In some of the objections we agree with Dr. Rentoul. In others he allows his strong feelings to lead him astray. For example, he says that a prosecution against a midwife is not to be allowed to private persons save with the consent of the Attorney-General. The clause he quotes says "with the consent of the Attorney-General, or of the County Council." Surely this is an alternative that should be stated. Again, he makes much of the Medical Council being required to frame regulations from time to time respecting the education and examination of midwives, their examiners, &c., and yet not being granted the power to see that these regulations are carried out. The Medical Council has declined such a function. But power is given to the Privy Council to make regulations for securing the due supervision of examinations and punishing midwives who are disobedient or who act disgracefully, and it is obvious that the Medical Council would have a strong right of remonstrance if the regulations it advises were disregarded. Indeed, Clause 2 gives power to the Council to make new rules. So on throughout. Dr. Rentoul's objections deal with matters of detail, in regard to some of which there should be no difficulty in procuring reasonable amendments. Perhaps his strongest point is the effect of the Bill in putting the existing midwives on to the Register. But will Dr. Rentoul tell us of any instance in the history of legislation where existing practitioners were not similarly treated? Moreover, Bill or no Bill, these women are in practice, have legal rights, and powers of recovery. The whole effect of the proposed legislation is to make the assumption of the title of midwife more difficult than it is now, and to reduce the numbers of a class already too numerous. Surely, everybody must wish to see such a reduction. If Dr. Rentoul thinks it to the interest of the medical profession to continue the existence of the "13,000 old women" (for the most part without fitness or qualification) as midwives, we do not so understand either the interests of poor women or of the medical profession, and we have a strong conviction that if Providence had designed parturient sufferings under an ignorant midwife's attendance to such a nature as Dr. Rentoul's, he would have written a most powerful argument for immediate legislation for improving such practitioners out of existence, which is what the Bill will do.—ED. L.

THE CURE FOR CONSUMPTION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With Koch's recent brilliant discovery man takes another step forward in his evolutionary career, obtains yet a little more control over circumstances, makes yet a little further advance towards complete correspondence with his environment. Nor is it now deemed over-sanguine to predict that this is but the prelude to other triumphs of a similar kind, and that the time will not be long delayed when others of his fell enemies, such as malignant tumours (themselves, who can doubt, parasitic, like tubercle), shall succumb to treatment. An important and oft-mooted question hence now forces itself upon us with peculiar insistence—whether, namely, the human race actually benefits in the long run by those artificial checks upon the operation of natural selection, to the number of which increasing knowledge is continually adding. Manifestly, by artificially rescuing from death those who are prone to disease, we increase the racial predisposition thereto, and lower the standard of health. The individual with a compound astigmatism wears eyeglasses; another, a truss to keep up a hernia; a third, elastic stockings for varicose veins; again, another has been operated upon for vesical calculus; and all probably have been inoculated against small-pox (soon it will be against tubercle too). But the result in any case is not perfect health. There is at the best but a patching and a propping, often felt to be so imperfect that the cry is raised, "Were it not better not to be!" Thus we have to face another question, this time an ethical one. How far is an individual who has been

artificially rescued from the death that would have resulted from an innate weakness justified in leaving posterity to continue a like maimed existence? I merely raise the question; I do not in the narrow limits of a letter attempt fully to answer it. All I will say is that the artificial interference with the operation of natural selection does not lead to such disastrous consequences as might at first sight appear. But, with regard to tubercle, I am convinced that it is far more frequently the result of unfavourable circumstances than of inborn weakness, and notably among the poorer classes—in other words, that the soil favourable to the tubercle bacillus is far more frequently acquired than simply inherited. I presume none will deny that among children, at least, the condition of tissue which harbours the tubercle bacillus is generally that afforded by the so-called "strumous" diathesis. But what is this but a more or less faulty state of nutrition, the result of unfavourable external conditions? I have never yet seen in a child an example of this diathesis owning any other source. To put this statement in another way: If we suppose that the strumous diathesis is met with among the children of the very poor in London in the ratio of 20 per cent. (a very low estimate), then I venture to say that if this unhappy percentage were fed from earliest infancy on healthy mother's milk, and subsequently brought up in country air, under perfectly sanitary conditions, the strumous diathesis would be practically reduced to *nil* among them. On the other hand, it must be granted that tubercle may develop in individuals who are in no wise strumous, sometimes striking down some of the apparently most perfect physical specimens of humanity, and I would throw it out as at once a possibility and a hope that in the far future it may be to this class, and to this class alone, that it will be necessary to apply Koch's method. For the strumous diathesis is not the result of an inborn weakness, but of a fundamentally wrong environment, and should surely be dealt with as such.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Guilford-street, W.C., Nov. 11th, 1890. HARRY CAMPBELL.

