the past year. Does "diphtheritic sore-throat" mean diphtheria or not? If it does, I would point out that among the ninety-three cases there was not a single death. The mortality rate of diphtheria is estimated by some authors higher than others. The lowest I can find is that by Aitken—viz., 33 per cent. If it does not, then I hold that the use of the term "diphtheritic" is both mischievous and unwarrantable.

I quote the following paragraph from "Quain's Dictionary of Medicine," under the heading "Follicular Catarrh (of the tonsils)": "The appearance of the tonsils in such a condition is at times mistaken for a diphtheritic state in consequence of the whitish patches of secretion deposited on them."

The presence of follicular tonsillitis in many parts of England during the past year is a matter of notoriety; and I think it is more than probable that the so-called diphtheritic sore-throats were examples of this simple malady.

Mr. Barford leaves it to us to estimate his "capacity to form a judgment." I venture to doubt his capacity to form an independent opinion on any subject which he approaches with a mind biased by preconceived opinions.—Yours, &c.,

H. G. ARMSTRONG,

Medical Officer to Wellington College, and Assistant-Surgeon to Royal Berks Hospital.

January, 1884.

* * We publish this letter at the request of Sir Lintorn Simmons, but we see no reason to alter the opinion we have elsewhere expressed.—ED. L.

"ON THE RELATION OF DISORDERS OF THE FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS TO INDIGESTION."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read with much pleasure the article by Dr. George Elder in THE LANCET on Dec. 15th, 1883, on the above subject. It has happened in the course of my practice in the special domain of gynaecology to meet with a vast number of such cases; indeed, it is almost the exception to find a woman with ovarian or uterine disorder who does not suffer from reflex disturbance of the digestive function at stated intervals. Such is the intimate connexion of the female reproductive system of nerves with those of the whole organism, that it is a work of supererogation to attempt a description of the anomalous symptoms of which such sufferers complain. Neither can there be any especial or absolute significance in the nature, seat, or definition of pain. The pain due to a congested ovary, to a hydro- or pyo-salpinx, may be referred to the hypogastrium, or may occasion a spasmodic contraction of the gall-duct, and thus set up a train of subjective and objective symptoms simulating with much exactness the characteristics of icterus. I have known yellow-eyed, worn-out, and chlorotic women suffer with constant uneasiness over the liver, with varying degrees of conjunctival yellowness, with a well-marked zone of discolouration around the waist, in whom all such icteroid deceptions abated just in proportion as the ovaries recovered their normal tone. This spasmodic contraction of the ductus communis, and the recurrent attacks of pain in the stomach attended with nausea at the intermenstrual periods, simulating periodical subacute peritonitis, is most often associated with some abnormal state of the ovaries (congestion, hydro- or pyo-salpinx). The vast series of anomalous nervous disturbances due to reproductive abnormality must be treated as a whole, and not separately. The prolonged use of the hot-water vaginal irrigation with Merriam's contrivance, by which the pelvis is elevated and the patient reclines comfortably in bed without the necessity of making any effort, galvanism over the ovary (from eight to twelve cells), intra-vaginal galvanism, the Turkish bath, shampooing, and tampons saturated with a solution of iodoform, glycerine, and eucalyptus globulus, pushed up into the cul-de-sac of Douglas, are the means which I employ to mitigate the suffering which arises from inflammation of the ovary and tube. Tonics and Trommer's extract of malt will arrest the dyspepsia. The amount of diastase in this preparation being larger than in any other, its influence is more active. Galvanism over the liver and the occasional use of the Carlsbad sprudel salt, with general massage three times a week, will be found to subserve a useful purpose in the reflex disturbances of the liver. In

dislocated uteri I prefer to give the necessary support and direction by properly adjusted cotton tampons soaked in glycerine and tannin. Properly applied they give immediate relief and occasion no local discomfort. In the hands of the general practitioner pessaries are an abomination; in the hands of the specialist they are only occasionally of permanent benefit. They militate against the very end we wish to attain by stretching the vaginal walls, by irritating both bladder and rectum, and by exciting inflammation. They are not constructed upon correct anatomical knowledge, since the attachments of the uterus and its peritoneal relations make it impossible to tilt and support the uterus sufficiently by intra-vaginal means. The astringent tampons lend an exciting principle to the vaginal walls, so that in time they may act as natural pessaries, and by their juxtaposition support the uterus. They reduce engorgement, soothe, and support. The dragging of an engorged uterus upon its attachments is sufficient to disarrange the stomach; and this will be found to abate immediately upon the introduction of the tampon. Over zealous local attention and a proneness to overlook intercurrent conditions, which is sometimes the weak spot of the specialist, are sources of error. Strict attention to hygienic and dietetic detail, well directed local interference at sufficiently long intervals, so as not to embarrass the patient or to create irritation, will be followed by measurable success.—Yours truly,

Washington, D.C., U.S.A. HORATIO R. BIGELOW, M.D.

