register in each parish baptisms, marriages, and burials. No doubt before that time the births of noble and important persons were recorded in private chronicles or public documents, but among the illiterate yeomen and husbandmen no record of this kind could have been made.

There has lately been a good deal of discussion on "Longevity" in *Notes and Queries*, and those interested in the subject will there find some instructive facts. Dr. Dickinson's learning, and general character as a scientific man, must give weight to any statements he may publish, and I have therefore trespassed on your indulgence, I fear to an unwarrantable length, in an attempt to point out the fallacy of some of his remarks.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Portman-square, Nov. 7th, 1868.

J. DIXON.

* * We regret that want of space has prevented earlier insertion of the above letters.

NEUROTOMY IN SYMPATHETIC OPHTHALMIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In answer to Mr. Solomon's note on my case of ciliary neurotomy for sympathetic ophthalmia, I regret having overlooked his valuable contributions to ophthalmology, citing the opinions of Professor von Graefe to the exclusion of his own.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Devonshire-street, Dec. 1868.

J. Z. LAURENCE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I read in your impression of Nov. 14th Mr. Laurence's case of ciliary neurotomy for sympathetic ophthalmia. I have also read Mr. Solomon's remarks thereon, in which he disputes the sympathetic character of the inflammation. In this criticism I cannot agree with Mr. Solomon. The subject is one to which I have given much attention for many years, and, though Mr. Laurence's remarks are in a very condensed form, I feel convinced that the case he describes was one of sympathetic inflammation in an early stage, and that it would not have been safe to have dispensed with surgical interference.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Lower Seymour-street, Dec. 7th, 1868.

R. TAYLOR.

BILIARY CALCULUS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The accompanying engraving represents a biliary calculus (the exact size as shown) passed by a woman, aged forty-five, without any aggravation of the usual signs of passing a gall-stone.

It is the largest I have seen or heard of, and I would feel obliged if you or any of your readers could inform me if it has been surpassed. It measures 3½ in. in length, 1½ in. in widest diameter, and weighs 1 oz. 6 drms.

I would feel obliged if you could insert the sketch in your next issue.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Barnsley, Nov., 1868.

J. BLACKBURN.

THE South Staffordshire General Hospital, Wolverhampton, has received a legacy of £100, and £77 12s., one-fifth of the residuary estate, under the will of J. B. Whitehouse, Esq.

BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

DURING the past week some matters of medical interest have been brought to a definite issue. At the annual meeting of the Birmingham Lying-in Hospital, the governors adopted the report to which we referred last week. As it was considered by many inexpedient to dispose of the whole of the hospital building, the committee were requested to consider the propriety of appropriating a portion of it for the purposes of the Lying-in Charity, in order to preserve, publicly, the identity of the institution. The election of all future honorary medical officers will be by voting papers, similar to those used at the Birmingham General Hospital.

On Wednesday last it was decided to establish a Training Institution for Nurses in Birmingham, in connexion with the General, Queen's, and Children's Hospitals. The hospital medical officers have agreed in condemning the existing system of nursing as very inefficient, and in thinking that the formation of a training school would be the best means of ensuring a supply of good nurses for the charities of the town, as well as for the public. The probationers will be admitted to the wards of the principal hospitals, and every facility afforded for their instruction; trained nurses will be supplied from the house, which will in time, no doubt, as in other towns, provide all the nurses for the different charities. It is proposed to vest the management of the Training Institution in a general committee of ladies and gentlemen, including medical men from the hospitals; while a house committee of seven ladies will arrange the details of the home. A provisional committee was appointed, and a towns meeting will shortly be held to formally start the undertaking, which is to be connected in no way with any particular religious sect.

At a meeting of the committee of election of the Birmingham Children's Hospital, held on Monday last, Mr. George Elkington, jun., was elected surgeon to the charity, vice Mr. P. Goodall, appointed surgeon to the General Hospital. There were three candidates—Mr. Elkington, Mr. W. Thomas, and Mr. W. S. Mann. Of the thirty-seven members of the committee present, twenty-seven voted for the successful candidate. Mr. Elkington was the junior surgeon on the staff of the General Dispensary, when the governors refused to grant the moderate request of the medical officers for an honorarium, and thus compelled the wholesale resignation of the honorary staff. Mr. Elkington on that occasion acted thoroughly in concert with his colleagues, although as the junior officer he could least afford to resign. It is stated that this course of action was somewhat ungenerously urged against his election by one member of the committee on Monday last, but it is gratifying that so large a majority showed their confidence in Mr. Elkington.

PARISIAN MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE operation of thoracocentesis is now universally employed as a most valuable resource in certain well-known medical cases. The operation is usually a safe one; yet it is sometimes attended by certain inconveniences which attach to the manner in which it is performed. M. Blachey, in a recent communication to the Société Médicale des Hôpitaux de Paris, points out the advantages which he has obtained by the employment of a very fine trocar, which he calls the capillary trocar. The puncture performed under such circumstances wonderfully facilitated the operation in six cases which were related to the Society. The operation is much less painful, and may be repeated if necessary. M. Blachey is confident that thoracocentesis performed on such conditions, and attended by the administration of chloroform, is a much better method of treatment in cases of serous effusion than the classical system of purging, blistering, and giving diuretics.

It is a question, and a very interesting one, whether there exists any connexion between rheumatism and gonorrhœa, or whether, in cases where both diseases co-exist, the fact is not due to a mere coincidence. This question was discussed some time ago at the Société Médicale des Hôpitaux de Paris, and,