lent Fund have been more numerous than at any time since the commencement of the Fund in 1836. The number of cases relieved in 1869 (besides the 35 annuitants) is 125, as against 106, the highest number in any previous year. In this way upwards of £1000 have been expended, in grants varying in amount from £2 to £20.

At our meeting on Tuesday last there were 19 applications, but unfortunately we had less than £50 at our disposal, and as a consequence most of these have been postponed for a month, in the hope that by that time means will be forthcoming to relieve them. Some of these cases are indeed of a most painful character. Five are widows, whose husbands have recently died while still in their prime, each leaving a large family, and in only one of these is there any sort of provision, and this only a policy of insurance for £500, for a widow and ten children. Another is a widow who has for several years striven hard, with varying success, to support herself and children, but who is now obliged to succumb from failing sight and inability to obtain employment. Two others are ladies—orphans—who have for some years maintained themselves, and aided their respective families, as governesses; but phthisis in one case, and a very painful malady in the other, have obliged them to give up their situations, and to seek assistance from this society. And such are but average specimens of the cases brought before our Committee for investigation month after month, and to assist in relieving these we appeal with confidence to our brethren, some of whom have indeed given most liberally, both in time and money; but still there are doubtless thousands more who have the means and the heart, but who know nothing of this quietly-working Benevolent Fund, and it is to these more especially that we look for help on this New Year's Day.

The benevolence of the Medical Profession, is universally admitted and admired; surely it will not be lacking towards those of its own body in distress, nor will its charity be denied to the widows and orphans of its own members.

Contributions will be thankfully received by either of the undersigned, and acknowledged in THE LANCET.

CHARLES J. HARE, M.D., Treasurer,
57, Brook-street, Grosvenor-square.

STAMFORD FELCE, L.R.C.P.,
12, Chipperham-road, St. Peter's-park, W. } Hon.
R. THORNE THORNE, M.B., } Secs.
42, Seymour-street, Portman-square, W.

Jan. 1st, 1870.

PUNCTURED WOUND OF THE THORAX TRANSFIXING THE LEFT VENTRICLE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The "Outrage at Ewell," by wilfully blowing up a house with gunpowder, will be fresh in the memory of your readers from the accounts in the daily press.

Some account of the condition of the man Huggett, who committed the atrocious act, and was found with a wound of the throat and a stab over the region of the heart, may be of professional interest, more especially as a medico-legal question arose with regard to the power of the man to self-inflict the wounds so shortly after exposure to the shock of an explosion of 28 lbs. of gunpowder.

I was called to the scene of the explosion on the morning of the 22nd Dec., and reached the spot about half an hour after the occurrence. I found the man Huggett lying on his back amongst the fallen bricks and debris in the front room of the adjoining house to that in which the explosion had taken place. He had been driven through with the forcing in of the partition wall. The explosion had reft the walls of the house in all directions, and blown a stack of chimneys from their base on to the roof. Huggett was insensible at the time I arrived, breathing slowly and feebly, with a fluttering pulse, and cold surface. I poured some brandy between the teeth, which gradually passed down the throat, and repeating this once or twice consciousness slowly returned. He smelt strongly of exploded gunpowder; his hands were burnt, and his face blackened and charred. His clothes were burnt in various places, but there was no serious burn of the body. An open clasp knife was picked up by his side. On the throat was a superficial wound about two and a half inches long, dividing the skin and superficial

fascia only, and jagged as though inflicted with a blunt instrument. Blood was not flowing from this wound. On raising the guernsey and flannel shirt from the abdomen and thorax they were found saturated with blood, which was now seen to flow from a punctured wound of the thorax. This wound was transverse, measuring half an inch. It was on the lower edge of the fifth rib, in a line with the nipple, and three-quarters of an inch below it. No ribs were fractured, but on firm pressure over them air passed out of the wound. The little finger just entered the wound, and could be passed between the fifth and sixth ribs through the divided intercostal muscles.

