TYPHOID FEVER IN INDIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—At page 332 of THE LANCET of September 7th, Dr. De Renzy, writing of India, says:—"The fever deaths appear in the returns under the head of continued and remittent fever, but it is at last pretty clearly made out that three-fourths of them at least are genuine typhoid."

It would be interesting to the profession to know the clinical observers on whose authority this remarkable statement is made. I am aware that in statistical writings ideas of this kind have been expressed; but surely medical science has not come to this pass in India, that questions of pure observation are settled by the manipulation of figures of varying quality, and the ideas which these may suggest to minds in the Presidency bureaux. What medicine now wants in India is the restriction of statistics to its own very useful domain, less speculative reporting on, and more intelligent clinical observing of, disease.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Edinburgh, September 7th, 1872.

C. MOREHEAD, M.D.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the replies of the Poor-law medical officers who have so kindly responded to my appeal. Though I cannot come up to Dr. Rumsey in numbers, I can, with satisfaction, state that five-sixths of the answers were in favour of Mr. Stansfeld's clause, and these answers were all from Poor-law medical officers.

I am still quite at a loss to account for Dr. Rumsey's opposition to so great a step in advance to the "Poor-law Service," considering (as I have always thought) that he was in favour of consolidation of appointments, and giving to those who do the work the credit and remuneration, which conditions I consider Mr. Stansfeld's Bill proposes to carry out.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

September, 1872.

J. WICKHAM BARNES.

THE AUTUMN CAMPAIGN.

(From our own Correspondent.)

Camp, 1st Division, near Amesbury,
September 11th, 1872.

HARD indeed the work has been of late—constant marching all day long, and long intervals between the breakfast early in the morning, and dinner generally not before evening—though during the last few days a piece of cheese has been issued to and carried by the men,—with very little water, for water is extremely scarce on these downs, streams being few and far between, and wells not abundant. It is, however, no doubt very beneficial to the men not to allow the water-carts to accompany regiments on the march, for during a hot and long day it would cause falling out of the ranks to an extent much greater than now. When undergoing strong fatigue the drinking of water frequently causes an intolerable craving for more, and an unquenchable thirst, incapacitating the men to a very great extent from bearing long marches. These marches, besides, have been especially fatiguing, nearly always across a country of successions of hills, steep, and covered to some extent, certainly, with elastic turf, but plentifully sprinkled with stubble and ploughed fields.

And now, after all this marching and counter-marching, fighting the most fearful battles, in which nobody would, if real, have escaped with life—battles in which impossible feats of arms were constantly accomplished with little or no difficulty,—after our thorough wettings and our nights in damp beds and dripping tents, what has been the effect of all these adverse circumstances on the health of this our magnificent force? Excluding a number of men who ought never to have been brought here in the various regiments, and who have been disposed of as totally unfit to undergo

the fatigues of a march, the cases of sickness ascribable purely to our life in camp have been extraordinarily small. At the present moment there are probably not more than thirty patients in the three field hospitals of this division; no serious cases, all of a trivial nature, and simply admitted because the men were unable, from slight sprains, bruises, &c., to accompany their regiments on the march, and had to be carried in the ambulances. About fifty or sixty men have been sent to Netley; but, excepting a few grave cases, such as acute rheumatism, chest affections, and one or two severe sprains, the patients sent to the reserve hospital have been worn out by chronic ailments, diseases which had been in their constitutions for years, and now brought out when these were put to the test; and, above all, a certain class of diseases brought with the men not well curable in tents. Venereal disease caused the largest number of admissions; accidents of all kinds—kicks, sprains, &c.—the next. These two classes almost complete the total admissions, the small balance being cases of diarrhoea, slight in their nature and easily curable, and chest affections, tonsillitis, and chronic eye diseases.

In my last letter I said that the distance of Netley would increase as we marched northward. This was wrong, for now the railway communication is much more direct, and, instead of being further from our reserve hospital, we are really much closer to it.

Our rations of beef and bread have during the last week been varied twice, much to everybody's dislike, by salt pork and biscuits. It seems extraordinary that here in England this should have been found necessary. Once certainly there was an excuse for the Control, for the entire meat supply became tainted; but yesterday I am afraid no such reason can be given. The pork is, no doubt, the best procurable, but to make it easy of digestion it requires twenty-four hours' soaking in water, which, of course, here is not feasible, when the ration passes from the barrel immediately into the stewpot. We have no such thing as diet in hospital, the patients eating their rations if well enough, beef-tea or arrowroot from the panniers if not. I forgot to mention that during a severe thunderstorm on the night of the 3rd a guardsman on sentry was struck down by lightning. He remained unconscious until found by the sergeant, and complained of nothing but a slight headache afterwards. On Sunday last the men all rushed down to the river Wiley, which we, as invaders, had crossed the day before, to wash off the dust and dirt of many a march, for water had been very scarce, and opportunities for bathing none.

September 14th.

Our campaign is ended. The contending armies, now again friends, are on the way to their various quarters, and scattering rapidly in all directions. There will hardly be any man, officer or soldier, who will not return to his barracks in better health than when he left them to take his share in the mimic warfare, hardly anybody whose constitution, unless previously undermined by disease, will not have become strengthened and more able and fit to bear those duties which the country is ever likely to require of its servants. And now that the campaign has so satisfactorily terminated, perhaps I may be allowed to make a few remarks on the medical arrangements of the two armies, how they answered, and also to hint at certain alterations for the better my own ideas and those of others suggested when visiting the camps. In a former letter I have already called your attention to the fact that last year a field hospital was attached to each brigade, which seems greatly preferable to the present system of giving three hospitals to a division, and treating men in them totally irrespective of the brigade they may belong to. I then suggested that the senior surgeon of the three regiments in the brigade should take charge of the field hospital, the two assistant-surgeons being detached from the two other regiments, leaving the surgeons with them. Then the patients would in every hospital be treated by their own medical officers, no doubt a great advantage to both, and not, as during this campaign, by total strangers. Of course this arrangement would not hold good during actual warfare. Then no corps could be without two medical officers, though the exigencies of the service would not permit any fixed rule to be adhered to. To go further, would it not be a good plan to detach from each regiment two or three suitable men to their brigade hospital as orderlies, thus teaching them their