more detrimental, alike to the public and to the medical man, than ever it has been at any period. The prescribing chemist has given place to the daily newspaper and magazine and the public swallow the quack nostrums there prescribed and so blatantly advertised and pay out their half-crowns without hesitation, in the majority of cases losing their money and vitiating their health in a stupendous, wholesale style never previously dreamed of. Never have the ailing public been so exploited. Great Britain has become the happy hunting-ground of the American professor of humbug and a rich harvest is being gathered by means of positive statements that applied to any other commercial transaction would assure prompt arrest and punishment. Why is it the law permits the statement that "Dr. Blank's Blue Pills" will cure locomotor ataxy, paralysis, and the like, and yet when the poor sufferer has spent his money and proved the fraud of the label the law offers no facilities for prompt punishment of the fraudulent vendor?

It is rumoured that owing to a recent legal ruling the authorities charged with the collection of revenue from these quack nostrums will shortly introduce an amending Act into Parliament widening the scope of its Acts. If this is done the medical profession should see to it that in future the Government should free itself from its association with quackery either by insisting on the actual formula being published on the outside of every package (as on the continent) or in some other distinct manner withdraw the sanction which its medicine stamp now extends. In view of the recent disclosures by a medical man (as reported in THE LANCET) of the ingredients of these nostrums the public will not need anything further to show them the "folly of their faith" than a knowledge that the actual ingredients of their favourite nostrum can be purchased for a few coppers. Apart from any other considerations it is pitiful to see the way the very poor are defrauded of their money and often when they need it most. The Government should do something to protect the ignorant or, at all events, in common decency they should dissociate themselves from a "connivance with quackery" and the medical profession should not hesitate to speak firmly on the subject.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Feb. 8th, 1904.

A CHEMIST AND DRUGGIST.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF BERLIN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The Anglo-American Medical Association of Berlin will be glad if you would inform the profession of its organisation and purposes. Realising the difficulties which beset the path of the stranger, the association places its services at the disposal of physicians who intend to study in Berlin. They are cordially invited to attend the meetings which are held weekly, and any information concerning the work to be had here will be gladly given to any member of the profession who will communicate upon his arrival in Berlin with Dr. J. H. Honau, president, Lützow Str. 78, or with the undersigned committee.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ALBERT J. MAYER, M.D., Secretary.

DAVID SHANNON, M.B. Glasg.

WILLIAM W. GRAVES, M.D.

Albrecht Str. 22, Berlin, Feb. 3rd, 1904.

SPORADIC SMALL-POX.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Wherever a sporadic case of small-pox occurs and there is no history of infection the question must naturally puzzle one as to the origin of the disease. Quite recently a case of small-pox occurred in my district and, like many other cases, so far as could be ascertained by questioning the patient, there was absolutely no history to answer for the infection. The house in which the case happened was dark and exceedingly dirty, and the rooms had a large number of papers upon the walls which were infested with bugs. During the outbreak of small-pox at the end of the year 1901 and the beginning of the year 1902 the stripping and cleansing of rooms previously to lime-whiting revealed large numbers of papers upon the walls of houses which were terribly infested with bugs. The amount of pent-up filth to my mind was so alarming that in reporting to my public health committee respecting the working of the sections of the Public

Health (London) Act, 1891, which govern the cleansing and disinfection of houses, *inter alia* I stated:—

Some of the rooms which were stripped after the cases of small-pox had 18, 15, 12, and 10 papers on their walls. The amount of pent-up filth must be enormous and it is not reasonable to expect tenants to cleanse such rooms by stripping the papers off the walls, so that if the tenants have to cleanse such walls the so-called cleansing will only be carried out by pasting on another paper. It is a common practice with owners after one tenant has left and before another one comes in to paste paper over the walls to hide the dirt and filth and to keep together the plaster. If such a state of affairs as this is allowed to go on the houses of the working classes in London will in time become so saturated with filth and disease that a condition of affairs in the metropolis will be arrived at like that in the year 1665 when plague broke out.

Recent researches in respect of mosquitoes being the carriers of malaria and of fleas being the means of conveying plague from infected rats suggest an idea as to whether there is any condition of a bug externally or internally which causes small-pox. I must apologise for writing on what may be considered so puerile a matter, for the question may be derisively asked what about lice and black beetles; but the walls of the houses which were cleansed, disinfected, and lime-whited had so much pent-up filth upon them by the plastering of paper upon paper that possibly the surroundings of the bugs had affected their condition or excreta, and any ideas which may suggest to bacteriologists new fields to work on in order to discover the origin of so loathsome a disease as small-pox, which must originate from some cause I am sure, cannot be amiss.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

FREDK. WM. ALEXANDER,

Medical Officer of Health, Metropolitan Borough of Poplar.
Bow-road, E., Feb. 2nd, 1904.

THE TREATMENT OF SCOLIOSIS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the report you give in THE LANCET of Jan. 30th, p. 302, of my paper on the above subject read before the Aberdeen University Medical Society there are several passages which give an entirely erroneous impression of what I said.

1. "In osseous scoliosis there was *bone disease* and [the condition was to that extent incurable." What I said was that "there was bony *deformity* and the condition was to that extent incurable."

2. "In *postural* scoliosis the curve in about one-half of the cases was a *reversed C* in the *dorsal region*."

This is not so at all. In all cases of scoliosis—viz., postural and osseous combined, about one-half have an *ordinary* (not reversed) letter C curvature of the whole dorsal and lumbar vertebræ (not only the dorsal region).

3. "The muscular sense was markedly *absent* in] the wasted muscles."

Surely the patient's muscular sense is *perverted*, not *absent*, for the vicious posture appears to her quite natural, while the improved position in which she is put by the surgeon appears to her, through her perverted muscular sense, to be totally incorrect. If the muscular sense were absent it would be a waste of time to treat the patient at all. I should be obliged if you would insert this in your next issue, as such errors are very misleading and tend to discredit the very valuable method of treatment which I was advocating.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

P. BERNARD ROTH.

Marischal College, Aberdeen, Feb. 2nd, 1904.

* * We have referred the above letter to our correspondent in Aberdeen who replies that his report "gives a very reasonable gist of the lecture" and was not intended to be *verbatim*. To the first and third emendations he demurs; the second one he admits to have point and accepts the correction with regrets for the slip. In these regrets we join.—ED. L.

CHLORETONE IN SEA-SICKNESS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In a recent issue of THE LANCET experiences were invited with regard to the treatment of sea-sickness by chloretone. I notice several medical men have given the experiences of their patients, but I shall venture to place before you my own personal experience of the action of this drug. I am always a bad sailor and when it recently