impressions and gives its orders to the nervous system with more rapidity and accuracy than can be depended upon in adult life. And as long as fencing is then indulged in moderation it must be of enormous value to the growing youth. With regard to the lateral curvature produced by fencing, it is certain that most fencers have it in a marked degree. But I am not aware that any evil has ever resulted from its presence. It could be easily prevented by fencing with the left hand as well as the right.

My object in addressing you is to point out the extreme appropriateness of fencing as an exercise for Londoners. Fencing can be performed in any weather by daylight or gas-light. At any gymnasium worthy of the name an adversary can always be depended upon, which cannot be said of racquets or tennis. Fencing is a very inexpensive hobby. It causes less strain on the system than boxing or gymnastics; it is an exceedingly pleasant pastime; its dangers are but few; it takes up but little time in the course of the day, thus differing widely from cricket or even boating; it may be indulged in by the young or the very old, but in this last case it must be taken up with great care, more especially if it has been discontinued for any length of time, or serious consequences, such as aneurysm, may result.

Free exercises, light dumb-belling and running assist fencing. Gymnastics, heavy dumb-belling and singlestick are its enemies.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

HENRY SUTHERLAND, M.D.

Richmond-terrace, Whitehall, June 19th, 1893.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have to thank you for your courtesy in sending me the number of THE LANCET containing the article on "Physical Exercises and Fencing," and had it not been for that I should have felt, mere layman as I am, somewhat diffident about addressing the Editors of one of our greatest scientific papers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Fox stated that fencing produces "at times an almost unbearable mental and nervous strain," and he went so far as to quote as one of its victims the famous "M. Merignac of Paris"; what that great master will have to say on the subject remains to be seen. The colonel has based his somewhat dogmatic assertion on the very mildly expressed opinion of an anonymous "doctor," who merely states that "the fatigue attendant on fencing is less a muscular fatigue than a nervous one." Practical swordsmen, I think, mostly differ from him; Lord Methuen, one of the most brilliant in the country, certainly does, and it would have been better if the writer of your article had glanced at his lordship's remarks at the end of the discussion which followed my lecture. I myself have been connected (not professionally, of course) with fencing from a very early age; it has fallen to my lot to organise and superintend the fencing of three regiments, in the course of which I had to do a great deal of teaching myself, and since I left the service I have been connected with a Volunteer regiment which has attached to it a cadet corps of boys varying from fourteen to eighteen years of age; many of these boys fence and some of them are accomplished players with "verie manie weapons," both ancient and modern, but in the course of my experience, ranging over forty-one years, I have never come across a case, old or young, in which the practice of fencing produced either nervous strain or deformity.

The writer of your article says that "there is probably a certain amount of truth" in Colonel Fox's assertion; this is mere surmise and it would have been more to the point had that gentleman quoted a case or two in corroboration thereof. I, on the other hand, can quote an instance where severe nervousness, far from being superinduced by learning to fence, was actually cured by it, and that instance is—myself! When I was at school, between the ages of eleven and fourteen, there was (unknown to the masters, of course) a considerable deal of bullying. I came in for rather more than my fair share of it, and this caused me to become extremely nervous; when I was thirteen I was put, at my own wish, to learn fencing under that splendid master Henry Angelo. I took an immense liking to it and never if I could help it missed a lesson or a bout; the result was that my skill at arms increased very rapidly; with that increased also my self-confidence, and in proportion the nervousness decreased until it disappeared altogether. So far as I can see, the only chance there can be of a boy being rendered nervous by fencing-room work is that—I hope a very remote one—of his being put under a bad-tempered brute of a teacher, who,

instead of leading him on, might knock him about; in such a case, however, the nervousness would not be due to the art of fencing, but to the individual ill-treatment.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Army and Navy Club, June 19th, 1893.

ALFRED HUTTON.