His state two hours afterwards was as follows:—Consciousness perfect; answered questions, and gave his reason—jealousy—for committing the act. He was very restless, raising himself on his elbow continually, and begging for cold water. Pulse 86, moderately full and regular; surface warm except the feet; shivers when the surface of the trunk is exposed; breathing hurried; general distress great, which I understand continued to increase up to the time of his death, six hours after the injury. I regret that my duties to the two other injured men and a call to a confinement rendered me unable to see Huggett again during life.

Section Cadaveris.—On enlarging the external wound on the thorax, the surface of the heart came into view. The pericardium contained a coagulum weighing 6 oz. On the surface of the left ventricle, an inch and a quarter from the apex of the heart, and corresponding with the parietal wound, was a transverse wound measuring five-eighths of an inch, the exact counterpart in shape of the blade of the knife already mentioned. On raising the heart this wound was seen to pass completely through its substance, puncturing the pericardium behind it, and slightly entering the lung, which had collapsed. When the ventricle was opened the puncture was seen to have traversed its cavity, close to the apex, dividing some of the columnæ carneæ. The left pleura contained nearly a pint of bloody fluid.

The organs of the body generally were healthy. A question was raised by some of the jury whether the wounds were self-inflicted. It was known that a scuffle had followed Huggett's entrance of the house between him and Spooner (now dead), the occupant. Huggett was insensible when found some minutes after the explosion. He remained so when I reached him. Spooner, who was pushing him out of the house, said he saw no knife in Huggett's hand. While in the act of pushing him, Huggett threw something towards the fire, and the explosion took place. The knife is shown to have belonged to Huggett. Spooner and the third man injured were sensible immediately after the explosion; one of them, in fact, ran into the street on fire.

There seems no reason, therefore, why Huggett may not have been conscious, and, having committed a dreadful crime, have come to the desperate determination of destroying himself as he lay in the ruins he had made.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Dorset House, Ewell, Jan. 1870.

G. R. BARNES, M.D.

DIMINUTION OF CONTAGIOUS DISEASES AT WINDSOR.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As much has been said for and against the advisability of extending the Contagious Diseases Act to the civil population, I send you a few facts which may prove not only interesting, but instructive, as to its efficient working in one of our garrison towns.

The battalion to which I belong left London for Windsor on the 1st of March, 1869, and as the Contagious Diseases Act was in force in that town, the men were carefully examined immediately after their arrival, and those found affected were sent to hospital for treatment. The admissions for venereal during the first four months of our stay were only thirty; nearly all the cases were of a mild form, and readily amenable to simple treatment. Upon the 1st of September the battalion returned to town, and was quartered at Chelsea barracks; the number under treatment was then only seven. From that date to the present, venereal disease has been greatly on the increase; as many as 108 cases

have been admitted into hospital during the last four months, nearly four times the number for a like period at Windsor.

Admissions for Venereal Diseases.

WINDSOR.				LONDON.			
March	...	...	11	September	...	...	17
April	...	...	6	October	...	...	29
May	...	...	6	November	...	...	23
June	...	...	7	December	...	...	39
Total	...	...	30	Total	...	...	108

I may add that formerly, before the Contagious Diseases Act was put in force at Windsor, the number of cases admitted, and the severity of the disease, were greater at that station than at any other.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM R. LANE,
Assistant-surgeon, Grenadier Guards.

Jan. 1870.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May I be permitted to ask your opinion, and, through the medium of your columns, to solicit that of those members of the profession who may be interested in the matter, upon the state of the present examination for the M.D. degree of the University of London.

