VOLUNTEER OFFICERS' DECORATION.

The King has conferred the Volunteer Officers' Decoration upon the undermentioned officers of the Volunteer Force:—
Northern Command: Rifle: 5th Volunteer Battalion the Durham Light Infantry: Surgeon-Major Andrew Arthur Abraham.

Scottish Command: Artillery: 1st Fife-shire Royal Garrison Artillery (Volunteers): Surgeon-Major Robert Balfour Graham. Rifle: 5th Volunteer Battalion the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment): Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel James Mill.

THE ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL, STONEHOUSE, PLYMOUTH.

Inspector-General H. Mackay Ellis, Director-General of the Royal Navy Medical Service, made his annual inspection of the Royal Naval Hospital, Stonehouse, on May 21st and 22nd. After the inspection of the medical and surgical wards he expressed his satisfaction with the result of the visit. The Director-General was accompanied by Inspector-General H. T. Cox, R.N., and the heads of departments.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

MELÆNA NEONATORUM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your annotation on the above subject in THE LANCET of May 25th, p. 1443, it is suggested that melæna neonatorum may "be one of the many pathological conditions produced by the virus of congenital syphilis." This statement is supported by the authority of Dr. Balzer of the St. Louis Hospital, Paris, who states in his article on Syphilis in Brouardel and Gilbert's "Traité de Médecine," 1906, that some newly born children succumb to intestinal hæmorrhage associated with purpura, a condition known as "syphilis hæmorrhagica neonatorum." Dr. Still in his lectures on "Infantile Syphilis" also refers to this condition. Whether melæna neonatorum is always due to congenital syphilis may be open to dispute, but this diathesis is probably responsible for most cases.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

New Cavendish-street, W., May 26th, 1907. C. F. MARSHALL.

CONVALESCENT HOME OF ADDENBROOKE'S HOSPITAL, CAMBRIDGE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May we ask you for space to appeal to Cambridge men and their friends for help in providing Addenbrooke's Hospital with a seaside branch for convalescents, such as is now felt to be a necessary equipment for every great hospital? These seaside branches are quite distinct from the ordinary convalescent home to which admission may be obtained through subscribers' letters for people needing merely rest and change of air. They are intended precisely for those whom such homes must of necessity exclude—viz., those who still need surgical care and dressings, including men, women, and children from three years old. The patients are nominated by the hospital staff and have all been under treatment at the hospital. There are thus no trivial cases. The removal of these patients at the earliest possible moment after operations or other severe illness gives much needed relief to the hospital wards, while the bright seaside and open-air life completes the work of restoration as nothing else could.

In response to an appeal made eight years ago by the medical and surgical staff of Addenbrooke's Hospital for such a branch the work was begun in a hired house by the seaside. The generosity of a few friends provided funds enough to try the experiment for some years and its success has been even beyond their hopes. But these funds are now exhausted; the lease of the temporary home at Dovercourt has come to an end; the committee has decided to build (no house not planned for this object being really suitable) and has secured an admirable site at Hunstanton. All that is now needed is £3000, towards which £600 have

already been given or promised. Donations will be gratefully received at Barclay's Bank, Cambridge.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

L. DE BUNSEN,

Honorary Treasurer of the Home;

DONALD MACALISTER,

Consulting Physician to Addenbrooke's Hospital.

Cambridge, May 18th, 1907.

SANITARY AUTHORITIES AND SANITARY OFFICERS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. J. H. Garrett, in his most excellent criticism on the administration of the Public Health Acts which appeared in THE LANCET of May 25th, p. 1447, has omitted to draw attention to what one may term the crowning absurdity of the law with regard to the appointment of medical officers of health. Dr. Garrett states that the law requires the medical officer of health to be a "registered medical practitioner invariably." This is not strictly correct. The Local Government Act, 1888, requires that he shall be legally qualified to practise medicine, surgery, and midwifery, but by the same Act authority is specially given to the Local Government Board to modify this requirement—that is to say, the Local Government Board has power to sanction the appointment of a "quack."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

R. BRUCE FERGUSON, M.D. Cantab., D.P.H., &c.

London, N., May 27th, 1907.

ALBUMINOUS BODIES PRESENT IN PATHOLOGICAL EFFUSIONS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Many thanks are due to Dr. W. C. Bosanquet's note on the above subject. I have been studying exudates and transudates from the same point of view during the past twelvemonth, but have adopted the plan of rendering the globulin precipitates free from salt by dialysis. I have supposed that globulin plus ammonium sulphate will keep unaltered for a long time and if that were the case this method would be devoid of the error against which we are warned. If the fluid to be examined be treated with the salt at once (as is possible in a hospital) need one fear any subsequent conversion of one globulin into another? These methods of analysis are naturally of no use clinically because it is a matter of days before the result is obtained, but as a subject of scientific research may we not still hope that the relative proportions of albumins, globulins, and the decomposition-products of proteids in these fluids are of profound interest?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

OSKAR C. GRUNER, M.B. Lond.

Clinical Laboratory, Leeds General Infirmary, May 21st, 1907.

A SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF VENEREAL DISEASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Some years ago the medical profession in Germany formed a Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease and last month was held the first meeting of a similar society for Austria. Is it not possible to do something of the same sort in Great Britain? Perhaps some of our leading medical men might make a start in the matter, as everything has to have a small beginning, and the three societies might work together in harmony and find some coöperation possible.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

May 27th, 1907.

H. N. R.

TRAINED NURSES ANNUITY FUND.—A drawing-room meeting will be held, by permission of Lord and Lady Ravensworth, at 71, Eaton-square, S.W., on Friday, June 14th, at 3.45 P.M., in furtherance of the objects of the annuity fund for disabled nurses. The Earl of Hardwicke will take the chair and the meeting will be addressed by Lord Loch, Lady Henry Somerset, and Dr. F. H. Champneys. Further information can be obtained from the honorary secretary, Dr. A. Ogier Ward, 73, Cheapside, London, E.C.