary, for the bull." I have italicised the last statement because I am surprised to see any doubt expressed as to the need for treating the bull in every herd in which contagious abortion (warping) has established itself. My impression is that the late Professor Nocard clearly established nearly 20 years ago that in every such case the bull was the main, if not the sole, medium for diffusing the infection and some inquiries which I myself made in this neighbourhood more than ten years ago quite confirmed that opinion.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Gloucester, July 18th, 1904.

FRANCIS T. BOND, M.D. Lond.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have read with much interest your annotation in THE LANCET of July 16th concerning the local use of antiseptics as a remedy for recurring abortion in cattle. I am under the impression that the treatment is not so new as your reference to Professor Cave's experiments would lead your readers to believe since it is within my knowledge that at least one veterinary surgeon of distinguished standing in his profession and a famous breeder of prize cattle—Mr. C. Stephenson of Newcastle-upon-Tyne—has for years made use of antiseptic vaginal injections with marked success in the treatment of such cases.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

WILLIAM MARTIN, M.D. Durh.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, July 19th, 1904.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF DERMATOLOGY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—You were kind enough some time back to call the attention of your readers to the report I was preparing for the forthcoming Berlin International Congress of Dermatology on Prevalence of Leprosy in the British Empire. May I ask you to be kind enough to let me notify in your columns my thanks to the numerous correspondents who have sent me data, and greatly oblige

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE PERNET,
Assistant to the Skin Department
University College Hospital.

July 18th, 1904.

LAYMEN AND ELECTRICAL TREATMENT.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It is unfortunately the practice of many members of the profession to send patients whom they may wish to be treated by some form of electricity or the x rays either to a layman for this purpose or to an institution owned and