VOLUNTEER INFANTRY BRIGADE BEARER COMPANIES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I read with interest Surgeon-Captain Lawless's letter in THE LANCET of June 10th. I think he hardly grasps the situation, as it is money, not men, that is wanted; men there are in plenty, money there is none. In 1890 there was a meeting of brigade surgeons, who went carefully into the question of brigade bearer companies, drew up a scheme, and a deputation consisting of myself and Brigade-Surgeons Milligan and Danford Thomas attended the Director-General and laid the following, amongst others, before him—(1) That in each brigade sixty-one men should be allotted as a bearer company, and that the senior medical officer should have the command and draw the efficiency grant; (2) that class-firing should not be compulsory for the efficiency grant; (3) that each volunteer bearer company should be equipped similarly to a bearer company on active service. In the end we received a notice that volunteer bearer companies were to be efficient volunteers first and stretcher bearers secondly. So I fail to see what advantage will be gained in getting St. John's men unless a grant is obtained to clothe and equip them. With regard to the remarks about regimental stretcher bearers, they are not as regulation (the Volunteer Regulations 1892, p. 182 A), which distinctly says that two men per company are to be stretcher bearers and in the Welsh Border Brigade I always get in brigade orders, "each regiment in brigade will furnish two men per company, who will be under the senior medical officer for all parades whilst in camp," and I get them, and in 1891, when the brigade bearer company went with the regiment to Aldershot, I utilised the regimental stretcher-bearers as a bearer company, and on all occasions when I have had the brigade bearer company in camp I have worked the regimental stretcher-bearers as a second bearer company, for it is only in brigade camps that regimental stretcher-bearers can get instruction as a company. No company officer can refuse the senior medical officer's demand for two per company. I would gladly join any scheme that would get in each brigade a bearer company entirely under the command of the senior medical officer. I have one in my brigade, but it is costly to start and troublesome to keep efficient, and the only true solution of the difficulty is to have the bearer company in each brigade attached to a company at headquarters, the men to be under the senior medical officer.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

PETER GILES,

June 20th, 1893.

Brigade-Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel W.B.B.

AN ANACHRONISM: SHOULD FULLY QUALIFIED MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS BE STILL DESIGNATED "APOTHECARIES?"

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I send herewith copies of three letters which I have received from Mr. J. R. Upton, clerk to the Society of Apothecaries, in reply to my inquiries as to what steps, if any, the Society was taking to obtain for its new licentiates a title more in accordance with their qualification. These replies cannot, I think, be considered very satisfactory. The title of "apothecary" is undoubtedly obsolete as signifying a medical practitioner, and certainly does not, and never did, convey to the public mind the idea of a practitioner of surgery. This being so, and the public rarely, if ever, consulting the Medical Register (less frequently the prefatory note referred to in your issue of the 10th inst.), I would call upon all the new licentiates, and invoke your powerful assistance, to bring pressure to bear on the Society to make an earnest attempt to get this matter put right.

It is, no doubt, matter for satisfaction that the diploma is recognised for appointments in the public medical services, but the greater number of us are not contemplating entering these services. The Society's diploma states plainly that the holder is a person qualified for the efficient practice of

medicine, surgery and midwifery; all that is wanted is a title which will enable the public to understand the nature and extent of the qualification. Surely this is not an unreasonable request and should not be very difficult to get. Everybody knows the meaning of M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P., and these titles convey a proper idea of the holder's qualification to practise surgery and medicine, but how many, even of the educated members of the community, know what L.S.A. means? And even if the title be written in full the possessor is regarded as a dispenser of medicines—"only an apothecary."

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
R. W.

June 20th, 1893.

[COPY.]

14, Austin Friars, London, E.C., 6th January, 1892.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter on the subject of the title of a L.S.A. whose diploma is dated subsequently to the 30th June, 1887, I beg to inform you that having regard to the recent decision of the High Court in the matter of the Queen v. the Justices of Aston, and the general unsatisfactory position of the whole question of medical titles, it is the intention of the Society of Apothecaries to approach the General Medical Council at an early date with a view of having the matter placed on a firm and intelligible basis.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES R. UPTON,
Clerk to the Society of Apothecaries.

[COPY.]

Society of Apothecaries, Blackfriars, London, E.C.,
22nd August, 1892.

DEAR SIR,—Until the decision of the Courts on the question at issue between the Royal College of Physicians and the Medical Council as to what the title L.R.C.P. confers on its holder, it would be premature for the Society to reopen the matter as to the title of its own Licentiates.

Yours truly,

JAMES R. UPTON,
Clerk to the Society.

[COPY.]

14, Austin Friars, London, E.C., May 31st, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to return my letters of the 6th January and 22nd August, 1892, which you sent to me.

The question of medical titles has not, I believe, been yet considered by the Medical Council.

With regard to the diploma of L.S.A., the fact that it now confers the triple qualification to practise medicine, surgery and midwifery is so generally known that the society is of opinion that its alteration (apart from the difficulty of obtaining an Act of Parliament) becomes a question of doubtful expediency.

The diploma is recognised as qualifying for appointments in the army, navy and Indian Government medical services, and is also recognised by municipal and other public bodies.

Yours truly,

JAMES R. UPTON,
Clerk to the Society of Apothecaries.

