that local antiseptic treatment can take the place of isolation.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

LOUIS COBBETT.

Pathological Laboratory, Cambridge, Nov. 28th, 1901.

THE DIRECTION OF HAIR ON THE HUMAN ARM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Referring to Dr. Walter Kidd's letter in THE LANCET of Nov. 30th, p. 1531, it may be worthy of record that his theory is not of universal application for the following curious reason. The Mahomedan religion is divided into two principal sects, the Sunnites and the Shiites. The members of these sects can be readily discriminated by the fashion in which the hair grows on their arms, for while on those of the Sunnites the growth turns downward from shoulder to wrist on the anterior side and upwards from wrist to shoulder posteriorly, the hair on Shiite arms presents the contrary appearance on both sides of the arms. This singular divergence is produced by the manner of washing their arms as prescribed by the tenets of the sects respectively. For while Sunnites hold it orthodox to stroke their arms after washing them from shoulder to wrist on front and from wrist to shoulder on the back, the Shiites abhor this practice and stroke their arms in the opposite ways, and hence the two directions in which the hair is seen to grow on the arms of the two sects.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Ealing, Nov. 30th, 1901.

GEORGE SHERRINGTON-MORRIS.

THE SAFETY OF CHLOROFORM IN MIDWIFERY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I crave space to add to the reasons given by Sir William Mitchell Banks and Dr. E. Malins—in THE LANCET of Nov. 16th (p. 1323) and 30th (p. 1529), 1901, respectively—for the immunity from death under chloroform in midwifery practice—viz., the age and vigour of the patients, their position on the left side, the reflex influence of the uterine contractions, and the hopefulness of relief from pain—the not unimportant fact of the hypertrophy of the left ventricle which the heart of the pregnant woman undergoes, in obedience to a well-recognised physiological law, to render it equal to the extra work of driving the blood through the foetal circulation?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Watton, Norfolk, Dec. 2nd, 1901. H. MALINS, M.B. T.C.D.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES AND THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—From the decision of the General Medical Council on Friday last in the Yarmouth case are we to infer that it is unprofessional to act as medical referee to the Liverpool Victoria Legal Friendly Society (which is a life insurance company) because it is associated with the National Medical Aid Company (which is a canvassing society)? or whilst refusing to act as surgeon to the National Medical Aid Company are we allowed to examine cases for the Liverpool Victoria? Other insurance companies have these so-called clubs, and I think that the justice of the matter would be met if practitioners were allowed to examine cases for life insurance but prohibited from acting as medical officer to any society or association which systematically canvasses for patients. The two societies have distinct offices, and whilst repudiating one I see no reason why one should not act for the other.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

EDGAR DU CANE, B.A., M.B. R.U.I.

Swindon, Dec. 2nd, 1901.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With the voting paper received from the General Medical Council is sent a copy of notices. No. III., which deals with association with medical aid societies, is worded as follows: "That the Council strongly disapproves of medical

practitioners associating themselves with medical aid associations which systematically practise canvassing and advertising for the purpose of procuring patients." Surely, if the Council so strongly disapprove, why do they not carry their disapprobation to its logical conclusion and pass a law prohibiting it altogether? There would be no lack of support from the rank and file of the profession. I am amongst the offenders, but why should I give up the £60 per annum, which my appointment brings me in, in order that my opponent should reap the benefit of my endeavour to carry out the wishes of the Council? It is not to be expected and would not be business-like.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Nov. 29th, 1901.

PRACTITIONER.

AN ELECTRO-THERAPEUTICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I ask for your kind assistance in making known to the profession that it is intended to form an electrical society for duly qualified medical practitioners who are interested in the application of all forms of electricity to disease. Any practitioners willing to give their support to such a society are requested to send their names to the undersigned.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

CHISHOLM WILLIAMS.

20, Bedford-square, W.C., Dec. 2nd, 1901.

OUR INCOMPLETE VACCINATION ACT.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have come to the conclusion, after careful study, that the principle which governed the inception of the last Vaccination Act will not be completely applied till successful vaccination certification is put on a parallel basis with infectious disease notification, so that all medical practitioners would become *ipso facto* vaccinators for the public. This would nationalise vaccination and enlist the active assistance of the entire profession. To leave matters on their present footing is no more logical than it would be to exclude small-pox notification itself. I would retain the public vaccinator as a reserve persuasive force, his services to come into operation when the sixth month after birth is reached without due certification. The fee should be paid on a similar but unified system to that now prevailing, distances being calculated from a fixed point in each area only, without reference to the certifiers' residence.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ARTHUR WADDELL, M.D. Glasg.

Potters Bar, Dec. 2nd, 1901.

MEDICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The discontinuance of *Bibliographia Medica* would be a calamity to all students of medicine. Is it not possible for a combination of the great medical institutions and societies in this and other countries to avert such a disaster which a recent circular says may happen to us?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

L. M. GRIFFITHS,

Bristol, Dec. 2nd, 1901.

Hon. Librarian, Bristol Medical Library.

AMERICAN DENTISTRY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I call your attention to an article in the November *Review of Reviews* on the above subject? Had it not been for one or two paragraphs I should not have troubled you about such barefaced quackery. Amongst other things it is stated that six medical practitioners were attended in one week at a branch of the American Dental Institute—an institute whose seeming superiority is set forth in no feeble language. Though unprofessional readers may be gulled by such articles it is surprising that even many medical men are quite as easily influenced. "American dentistry" seems to have a great fascination, and though it is obvious that it possesses no claims to superiority over dentistry as practised over here, yet even medical men who ought to know better are lured by the magic expression