excepting in the matter of ventilation, should, if properly laid, be in fair condition. The daily passage, however, of some 100,000 or 150,000 gallons of sewage, whilst tending to flush a small sewer, must of necessity in its passage through so long a length give off in considerable volume the products of fermentation, though the rainfall on so large an acreage, if passing into the sewer, must be greatly in its favour from a sanitary point. Whilst fixing the disconnecting traps as near to the sewer as possible a certain length of dead drain between the sewer and the trap cannot be avoided, and these dead ends are most objectionable, accumulating the foulest air in the sewer in such close proximity to the houses. Undoubtedly these ends should be fitted with at least a four-inch ventilating pipe on the sewer side of the house trap carried up to a suitable point above the roof of each house, but in this matter discretionary powers should rest with the surveyor who administers the by-law, as in some instances such a pipe might prove a source of danger. To be definite, the disconnecting traps can be used and are certainly desirable as retarding the entrance of sewer air to the inside of the houses, but if used the public drain must be ventilated. Without these traps this is still more a necessity.—ED. L.

"RETURN' CASES OF SCARLET FEVER."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your annotation in THE LANCET of Jan. 30th under this heading beside the question of neglect at a special hospital comes the more general one of how far persistent desquamation is a sign of infectiousness in convalescents. There is good reason to doubt that the child, aged ten years, was discharged from the hospital while in an infected condition; ragged edges are often found on the hands and feet for some time after infection is over, and cases are not rare where harmless desquamation is continued into the twelfth week or longer. In this case no clue is given as to the time that had elapsed since the commencement of the disease. A similar case is mentioned in this note as discharged after eight weeks in hospital and also a second case, but only a supposition is expressed as to whether one other case may have been due to the first of these, though—"both of these returned children had moved about with perfect freedom among other children at home, at school, or at the Sunday-school." No evidence is forthcoming as to any child having suffered in consequence. Some details of the one case supposed to be originated by the nine-week convalescent would be of interest.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

WILLIAM SQUIRE, M.D.St.And., F.R.C.P.Lond.

Dunscombe, Ealing, W., Jan. 30th, 1897.

"THE FRINGES OF DISEASE."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have read with great interest Dr. Goodhart's address, published in THE LANCET for Nov. 21st, 1896, on the Fringes of Disease. It brings before us clearly our ignorance of the nature of very common ailments, and should serve as a warning against hiding this ignorance under high-sounding titles, which only tend to confusion. I was struck especially by Dr. Goodhart's remarks on the subject of follicular stomatitis in the adult, for I have very lately had a case of it and must plead guilty to having taken refuge in the stomach theory of causation, although feeling that there was nothing particularly wrong with that much-abused organ.

The facts of the case are these. A woman, aged twenty-six years, confined normally on Aug. 18th, 1896, experienced on the fourth night a species of nightmare which lasted for an hour or so. On the night of the 30th she had similar symptoms, but not so marked, followed in the morning by an attack of vomiting. On examining the heart a loud, musical, systolic murmur of very strange distribution and conduction was heard in the pulmonary region. This murmur, after lasting for a few weeks, gradually disappeared, and at the present date the heart sounds are apparently normal.

The patient did not convalesce properly, a condition

ascribed to the heart trouble, which I looked upon as thrombotic, and on Oct. 14th she developed follicular stomatitis (small ulcers with yellowish pellicle). I may remark that at this time the baby was affected with thrush in the mouth. Recurrent attacks in the mother continued until Oct. 23rd, when she left for a change, her mouth being very sore and painful on the day she went away. On the 24th she felt very tired after a night's railway journey. On the 27th she had a pain in one of her knees which almost prevented walking. On the 28th she felt very ill. She experienced a feeling of internal coldness, but no shivering, and her temperature rose to 104° F. On the 29th the temperature was 105°, dropping to normal next day, when dysenteric symptoms began, after which the fever was only slight. The dysentery gradually improved and she was able to get up on Nov. 6th, and though the convalescence was a little slow it was otherwise satisfactory. The stomatitis cleared up during her sharp illness and has not since returned. In connexion with these obscure signs of disease I should like an opinion upon a condition of tongue, of which I have met with one or two cases in young children. I mean a map-like appearance of the dorsum, due to loss of epithelium in patches. What is the immediate cause of this condition?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

WALTER H. HAW, B.A., M.R.C.S. Eng.,

District Surgeon.

Barberton, South African Republic, Dec. 16th, 1896.

