of beds from 57 to 114, was completed (and brought into use) in 1903 at a cost of £37,000, all but £9000 of which has been obtained. This scheme has received the full approval and generous financial support of King Edward's Hospital Fund. The pressure on the enlarged hospital has continued to be very severe and the beds are always full. The ordinary annual expenditure, formerly £6500, has been increased to £11,000. The receipts, however, have unfortunately remained almost stationary and a debt of £4000 has already been incurred through the increased expenditure on maintenance. In view of the debt of £9000 on the new building the committee feels that the time has come when the increase of liabilities should cease and it has decided, with great reluctance, to withdraw 57 of the beds from use at the end of December unless adequate assistance can be obtained in the meantime.

The disorganisation and general inconvenience resulting from such a step can only be fully appreciated by those concerned in the management of similar institutions, but all can realise the suffering that would be caused in this crowded neighbourhood by the withdrawal of any hospital accommodation, more especially at this time of unusual distress. Never before in the history of the hospital have wards been closed for want of funds and we earnestly hope that the public will remove the necessity for so calamitous a step by subscribing liberally to the special fund opened for the purpose. Cheques, &c., crossed "Barclay and Co., Ltd.," should be sent to the secretary at the hospital.

We are, Sirs, your most obedient servants,
AMHERST OF HACKNEY, President.
WILLIAM CECIL, Chairman.

Oct. 25th, 1904.

THE PREVALENCE OF APPENDICITIS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Nothing is more remarkable in the medical world than the extraordinary increase of cases of appendicitis. In the middle of last century this complaint was almost entirely unknown. The only case that I can remember hearing of when I commenced practice in Edinburgh 60 years ago was that of a daughter of Mr. Syme, at that time and for a long period our first surgeon. She had swallowed a cherry stone which was found after death in the appendix vermiformis where it had set up inflammation. During 40 years, in which I had a very large practice in Edinburgh amongst all classes, I do not remember a single case and I have heard of none for the last 25 years among my old patients. I do not know what may have been the experience of the other medical men in Edinburgh during the same periods. For myself I have always strongly objected to the very full feeding, especially of the large use of butcher's meat, which was introduced some 60 years ago, and generally adopted by both the profession and the public. This mode of living has been followed now by three generations and, as I have shown elsewhere, to the great deterioration of the health and strength both of rich and poor. The great risk of appendicitis is the formation of pus, caused no doubt by the irritation of some small hard bodies which have dropped into the appendix vermiformis in their passage through the bowels. I have also shown elsewhere the connexion of pus formation with the consumption of large quantities of food, especially of butcher's meat. Here, I believe, we have a true cause of the disease and also a sufficient one and it seems unnecessary to go further.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Currie, Midlothian, Oct. 24th, 1904.

GEORGE S. KEITH.

ERICHSEN'S SURGERY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In an address to the students of the Leeds Medical School delivered by Mr. Edmund Owen on Oct. 18th and published in THE LANCET of Oct. 22nd (p. 1123) occurs the following :—

The labours of Lister have happily diminished the field of work of the operator in some directions, though have enormously increased it in others. Indeed, Lister has entirely altered the map of the surgical world. As the result of his work the old surgical gazetteers became useless. They could not be adapted for modern requirements, even by the most skilful editors. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the case of that great text-book—that standard work for students in my early years—Erichsen's "Surgery." The copyright of that book must have been a considerable source of income both to its illustrious author and to its publisher. It was read by nearly every student and referred to by nearly every man in practice. It was taken into the law courts,

and it was quoted by every surgical writer. Its position as *the* authority in all surgical questions seemed to be for ever established. Then came the revolutionising work of Lister, and the well-known text-book, like the Great Auk, ceased to be.

My object in writing is to point out that, far from Lister's revolutionising work appearing to deal a death-blow to Erichsen's "Surgery," two of the most successful editions appeared after the period at which Lister's teaching became generally known and began to produce its effects.

In 1884 Mr. Marcus Beck first became associated with the author in revising the text-book and in the preface to the eighth edition then published it is specially remarked that "in no corresponding period in the history of surgery has so great an advance been made in all its branches as in that which has passed since the last edition of this work was published." That edition, which was exhausted in less than four years, was universally read by students and no one could speak with more authority on the new methods of surgery than Marcus Beck.

Of the ninth edition appearing in 1888 the same may be said, and thus I hardly think the evidence shows that "the well-known text-book, like the Great Auk, ceased to be" by reason of the work of Lister. On the contrary, the new life which Beck so freely infused into the book was essentially that derived from Lister's teaching, and there can, I think, be little doubt that even now, as in Mr. Owen's early days, "Erichsen" would still be the standard work for students if Marcus Beck were still alive.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Oct. 25th, 1904.

RAYMOND JOHNSON.

MANCHESTER.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Victoria University Laboratories.

ON Oct. 14th the new Public Health Laboratories in York-place, Oxford-road, were opened for the regular course of instruction in public health. It is more specialised than is required by the medical student who is not ambitious of public health distinctions. The courses are arranged to assist students to take a diploma in public health leading up to the B.Sc. degree in public health. Students will also have opportunity for qualifying for a diploma in veterinary state medicine. There are also research and post-graduate courses in pathology and bacteriology in which most valuable work is carried on. To those who can look back even for a very moderate number of years the development of pathological study in Manchester must seem remarkable and it has led to some division of labour being required. Professor S. Delépine will deal with the more specialised departments of comparative pathology and bacteriology, while Professor J. Lorrain Smith will have charge of the pathological instruction as more especially applicable to medicine and to the requirements of those who seek medical degrees. Though the work of teaching can be carried on the buildings are not yet finished and their full equipment is not expected before January next. The classes now at work are for medical officers of health; for chemists studying the application of bacteriology to various industrial processes, as in fermentations; and for medical men or advanced students making a special study of bacteriology. The work in connexion with municipal public health has grown rapidly within the last few years and in these laboratories the inquiries and samples of about "100 sanitary authorities will be studied, examined, and reported on." In January next courses of advanced lectures on public health will be begun. The building when complete will not be unpicturesque it is said. It will be two storeys in height, will have a frontage of over 50 yards, and its appearance will be somewhat striking from the amount of window space.

Eyesight of School Children.

The report of the education committee of Manchester on the work of the past year contains an immense amount of information as to all branches of school life. But that which is specially interesting to our profession is the report of the medical officer—Dr. A. Brown Ritchie—who has tested the eyesight of children attending the schools in Standard II. and above. The total number tested was 27,329. Of these 1960 cases were so grave that circulars were sent to the parents calling attention to the defects and