it will, I think, be interesting to notice whether the same relation persists in future.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ALEX. B. MACDOWALL, F.R.Met.S.

Ifracombe, Dec. 20th, 1901.

THE LATE R. B. ANDERSON FUND.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Permit me to add a word to the appeal of Lord Stamford and Mr. Timothy Holmes in reference to the R. B. Anderson Fund. It seems a most melancholy and depressing thought that an appeal renewed at intervals over six months, made by men of the highest standing, backed up by the editors of the great medical journals and on behalf of a man who is one of the martyrs of the profession if ever there was one, should only result in the miserable sum of £80. This is both inadequate for the pressing needs of Mrs. Anderson and family and discreditable to the profession.

When Mr. Anderson was alive, when the memory of the gross injustice perpetrated on him (and through him on the profession) was fresh, we rewarded him for his heroic endeavours to secure justice in the usual way. He was looked on as a crank, a misguided enthusiast, a man with a grievance; or even worse, he was regarded with suspicion, and his motives were impugned. Ridiculous as it may seem to those who knew him, I have even met people who talked of him as a "paid agitator." The last few years of his life were spent in anxiety and poverty. I am afraid that sometimes he even had not enough to eat. It is a story we, as a profession, can only recall with shame, but it is not too late to do something for our credit's sake.

Especially would I appeal to those who take an interest in medical politics. I had the honour of Mr. Anderson's intimate acquaintance and never did I meet a man to whom the honour and interests of the profession were so dear. Even his own wrongs were swallowed up in his enthusiasm for the cause. When the rights of the profession were assailed in his person he defended them with a courage and tenacity that nothing could shake. He faced prison and financial ruin rather than compromise one jot of those rights. He hastened his own death by the privations and mental anxiety incurred in fighting a battle which was not his alone but that of the whole profession. We may think his conduct quixotic, that he was foolish in neglecting his family and financial interests in order to fight the battle. But those of us who in his place would have been less courageous (more prudent, if you will) may at any rate honour his undaunted courage and sympathise with his family, left in very distressed circumstances. Every man who reads this could afford a few shillings, and I trust for the honour of the profession that the fund will not be closed at anything like its present miserable state. I shall personally be glad to receive and forward to the treasurer any subscriptions which may be sent to me.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Cotfield House, Gateshead, Dec. 18th, 1901.

ALFRED COX.

CANCER AMONG HINDOOS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The letter of Colonel J. Maitland, I.M.S., in THE LANCET of Dec. 21st, 1901, p. 1763, has re-stimulated my previous intention, formed at the time that Mr. C. B. Keetley's paper appeared in THE LANCET (Oct. 5th, p. 939), of refuting the statement contained therein—to wit, "Hindoos (*sic*) suffer comparatively little from cancer." Dr. C. N. Saldanha, judging from his name, hies evidently from the Malabar coast, most probably from Mangalore, South Canara, and has had his medical education at the medical institutions of either Bombay or Madras. Not having a Medical Register at hand I am unable to assert definitely. I have had over three years' experience of surgical work on this coast, from the north of South Canara to the south of Malabar (Cochin) and can avouch for the fact that cancer, in its general signification, is common—indeed, very common—among the natives in this tract of the Madras Presidency. All the various organs and tissues obnoxious to this infection were represented: the penis, the jaws, throat, cervix uteri, breasts, &c. The most prevalent were cases affecting the lower jaw and the penis. Colonel Maitland speaks for the

Madras General Hospital, where cases from all over the Madras Presidency come for operation.

Thus my local, though limited, and Colonel Maitland's general and considerably more extensive, experiences of the Madras Presidency do not bear out the sweeping generalisation attributed to Mr. Keetley's informant. Of course, the word "Hindoos" is employed by Mr. Keetley in a very loose sense and might have passed muster 50 years ago as of sufficient scientific accuracy; but in this more enlightened twentieth century this now obsolete and vague word should be replaced by one more in accordance with our advance in anthropology. Mussulmans are not Hindus, yet the former are subject to the same ills as the latter. The term "natives of India" would remove the objection. It was a pity Mr. Keetley did not refer to the annual reports of the medical institutions of India, obtainable at three or four accredited booksellers in London, before accepting the *ipse dixit* of Dr Saldanha.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

C. DONOVAN, B.A., M.D., B.Ch. R.U.I.,
Captain, I.M.S.

Instow, N. Devon, Dec. 22nd, 1901.