THE ELECTION EXPENSES OF DR. J. G. GLOVER, DR. LOVELL DRAGE, AND DR. S. WOODCOCK.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It is proposed that subscriptions be raised to defray the expenses incurred in the late election by the candidates, Dr. James Grey Glover, Dr. S. Woodcock, J.P., and Dr. Lovell Drage. Although the two latter were not successful they, considering they appeared for the first time as candidates, made a good fight and will certainly contest the seats again at the next election. The expenses were necessarily heavy, the "constituency" being 24,000 electors. Any sums sent to me will be acknowledged on behalf of the committee and the accounts duly audited.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

A. GEORGE BATEMAN, M.B. Aberd.,

Hon. Sec. to the Election Committee.

49, Devonshire-street, Portland-place, W.

"DR. R. R. RENTOUL AND THE MIDWIVES BILLS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of Jan. 23rd Mr. R. Humphreys gives the lie direct to some of the statements in my address upon the above subject and which appeared in THE LANCET of Jan. 16th. I shall notice only two of his assertions.

First, he takes objection to my having said that the Midwives Bill was a "proposal to hand over confinements, natural and abnormal, to the sole control of the midwife." He says, "No one ever proposed to do such a thing." Although I took care to quote Clause 5 of the first Midwives Bill in my address as published on Jan. 16th, so that supporters of "midwives" registration might be taught the very A, B, C of their proposal, I shall quote it again for their exclusive benefit. Here it is—Clause 5 of the Bill of February, 1890: "A person registered under this Act shall be entitled to *practise midwifery* in any part of England and Wales for gain; and from and after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one, a person shall not be entitled to recover any fee or charge in any court for the *performance of any midwifery operation*, or for any *midwifery attendance*, or *advice*, unless she be registered under this Act; neither shall she be eligible for any public appointment as a midwife without such registration." (A copy of this Bill can be had from Eyre and Spottiswoode, East Harding-street, E.C.). Now if this clause did not propose to hand over *all* midwifery cases, natural and abnormal, then I fail to understand the meaning of words.

Secondly, I quoted Dr. Matthews Duncan as having stated that 1 woman in every 15 died in her first confinement.

Mr. Humphreys asserts that Dr. Duncan "never said anything of the kind." Here again Mr. Humphreys shows his ignorance. If he will refer to Dr. Duncan's work¹ he will find a table showing that 1 in 15 dies in her first confinement, 1 in 8 in the fourteenth confinement, and 1 in 6 in the fifteenth confinement. I am really surprised that even Mr. Humphreys gives himself the congenial part of trying to throw mud at Dr. Duncan. Dr. Duncan was appointed by the Government to report upon this subject, and it is not likely he either wilfully or otherwise told untruths. Had Mr. Humphreys taken the trouble—as the merest tyro would—of having read the statement made by Mr. Stephens, M.P., before the Select Committee upon Midwives Registration (question 586) he would have seen Mr. Stephens stated that the death-rate among women in their first confinement at the City of London Lying-in Hospital was 1 in 20; this among 1923 births. Dr. Duncan's figures also are, if anything, too low, because he deliberately excluded all deaths among *unmarried* women—a class who give a very high puerperal death-rate.

If the above are fair samples of my "mis-statements," I think I can leave your readers to judge of their accuracy. If my case is based upon untruths, let it deservedly perish. Will you allow me here to state that the "Editorial Reference Committee" of the *British Medical Journal* has, on Jan. 21st, ordered that my address, which you published on Jan. 16th, is to be suppressed from the journal? This "Reference Committee" consists of Dr. H. Barnes (Carlisle), Dr. Roddick (Montreal), Dr. C. Parsons (Dover), Dr. T. Bridgewater (Harrow), Dr. J. W. Cousins (Southsea), and Dr. C. Holman (London). Why have they thought it worthy of being suppressed? May I ask as a favour, through THE LANCET, that each practitioner interested in this vital question order at once 100 reprints of my address, so that he may send it to M.P.'s, county councillors, boards of guardians, and members of medical societies?

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

ROBERT R. RENTOUL,
Liverpool. Direct Representative, General Medical Council.

