THE PREVENTION OF ALCOHOLISM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of Oct. 14th was an article by Dr. G. Archdall Reid entitled "The Temperance Fallacy." This subject was largely used as a peg on which to hang the writer's contempt for the ignorance displayed in the matter of heredity by his professional brothers. But towards the end of his lengthy communication was to be found the amazing suggestion that the chronic drunkard should be prohibited by law from procreating children. That is the climax led up to by ten closely printed columns of THE LANCET. Luckily for the labouring reader he may at this point derive some amusement from a footnote wherein Dr. Reid hugs to himself the idea that a few foolish people may label him "that most immoral man." Surely, the author is poking sly fun at us. Can he really suppose that the sexual functions of a drunkard are to be controlled by a bench of magistrates? If a starving man be forbidden to eat in full view of a banquet, does he die from want of food? Supposing that such a law as Dr. Reid proposes were enacted there would follow very obvious results. Trade in so-called "preventives" would be increased; abortion mongers would wax fatter even than now; and a premium would be put upon infanticide. For my part I would suggest that a rational and radical proceeding would be the castration of all drunken men and the spaying of all drunken women.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

London, Oct. 14th, 1899.

SIDNEY VINES.

WHO PAYS LUNACY FEES?

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Can you give me any information on the following? While I was professionally attending a young woman she developed signs of mania and I had eventually to sign a certificate for her removal to a public lunatic asylum as a pauper. I sent in a bill to the guardians for a guinea and am now informed by their clerk that as I was attending the case as a private practitioner they cannot admit their liability. The clerk further states that the district medical officers are contracted with to certify pauper lunatics at a charge of 10s. 6d. The point I wish to clear up is, Have I any claim against the guardians or not? I may say that on a former occasion I sent in a bill for a guinea for similar services and received 10s. 6d., with an intimation that the guardians considered that sufficient for a lunacy certificate. Trusting you will be able to clear up this matter,

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Oct. 11th, 1899.

M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

** Our correspondent should have arranged for his fee at first. He is now not only late in action but applying to the wrong parties for payment. Fees for the signing of certificates for pauper lunatics take the form of an order to pay made by the justices of the peace on the guardians. In possession of such an order the medical man is independent of the guardians who must pay the sum named—sometimes one guinea, sometimes two guineas, but never, we believe, less than one guinea. The point that the medical man was attending the case as a private practitioner has no significance whatever, and the clerk to the guardians quoted by our correspondent seems to be more than usually ignorant of the Lunacy Act. The subject of lunacy is apt to be a sore one with the guardians who are unable to understand how a medical man can expect to earn such an enormous sum as 21s. by "just putting his name to a piece of paper." The Lunacy Act is quite clear on the point and when the order is signed by the magistrate the guardians must pay. The relieving officer should have on him a supply of order forms for the medical man's fee and the order should be made out at the same time as the other papers necessary to the certification of the patient as a lunatic are signed. All medical men should see that the order for their fee is made out at this time and should mention the matter to the relieving officer or to the justices so that future trouble may be avoided. We fear that the only remedy now

available to our correspondent is to go to the justice who signed for the patient's removal to see if he can get his position rectified.—ED. L.

"THE EXPENSES OF A MEDICAL MAN'S MOTOR-CAR."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—We notice that in THE LANCET of Oct. 14th, at p. 1027, you say that Dr. A. Charpentier, who has driven his car 5000 miles in the year, sets the cost of repairs down at £26. Allow us to point out to you, as manufacturers of the car in question, that this is an oversight on your part, as the £26 include cost of running—viz., fuel, lubricating, and wear and tear of the car. This amount of £26 includes also new chains of English make which have been found better than those we were fitting at the time Dr. Charpentier had his car and which we are now fitting free of charge, thus avoiding the possibility of this expenditure in future. It also includes new tyres, which we are also now fitting, of a new and thoroughly satisfactory pattern guaranteed to stand wear in every way.

Leaving the items of chains and tyres out it leaves only the sum of £4 for actual repairs. Taking the improved chains and tyres to last only two years—and this is certainly under the average—we must add £4 for tyres (the cost for a new pair being £8) and £2 for half of a new pair of English chains (the cost of a new pair being £4), thus bringing up the total repair and wear-and-tear account to £10. Interest on capital and licences are not taken into account, as they would have to be paid in any case, whether horse or motor is used. We give herewith the actual account as rendered by Dr. A. Charpentier, from which it will be seen that our account is strictly correct. Knowing that you are thoroughly willing to "hear both sides" on this important question is our only apology for thus troubling you and begging the necessary space in your valuable paper to explain matters which otherwise might be well misunderstood to our discredit.

We are, Sirs, yours obediently,

INTERNATIONAL MOTOR CAR COMPANY

Kilburn, N.W., Oct. 18th. (F. O. SEYD, Manager).

The cost works out as follows for a year:—

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Interest on £180	8 2 0	New sprocket wheels	1 0 0
Licence	2 2 0	One pair chains	5 5 0
Petrol	6 10 0	General small repairs	3 0 0
Lubricating oil (seven gallons)	0 10 0	Connolly's tyres (half)	4 4 0
Solid grease (20 lbs.)	0 16 0	Brampton's chains and wheels (half)	5 0 0
Recharging batteries	0 10 0		
		Total	36 19 0

NOTES FROM INDIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

The Indian Medical Service.—Inoculation for Dysentery.—The Progress of the Plague.—Vaccination in Bengal.—The Pay of the Special Plague Medical Officers.

THE annual Indian Medical Service dinner was taken advantage of by Surgeon-General Harvey, I.M.S., to refer to the difficulties which the medical service had experienced from war and plague during the past few years and to show, though short-handed, how excellently it had performed its work. There is a prospect of having a new alienist department and a new bacteriological department. Surgeon-General Harvey stated that under the improved arrangements by which the great jails are now manned by medical officers, the health of prisoners has enormously improved. It is proposed also to create a chemical department to be available for the advantage and convenience of commerce and medico-legal work. He referred also to the magnificent new hospital in course of erection in Calcutta, and to new buildings in connexion with the Medical College. He repudiated the suggestion that the service had become unpopular, and said that the marks showed that there was no falling off in the quality of successful candidates.

The *Japan Mail* reports that Dr. Kitasato has conclusively established the efficiency of his method of inoculation in the treatment of dysentery. As the result of 50 or 60