PERMANGANATE OF POTASSIUM IN THE TREATMENT OF DYSENTERY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of Dec. 21st, 1901, Mr. W. B. Bennett of Liverpool records a most interesting case of diarrhoea in which he finally adopted the treatment of washing out the bowel by a weak solution of permanganate of potassium. I have been more than usually interested in this contribution of Mr. Bennett, and I think it will be of interest to him and to your readers to know that this form of treatment was successfully adopted in connexion with a mild epidemic of so-called asylum dysentery at this institution more than two years ago. At the time every conceivable remedy was tried with little or no effect, but no sooner had we adopted irrigation of the bowel by means of permanganate of potassium than our cases began to improve and we had no more deaths. From Mr. Bennett's reference to his experience of this method of treating dysentery in South Africa it would seem as if it had been employed here prior to his South African experience. It is to be regretted that these facts were not put on record earlier, but it is hoped that a short contribution on the subject will see daylight before long. The plan adopted here was to wash out the bowel morning and evening, and seldom had this to be repeated after the second day. In every case of severe diarrhoea with any tendency to straining we now always employ this method of treatment.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

P. W. MACDONALD, M.D. Aberd.

The Asylum, Dorchester. Dec. 30th, 1901.

THE BRITISH ELECTRO-THERAPEUTICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I write to ask those who are interested in this subject to support the movement started by Mr. Chisholm Williams for the formation of an Electro-therapeutic Society. The number of those who make use of electrical methods in medical work is steadily increasing in this country, and a society which will provide a meeting-place and an opportunity of exchanging ideas should be a very useful one. The list of those who have already sent in their names as supporters of the proposed society is a good one, and it includes a majority of the gentlemen who are in charge of the electrical departments of the London hospitals. I hope that many others who may be waiting to see how things are going to turn out will be encouraged to send in their names to Mr. Chisholm Williams, 20, Bedford-square, London, W.C., before Jan. 10th. or will attend the meeting to be held on that day for the formal establishment of the society.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Wimpole-street, W., Dec. 30th, 1901.

H. LEWIS JONES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The first general meeting of the above will be held on Friday, Jan. 10th, at the rooms of the Medical Society of London, 11, Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, London. W.,

at 8.30 P.M., to receive the report of the provisional committee.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Bedford-square, W.C., Jan. 1st, 1902. CHISHOLM WILLIAMS.

THE AGE OF VACCINE LYMPH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It would serve a very good purpose if THE LANCET called urgent attention to the necessity for a date to be affixed to every tube of vaccine sent out by our recognised purveyors. This would be a very simple proceeding and highly proper. Of course, it requires no large stock of intelligence to see that this would condemn as useless much lymph which now filters through various sources to the too confiding practitioner. As it is, I know of nothing so unsatisfactory to ourselves and the public we serve as the present almost hopeless uncertainty of the age and consequent strength of much of the vaccine stocked and sold by secondary agents. Something ought to be done to put this matter on a fair basis.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Newington-green, N., Dec. 29th, 1901. GEO. J. B. STEVENS.

NOTES FROM INDIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

The Plague Epidemic: the Mortality in Bombay and Elsewhere.—Death of Surgeon-General R. Harvey.—The Famine.—Final Report of the Plague Commission.

THE number of deaths throughout India from plague during the past week is somewhat less, the figures being 7961, as against 8431 during the previous seven days. For the corresponding week last year the deaths were only 2140. The decrease this week is chiefly in the Bombay Presidency, where 5655 deaths occurred, as compared with 5980 in the previous week. Last year there were only 560 deaths. The Punjab returns 1646 deaths, as against 946 for the previous week and only 14 last year. Bengal returns 168 deaths, but last year, when the disease was raging in the Patna and neighbouring districts, there were 798 deaths. The province of Jummū, across the Punjab border, has become infected, but Kashmir proper is free. The number of deaths from plague in Calcutta remains about the same, but during the month of November there were 93 deaths, as compared with 81 during October. The disease is once more spreading in Bangalore, not only in the city but in the cantonment. In Bombay city there is not much change, 177 deaths being recorded for this week, as against 181 for last week, but the general mortality keeps high. The present death-rate is 52.93 per 1000. For the year 1900–1901 the death-rate of Bombay city was no less than 96.56 per 1000 by the old census and 102.25 per 1000 according to the recent one. This is three times the average death-rate before the era of plague. The infant mortality is enormous. Of 79,350 deaths 13,492 occurred among children of one year of age and under.