"POISONING BY ANTIPYRIN; RECOVERY."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The case of poisoning by antipyrin recorded by Mr. Webster in THE LANCET of Jan. 30th reminds me of a case I saw a few years ago in Calcutta. The patient was a middle-aged woman, convalescent from typho-malarial fever. She was suffering from severe headache, for which I gave her ten grains of antipyrin, with twenty minims of spiritus ammoniæ aromaticus and an ounce of water. In about half an hour's time the patient's condition much resembled that described by Mr. Webster, but with these differences: she was very pale, not cyanotic; there was no swelling of the eyelids, but almost complete loss of sight, and the rash disappeared in about eighteen hours. It much resembled that of urticaria, but there were no small papules, as in Mr. Webster's case. It is interesting to note that the rash in cases of chronic antipyrin poisoning is small scattered papules only, which are seen chiefly on the flexor surfaces. My patient rallied well on the administration of hot coffee and whisky. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

FRANK G. WALLACE, M.A., M.B., B.C. Cantab.
Earl's-court, Feb. 1st, 1897.

CHRONIC ULCERATION TREATED BY OXYGEN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Will you permit me to make a correction in your kind report in THE LANCET of Jan. 30th of my oxygen cases shown at the Clinical Society? All the final bacteriological examinations showed only *staphylococci*, all the other micro-organisms having disappeared. I have obtained identical results in hundreds of examinations. I mentioned these facts to show the selective power that oxygen undoubtedly has.

I remain, yours faithfully,

Hertford-street, Mayfair, W., Feb. 1st, 1897. GEORGE STOKER.

MALE NURSES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It is possible that some of your readers may be inconvenienced by an erroneous statement of Lady Priestley in the *Nineteenth Century*. Having mentioned the necessity and propriety of employing male nurses in certain cases Lady Priestley regrets that there should be no institution for supplying them. This is an amazing misstatement considering that the Hamilton Association for providing male nurses was founded in May, 1885, and has been steadily at work up to the present time. Many medical men have employed the nurses under the association, and have testified to their ability and attention. During all this time the association has been regularly advertised in the THE LANCET, and on more than one occasion you have expressed your editorial approval of its work; even as early as 1886 you pronounced it "deserving of support." Let us again remind your readers that the Hamilton Association is not a commercial, but a philanthropic institution. Its object is not to make a pecuniary profit, but to be a benefit to both patients and nurses, and therefore to medical men. Thus it differs altogether from proprietary concerns which since its establishment have added this branch to their business. It is managed by a committee on which the profession is fully represented and which is therefore able to exercise needful discipline. Admission to the roll of the association is only obtainable after full inquiry into the character and antecedents of candidates and is the best guarantee the public have of the qualifications of a nurse. You will, no doubt, remember that the association was founded by the late Miss Jane Hamilton, a lady whose relatives were hospital physicians and surgeons. Miss Hamilton had seen the necessity of men being trained as nurses to attend to various cases, had witnessed distress at the difficulty of obtaining them, and founded the association at very great expense, leaving a legacy at her death to carry it on. Surely Lady Priestley should have known this before writing on the subject. We hope, however, the publication of these facts in your columns may go far to neutralise the injurious effects of her misstatement.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

THE TREASURERS OF THE HAMILTON ASSOCIATION.
Park-street, Grosvenor-square, W.

* * "The Hamilton Association for providing trained male nurses is one deserving of support. It is most desirable, we think, that male nurses should be employed for attendance on the sick of their own sex whenever practicable." These were our words concerning the Hamilton Association in THE LANCET of Aug. 7th, 1886, and they convey our opinion at the present time.—ED.L.

"ARMY EXAMINATIONS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I say, in answer to "Uncrammed," that I did not uphold the current scheme of "Army Examinations," neither did I decry our public school life, and I certainly do not call in question the capacities of the school teachers? My point is that the inevitable competition, whatever the subjects of examination may be, is the great cause of the parental complainings, with which everyone must sympathise. This competition means that only a proportion of candidates can be successful, notwithstanding that all may come up to a satisfactory standard of physique, mental equipment, &c., and have enjoyed the advantages of a public school training. But the misfortune is that this is not enough. These candidates have to compete with one another, and the competition necessitates a special preparation which is carried out under disadvantages at school, but, for reasons I gave, with more success outside by special army instructors. The need of this special preparation may be deplorable, but how is "Uncrammed" going to obviate it? To eliminate competition is impossible, and the only other way to suppress these outside army instructors is for the schoolmasters to be more successful. Even then, does "Uncrammed" suppose there would be no distressed parents left to write to the papers and bemoan their hard lot? Are the lads who cannot compete successfully from school to give up the struggle? But what harm do these army instructors do? THE LANCET, having

¹ Mortality of Childbed and Maternity Hospitals, p. 41, table vi.