For that of M.B. there are four examinations; under the existing regulations that candidate is fortunate who is able to obtain the degree within six years from the commencement of his professional studies, the majority of students taking a much longer time. The stringency of these examinations, and the high standard fixed for each of them, are well known to you, and need no remark from me. Although, as a test of professional knowledge, they are far superior to those for the M.D. degree of any other university, yet the M.B.s of London are proclaimed by the Senate to have no right to assume the title of "Doctor," although every other university permits and even encourages its medical graduates to do so. After receiving the degree of M.B., candidates have to spend a further period, varying from one to five years, in practical professional work, or in receiving clinical instruction at an hospital, before they can proceed to the degree of M.D. To obtain that they are required to pass a stringent examination in medicine (having previously passed another, equally stringent, for the M.B. degree). To this not much objection can be made; but in addition to medicine they have also to pass in logic and moral philosophy, in which subjects the standard is also extremely high, and of which a knowledge cannot be acquired, sufficiently for the requirements of the examination, in less than a year, by the average of medical students, and even that period is barely sufficient. So that after two severe preliminary examinations in arts and scientific subjects, followed by two examinations universally admitted to be more stringent than those of any other university in the world, in every subject in any way connected with professional matters, the candidate for the M.D. degree may have to wait as much as five years before presenting himself for that degree; he then is required to pass an examination in abstruse metaphysical subjects, wholly unconnected with his profession, and of no possible use, practical or theoretical, in the practice of that profession, and this when he may fairly be supposed to be engaged with the responsibilities of practice, and has long emerged from the condition of a student.

May I inquire whether, in the opinion of yourself and of your readers, some alteration is not required in this examination; and whether it is deemed expedient that after a man has passed, I may say a considerable portion of his life in the acquisition of professional knowledge, he shall be called upon to plunge deeply into studies of the kind I have mentioned? Whether, if an examination be required at all for the degree of M.D., it would not be much preferable in all respects to have an examination in subjects wholly professional? Whether an examination like this enhances the value of the London M.D. degree in the estimation of either the public or of the medical profession, and does not rather lower it, and that in no small degree?

It seems to me that after a student has obtained the degree of M.B., he should be at liberty to devote himself to his profession for the rest of his life; that the retaining of such subjects as the above, in the syllabus of the University relating to medical degrees, is but the maintenance of an old tradition of the middle ages, which is now ignored, either entirely or to all practical purpose, by all other British Universities, so far as I am aware; and that the *prestige* of the London degree (which is, I presume, intended to rank first of all medical degrees), has suffered and will suffer, considerably in both public and professional estimation, if the examination in Logic and Moral Philosophy be not abolished, or at least considerably mitigated in severity.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ALPHA.

* * Although we print the letter of our correspondent, we must not be considered in any way to endorse his complaint or to approve his suggestion. The University of London does not profess to educate the medical profession, but the teachers of the medical profession; and much of the time mentioned by "Alpha" may be saved by men whose talents and industry enable them to pass previous examinations in the first division. It would be equally a blunder and a calamity if the regulations of the University were to be relaxed. With regard to logic, it is surely irony to say that it has no bearing upon the practice of the profession! If it has not, so much the worse for the sick. And if it had not, both for it and for moral philosophy we might justly urge that the most crying requirement of our day is an education that shall enable doctors, by hard work at difficult studies, to comprehend and solve problems of great intricacy. The Roman legionaries owed much of their success in arms to the fact that they exercised with weapons much heavier than those with which they fought, so that a battle was a recreation when compared with a review. In like manner, the training of the highest ranks of the profession should be such as to make them mental athletes; and for this purpose neither time nor labour should be spared.

With regard to the question of title—it is one on which the Senate has a right to impose its own terms. It is clear that the different degrees must be distinguished in some way; and what way can be better than by restricting the holder of each to his own proper appellation?—ED. L.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL AGAIN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As a student of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, allow me to ask your readers if it be not a disgrace to one of the first medical schools in London that a woman should be allowed to clean out the dissecting room, where there are at least eight bodies, both male and female, in different stages of dissection? May I not ask if this be not contrary to all laws of decency, if not of morality? Enclosing my card,

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Jan. 1, 1870.

STUDENS.

BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

A PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY meeting on Christmas-eve, over a trayful of specimens, is surely an exhibition of *quasi*-morbid scientific enthusiasm. Last Friday's gathering of the Pathological and Clinical Section of our B.M.A. Branch was fairly attended, and a good few "exhibits" of more than average interest were passed round and commented upon by Dr. Malins, of Cradley, Dr. Welsh, of the General Hospital, Dr. James Hinds, Mr. Vincent Jackson, and others. Nothing specially important turned up, but the meeting deserves notice as the last of an active year, and as bearing on the question of amalgamation of Medical Societies. Last year it was suggested, with a prospect of success, to amalgamate