Parliament, "the Plumbers' Registration Bill, 1897," stated "that they were bound to recognise the members of the trade or profession it was proposed to register who were practising at the time the Bill was passed," and the members of the House are reported to have replied "Hear, Hear." To such a statement applied to the Midwives Bill no one, so far as is reported, has raised the slightest objection—indeed, it is provided for in the Bill under discussion by Section 4, "Provisions for existing Midwives," that a midwife who has already been in practice for two years may be registered without an examination, &c. But this is entirely a different point to the one he is there attempting to discuss and I repeat that he deliberately is evading the issue.

Again, Mr. Humphreys admits that "it is perfectly true that the use of such a title" as Licentiate in Midwifery "is not expressly forbidden in the Bill," and let us mark well the reasons he gives that it is not so prohibited: "for it would then be merely a question of evading terms." If this strikes Mr. Humphreys as a cogent reason for the non-protection of a title belonging to the profession of which he is a member does it not strike him also of the absolute absurdity of attempting to "solve a difficult problem" by a Bill which to nullify in practice is "merely a question of evading terms." Mr. Humphreys has evidently yet to learn that specious fallacies are not arguments or facts. Has he ever heard, I wonder, of the expression "driving a coach and four through an Act of Parliament." If not I would refer him to the words of that profound thinker, Herbert Spencer, who in denouncing immature, ill-considered, and ill-devised legislation, says, in effect if not in the actual words, that no prophecy is more safe than that the results anticipated by such legislation will be vastly exceeded in amount by the results never anticipated.

But, to resume the exact point and to follow Mr. Humphreys in his context, he goes on to say: "Clause 5 (f) places the approval of 'the rules for regulating, supervising, and restricting within due limits the practice of midwives' in the hands of the General Medical Council." True, the section does this with regard to *practice* but, be it noted, nothing is provided either in this section or in any other of the Bill for "rules" to restrict the use of midwifery titles by registered midwives. Then he proceeds: "The assumption of title would prove at once that the midwife who assumed it intended to step beyond the province assigned to her" and "therefore she would at once be liable to be struck off the register." This explanation is, of course, Mr. Humphreys's own; the words speak for themselves. According to him assumption of a title by a registered midwife against which there is no penal provision in the Bill would be conclusive proof of an intended misdemeanour in practice and therefore punishable as an actual misdemeanour. This free-and-easy manner of prejudging and assuming guilt might be very convenient, but the laws of England are not administered in this grotesque manner; with such clouded ideas of legal procedure one can well imagine what a slight conception Mr. Humphreys has as to the true requirements of a good act of Parliament.

If Mr. Humphreys will provide a list of the results he anticipates from such an invertebrate measure I will venture to provide him with a list of results which he possibly never anticipates.

Leeds, March 14th, 1898.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

J. H. WIGHAM.

"A RARE TRANSPOSITION."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Mr. W. H. Brown reports a case of transposition of the heart only and he concludes by remarking that he has not met with records of a similar condition. May I call his attention to a case which, except for the cyanosis and the dyspnoea, corresponds with the one he has reported? The patient was shown at the Leeds and West Riding Medico-Chirurgical Society by Dr. Wardrop Griffith on April 30th, 1897, and the case is reported in THE LANCET of May 29th, 1897.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Weymouth-street, W.

CHAS. W. CHAPMAN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—“Anatomist,” in THE LANCET of March 12th, asks for further details in the matter of the instance of transposed heart. The circumstances under which the

examination had to be made prevented my securing the specimen, otherwise I should have brought away the contents of the thorax for dissection. *The aorta turned to the left. The cavities of the heart were in their ordinary relations. The heart was placed at its usual level so far as the spinal column was concerned.* I fear that I cannot add any further information to the above meagre description.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

W. H. BROWN.

Queen-street, Leeds, March 14th, 1898.

