But in this age of speed in all things, to the laid-aside place previous Warrants may be similarly consigned. We have now the Darwinian one of 1876, and it will be interesting to note the results, public and personal, of its constitution of selection absolute.

In conclusion, you properly complimented the Director-General lately on the passing of the Unification Act to its full strength, and the public may well be congratulated on it. Like many other Acts of a public policy, it had to drag its slow length along through obstructive legislation. Did war overtake us in these times of European anxiety, to take the field under the old system of regimental hospitals would be tantamount to doing so with Brown Bess.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
August, 1877. ONE OF MR. ALEXANDER'S SELECTED.

CASES OF OSTEOTOMY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read with much interest the report, given in your issue of Aug. 18th, of four cases of osteotomy, the operation having been performed in each case by Mr. Thomas Jones for the relief of rachitic curve of the tibia.

The value of this operation in cases where the curved bones have become consolidated and have lost all elasticity is very generally appreciated, and for such cases osteotomy is the recognised mode of treatment; but this consolidation of the bone never occurs before the age of four years, and in children under that age the deformity is easily reduced by the use of properly applied splints. I have treated a large number of these cases, and will briefly describe the mode of treatment adopted. The person in charge of the case is instructed to douche the legs every morning with cold water, dry them with a rough towel, and afterwards well rub them with the hand, for the purpose of promoting free circulation in the limb. The bones are then manipulated in the following manner. Suppose the left leg to be the object of attack, and that it is curved outwards, the leg is grasped with the right hand just above the most prominent part of the curve, so that the ball of the thumb rests against the prominence itself; the left hand then grasps the lower part of the leg, around the malleoli, and the bone is gently but firmly bent towards its natural position, then allowed to relax and again straightened, this exercise being continued for ten minutes. Straight splints, reaching from above the head of the tibia to a little below the foot, are worn night and day; the splints should be of solid wood, hollowed so as to be concave from side to side, nicely padded, and firmly bandaged to the inside of the leg. The flat pieces of wood cut out by a carpenter, which, when roughly padded with tow and covered with linen, are honoured with the name of splints, are quite useless; they slip round the leg if not bandaged on very tightly, and when so bandaged, from pressing only on one small point of the head of the tibia above and also of the internal malleolus below, they to a certainty produce sloughs at those places.

Cases 1, 3, and 4 reported by Mr. Jones would, I believe, have yielded readily to treatment such as above described; certainly I have succeeded in relieving cases of greater severity than is the one of which an illustration is given. With regard to the illustrations of this case it would have been more satisfactory had "the cure" been shown with the child in the erect position. It is a well-known fact that in cases of genu extorsum the deformity is rendered much less apparent by flexing the leg on the thigh.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

FREDERICK R. FISHER, F.R.C.S.
Grosvenor-street, August 20th, 1877.

THE ASTLEY COOPER PRIZE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As one of the candidates for the above I was delighted to read the remarks concerning the late award in your last issue. Although I have not the pleasure of knowing any of the physicians and surgeons of Guy's Hospital, nevertheless, considering the trouble they have taken in reading the various essays, I believe they were actuated by the purest and best of motives when they awarded the

prize to the essay bearing the motto "*Facta non verba.*" At the same time I do not believe for one moment they had any idea that the envelope, when opened, would be found to contain the names of two gentlemen—viz., Drs. Eulenberg and Guttman. Had they been aware of this fact, although the essay may be (and, considering joint authorship, ought to be) the best, I think, knowing, as they must do, the exact wording of the late Sir A. Cooper's will, they, in justice, would not have awarded the prize as they have done. I have taken legal opinion on the matter, and am assured that the prize must be awarded to one and not to two authors. The length of time the judges have taken before they awarded the prize—viz., nearly eight months—distinctly points to two important facts: (1) That there must have been a great number of essays to decide upon; or (2) that the competition must have been very close. At present it is my intention to dispute the case in a legal court, and hope the other candidates will join in the expense. I do not wish to cast the slightest imputation upon any of the gentlemen who have judged the essays; at the same time, considering the time, trouble, and expense I have been put to in writing my essay, making my microscopic preparations, and engraving the same on stone, &c., and to find, at the last moment, that a German company has been formed to write an essay that ought to have been the work of one, is, to say the least, disheartening. Entering into the competition with the idea that the award would be to the best author (not authors), I am informed that I can legally claim loss of time, &c. &c., if it is decided to persist in giving the prize to Drs. Eulenberg and Guttman. I hope, Mr. Editor, you will kindly publish this letter without my giving my name and address, as, until the present question is settled definitely, I do not think I should be justified in giving either; at the same time, if any of the other candidates should wish, with me, to dispute the case, if they will, through the medium of THE LANCET, state so, I will put myself in communication with them.

I am, &c.,

August 28th, 1877.

JUSTICE.

POOR-LAW MEDICAL WORK.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As the letter of your correspondent, "ex-Poor-law Medical Officer," touches on a subject on which I have written and thought very much, perhaps you will allow me to make a few remarks on it. He very justly exposes some of the evils which have brought Poor-law medical work into disrepute—viz., false shame about doing work which is paid for, and delegation of duty to unqualified assistants.

I do not consider that the medical officer who attends himself, personally, loses any caste, or that his social position is thereby affected. I speak for myself, and I am a poor-house medical officer. Before entering on my duties I had read "THE LANCET Commission on Workhouses," and so convinced was I by it of the great field of usefulness and of knowledge opened out in a workhouse infirmary, that when I accepted my appointment I made it my object to assist in the improvement you had commenced, to attend my patients in the same way as if I were physician to a voluntary hospital, to introduce system and method into the working, so that my infirmaries might favourably compare with any hospital in England. I have done so with both success for myself and benefit for my patients. I recognised, with you, that "our State hospitals are our workhouse wards," and that there is little difference between the pauper who seeks the aid of a voluntary charitable institution and the pauper who is compelled through the exigencies of sickness and necessity to enter a poor-house infirmary. The diseases are the same, and, moreover, I was paid for doing the same kind of work which the hospital physician was doing for nothing.

I never felt ashamed of my appointment, and I never despise my patients; and for this feeling I certainly must thank the writers who, with an earnestness and thoroughness worthy of the highest praise, let in such a flood of light on the condition of our workhouses, and who have been the means of inducing boards of guardians to erect infirmaries worthy of the object for which they are intended. This little book should be in the hands of every workhouse