with great praise, the spectacle truss of Bechard, a very elegant folding spring truss, which can be doubled up and put away in the pocket. The origin and object of this little contrivance are characteristically described by the inventor. "A young man, the subject of an inguinal hernia, presented himself to us lately. We showed him our trusses, but he complained that they were all too easily seen. Being on the point of marriage, he wished not to expose his infirmity to his young wife. We apprehended the annoyance which this young man would feel in appearing before his young spouse the bearer of an apparatus little used in the chamber of Venus, and of which the aspect is anything but erotic. Under these circumstances the plan occurred to us of constructing a truss composed of a simple sheet of steel and a pad. The steel spring, well rounded and polished, was formed of several pieces united by joints, with a back stop, and so arranged that when the truss is opened, it forms a complete whole; but when the joints are closed, its size is so small that it can be hidden no matter where, even in the trousers' pocket." To some this is the *ne plus ultra* of a truss, and it is only fair to say that M. Bechard's truss is beautifully made, and perfectly fulfils the conditions described.

FIG. 18.

FIG. 19.

FIG. 20.

ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

To the President, Treasurer, Grand Committee, and other Governors of St. Thomas's Hospital.

THE undersigned physicians and surgeons of St. Thomas's Hospital feel it to be a duty incumbent on them again respectfully to address the Governors of the Hospital on the present lamentable position of this ancient and important Charity.

In February last, feeling how seriously the public interests committed to our care might be jeopardized by the then impending changes, we deemed it right to call the attention of the Governors to those points which appeared to us, at that time, to demand the most careful consideration and the best attention of those most qualified to form an opinion. And we especially insisted on "the paramount importance that everything possible should be done to ensure a full and free discussion of the various issues likely to be raised."

Since we last addressed the Governors, various questions of vital interest to this great Medical Charity have come under discussion, for the elucidation and determination of some of which, it might have been supposed, the opinion of the medical staff, as of those who must be the best, if not the only persons qualified to form a correct judgment, would have been sought. It is, nevertheless, true that our former address has remained unnoticed, and that our views have been either altogether ignored, or misrepresented.

But notwithstanding such discouragement, the duties imposed on us by the Governors themselves, in the formal "charge" delivered to us on our appointment, and by public opinion, alike compel us to entreat the serious attention of every Governor to the incalculable injury which the Charity must inevitably sustain by the forced closure of the present hospital, before another permanent hospital is provided. That one of the largest, richest, and most ancient metropolitan hospitals should be temporarily suspended from the exercise of that benevolence on which the lives and happiness of thousands of our suffering fellow-creatures depend, cannot be viewed otherwise than as a public scandal, as well as a great calamity. To avert such a catastrophe surely demands every possible effort and even large pecuniary sacrifice.

We learn that, with a view to mitigate, if possible, so great an evil, long foreseen and justly condemned by the unanimous public voice, various efforts have been made to secure beds in other hospitals; but that finally it is proposed to lease the Surrey Gardens, for a term of two and a half years, and to expend a large sum of money in fitting up the music hall for the temporary reception of patients, and a still further sum in providing accommodation for the resident officers.

In reference to any arrangements for obtaining the use of beds in other hospitals, it is needless to remark, what must be evident to all, that this would be only paying out of the Hospital funds for the maintenance of those afflicted poor, who would otherwise be provided for to a great extent, if not altogether, by the public, in the respective hospitals to which they might be admitted, and that it would be a virtual suppression of St. Thomas's Hospital.

In reference to the Surrey Garden scheme, whilst we readily admit that it is open to less objections than others, inasmuch as it provides for the maintenance of, perhaps, 200 of the 500 beds at present occupied in St. Thomas's Hospital, it nevertheless involves a most deplorable curtailment of the benefits dispensed by the existing Hospital, probably very inferior accommodation for the sick, great injury and injustice to the suffering poor, irreparable injury to the Medical School, and, as a necessary consequence, great difficulty in finding proper candidates for the numerous minor offices (now about 30) necessary for the care of the patients, and hitherto always filled by pupils of the school.

However great may be the inconvenience and discomfort occasioned to the resident officers, whether medical or non-medical, by any such temporary scheme as this of the Surrey Gardens, it can only affect the physicians and surgeons by diminishing their duties. We may, therefore, with the less danger of being misunderstood, say, that we are deeply convinced it would be difficult to over estimate the evils that would be entailed on the Charity, and on the suffering poor, by an abandonment of the present before another permanent hospital is provided. We would, therefore, most urgently press on the Governors the necessity of obtaining such a modification of the Bill now before Parliament, as shall secure the maintenance of this time honoured Charity in its present site, and the continuance of the priceless blessings which it dis-

penses, until another site can be procured and another hospital erected. Nor can we believe that any serious objection would be raised to such a procedure by the railway company, when it could be shown how entirely the legitimate interests of all parties might be thus secured.

T. A. BARKER, M.D.
JAS. R. BENNETT, M.D.
R. GOOLDEN, M.D.
T. B. PEACOCK, M.D.
J. S. BRISTOWE, M.D.
WILLIAM BRINTON, M.D.
E. CLAPTON, M.D.
JOHN F. SOUTH.
GILBERT MACKMURDO.
SAMUEL SOLLY.
F. LE GROS CLARK.
JOHN SIMON.
SYDNEY JONES.

London, June 12th, 1862.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR
THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE.
CONGRESS OF 1862.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

THURSDAY, JUNE 12TH.

THIS department resumed its sittings this morning, W. Fairbairn, Esq., president, in the chair.

