FIELD SERVICE COOKING.

According to the *Militär-Wochenblatt* aluminium is being tried in Germany as a material for cooking-utensils, and an aluminium field-canteen for officers has been brought out by a firm under the supervision of a medical officer of the German army. The lightness of the metal is an important consideration from the army transport standpoint, and it is said—contrary to what might have been expected—that, from experimental trials in the German army, aluminium vessels have shown themselves to be durable and adapted to field service work, in addition to being easily cleaned, not liable to rust, and not giving rise to any product deleterious to health when used for cooking purposes. It is also stated that experiments made with cooking apparatus composed of this metal in the Hygienic Laboratory of Berlin have proved to be satisfactory.

THE HEALTH OF THE BENGAL ARMY.

The contrast between what is called a "cholera year" and a "non-cholera year" in India is very striking. The conditions remain apparently the same in both years. There are always some cases of cholera in Lower Bengal and in the so-called endemic area, and the communications between this part and the rest of the Presidency and up-country provinces practically do not vary; but the prevalence of the disease does vary enormously in different years. The health of the army in Bengal has lately, and still continues to be, remarkably good, not a single case of cholera having been reported, according to the latest Indian papers, during September.

THE RETIREMENT OF SURGEON-COLONEL RICHARDSON,
INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF CIVIL HOSPITALS IN THE
NORTH-WEST PROVINCES AND OUDH.

The Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Commissioner of the North-West Provinces and Oudh, in publishing a letter from the Government of India in the *Provincial Gazette* regarding the retirement of this officer, expresses the great regret that is felt at the loss of his services and passes a high encomium on the professional and administrative ability which he has shown. The communication from the Governor-General in Council directs attention to the fact that Surgeon-Colonel Richardson had been connected with those provinces for nearly thirty years, having also temporarily officiated as Surgeon-General and Sanitary Commissioner with the Government of India, and refers to the valuable services rendered by him, adding also that his ability and experience were highly valued by the Governor-General in Council.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

SEA VOYAGES AND PHTHISIS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Mr. Leopold Hudson, in a note to his valuable communication on "Sea Voyages for the Surgical Convalescent" in THE LANCET of Oct. 21st says: "But Dr. Burney Yeo doubts whether phthisis at any stage is benefited by ocean travel." This is not quite accurate. I have expressed myself on this subject¹ as follows: "One or two long sea voyages, or a sea voyage to Australia or New Zealand, followed by an out-of-door life in suitable parts of the interior of these colonies, may be recommended to the same class of cases," and in the preceding paragraphs I have defined this class as "cases of early phthisis in persons of otherwise good health and possessing abundant capability of taking active exercise and following an out-of-door country life. The disease should be limited, non-progressive, and quiescent, or but very slowly advancing and with little or no fever." In a note I add, "We desire to protest in the strongest terms against the routine prescription of a 'sea-voyage' to young men the subjects of phthisis. It is both cruel and ignorant. We have just heard of two young men, one of whom we knew, who had been ordered a sea-voyage and who met in the same cabin in a sailing vessel; they both died long before the vessel reached its destination. This is a common experience." I have only protested, and I shall continue to protest, against the routine practice of

prescribing a sea-voyage for the subjects of phthisis without discrimination and without a knowledge of the tragic results which frequently attend it.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
Hertford-street, Mayfair, Oct. 24th, 1893. J. BURNLEY YEO.

MATERIALISM AND LIFE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The question so innocently and so deftly raised by your correspondent "X"—whether life and mind are the same thing—is certainly one easier to ask than to answer. It is a pity that so expert a cross-examiner and so cautious a critic should treat the subject so lightly. His reference to the mole and foetus strikes one as original, and, if he added a few reflections, it might serve to throw additional light on so abstruse a subject. But whatever the decision may be it is all important to note the grounds on which it rests. Such a discussion inevitably raises the question, what are the limits of science? To this Professor Tyndall unhesitatingly replies,¹ "In all such inquiries we are necessarily limited by our own powers; we observe what our senses, armed with the aids furnished by science, enable us to observe, nothing more." In thus strictly limiting scientific investigation and research to the study of phenomena science is perfectly justified, for the causes of phenomena lie beyond the jurisdiction of the senses. By tracing each phenomenal consequent to its antecedent the scientist obtains a prevision over nature, and is thus enabled to anticipate the future. But do modern scientists confine themselves within these limits? On the contrary, they postulate as explanatory of the various phenomena, atoms, forces, &c., none of which are objects of the senses. To this course they are compelled in consequence of an intellectual necessity by means of which the human mind cannot contemplate phenomena other than as relative to a power which issues them. To account, therefore, for the different sets of phenomena, science postulates the various forces—chemical, electric, &c. The powers themselves are, however, as inscrutable as a soul. Man obtains his knowledge of power not by an induction from nature, but in consequence of his own exercise of power. Herein lies man's special prerogative, which invests him with a trust and exempts him from absolute subjection to the laws of nature. But are mental functions the result of molecular processes in the brain or are they affections and activities of a mental subject? Laying aside at present the important argument in favour of a mental subject arising from the law of the conservation of energy, a few of the discoveries of modern science seem to me to point clearly to the existence of a mental subject, and are simply unintelligible apart from that supposition. The secondary qualities of matter—colour, heat, &c.—are affections of a mental subject, and are due to various "modes of motion." Apart from a mental subject they do not exist. Even in regard to the primary qualities of matter it is now shown that the atoms are not in contact, but are kept apart and in position by various forces. Accordingly the solidity of the mass is not due to the sum of the solidities of the atoms, but is the product of a dynamism which binds the elements together. Moreover, the nervous system stands between the external world and mind. Light vibrations impinging on the retina and sound waves on the tympanum are conveyed thence, as nerve currents to the brain, and these communicate to the mind the sensations of vision and hearing. Apart from a mental subject to translate the various nerve currents into their mental equivalents sensation would be impossible.

Here, however, I must note an objection raised by my cautious critic. On the supposition that life and mind are two different things, he concludes thus: "It follows from this that in all of us outside the powers connected with our organisation there are two others in operation, but in no way dependent upon it; one is life and the other is mind." These powers evidently do nothing and explain nothing in connexion with the organism. In striking contrast to the fierce struggle for existence which rages outside, these highly favoured individuals stand aloof not unlike a pair of cooing turtle-doves that never take to quarrelling. On these terms it is no wonder that the "powers connected with organisation," which do all the drudgery work, should turn indignant with their superfluous lodgers, and should

¹ Manual of Medical Treatment, vol. ii., p. 118.

¹ Fragments of Science, vol. ii., page 246, sixth edition.