MR. VICTOR HORSLEY AND THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—All those who have at heart the maintenance of cordial relations between medical men of different countries owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Victor Horsley for the leading part he has taken in inducing the General Medical Council to write its second letter to the Privy Council. More than once during recent years erroneous impressions created abroad by the publication of certain speeches made on the General Medical Council have had to be corrected privately, and it was high time that a clear and accurate statement should be made. It is to be hoped that the first letter has now been withdrawn, for the discrepancies between the two official documents would appear still more perplexing and unaccountable abroad than here. Someone has made—and not for the first time—a serious blunder, the repetition of which should be prevented.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

Harley-street, W., March 14th.

J. KESER.

"THE TESTIMONIAL TO DR. ARLIDGE."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Your kindness in publishing the lists of subscribers to the testimonial to Dr. J. T. Arlidge induces me to ask you to notice the result of the subscriptions so kindly placed in my hands. This sum, with some additional subscriptions received by the Manchester and Liverpool District Bank and by Mr. Folker, enabled the committee to present Dr. Arlidge with an illuminated address and a handsome gift of plate. The medical faculty and the committee of the North Staffordshire Infirmary have presented Dr. Arlidge with a full-sized portrait in recognition of his long and valued services as physician and subsequently as consulting physician to that important institution and it has now been placed in the board room of the infirmary.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

CHAS. F. MOORE.

Upper Merrion-street, Dublin, March 14th, 1898.

"THE HEAT OF THE INCANDESCENT ELECTRIC LAMP."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of March 12th there appears an interesting and useful annotation on the above subject. In further illustration of the point I venture to refer to an apparatus for cooking or other purposes where the heat is produced by broad-filament incandescent lamps with a reflector of special construction. A thermometer placed midway between two such lamps twelve inches apart quickly registers 350° F. The temperature can be regulated by a rheostat or by adjustment of the reflectors. Such an apparatus adapts itself admirably to medical uses and where dry heat at a very high temperature is indicated I never use any other method of obtaining it. By means of such an arrangement heat may be localised upon any particular limb or organ or applied to the whole surface of the body. It is easy to show that in order to obtain the most intense heat rays the heat-producing source ought to be of a luminous character, and by far the best means of securing high temperatures with luminosity is the electric light. Here

heat is produced without combustion and the many disadvantages that accompany the latter.¹

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Mansfield-street, W., March 11th, 1898.

W. S. HEDLEY.

MEDICAL REFORM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I fail to see the benefit or wisdom of the startling headings "Battle of the Clubs" so constantly appearing in our medical journals and I venture to think that a large proportion of your readers would rejoice at the discontinuance of this belligerent term. It cannot be productive of any good and must, I fear, tend to prolong an unmerited feeling of animosity against the profession in the minds of all club worshippers, who are always well posted with these paragraphs. We maintain the justice of making public the various errors perpetrated by the so-called medical aid and other societies and clubs and our chief aim now should be how best to elevate the tone of the coming practitioner. Two essential features demand consideration—reform of preliminary examination and the institution of the one-portal system, and I would suggest that these subjects should be set down for discussion as early as possible by every medical society throughout the land, when a concentration of the results should bring weight of evidence sufficient to move the General Medical Council to prompt and energetic action.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

March 15th, 1898.

S. STRETTON.

A FLAGRANT CASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—My late unqualified assistant has opened a shop not five hundred yards from my surgery. He purposes vending drugs, instruments, &c., as well as prescribing for and dispensing medicines to anyone seeking his advice at his shop. I also understand he is to visit cases at their own houses and attend midwifery. Can I adopt any means to prevent his doing so? It seems hard on general practitioners that they are liable to have their names erased from the Register by the General Medical Council for employing unqualified men without giving them the means of protecting themselves from those pirates. I enclose my card.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

March 15th, 1898.

A VICTIM.

* * If the unqualified assistant sells drugs or falsely pretends to be a registered medical man he can be prosecuted. Otherwise in the present state of the law no more can be done against him than against any other quack.—ED. L.