The news of the death of Surgeon-General R. Harvey, C.B., D.S.O., has been received with deep regret throughout India. He was very popular and his ability was unquestioned. He is reported to have died from peritonitis. In accordance with his special wishes his remains were cremated and the ashes were buried in the grave of his little daughter at Simla. As Surgeon-General L. D. Spencer has previously officiated as Director-General it is probable that he will be appointed to the post left vacant by the death of Surgeon-General Harvey.

During the past few weeks the famine conditions have so far improved that at present there are only about 90,000 persons under relief. The details are: Madras, 2043; Bombay, 47,508; Rajputana, 94; Baroda, 26,283; and the Bombay Native States, 16,400.

The conclusions arrived at by the Plague Commission in its recent and final report have been anticipated by most of the authorities in India for some time. The mild measures now practised are almost entirely in accordance with its recommendations. Medical examination of travellers is still carried out in some places—for some months past at Poona—but its value has apparently been negative. The conflict of opinion between the medical and civilian members of the commission concerning administrative control is natural—the civilian

members on behalf of their service being jealous of the loss of power in administration. It is not generally known in England how comparatively subordinate the medical services are in India. That they are so is proved by so many of the plague appointments being held and the reports written by military and civilian officers. The scheme for the sanitary administration of India is one of the best suggestions in the report.

Dec. 6th, 1901.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE PROFESSION POPULAR ERRORS IN REGARD TO CLUB PRACTICE.

(BY OUR SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.)

THE *Daily Express* has a large circulation throughout the kingdom. It is published at the popular price of one half-penny and professes to advocate progress in every direction. Recently it published an article entitled, "Poor Men's Doctors," which bears the impress of sincerity and seems to have been dictated with the object of defending the interests of the many against the selfishness of the few. In this instance the selfish few are the members of the medical profession who, by inference, are accused of having formed a sort of oligarchy or trade union so as to fill their pockets at the expense of the poor. The case is not stated in these plain words, but that is the moral which will evidently be deduced from the description given. It might be thought that the most elementary sense of justice would suggest the advisability of taking into consideration the other side of the question. Nevertheless, there is not a single fact, not a single argument, brought forward in defence of the medical profession. In THE LANCET alone there have been hundreds of columns published on the subject, but evidently the author of the article in the *Daily Express* has not read one of these nor does he seem to have questioned any member of the various medical unions that exist in all parts of the country or to have consulted any of the numerous reports and documents which these medical organisations have issued. The publication of an *ex-parte* statement is not the way to promote the cause of progress. It can but tend to envenom the situation. True progress can only be achieved by hearing all sides and then by striving to harmonise conflicting interests. The statements of the *Daily Express* are important, not merely because they have been published in a paper which has a wide circulation, but because they echo opinions which, however erroneous, are widely held by a large though misinformed section of the public.

The *Daily Express* complains of the decision of the General Medical Council, which it inaccurately entitles the "British Medical Council," in regard to the case of Dr. R. Rendall of Great Yarmouth. It qualifies as "ridiculous words" the terms "infamous conduct in the professional sense," but it has nothing whatsoever to say as to the technical point at issue—namely, whether medical men should allow paid agents to canvass for patients on their behalf. The effort, however, to put an end to toting for patients' deals, we are told, "with a principle concerning the health and welfare of at least 2,000,000 persons." This is doubtless true, but it affects this great number of people in a manner calculated to protect their best interests by securing for all better and more careful medical attendance. Then follows the statement that the 2,000,000 and more members of medical clubs are "workmen who under ordinary circumstances would be unable to pay for medical attendance and would be forced to apply to the parish or to throw themselves on the bounty of benevolent societies." Fact after fact, case after case, and article after article have been published in these columns and elsewhere to prove that such a statement is absolutely false; but it is not necessary to refer to this great mass of evidence—the falsehood of the statement is clearly demonstrated by the medical clubs and friendly societies themselves, for if this assertion were true they would not so strenuously object to establish a wage-limit.

The position is very simple, the case is very clear. The darkness is caused by the perverse manner in which the real issue is systematically concealed. Medical practitioners have no objection to attending the genuine poor for one penny per