CHLOROFORM ADMINISTRATION IN NASAL OBSTRUCTION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—If complete nasal obstruction exists, and the mouth be closed, it is obvious that the air-supply is cut off. This sounds like a truism, and yet I am not aware that it has received due attention. It is, I believe, routine treatment, or was, in chloroform narcosis, when the breathing became embarrassed, to open the mouth and pull forwards the tongue; but whether it was fully recognised that the impediment to the entrance of air was frequently caused by obstruction other than that due to spasm of the glottis, a falling back of the tongue, recession of the epiglottis, I am not prepared to say. I was myself until recently unacquainted with the fact.

Perhaps a case will better illustrate the point. A boy, the subject of post-nasal growths, was anaesthetised, or rather the attempt to anaesthetise him was made in the ordinary way by means of a Skirner's apparatus. I say attempt, for from an early period the breathing became embarrassed, and but little air or chloroform vapour was inhaled. The respiration was shallow, there was much sinking in above the clavicles, and these symptoms were not materially relieved by elevation of the chin. Some time before the conjunctival reflex was abolished breathing became imperceptible; the chloroform was removed, the chin strongly elevated, and breathing somewhat deepened again. The mouth all the time was tightly closed, being opened eventually with difficulty. The moment, however, that this was accomplished the breathing became free and he was quickly narcotised. Later, in the course of the operation, an accident occurred which again proved the necessity of the open mouth. The gag slipped, the mouth closed, and the breathing immediately became embarrassed again. It was simply open mouth, for the tongue was not interfered with, neither was the chin raised. I take it, in such cases as these, the ordinary method of raising the chin must be abandoned, for, the nose being obstructed, elevating the chin will close the mouth, and thus cut off the only air portal. If a gag be inserted and but partly opened, the difficulty will be overcome. The case

I have described is a typical one, but before this came under my observation I had seen several cases which illustrated the point in only a lesser degree.

I am, Sirs, yours obediently,
George-street, W., Oct. 27th, 1890. F. G. HARVEY.

BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Hospital Abuse Inquiry.

At a meeting of this committee, held on the 12th inst., his Honour Judge Chalmers presiding, it was stated by one practitioner, of twenty-five years' standing, that he never went into the out-patients' department or the hospitals without meeting some who were well able to pay for medical aid. Many persons drove up in cabs. He had seen seven or eight cabs outside the general hospital at a time. Mentioning the obstetric officer's name at this hospital, he said that he would not be surprised to see on his day a number of women with silk dresses and gloves going to see that gentleman. He gave other instances from his own experience where patients in good position obtained relief from the hospitals, and considered that the basis should be on the wages of the individual certified by the master.

Midland Medical Society.

Dr. McEwen of Glasgow gave the inaugural address before this Society on Wednesday last; there was a large audience. Four cases of aneurysm—of the aorta, the left subclavian, the abdominal aorta, and the femoral and iliac artery—were narrated, and the operation of the author described. This consists in the introduction of a fine steel pin into the sac, and sufficient irritation of the interior at places, to cause formation of white thrombi. Of the four cases mentioned, two recovered, one was much relieved, and one died. Much interest was shown in the address, at the conclusion of which a vote of thanks was moved by Mr. Oliver Pemberton and heartily accorded.

Munificent Gift to the Medical Charities of Birmingham.

