ground a few feet before the first line of the crowd. The wounds were consequently all caused by ricochetting bullets and resembled in their horrible character the effects of bursting bombs.

NEW BARRACKS AT NORWICH.

The Secretary of State for War will, on the first Thursday in October, lay the foundation-stone of the new cavalry barracks to be erected at Norwich at a cost of some £200 000. When, on account of sanitary deficiencies, the existing barracks were condemned some time ago a representative committee of the leading citizens purchased 20 acres of ground as a site for new military headquarters.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

INEBRIETY A DISEASE AND THEREFORE TO BE TREATED BY THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Much credit belongs to Dr. J. S. Bolton for emphasising the fact that alcoholism should be regarded as a disease and should be treated by those qualified to treat disease. It is greatly to be regretted that the medical profession have in the past neglected fully to grasp the situation as expressed in these views, for the result has been the springing up of a host of lay, and it may be said quack, "doctors" and their attendant clerical satellites. Good may have come from some of these secret remedies, but the very fact that they are secret and that their benefit, if any, is denied except at exorbitant charges by their so-called "discoverers" and pushers to the masses who need them makes them, to say the least, questionable. It should be recognised that alcoholism can be treated in suitable cases by a medical practitioner whilst the subject of it remains in his home and in his business surroundings and that treatment there has its many advantages. On the other hand, there are numerous instances where for the success of the treatment it is undoubtedly better for the patient, often of the upper classes, quietly to leave home and enter voluntarily a thoroughly well-conducted institution where recognised and satisfactory treatment can be carried out. I may mention but a few advantages. He enters upon new surroundings which produce new trains of thought and relieve the nervous system. He is no longer under the critical eye of relatives or friends who are, perhaps justifiably, suspicious that the treatment will be a failure, but in the midst of others who have already benefited and can therefore encourage. He is under the constant, though not irksome, supervision of a thoroughly competent medical observer. He may have gone from the town into the country and the tonic effect of the pure air is a great aid to his recovery. The treatment can be carried out with great regularity and precision so that he gets all the good that residence at a spa with its routine and restrictions, cheerfully borne, bring about. Further, a very exact record of his case, together with its after-history, can be made and the statistics thus gained may prove of invaluable help in the future treatment of cases. It would seem that the treatment by atropin combined with strychnine is having very distinct and lasting success and it behoves every practitioner to make himself fully acquainted with its details, and if unable to carry out the treatment himself with the patient near him to seek the help of an institution where it is systematically undertaken solely by a qualified medical practitioner.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, W., August 18th, 1905. W. MCADAM ECCLES.

ASPIRATION IN DISEASES OF THE EAR AND NOSE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I am pleased to see in THE LANCET of August 12th (p. 434) an article by Dr R. Sondermann of Dieringhausen on his apparatus for the use of aspiration in diseases of the ear and the nose, of which I am in a position to speak with

strong approval, having made use of it in my practice since reading his original papers in the *Münchener Medizinische Wochenschrift* and the *Archiv für Ohrenheilkunde*; I have also repeatedly recommended it to my *confrères*. I have found it of particular value in relieving headaches due to catarrhal conditions of the sinuses; in point of fact, more than one patient under my care at present is most enthusiastic with regard to the relief afforded by it, one lady in particular insisting that she hardly knows how she could live without it. As regards the ear, it is a very efficient substitute for Siegel's exhausting speculum, and is much less uncomfortable in its application. It can therefore be used for the extraction of discharges from the middle ear, after perforation, whether by paracentesis or otherwise, in cases such as those of acute suppurative otitis media in which the driving out of the secretion by means of inflation through the Eustachian tube involves the risk of infection of the mastoid antrum. Me-srs. Mayer and Meltzer have, at my request, added this instrument to their stock.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Cavendish-square, W., August 17th, 1905. DUNDAS GRANT.

