be to form a combination such as has never yet been attempted by the profession. If that were once accomplished there would be no difficulty left. The union and club authorities would be obliged to accede to any reform demanded with anything approaching to unanimity by the profession. But there is the rub. We are not sufficiently organised to effect combinations. I fear, therefore, reforms are not likely, and that the present system of hard work and poor pay will probably flourish for many a long day, until, in fact, it has become so intolerable that there is a great dearth of candidates for the profession.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

E. PAGET THURSTAN, M.D.

Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, May, 1887.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Kindly allow me to make a few remarks upon the letter of Dr. Paget Thurstan in THE LANCET of April 23rd, 1887. He says, "Such is the state of things; what is the remedy?"

There is and will be no remedy unless medical men hold more together. Why do we not have a society similar to the Incorporated Law Society, and determine amongst ourselves not to take any appointment without a meeting of medical men likely to be invited to undertake any appointment, consider the amount of work to be done, fix their own salary, not allowing the steward or secretary to say we give our surgeons "so and so," and then, throwing the result into the hands of the members, to ballot for the surgeon, each one honestly refusing to make any attempt to win over voters? Can there not be some interference on the part of the Medical Council to limit and determine the difference between medical men and chemists as to their several provinces? Numbers of the people, both rich and poor, consult chemists, and never send for a doctor until the eleventh hour, to save any difficulty with regard to the death certificate. Until this is done I fear there will be no remedy for the general practitioner.

I am, Sirs, yours obediently,

May, 1887.

M.A. Cantab.

THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The decision of the Medical Council in reference to the Apothecaries' Society will give general satisfaction to medical practitioners throughout the country, and they cannot but feel very satisfied at the action of their representatives. The important discussion previously to the division will open the eyes of the medical world. Never was a speech made more damaging to the speaker, or more likely to poison the ignorant mind, than that of Sir W. Gull. One benefit, I trust, will arise from Mr. Brudenell Carter's able advocacy of the weak against the strong—namely, that now the Fellows and Members of the Royal College of Surgeons may hope to have his energy and ability directed towards obtaining for them their just rights and privileges from their own College. The Hall has now nothing to fear; and if in the future it sends out as good men as it has done in the past, the public and the profession will have no cause for complaint.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

May, 1887.

J. WICKHAM BARNES.

THE COMPULSORY DETENTION IN WORK-
HOUSES OF PATIENTS WITH VENEREAL
DISEASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reference to the above subject, you state in last week's issue that a correspondent calls your attention to the fact that, so far as workhouses are concerned, such powers already exist, and are to be found in Act 30 and 31 Vict., the Poor-law Amendment Act, c. 106, s. 22. Now, when I wrote you fourteen days ago, I was quite familiar with Section 22, and, certainly, one might very well argue that it gives the necessary power; but I find there is considerable uncertainty as to whether it really applies to cases of venereal disease. It is therefore desirable to have a definite and authoritative opinion on the matter, and, if that be adverse, then some other measure must be obtained. In support of what I say, I may mention that quite

recently a deputation of influential gentlemen from eleven unions or boards of guardians in the principal naval and military centres had an interview with Mr. Ritchie, President of the Local Government Board, with reference to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. In his reply, Mr. Ritchie referring to Section 22 of the above-mentioned Act stated: "Well, a question then arises as to what is the meaning of the words 'contagious diseases' in this Act. I have no doubt it might be argued, and argued with very great force, that the disease in question is a contagious disease under this Act; but I understand there is a very considerable element of doubt upon the point as to whether or not medical officers who are really responsible would be justified in certifying that a certain poor person is suffering from a contagious disease under the Act and ought to be detained." This really being the case, Mr. Ritchie proposed to submit the question to the law officers of the Crown, so that at present the matter is *sub judice*. Even when we obtain power to detain patients in Poor-law institutions, there still remains the large number of cases in lock hospitals and other hospitals with lock wards. Surely something should be done in order to deal more satisfactorily with these. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

May 17th, 1887.

ARTHUR FLINTOFF MICKLE, M.B.

THE UTILITY OF DRUGS IN THE TREATMENT
OF DISEASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I am a general practitioner, and am glad to be able to add have been a successful one for the past thirty years. I desire to make a comment or two on the speech of Sir William Gull at the last meeting of the Medical Council, as reported in THE LANCET of the 14th inst. I am referring particularly to his expressed disbelief in the utility of drugs in the treatment of disease, and his belief in the all-sufficiency of guarding the patients from any "interference with the powers of nature," and keeping him in "a warm bed." Sir William Gull, referring to the share which he bore of the responsibility of conducting the treatment of the Prince of Wales' attack of typhoid fever, stated that during the whole illness his Royal Highness did not take four doses of medicine. Typhoid fever, all properly educated medical men know, requires, as a rule, little or no active treatment. But what if the Prince's illness had been rheumatic fever or malarial fever caught in India (supposing his Indian tour to have taken place): would Sir William still have withheld all treatment by drugs—salicylates in the one case, quinine in the other? I will do him the justice to say I do not believe he would. But is it a fact that the treatment of the Prince consisted entirely in guarding him from interference with the powers of nature, and in keeping him in a warm bed? Was not alcohol freely administered? I do not know; but this I do know, that Sir William regards a full dose of alcohol, two ounces or even four ounces of brandy if necessary at bed-time, as the best sedative for the nocturnal restlessness accompanied by delirium which occurs in typhoid; and I would ask what is alcohol administered in this way but a drug?

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

May, 1887.

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

REPEATED ASPIRATIONS OF THE BLADDER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The case of repeated aspiration of the bladder recorded by Mr. Collier in last week's LANCET is like one published in *l'Union Médicale*, Feb. 26th, 1876. The patient was a man seventy years old, who had retention from enlarged prostate. The bladder was aspirated with a Potain's aspirator sixteen times in nine days, and then at last an instrument was passed. He did well, and no harm came of the repeated punctures. "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him!"

Your obedient servant,

Wimpole-street, W., May 17th, 1887.

STEPHEN PAGET.

Two entertainments by amateurs are to be given at the Novelty Theatre on the 3rd and 4th prox., under the patronage of the Prince and Princess of Wales and other members of the Royal Family, for the benefit of the Great Northern Central Hospital.