"MEDICAL AID ASSOCIATIONS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The medical profession appears to be suffering acutely at present from the disease of excessive competition, and it is obvious that the cause of this is that we have too many medical men for our population. The symptoms force themselves continually on our notice, for we hear constantly of medical men being obliged to work very hard indeed for the utterly inadequate salaries given by boards of guardians, factory owners and by other medical men, not to speak of the disputed case of medical aid associations. Other bodies which employ "doctors" show signs of an inclination to lower their salaries, the Guildford sanitary authority leading the way with the magnificent offer of £200 a year for a medical officer of health, who will not be allowed to practise privately. The value of the services of medical men appears to be decreasing.

Having thus briefly discussed the etiology and symptomatology of our disease I will proceed to suggest a line of treatment, and I beg to remind some of your correspondents of what they appear to have forgotten—namely, that our first object should be to remove the cause, and that the treatment of symptoms should be regarded as secondary to that of the disease itself. The General Medical Council, as I pointed out some months ago, cannot treat the particular symptoms to which attention has been of late so forcibly directed, but it can remove the cause of the disease. The portals of the profession are under its control and were it to make the entrance so difficult as to exclude the huge crowd of half-educated and dull lads who now elbow us and degrade us in ever-increasing numbers, it would have the support and sympathy of the nation, which would recognise the action as an attempt to produce a better article, whilst the attack on medical aid associations was considered to be an effort to get a higher price. Why should not the Council request the licensing bodies to raise their standard of literary and professional knowledge so as to shut

out half or two-thirds of such men as those now qualifying? Is it not clear that if our standards remain as of old whilst those required for arts degrees and for entrance into all other professions are raised the majority of the dull and lazy youths intended for professional life will come to us, swelling our numbers and making still more extreme the competition in our lower ranks, whilst the really clever and industrious (always few) will turn to some employment for obtaining which energy and intelligence are required? The general public would like to see the standard raised, for it would mean that they would have better advice, for which they would be willing to pay. The outflow from the profession being unchanged, whilst the inflow would be much diminished and improved in quality, we should have fewer and better medical men, more highly respected and more highly paid. Instead of thinking of forming new universities with low standards we should try to force up the standards of those we have to something like the level of London, and should insist on a corresponding change in the other licensing bodies. If they resisted, would it really be a great loss if the examinations of a dozen of them ceased to be "deemed to be qualifying examinations for the purpose of registration under the Medical Acts?" I cannot think so.

Contrast this broad and easy plan of bettering ourselves with that suggested by some of your correspondents, who seem to propose to use boycotting and conspiracy to force medical men to abstain from doing that which they have a legal right to do—namely, to accept certain employment—and thus to make the boycotted employers offer better terms. The advantages of the simpler and more dignified method of treatment are so obvious that I cannot avoid concluding that those who propose the other do not wish to remove the disease, but to suppress one symptom in order to exaggerate others from which they expect to derive advantage. I should be sincerely glad to think that they wished to improve the position of medical men without capital, but I see clearly that their proposed action can, if successful, only result in preventing others from competing with them for our services.

In conclusion, I wish to protest against the language used towards the General Medical Council by those against whom it has recently decided. It is not consistent with the respect due to such a body to speak of their opinions as "lame," "impotent," "illogical," and "past patching," or to compare them to "monkeys in possession of a lancet." We were hailed before a Caesar whom our opponents proclaimed to be revered and august, but when he has decided in our favour he is attacked with opprobrious epithets. Surely no savage ever treated his domestic deity so harshly when luck was bad.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

VERAX.

June 12th, 1893.

MANCHESTER.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Civic Honours.

THE courteous intimation which has been received here very recently from the Prime Minister to the effect that the Queen has been graciously pleased to confer on the chief magistrate of this city the title of Lord Mayor has given universal satisfaction. The present occupier of the civic chair, Mr. Marshall, is deservedly most popular in Manchester, and the congratulations he is receiving on all hands are many and sincere. The Chorlton board of guardians, at their meeting on Friday, received the news with evident satisfaction, and the clerk, Mr. Bloomfield, informed the board that immediately on his becoming aware that the honour had been conferred he at once caused the flag to be hoisted on the union offices. A resolution was passed instructing the clerk to write formally congratulating the new Lord Mayor on behalf of the board. At the same meeting it was resolved that the board should avail themselves of the recent order of the Local Government Board with reference to the celebration of the forthcoming Royal Wedding and that the poor inmates should have a treat on July 6th.

Cholera Precautions.

The drought still continues and the heat increases steadily from day to day. The health return for last week indicates that on two occasions during that period the sun-heat exceeded 124° and the maximum in the shade amounted to 81° on Friday last. But what is more important as a foreteller of coming mischief is the fact that the