are not told. Such a series simply proves nothing as regards the frequency with which ulcer precedes cancer in general, and it is amazing such capable men cannot see it.

Mr. Moullin is very strong on "facts," but he confuses "facts" with the "inferences from facts." His facts, no doubt, are right enough. It is his inferences that I dispute. I observe he has not withdrawn the pathological statement which I showed to be erroneous in my last letter.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Exeter, March 21st, 1910.

W. GORDON.

CONGENITAL DIAPHRAGMATIC HERNIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—On March 5th I was requested by the coroner to examine the body of an infant, aged 11 months, who had died, no medical aid having been called in. On opening the thorax I found the left half to contain what appeared like, and proved to be, peritoneum, the division of which disclosed about two-thirds of the entire small intestine and a small lobule of liver. At the very apex was an extremely atrophied lung ending in three small tentacles of lung tissue. Underneath this "peritoneal cyst" I found the heart closely bound, by its pericardium, to the left of the spinal column.

Anteriorly, from the median line for about two inches to the left the diaphragm was free and presented a falciform arch with tendinous border, through which the hernia had found its way into the thorax, probably very early in life, judging by the very atrophied lung. There was no strangulation, and the intestines had apparently performed their functions until death. The right lung was in a state of red hepatisation, accounting for the cause of death.

Perhaps you will consider this brief record sufficiently interesting for publication. May I add that it would interest me, and I hope some others, to learn of similar cases which may have been recognised during life? I would imagine that auscultation and percussion would have presented more curious and puzzling features than merely dullness of the right, and hyper-resonance of the left, with its "borborygmie râles" (!)

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

WILLIAM A. FOX, L.R.C.S. Edin.

Grange-over-Sands, March 12th, 1910.

TO MEDICAL FREEMASONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May I appeal to my brother masons who have votes to spare to send them to Mrs. Knight, 10, Elma-road, West Green-road, Tottenham, or to,

Yours faithfully,

138, Harley-street, W., March 12th, 1910.

FRED. J. SMITH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May I once again through the medium of your widely read columns appeal to medical men, and medical Freemasons in particular, for votes for the Masonic charities. At the forthcoming elections in April and May there are two medical candidates. Votes for any of the Masonic institutions are equally acceptable, as exchanges can be effected, and will be gratefully received and acknowledged by me.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

WILLIAM WILSON,

Secretary, St. Luke's Medical Lodge of Instruction.

184, Goldhawk-road, W., March 18th, 1909.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD INFIRMARY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I venture to ask leave to state that the Workhouse Nursing Association sent upon Feb. 22nd a further letter to the Local Government Board in answer to our memorial, a copy of which was published presumably by the guardians. In this further letter we explained various facts in the case, which the Board seem to have ignored and again pressed for a full inquiry. On March 4th we received an absolute refusal from the assistant secretary for any further inquiry or investigation; no reasons were given. We think it only right that the public should be in possession of these facts regarding a case of wide interest and great public importance. The correspondence is open to the inspection of the press, and of all interested in the subject of union infirmaries management.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

March 17th, 1910.

R. V. GILL, Secretary.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE PARIS FLOODS.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL SANITARY COMMISSIONER.)

Paris, March 12th.

WITH the solitary exception of one sewer in the Rue Richepanse the sewers of Paris withstood successfully the enormous pressure put upon them during the recent floods. Now that the waters have subsided it is possible to see what has really happened. The Paris sewers measure in length about 700 miles. They cost £6,000,000 to build, and the quality of work done on so vast a scale has just been rudely tested. The sewers for the most part are made of masonry. A rough granulated and somewhat porous yet durable stone found in the neighbourhood of Paris has been generally used for this purpose. It is cemented, and the lower part of the sewers are or are supposed to be watertight, but the upper portions very often are not. Water oozes through the roofs and thus the sewers serve to drain the surrounding subsoil and keep it dry. But the culverts or lower channels of many of the sewers are now very much worn and in need of repairs. If some of these had burst it would scarcely have surprised anyone. As a matter of fact, even the one sewer known to have burst, that of the Rue Richepanse, did not do so in consequence of any inherent weakness. It appears that at the corner of the Rue St. Honoré and the Rue Richepanse there had until recently stood a house that was more than 300 years old. So dilapidated had it become that in the lease made out for the last tenant a clause was inserted by which the occupier undertook not to allow anyone to dance in the house for fear it should collapse. This old dwelling was pulled down and the construction of a new building was preceded by some deep digging in order to lay foundations and construct cellars. On each side of the Seine the soil is alluvial and porous, and as the water rises in the river so does it tend to rise in the subsoil of the low-lying quarters of Paris. During the recent floods all this porous soil was inundated and the level of the subsoil water rose and fell with the river, though it maintained a lower level. Thus when the water reached the level of 33·45 metres above the sea in the river at the Pont de la Concorde it was at 31·95 metres in the subsoil of the Place de la Concorde. The level of the adjoining Rue Richepanse is 31·94 metres above the sea. Consequently the subsoil waters in the Place de la Concorde rose above the level of the sewers in the Rue Richepanse and the Rue St. Honoré. The small amount of earth which separated these sewers from the pit caused by the deep digging necessitated by building the new house at this corner was soon saturated and disintegrated. Thereupon the whole side of the street fell into what will be the cellars and foundations of the house in course of construction. Thus laid bare and deprived of any sort of support, the walls of both sewers gave way and also fell into the cellar space. The accident may therefore be described rather as a land slide than as the bursting of sewers.

But there was another source of weakness at this particular spot. Passing along the Rue St. Honoré, immediately under the two sewers that meet at the angle of the Rue Richepanse and the Rue St. Honoré, is a gallery in course of construction. It measures 2·30 metres, or more than 7 feet in height, and is meant to prevent the overcrowding of the sewer with electric wires of all sorts. As this gallery is not intended to hold water or undergo any particular pressure, it is not as solidly built as the sewers, and therefore it readily gave way. The accompanying plan shows the arrangement. Still further down comes the Nord-Sud Underground Railway, which passes all along the Rue St. Florentin from the Place de la Concorde and the Rue Richepanse on to the Place de la Madeleine. The roof of this tube railway is 3·20 metres below the sewer, but in this space passes the electric gallery, which is 2·30 high, so that these three underground passages nearly touch each other. The roof of the railway tunnel is 23·42 metres and the rails 18·92 metres above the sea level. The water in the surrounding subsoil rose to close upon 32 metres above the sea level. No wonder, therefore, that the tube tunnelling was absolutely full of water and that the water surged up the steps of various stations, overflowing notably at the Place du Havre, in front of the St. Lazare station. What a picture this gives of the underground life of a great city and the new