

blood under the influence of electric shock; for oxygen is instantaneously combined with a carbon and diamagnetic substance is formed, and the oxyhæmoglobin simultaneously disappears. With regard to the interest which centres in "What is Life?" I would remark that the cause and nature of animal life are as essential to scientific medicine as a knowledge is to the engineer, for the proper construction of his mechanisms, of the natural forces by which those mechanisms will perform their work. In a very few words I will endeavour to render my meaning perfectly clear. It is well known that in steam and electricity we have two great forces, and by a careful consideration of their nature forms of mechanism have been invented capable under their power of doing almost any kind of work. In the foregoing letter I have endeavoured to show the manner in which the arterial blood does work upon the force of terrestrial magnetism, and terrestrial magnetism upon it, and how in this way that great natural force is utilised so as to cause the evolution of those phenomena which are natural to the living body. But the mechanism of the living body is constantly being impaired by the introduction of material impurity, and therefore it is that a full knowledge of the mode in which matter is productive of its effects, and also a knowledge no less full of the essential nature and conditions of that life the establishment of which in its truest environment and most perfect state is desired, become of such vast interest to the physician as well as to the human race in general.

### "THE BATTLE OF THE CLUBS."

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—Our "Battle of the Clubs" here has reached this stage—that there are four outside competitors against the present holder—no local man is contesting. There have been other candidates, but they have been induced to withdraw. The present holder refuses to take infants and girl juveniles under 4s. per annum. May we ask your assistance in appealing in the columns of THE LANCET to these men, urging them to withdraw? I may, perhaps, add that the outside men have tendered for the infants and other juveniles at 2s. 6d., 2s., and 1s. 6d. per annum. There is absolutely nothing personal against the present holder. This battle was brought on by the Loyal Benevolent Lodge requiring him to attend infants from three months and juveniles of both sexes to fifteen years for 2s. 6d. per annum. The local profession is united to a man. If we can only win this fight there are many other reforms open to us with every chance of success. I am, Sirs, yours truly,

FREDERICK PEARSE, Hon. Sec.

Portsmouth Medical Union, Pembroke-road,  
Portsmouth, Nov. 17th, 1895.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—Your Special Commissioner has hit upon one of the chief difficulties in dealing with the club question at Hull. When the medical aid system was first imported into—it was almost unanimously condemned by the resident practitioners. Its first medical officer undertook his duties knowing that so far as—was concerned he would have no support from his professional brethren. The result was that this gentleman obtained a free hand, without competition, amongst several thousand people, and could always obtain a consultant from other towns when the nature of his cases required a second opinion. Our united action was therefore inoperative, and gave the suspicion that we were actuated entirely by selfish and personal motives in our repudiation of an institution of a philanthropic character, supported by the tacit approval of the leading members of the profession in the district, and by many influential and respectable townsmen. Finding also that in a case of grave emergency it was difficult to adhere to our resolution we abandoned our position, not because we considered it unjustifiable, but because we were advertising an institution whose methods we disapproved. At present consultants are little touched by this contract question, though it will doubtless affect them in their turn if they countenance the present system of provident medical aid. The snake which they warm will sting them in the pocket. Sir Dyce Duckworth said plainly at Southampton what he thought of medical aid ethics, but the thing goes on in spite of his and other protests, and will go on until we learn that it is the common interest of the

profession to protect itself from the imposition of a pauperised public. Many a consultant who would tremble to meet a homœopath does not hesitate to throw the mantle of his protection over the covering of a lay committee in practice for gain by a medical man, whom they make absolutely their servant, and whom they sweat or dismiss at their own sweet will. While this is the case combination to regulate club practice is impossible.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

J. B. PIKE.

### "INFANT CRIMINALS."

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—On your most valuable Annotation in THE LANCET of Oct. 26th last, on the above subject, I beg to offer a few remarks. The family medical practitioners' duties, of necessity more than any other class of the community, compel them to observe the daily domestic lives of mothers and children. The accurate information, stated in your remarks to be so much needed, can only be obtained from the general practitioner who has almost daily opportunities of observing from birth the different phases of existence. Looking at this vital question from a domestic and clinical aspect, I am of opinion that we are too conventional in our ideas of heredity, skull and face formations, and I fear these stand in the way of realising the full importance of infant mental management. We who have lived long enough have over and over again seen the cruel, lying, selfish, and vicious child of the fat, dirty, lazy, and fatuous mother sent to the infant school, where the ethical law has been habitually and objectively hammered in, and, despite the surroundings, not only has the child passed on into becoming a good mother of a family, but also by precept and example taught her children in the way they should go. What are much needed, as I have advocated in your columns and in other journals, are fixed laws for the homes, bearing the stamp of coöperation and authority. We who have so long moved among the masses feel what influence an applied system would have, and how willingly many would carry out rules of guidance while dealing with infant development and abnormalities. Further, while acting on "the hygienic imagination" with a "time-table" hung up in the homes, we know how much in the decent ordering of life dormant ethical law can be aroused and appreciated.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Londonderry, Nov. 2nd, 1895.

WALTER BERNARD.

\* \* Dr. Bernard forwards to us with his letter a "time table" to be hung up in cottage homes as a regulation of domestic affairs. There is no doubt that the orderly and accurate observance of the simple rules of health and cleanliness that he enjoins in the document would conduce to a sanitary and also a happy home.—ED. L.

### "THE PICRIC ACID TEST FOR SUGAR IN THE URINE."

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—Pressure of work in connexion with the opening of my session and otherwise has hitherto prevented a reply to the recent letter of Sir George Johnson. I stated that if a solution of caustic potash and about an equal quantity of a saturated solution of picric acid be added to perfectly normal urine, a reddish colour is produced in the cold, and that when this solution is boiled the fluid assumes a deep claret colour. The same result ensues if the picric acid solution and the caustic potash solution be added to saccharine urine in the cold. On boiling, a deeper colour results in the latter case, the intensity of the colour depending entirely on the amount of glucose present. If the amount of glucose be small the colouring is not deeper at first than that which results in the case of perfectly normal urine. In this sense the picric acid test is, in my opinion, fallacious. Further, the solution gradually becomes of a darker colour on exposure. That Sir George Johnson himself maintains that the intensity of the carmine colouring is due to the proportion of sugar is evident from his recommendation of the picric solution as a quantitative test, the proportion of glucose being determined by the varying shades of colour. Sir George Johnson states that "the reddish colouration with picric acid and potash at the ordinary temperature in urine, whether normal or saccharine, is due entirely to