"A GENERAL MEDICAL HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The proposal to establish in London "a general medical hospital for the insane and persons afflicted with what are supposed to be incurable nervous diseases, with a branch establishment for convalescents on the Continent," mentioned in your columns of the 12th inst., is one of very great importance, and demands the fullest consideration of the whole medical profession. For not only is the proposal important to those already engaged in this specialty, but it concerns also hospital and other physicians, and those engaged in the general practice of their profession, inasmuch as the scheme provides for a staff of non-alienist physicians, and for clinical instruction in mental diseases. Any step which tends to abolish existing mystery or ignorance from the minds of the profession or public with regard to the care and treatment of the insane, to promulgate correct views with regard to insanity, and to lead to hospitals for the insane being regarded not merely as places of detention, but in the light of ordinary hospitals for the treatment of disease, is certainly a step in the right direction, although no doubt opinions will differ as to the best practical means of arriving at so desirable an end. Opinions will probably also differ on the question as to whether alienists or non-alienists are best qualified to act as honorary physicians or surgeons to the projected hospital, but this point may very well be left open to further discussion by the profession, as well as the part the Commissioners in Lunacy ought properly to take in all matters connected with the care and supervision of the insane. It will probably be contended, on the one hand, that the alienist physician, engaged as he usually is wholly in the special study of brain and nervous diseases, sees nothing but diseased conditions of the nervous centres, and thus has not that opportunity for general observation and comparison with healthy conditions of these centres possessed by the ordinary hospital physician, and thus becomes biased; while, on the other hand, it may be contended the alienist physician, who is not usually selected for this particular duty from the lower ranks of his school or college, enters upon it with all the latest teaching in physiology, pathology, and therapy fresh in his recollection, and is consequently well prepared to observe and note morbid conditions and compare them. It may further be contended on the part of the alienist physician, that even the whole of a lifetime specially devoted to the purpose will scarcely do more than suffice to reveal to any appreciable extent the secrets of the morbid nervous centres alone.

Other questions also arise out of the proposal. For instance, in what respects such a hospital as that projected should differ from any ordinary hospital in construction, government, administration, the provision to be made, and special requirements for the personal and other care and

treatment of the insane, for it unfortunately is generally found necessary in the early and acute stages of mental disease to deprive the patient to a greater or less extent of his liberty; and thus there is introduced a disturbing element not usually met with in the treatment of ordinary disease. Self-control in the insane being usually in abeyance, other control—personal, mechanical, chemical, or structural—must necessarily be substituted for it to prevent accident, for it is an undoubted fact that a very large proportion of patients sent under care and treatment to hospitals for the insane are only so sent by relatives or the public authorities when it is found that they are dangerous to themselves or to others. When all the conditions here alluded to are provided for in the projected hospital, it will be seen in what respects, if any, it differs from some existing asylums or hospitals for the insane in construction and government, or in the means afforded by them for systematic or clinical instruction in mental diseases; for many of the existing admirable institutions it is well known are already open to such members of the general body of the profession as choose to avail themselves of their clinical teaching, as well as to medical students; whilst the able physicians who act as their medical superintendents already give systematic instruction in mental diseases in every medical school in the metropolis.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Malling-place, Kent, Jan. 19th, 1884.

JAMES ADAM, M.D.

* * If any proof were required of the urgent need of a hospital such as that which we understand to be projected, it would be found in the above able but mistaken argument. The writer, an accomplished alienist, does not even recognise the existence of a stage of self-conscious worry or weakness *before* the development of insanity, during which the patient is not only willing but anxious to be treated. Alienists rarely see patients in this stage, yet it is thus early, before they are certifiable, that they need hospital treatment and can be "cured."—ED. L.