MIDGES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS—As one who has suffered, and is still suffering, from the effects of midge-bites may I give my experience at an East Coast watering place recently? My wife and two children went to Saltburn a few weeks before I did and spent most of their time on the sands; during all this time none of them were bitten by midges. After I came my wife and I spent a considerable time on the golf links a little inland and whilst in search of lost balls frequently went into hedges, pits with rank thick grass, brambles, &c., at the bottom, and sometimes into a wood which was specially placed to trap a "pulled" drive. A few hours after our first visit to the golf links we were both badly bitten and so were numbers of other golfers. The children escaped entirely through not coming into any of the places mentioned. Midges, I believe, collect under trees, near hedges, and amongst thick rank vegetation in places fairly protected from wind. Avoid such places and you will be free from their annoyance. I tried thickish coatings of ointment but they seemed to bite all the same. As regards remedies I tried hazeline, izal, equal parts of liquor ammoniæ fortior and tinctura opii, strong lead and opium lotion, &c., but nothing eased the irritation so quickly or so thoroughly as menthol dissolved in olive oil in the strength of 1 in 4 (i.e., as much menthol as the oil will take up). May I warn your correspondent against an heroic mode of treatment I adopted because I had known it to ease the irritation of small-pox papules—i.e., the application of pure carbolic acid by means of a fine camel-hair brush just touching each spot with it. I am deeply sorry to this day (more than a fortnight after the application) that I allowed apparent analogy to lead me astray.

I am Sirs, yours faithfully,

MEREDITH YOUNG, M.D. Edin.

Stockport, August 22nd, 1905.

THE SPA TREATMENT OF CIRCULATORY DISORDERS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In an interesting article published in your columns under the above heading the following statement occurs referring to Llangammarch Wells: "Judged from the continental standard of comfort and the provision of amusement and distraction this must be regarded as a health resort *in posse* rather than *in esse*." This statement is calculated to do considerable harm to the interests of this spa and is all the more serious inasmuch as for the past two years no expense has been spared by the proprietors in developing the resources of this establishment on really up-to-date lines. And in this work attention has been equally divided between the social and medical requirements of the visitors. An extensive bathing installation has recently been established at considerable cost in which various kinds of baths can be administered. In the reclining baths, constructed of solid porcelain, both barium and artificial Nauheim baths are given, and in addition douche, needle, shower, and wave baths are provided. There are also facilities for treatment by massage and resistant exercises. Shooting, fishing, and

golf over beautiful mountain scenery are not the least attractions of the place. As to a band, most of the cardiac patients who come here are glad to find that at any rate this form of entertainment is conspicuous by its absence.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
JOHN GRIFFITHS.

Bishopsgate-street Without, E.C., August 17th, 1905.

ASSISTANT MEDICAL OFFICERS AT DARENTH ASYLUM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—We have felt it our duty to resign our appointments as second, third, and fourth assistant medical officers at the Darenth Asylum of the Metropolitan Asylums Board in order to call attention to the difficulties we have met with in the fulfilment of our duties. It may not generally be known that the assistant medical officers under the Metropolitan Asylums Board rank as subordinate officers, while the chaplain, steward, matron, and head schoolmistress are principal officers. The result of this is that directions for the care of patients given by an assistant medical officer may be revised by a lay officer of the superior rank and the assistant medical officer's only remedy is an appeal to the superintendent on every such point. This is no merely hypothetical objection but is in actual experience a difficulty which does arise and for which the remedy officially provided is obviously inadequate. We are prepared if necessary to quote instances from our own experience of matters exclusively medical in which a lay principal officer has modified the directions of an assistant medical officer. It is quite clear that no lay officer can be allowed to interfere in medical matters without direct detriment to the interest of the patients. That the assistant medical officer may appeal to the superintendent does not, unfortunately, secure the patient from harm. Such intrusions of unqualified persons into purely medical matters are frequent and entail upon the assistant medical officer an almost continuous series of complaints. Moreover, and this is a much more serious aspect of the case, by the time the complaint is made the harm may be done and the patient have already suffered from the effect of ignorant interference.

Attempts have been made before to remedy this paradoxical state of affairs, but the facts as they are at present demonstrate the completeness of the failure those efforts have met with. From the status of the assistant medical officers and the accommodation provided for them we are led to suspect that the Metropolitan Asylums Board is not particularly anxious to get as assistant medical officers men who will stay for any length of time at their asylums. Now it is obvious that if, as it often is, the average stay of an assistant medical officer at an asylum is not more than a few months his opportunities of getting any thorough grasp of the condition and progress of his patients are very imperfect, and the interests of the patients cannot fail to suffer by this. These being the conditions under which we have been compelled to do our work, we have been led to the conclusion that it is our duty to resign our appointments.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,
FRANCIS R. BARWELL.
GERARD A. HERKLOTS.
H. P. KENNARD.

Darenth Asylum, Dartford, Kent, August 22nd, 1905.

