UMBILICAL HÆMORRHAGE IN INFANTS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Dakin, in his very practical paper on this subject, says he “came to the conclusion that no reliance can be put on the ordinary means in use and recommended in text-books—namely, compression by pads, collodion, cold, heat, perchloride of iron, the actual cautery, tannic acid, and the internal administration of gallic acid.” I do not know to what text-books he refers; but he will find none of these delusive means recommended in the system of “Obstetric Medicine and Surgery,” by myself and Fancourt Barnes. He will find the following: “We have secured the bleeding vessels by passing two needles at right angles to each other through the abdominal walls so as to get below the bleeding spot, and then twisting a fine silk ligature round the needles.” Perhaps Dr. Dakin’s method is an improvement.

I am, Sirs, yours obediently,
Harley-street, March, 1889. ROBERT BARNES, M.D.

METATARSALGIA.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Having for the past two years suffered from the symptoms described as metatarsalgia, I have watched this correspondence with much interest. I had proved practically before this correspondence opened that the pain was due to descent of the tarsal arch, which is accompanied by two further alterations in the shape of the foot—one a lengthening of the foot from half to three-quarters of an inch, causing undue pressure on the great toe; the other a spreading of the foot to the outer side, causing a corresponding pressure from the boot. The measurement of the boot is generally taken by the bootmaker with the patient seated, and the weight off the foot. When the weight comes on the foot, the foot spreads inordinately; the boot is not constructed to allow for so much spreading, and a frightful cramping pain is the result, causing the unhappy patient to remove his boot without regard to place or circumstance, often the most inconvenient. On first removal of the boot the pain is intensified, and has been so great as to almost cause a faint, necessitating at least a quarter of an hour’s rest, after which it will gradually wear off. This pain and its mode of causation is not a new point, for ten years ago I heard Mr. Reeves, of the London Hospital, prescribe a pad for relief of these symptoms, and, after much personal suffering, I can corroborate the efficiency of this treatment. The patent flexura waist of Messrs. Burgess, of Regent-street, gives considerable support to the arch; but it appears to me that no bootmaker is sufficiently impressed with the real necessity of the case, or the agonising intensity of the pain, to take sufficient trouble towards making a suitable boot. The ordinary bootseller knows nothing whatever about the making of boots, but only concerns himself with the selling. In making a boot for a patient suffering in this manner, it must be borne in mind that the letting down of the arch is a gradual process, coming on during exertion, more particularly during prolonged standing, and it thus follows that the foot may be quite comfortable on starting the day, but be quite unbearable towards evening; this is a point which has not been much noticed. The pad for the arch must be made with very great care; if too large it is worse than useless. Another point I have frequently observed is that sprained ligaments are particularly liable to rheumatic inflammation; hence the aggravation of the metatarsalgia in cold or damp weather, or after wearing a pair of boots with unusually thin soles. It follows, therefore, that persons liable to this affection should always wear boots with good stout soles.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

EDWD. F. GRÜN, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
Putney, S.W., March 16th, 1889.

NORTHERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Newcastle and Gateshead.

ACTIVE preparations are being made for the forthcoming meeting of the British Association, which is to be held in Newcastle-on-Tyne from the 11th to the 19th of September next. I hear that, although no special effort has been made to raise funds for the local expenses, by far the greater part of the sum required (£4000) has been subscribed or guaranteed. The medical profession of the district, led, I may say, by Professor Philipson, have been liberal contributors.—Another of those distressing cases of fatal lead poisoning in female workers has taken place since my last letter, in Newcastle. The poor girl was only eighteen, and had suffered from the effects of lead for about a year, and ultimately died in the infirmary. At the inquest held, the coroner said he would communicate with the inspector of factories to see if he would attend inquiries of this kind, and be the means of lessening the danger to the female workers which appeared to exist at present.—The people of Gateshead are in good spirits at the news of the Committee of the House of Lords having forced the water company to supply the higher parts of the town at the same rate all round. Previously to this decision there was some fear of those parts of the town being either starved as regards water or compelled to pay an exorbitant rate.—It is stated in our local papers that a committee from the University of Cambridge has visited the observatory of Mr. Newall to report on his celebrated telescope which he offered to present to that university.

Carlisle.

The annual meeting of the Home for Incurables of the border counties has been held at Carlisle. Dr. Barnes, who has acted as honorary medical officer to the institution since its commencement, has expressed his willingness to act as honorary consulting physician. The financial position of the Home was favourable, and, as the chairman remarked, very few institutions were, like it, free from debt.—An outbreak of scarlet fever is mentioned as having taken place at Edenhall. The disease is said to have been imported from Workington.—A painful affair took place on Sunday evening, March 24th, at Haltwhistle, a little town between Newcastle and Carlisle, where a married woman, taking advantage of her husband’s absence at chapel, rushed out of her house, taking the baby in her arms and two little children with her, and threw herself along with them into the burn which runs through the town, and they were all drowned and carried away into the Tyne. It appears that she wished very much to keep the eldest little boy at home from chapel that night, but was overruled in this, to which circumstance no doubt he owes his life. She exhibited no signs of insanity on the day in question, but she had been an inmate of an asylum several years ago.

Sunderland.

It is announced that the new wing of the Sunderland Infirmary in commemoration of the late Mr. James Hartley will be completed and ready for furnishing in June. The cost of the new addition will be £11,500. The wards will accommodate 70 beds, making with 140 already available more than 210 beds. This large addition to the institution has brought about the completion of the amalgamation scheme between the Children’s Hospital and the infirmary. The new wing has been built in accordance with all the latest improvements in ventilation and sanitation, and it is proposed to light the whole building with electricity. As showing the importance of the work done by the infirmary, it may be stated that, while there are 133 patients in the institution, 27 adults and 10 children are waiting for admission.—A meeting of the representatives of the various friendly societies has been held at Sunderland to promote a Convalescent Home on the lines suggested by Dr. Robinson of Stanhope. It was stated that by hiring three cottages as a commencement at Morecambe Bay or Grange-over-Sands 200 patients could be received in twelve months. This is quite possible, for there is a small institution in Newcastle of four beds where patients are accommodated at the rate of 100 in the year.

NEW BELGIAN MEDICAL SOCIETY.—A new medical society has just been established in Brussels under the title of the Belgian Gynæcological and Obstetrical Society. The presidency has been offered to Professor Deroubaix of Brussels, and Drs. Jacobs of Brussels and Fraipont of Liège have been requested to draw up a set of bye-laws. The next meeting will be held at the University of Brussels on the 7th inst.