THE NEED OF SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR THE "NERVOUS."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Under the above heading there appears a short and quasi-editorial note in your journal of last week (p. 146), involving a misconception which perhaps it would not have been worth while to notice had it been of merely personal interest; but as the whole matter is one of wider scope and more permanent significance than could be inferred easily from one case, I think it desirable to trouble you with the following brief rejoinder. It is not necessary to defend the "eminent English specialist" referred to, inasmuch as he had no responsibility whatever in the case, and was only incidentally consulted by letter. But his opinion happened to be (and I therefore took it to be a representative opinion) that a woman in a state of prolonged lethargy or "trance," and with no other evidence of insanity than the fact that without "care and treatment" she would probably die of starvation, was not in a position in which she could properly be certified as of unsound mind, and thereby be placed in an asylum. Obviously, there might be cases in which the answer to this question might be of more pressing importance than in the case I reported in THE LANCET; and I alluded to one in which, the patient being under age, I had certified a girl on account of mere hysterical anorexia, and had her treated in Gartnavel Asylum, with the best results. Such cases as this last are not very uncommon, and the proper way of dealing with them is a matter in which the whole profession has a legitimate interest. My own opinion is simply that there is a difficulty in dealing with such cases as frankly insane. But, *rather than let such a patient die*, I would feel justified in certifying her of unsound mind, as at present advised.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

Glasgow, Jan. 22nd, 1884.

W. T. GAIRDNER.

* * What does Professor Gairdner mean by "frankly insane"? There are no voluntary patients in England, as Dr. Gairdner probably knows, and "hysterical anorexia" is not a certifiable disease. If by anorexia Professor Gairdner means refusal to take food, that may have been evidence of insanity; but the case must have been admitted on his general opinion, not for anorexia.—ED. L.

"ENLARGEMENT OF THE BURSA PATELLÆ IN CLERGYMEN."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your issue of the 12th inst., I notice a letter from Dr. Wherry of Cambridge expressing his surprise that cases of "housemaid's knee" should occur among the clergy. For the last few years I have been attending the members of the French Jesuit College here, and I have found affections of the bursa patellæ by no means uncommon; these vary in severity from a simple corn-like hardening of the skin covering the patella to the most acute inflammation of the bursa ending in suppuration. Evaporating lotions are often very serviceable in reducing the inflammation, but of course incision frequently becomes necessary, and in some cases large quantities of pus are discharged. Recovery is generally rapid and complete, but occasionally a low chronic state of inflammation in the joint has supervened and has been very troublesome. Complete rest with the application of belladonna plaster, followed by painting with tincture of iodine, have always been successful in producing an ultimate cure. There are about 100 members of the college, the majority of these being students varying from eighteen to twenty-two years of age, and the average number of cases of affections of the bursa patellæ has been about five per annum. I am, Sir, yours truly,

F. H. V. GROSHOLZ, M.K.Q.C.P.I., &c.

Aberdovey, Jan. 15th, 1884.

DR. ROGERS AND THE WESTMINSTER UNION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have much pleasure in handing to you a resolution passed at Derby by the Midland Branch of the British Medical Association on January 10th, 1884.

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,

Nottingham, Jan. 17th, 1884.

A. W. MARSHALL.

"That this meeting of the Midland Branch of the British Medical Association desires to express its sympathy with Dr. Rogers in the contest which he has had with the guardians of the Westminster Union, and at the same time to congratulate him upon the somewhat tardy justice which has recently been meted out to him by the Local Government Board in reinstating him in his position as medical officer of the Union." (Signed)

W. WEBB, M.D., President.

A. W. MARSHALL, M.D., Hon. Sec. and Treasurer.

LIVERPOOL.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF HOSPITAL SUNDAY IN LIVERPOOL.

ON Sunday, the 13th inst., the weather was most favourable for church-goers, and Hospital Sunday continues as a firmly established and favourite institution in Liverpool. Bishop Ryle showed his interest in our local medical charities by preaching sermons both morning and evening on behalf of the fund, and the collections still continue to show the same munificence which has from the first marked Hospital Sunday collections in this neighbourhood. Up till the 23rd inst. the sum of £6900 had been paid into the bank, which sum will be further augmented by a few collections not yet received, and the proceeds of Hospital Saturday will, it is believed, bring the total up to its usual average of £10,000.

HEALTH OF LIVERPOOL.

The extraordinary mildness of the present winter has evidently a very marked effect upon the death-rate. At the meeting of the Health Committee on the 17th inst. the medical officer of health reported that the deaths for the week ending the 12th inst. were 260, being a decrease of 94 on the corrected averages of the last ten years, and 106 less than in the corresponding week of last year, making the rate of total mortality equal to 23.6 per 1000 of the estimated population.

THE INFIRMARY FOR CHILDREN.

The annual meeting of this most useful charity was held on the 22nd inst. The report for the year 1883 showed that