THE PLAGUE IN INDIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

THE weekly death-rate for the city of Bombay still keeps terribly high. For the past seven days 2059 deaths have been recorded, giving a rate of over 130 per 1000 per annum. Of this number 1500 may be put down to plague. There are some slight indications, however, of improvement in the plague mortality. The type of the disease still keeps extremely virulent. The operations of the Plague Committee have provided for large numbers of the people being temporarily turned out of their infected houses and given quarters in camps. It cannot be expected, however, that 10,000 or 15,000 thus isolated would make much impression among a population of 900,000 people, and it is worthy of note that last year, when segregation of the healthy and infected was not resorted to, the mortality was less than it has been this year. On the other hand, a voluntary exodus of people to

the estimated number of 300,000 took place last year, which may have reduced the actual number of those attacked if it had no effect on the duration of the epidemic. Large numbers of the well-to-do, estimated at 12,000 people, have this year moved to bungalows or temporary sheds in the suburbs within the island. It is probable, therefore, that this clearing of the population from certain districts, together with the other measures adopted by the Plague Committee, will soon have some effect on the number of cases and consequently on the death-rate, although it is impossible to estimate how much of a decline may be due to the sanitary measures adopted and how much to a natural subsidence of the epidemic.

Another European nurse, Miss McDougal, has unfortunately died from the plague. It is stated that one of her delirious patients expectorated on to her face and that some of the sputum entered her eye. Inflammation followed the next day, with subsequently enlargement of and infiltration around the parotid and cervical glands. It has been noted that cases in which these glands become affected are almost invariably fatal.

Strong representations are being made in the local press that, with the published results of M. Haffkine's inoculation so unmistakeably proving its advantages, all those who are brought in immediate contact with the sick should not only have every opportunity given them to be inoculated, but should be urged by the authorities to go through the operation. The Government, however, still refrain from even advising those under them to go through the process, and the Plague Committee still continue to abstain from giving it any support.

Nothing further has been discovered with regard to a curative serum. The preparation now being further tried; which was made on the lines of the curative serum for diphtheria, does not show any distinct advantages. There are many cases in the fever hospital showing relapsing fever and plague occurring in the same individual. This is not only distinctly shown by clinical evidence but also by bacteriological examination. The symptoms of plague seem to be somewhat subdued by their association with relapsing fever, and the prognosis in these cases seems better than in those of plague alone.

A fire broke out in one of the temporary plague hospitals resulting in the death of three patients from the exertions attending their hasty removal. Some of the European nurses greatly distinguished themselves by their efforts to save the patients from the rapidly burning sheds, but unfortunately lost all their baggage by the destruction of a wooden building specially allotted to them.

Feb. 24th.

PROSECUTION OF A QUACK AT THE BLACKBURN COUNTY COURT.—On Monday, March 7th, before Judge Coventry, J. Tempest was sued by the Apothecaries Society of London for the sum of £20, the penalty for acting as an apothecary without having previously obtained a certificate as required by the Apothecaries' Act of 1815. For the plaintiffs it was stated that defendant had practised in the Oswaldtwistle district for the past two or three years, purporting to practise under an American diploma, and had issued pamphlets and handbills in which he described himself as a properly qualified man. The words "Dr. Tempest" were painted on the lamp over his door. In the defendant's examination it was elicited that he was "a fellow of the London college of safe medicine." Judge Coventry fined the defendant £20, but leave to appeal was given.

BIRKENHEAD MEDICAL SOCIETY.—At a meeting on March 11th, Dr. R. S. Marsden, President, being in the chair, Dr. Edgar Stevenson read a short paper on the Eye Complications of Influenza, drawing attention to the chronic nature of any eye affection which might occur during, or be precipitated by, an attack of the disease, and inviting a discussion on the nature of the headache which is so prominent a feature of almost every case. He also read notes of a remarkable case of optic neuritis occurring after influenza, and gave his reasons for considering that the lesion in these cases was more likely to be due to a form of cerebritis than to meningitis. An interesting discussion ensued, in which the following gentlemen took part:—Dr. Harris, Dr. Pinkerton, Mr. Harrington, Dr. Carden Pearson, Mr. Wilkinson, Dr. Dixon, Dr. Lambert, and the President. Dr. Stevenson replied.

¹ These points were brought forward by me in a recent communication to the Balneological Society, when the apparatus was shown. It is devised and constructed by Mr. H. J. Dowsing, 24, Budge-row, Cannon-street.