HOMBURG.

THE PROBLEM OF MINERAL WATER HEALTH RESORTS.—
WHAT SHOULD, AND WHAT DOES, DETERMINE
THEIR POPULARITY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL SANITARY COMMISSIONER)

PART II.¹

THE HOMBURG OF TO-DAY: SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS AND
ECONOMIC ERRORS.

Homburg, August 4th, 1905.

In 1872, as already stated, there were 21,001 visitors at Homburg. On the first day of the new year the gaming tables were removed and in 1873 Homburg had only 9287 visitors. Still, this was very much better than had been anticipated and it conclusively proved that after all the gaming

tables were not the sole attraction. It showed that the beautiful surrounding country, the salubrious climate, and, above all, the beneficial effects of the mineral waters would suffice to make Homburg a popular health resort. But with this end in view a different policy would have to be followed and it would be necessary to consider more especially those who, in spite of the abolition of the gaming tables, had remained faithful to Homburg. These were for the most part English people and prominent among them was the Prince of Wales, now His Majesty King Edward VII. The English visitors constantly complained of the bad odours and generally speaking of the insanitary conditions of the town. Those who made it their business to let apartments attempted to fit them out in accordance with English taste and habits and the hotel proprietors likewise endeavoured to cater for British visitors. The beautiful park which the brothers Blanc had laid out and the palatial casino which they had built now became public property and here English games of every sort—croquet, lawn tennis, and golf—are encouraged so as to please and to attract the English. But it soon became necessary to require payment from the visitors who frequented the Casino, or Kurhaus as it is now called, and the mineral springs; this took the form of a Kurhaus tax of 16, now of 20, marks which every visitor who remains more than three days has to pay, and this sum, added to the interest on the £150,000 saved out of what the brothers Blanc had been made to pay, constitutes a fairly good income. But what would have been the position of the town of Homburg if it had been obliged to build a kurhaus and to provide a park at its own cost? As it is, the town has only to bear the expense of the upkeep of these places and to help in this it possesses an endowment of about £150,000. Nevertheless in spite of all these very substantial advantages, Homburg has not recovered its old prosperity; some progress has been made but it was laborious and gradual. Thus, for instance, under the stimulus of the gambling tables the number of visitors, which amounted to 9570 in 1860, increased in 12 years to 21,001 in 1872. Without the gambling tables the number of visitors, which had fallen to 9287 in 1873, increased in 12 years to 11,679 in 1885. The eloquence of these figures is keenly appreciated by the citizens of Homburg. One of the best records was that of the year 1890, when there were 12,920 visitors. In 1903 there were 12,449, so the town is still far from regaining its former prosperity and yet, from the health point of view, Homburg is much more deserving of patronage than in the old gambling days.

First and foremost, Homburg is now properly drained. Excepting in the outskirts that are not frequented by the visitors all the cesspools have been abolished. Mr. Lindley, a well-known sanitary engineer from Frankfort, was intrusted with the carrying out of a scheme of drainage based on the separate system and on the house-to-house ventilation of the public sewers by each private soil-pipe. So far as the streets are concerned this method seems to work very successfully and I was nowhere able to detect the slightest odour. This system has been the subject of an immense amount of controversy and it would be interesting if a scientific investigation could be made to ascertain what are the practical results. Unfortunately there seem to be at Homburg very little public spirit and knowledge of public affairs. It will scarcely be credited but it is, nevertheless, a fact that I spoke to several prominent citizens and I found that they had not the remotest conception as to how their own town or even their houses were drained. They all said that the drainage was very good and that it was the Lindley system, but when I endeavoured to enter into details no one could explain what constituted good drainage or what were the special views held on the subject by Mr. Lindley. Then when in my turn I explained that Mr. Lindley advocated the suppression of the intercepting chamber or disconnecting trap generally placed between the private house and the public sewer, and when I added that, instead of thus shutting out the sewer airs, he sought, on the contrary, to draw them away so that they might be discharged over the private houses by prolonging the soil pipes above the roofs, some of my hearers were utterly astounded, not to say a little alarmed. Of course, an obvious objection to this system is that these soil pipes may pump sewer air into neighbouring bedroom windows. The answer to this is that there are so many soil pipes that when they are all used as ventilators the sewers are so thoroughly ventilated that the sewer air can no longer be injurious. Then I ascertained

¹Part I. was published in THE LANCET of August 12th, 1905, p. 484