this is undoubtedly what would have happened, and I do not think it would be seriously blamed.

"Instead of trying you for murder your prosecutors ought to congratulate you on your skill and good judgment. If time permitted I would willingly appear in the witness-box to sustain this my written opinion. Make any use of this you think fit. "LAWSON TAIT."

"THE NEW PHOTOGRAPHY."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have so many applications, chiefly from medical men, for prints of my photographs of the hand that I have arranged with the Swan Electrical Engraving Company, 116, Charing-cross-road, to supply both photographic prints and printing blocks of this or any other of my subjects to anyone requiring them. I should be much obliged if you could kindly mention this in your next issue, as it will relieve me of pressure of correspondence and enable those who wish to get blocks or prints to apply directly for them.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

A. A. C. SWINTON.

66, Victoria-street, London, S.W., Jan. 27th, 1896.

"A METHOD OF EXAMINING CLUB-FEET."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Mr. A. H. Tubby's paper in THE LANCET of Jan. 18th sets out ten points to which the surgeon's attention should be directed. But none of them refer to the condition of the toes as indicating in them physiological perfection, perverted activity, or suspended or defective function. And yet, as I have long been contending, there must be some relation between the functions of the toes and more than one of the conditions mentioned. It can hardly be, for instance, that the coexistence of claw-like toes with exaggerated arch (spoken of as "arcuatus" in the paper) is a mere coincidence. The relation of the two features can, as I think, be demonstrated, but that is not my present object.

I wish to point out conditions frequently to be found in the toes which ought to be noted when existent in a methodical examination of any defective foot. The great toe may be found to have been habitually packed in the median-pointed sock or boot over or under the second toe. The difference is important. The former position is compatible with a good deal of functional activity; so far as the toe can move it does so in the natural plane of movement—from its peculiar position of rest (extension and eversion) downwards and inwards. When, however, it is packed under the second toe the position of rest cannot be assumed at all, and any movement must be in a plane for which the joint at the base is not adapted. Habitual packing in this position is absolutely incompatible with free exercise of function, and, in such a case, the plantar arch often sinks because of the suspended function of its powerful tie-rod muscle, the flexor longus pollicis. The smaller toes should each afford evidence of habitual pressure downwards, and if the final joints be not capable of free extension, so that the final phalanges lie in full length on the ground when pressed against it, this shows that the flexors act too much as flexors and not as pressors downwards of these phalanges. The point is important in relation to the corns or thickened skin beneath the heads of the metatarsal bones, to which attention is directed in the paper. When the toes are firmly held against the ground by the flexor muscles the heads of the metatarsal bones are supported, and when borne down by the weight of the body are let down gently without sliding and therefore without friction. Functionally efficient toes and callosities on the sole are never found together. Altogether, it is not too much to say that, if the physiological state of the toes be determined, the condition of the foot as a whole may be predicted.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Gloucester, Jan. 25th, 1896.

T. S. ELLIS.

VOLUNTEER MEDICAL ORGANISATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It is much to be desired that the report drawn up by the sub-committee of the Volunteer Medical Association on this subject, a notice of which appears in THE LANCET of Jan. 25th, 1896, will be published in such form that access to it may readily be had by all who are interested in this branch of the volunteer service. To judge from the

extracts which your notice contains, the sub-committee's recommendations appear to be excellent, and criticism will be directed, I imagine, rather to what the report otherwise contains. Indeed, it would appear that the sub-committee have committed themselves to a proposition which I venture to think may be disputed. In the introduction or preamble the opinion is expressed "that the existing medical organisation was good so far as it went." Now, I ask, for how many parts of the country is this a correct description of what exists? We have, it is true, regimental surgeons innumerable, with a few bearer-companies, and companies of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps here and there, but these surely are not seriously to be regarded as constituting an "organisation." Organisation implies the power of co-ordinated action, and these certainly have meantime not that, however fitted they may be to acquire it. Indeed, the whole question would seem to lie here. Is there at the present time existing in this country any volunteer medical organisation worthy of the name? The basis of much that does exist is the regimental system, and that system in the regular army broke down most thoroughly and completely when the introduction of quick-firing guns made the rapid development of military evolutions a necessity. Why should it be retained in the volunteer service? Should "organisation," indeed, not begin by the creation of a volunteer medical staff, on the lines of the army medical staff, to include regimental surgeons, as well as the officers of bearer-companies and of companies of the volunteer medical staff corps, so that something like uniformity would at least be afforded as a basis for development? None of us who are attached to regiments would want to leave them, I should think; but all of us, I believe, would derive some support in the discharge of our duties from the knowledge that we were in addition part of a larger medical "organisation" which was something less of a fiction and more of a fact than at present.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Glasgow, Jan. 28th, 1896.

ARCH. K. CHALMERS.

ROENTGEN'S RAYS AS A CURE FOR DISEASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Do Roentgen's rays possess germicidal properties? If so, what a vast field of treatment is laid open. We should expect that many diseases due to microbes would be curable by simple exposure to these rays. We might hope even that pulmonary phthisis could be cured by direct action upon the bacilli, for it would not be difficult to flood the apex of a lung with Roentgen's rays. Professor Marshall Hall long ago proved that sunlight was a germicide, and he found the most powerful rays in this regard were placed towards the violet end of the spectrum near those having the greatest chemical activity. Roentgen's rays are ultra-violet and possess chemical activity; by analogy we should expect that amongst them would be found some having germicidal power.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Jan. 29th, 1896.

THOS. GLOVER LYON.

MUNICIPAL MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Your article in THE LANCET of last week calling attention to the action of the Dunstable Town Council with regard to their medical officer is well timed. A similar incident came under my notice some little time ago. A parochial board advertised for a medical officer. The appointment was given to one of the local men, each of whom is to have his turn, the appointment being only for a year. The curious thing is that the appointment was made fully two weeks before the advertisement appeared. This I have on the authority of one of the local men. There is a great deal of "red-tapeism" connected with these appointments, and now and then the officials are made to climb down, as the following will show. Nearly a year ago a certain corporation advertised for a medical officer. Applications were received in due course, but each applicant shortly afterwards received notice that the appointment had been filled up. The "Final" results of a university medical examination were announced, and you may judge of the surprise of one of the rejected applicants when he received a second note stating that he had been appointed to the vacancy. The post had been