Mr. G. F. Muntz, of Umberslade, has vested in trustees securities of the value of £21,000, the annual income of which is to be distributed among the medical charities of the town. Certain conditions are attached, and the institutions not to participate are clearly laid down—viz., (1) hospitals or asylums for the insane; (2) institutions or homes for convalescents; (3) institutions primarily supported by public rates; and (4) institutions carried on as commercial enterprises or for private profit. In case of the last-named condition, provision is made not to exclude institutions receiving paying patients if at the same time the deserving poor are treated either gratuitously or at a nominal cost. Certain other contingencies are allowed to be taken into consideration—namely, the circumstances under which such institution shall during the preceding financial year have invested by way of permanent endowment any part of its ordinary income, the objects and purposes of the institution as supplying the public want for the time being, the general character and status of the patients, and the provisions for ensuring the benefits of the institution to the deserving poor; the amount of voluntary annual subscriptions as showing the appreciation of the public of the need of the institution and the public confidence in its management; the income receivable from permanent endowments, and the average cost of patients of any recipient institution as compared with the average cost of patients in institutions having similar objects located in other towns, in cases where information is available. Ten trustees are appointed.

Up to the present time the Hospital Sunday collection for this year amounts to £4209 9s. 2d.

Birmingham, Nov 13th.

NORTHERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

A New Park for Newcastle-on-Tyne.

MR. W. D. CRUDDAS, a partner in the celebrated Elswick works of Sir Wm. J. Armstrong, Mitchell, and Co., has presented a piece of land to the Corporation of Newcastle

to be used for ever as a park and recreation ground. The land presented is valued at £12,000; but Mr. Cruddas's gift is all the more valuable as it is in a populous and working-class district of the town, where there was, but for this gift, little chance of ever obtaining breathing room in the way of a park.

Newcastle Royal Infirmary.

At a late meeting of the governors of the Royal Infirmary, Dr. Bruce presiding, Dr. Baigent, house surgeon, was called into the board-room, and received the warm congratulations of all present on having as the most distinguished graduate of the year carried off the Gold Medal given by the University of Durham for that prize. Dr. Philipson spoke of the honour achieved by Dr. Baigent for his essay, which was based on original research, and which was the best of the productions of twenty-eight candidates.

Newcastle Hospital Collections.

The usual collection in churches and chapels for our local charities was taken on the 26th ult. The weather was so unfavourable that some of the collections were postponed, and others have taken the course of supplementary ones, so it is to be hoped that the fund will not suffer seriously in the long run. On Saturday last the workmen's collection was made, and it is expected from the prosperous state of trade that it will make up for any deficiencies in the places of worship. Last year's was the largest amount ever given by the workmen—viz., over £2000, and it exceeded that collected in the churches.

A Brave Young Lady.

The other day, while a servant girl in Morpeth was engaged in cleaning an upstairs window she was heard to scream, and was seen in the act of falling from the ledge on which she was sitting by Miss F. Arkless, who was passing at the time, and who with great presence of mind ran forward to the place, knelt down on the pavement and fortunately was able to catch the poor girl's head in the lap of her dress as she came to the ground. She thus broke the fall and averted what might have been serious consequences. It is fortunate, the papers say, that Miss Arkless received no injury herself from her courageous act. The servant has escaped with bad contusions of the limbs, and is recovering under the care of Mr. Skrimshire, surgeon.

The Health of Whitby.

Dr. T. Tinley, the medical officer of health, has presented a very satisfactory report as to the sanitary condition of this favourite watering place for the last quarter, and says that the death-rate from all causes has been below the average of past quarters. Dr. Tinley says also that the most satisfactory feature in his report is the absence of death from zymotic disease, not one having been registered. There has been no death even from diarrhoea, which is remarkable considering the large influx of visitors to the place in the summer season. Dr. Tinley says that while the death-rate was about 15 per 1000 on the year the birth-rate almost doubles the death rate for the quarter, being 6·7 for the quarter. Dr. Tinley is to be congratulated on the improved sanitary condition of the borough, and it is to be hoped that it will soon emerge from its condition of being regarded as an almost stationary town as regards its resident population, as twenty years ago its population was very little different from the present estimate of about 15,000. Cæsarean section was performed in a case at the Whitby Workhouse on the 3rd inst., mother and child being saved.

It is stated in our papers that by the will of the late Mr. Robert Walters of Eldon-square, in this city, several benevolent and religious societies will receive important bequests, including £500 each to the Newcastle Royal Infirmary and the Dispensary.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, Nov. 12th.

SCOTLAND.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

The New Member for the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews.

SIR CHARLES PEARSON, the Solicitor-General for Scotland, was on Wednesday duly declared to be elected Member of Parliament for the Universities. There was no opposition and therefore no poll.

The Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh.

This Society held the first meeting of its seventieth