Dr. DUNDAS THOMSON, medical officer of Marylebone, President of the Metropolitan Association of Medical Officers of Health, and Vice-President of the British Meteorological Society, read a paper "On the Proper Source of Water for Domestic Purposes." He said that the usual kinds of water used for domestic purposes were well waters, agricultural river waters, and pastoral waters. A general idea had prevailed that for the purposes of drinking, well water was to be preferred to that derived from other sources of supply; and although sanitary officers had made attempts to inform the poor that it was unwholesome, their efforts were greatly obstructed. He had examined shallow well and other waters for the supply of towns, and he found that they not only contained sewage, but they varied generally in their composition from day to day. It was important to remark, that epidemics had particularly prevailed in a fatal manner in those towns where impure well water was extensively employed by the inhabitants—as in certain parts of London, Liverpool, and Glasgow. The fatal results depending on this and collateral unhealthy conditions were especially marked in the invasion of the several epidemics of cholera, which caused the public mind again to resort to the unwholesome character of well waters, contaminated by sewage, and were further rendered impure by impregnation from vapours disseminated by escapes from gas-pipes under the pavement of the streets. He condemned in the most unequivocal manner the use of lead cisterns and lead pipes, and said they ought never to be used for the conveyance of water for domestic purposes. He recommended the use of pastoral waters, which were entirely free from pollution of sewage and agricultural impurities. It was becoming essential for the increasing population on the banks of rivers that the supplies of cities should be derived from the waters referred to, as they were not only free from animal *débris*, but were delivered in cities by the force of gravity, and thus saved a large expenditure for pumping.

After some discussion,

The thanks of the department were voted to Dr. Thomson for the valuable information he had afforded them.

Dr. BRYSON read a paper "On Quarantine as a means of Preventing the Spread of Infectious Diseases."

Dr. MILROY read a paper by Mrs. Baines "On Excessive Infantile Mortality," which showed that the amount in England exceeded anything of the kind in the civilized world.

Dr. LEIGH, of New York, attributed the cause of infant mortality in New York to bad milk.

Mr. REYNOLDS said, if a cordon were built round Birmingham, and all population was shut out, if infant mortality increased as it had done during the last ten years, at the end of thirty years Birmingham would become depopulated.

Mrs. WILLIAM FISON read a paper "On the Causes that retard Sanitary Reform in Great Britain," which she attributed to the drinking customs of the people.

Dr. HAUGHTON read a paper "On the Influence of Amusement on the Public Health," which showed the necessity of recreation and amusement.

A discussion took place at Burlington House in the evening on the question of Sanitary Statistics; Professor Lee presided.

FRIDAY, JUNE 13TH.

The department re-assembled this morning, W. Fairbairn, Esq., F.R.S., in the chair.

Sir JOSHUA JEBB read a paper on "Ventilation," which he explained by reference to plans and diagrams, proving that by the use of a particular engine all buildings might be kept at a regular and cool temperature.

The thanks of the department were voted to Sir Joshua Jebb for his able and interesting paper.

Dr. SANDERSON read a paper, being "Observations on the Natural Movement of the Air in Public Buildings similar to Hospitals, and the Application of Artificial means of Ventilation, founded on an experimental inquiry into the ventilation of St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington."

Thanks were voted to the writer for the paper.

The proceedings were brought to a termination on Saturday by a dinner at the Crystal Palace, the President, Lord Brougham, in the chair.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

POOR-LAW MEDICAL REFORM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Seven weeks ago I pointed out to Mr. Griffin that "Lord Elcho's Return does *not* represent the figures on which the elements of my scheme are intended to be based. In the former, the non-resident paupers are all *included*; in my plan they are to be (as I have stated) *excluded*. Again, the number of cases treated by the medical officers are estimated, in Lord Elcho's Return, in accordance with the present indiscriminate mode of granting doctors' orders. My plan conditions that the same sick pauper shall be counted *but once* as a case of sickness during the half year."

The correctness of my calculations, of course, presupposes a correct keeping of the figures pertaining to the several divisions in the Pauper Classification Book. This being obtained, it could not, under my plan, possibly happen (when there are but few non-residents), that the number of *individuals* receiving medical relief could exceed the total number of resident paupers, and "persons having received medical relief only," combined.

Whether it is from an incorrect method of keeping the Pauper Classification Book, or from the frequent repetition of orders to the same individual in the half year, (singly or combined,) I know not; but this is evident, that in Lord Elcho's Return not a few districts, &c., show a large excess of cases of sickness over the given number of half-yearly paupers. The Ewell district in the Epsom Union is a conspicuous example. It would appear that *every individual pauper* in this district actually received four or five separate doctors' orders in the year ending March 25th, 1857.—each order, according to the present mode of enumeration, being counted as a separate case of sickness. According to my plan, how many soever the intervals of health, or how many soever the orders he received, the same sick pauper would be counted *but once* as a case of sickness during the, and each, half year. Hence, according to my scheme, the cases of sickness could *never* exceed the "total number of paupers relieved." In order therefore to make the figures in Lord Elcho's Return conform (as nearly as possible) to what *only could* be the *maximum* amount of cases (according to my definition of a case of sickness), no other alternative was left me, in computing the subjoined tables from these said figures, than to apportion 100 per cent. as the ratio of sickness to pauperism, in every instance where, according to this said Return, the excess I have alluded to obtains.

In computing the amount per case produced by both the present salaries, and by Mr. Griffin's plan, I have adhered to Lord Elcho's figures.

With this explanation, I now respond to Mr. Griffin's challenge contained in your journal of the 24th ult. :—