

unhappy frustration: and to hold long subsistence seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnising natiivities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In September last I sent to the meeting of the British Association at Bradford a paper prefaced with the following remarks: "This year being the tercentenary of the publication of Dr. Gilbert's celebrated work 'De Magnete,' in which he announced in the year 1600 that the earth was a magnet, but from which time till now the cause of its magnetism has remained a mystery, the present meeting of the British Association would appear to be a very appropriate occasion for commemorating that event and for suggesting an explanation of the cause which is not at variance with known electrical and meteorological laws, since no reasonable explanation or one that is proof against scientific criticism has yet been offered." My paper arrived late—three days after the British Association had commenced its proceedings, but I was pleased to see that Professor S. P. Thompson lectured at the London Institution at the end of last year on "A Tercentenary of Electricity," and it is with still greater pleasure that I now learn in your columns that the medical profession at Colchester, Gilbert's native place, have combined to erect a marble statue of the famous physician and scientist. I trust a much larger sum will be subscribed than the one mentioned as being actually wanted. I have much pleasure in seconding your appeal and in forwarding to the treasurer my humble contribution.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Jan. 15th, 1901.

FREDERICK GEORGE, M.D. St. And.

THE PROPOSED NEW MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, ETC., AT BOURNEMOUTH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As a member of the Municipal Buildings Committee of the Bournemouth Town Council, my attention has been called to a communication appearing in THE LANCET of Jan. 12th, p. 116, under the heading of "When is an Improvement not an Improvement," in which the writer has made many inaccurate statements calculated to do this unique health resort considerable harm. I cannot do better than enclose the "statement of facts," which will sufficiently refute such misunderstandings.

As a medical man who has known the town for more than 17 years I shall hail with satisfaction the time when this open space in question is properly drained and laid out as beautiful and healthy pleasure grounds, in place of being a semi-swamp in parts and a possible receptacle for things of an objectionable nature. Instead of putting the ratepayers to an unnecessary expense in refuting misstatements it would be far more to the purpose if these objectors would direct their energies towards strong advocacy of more shelters and more seats throughout the town, and the erection of that much-needed pier pavilion, all of which would prove inestimable boons to the invalid visitors to this town and enormously strengthen our hands in the treatment of chest cases and many other forms of disease. The lack of the above is the one crying need of Bournemouth, for it is often a difficulty to encourage patients to go outside their houses to take fresh air unless there is adequate provision for shelter from sudden atmospheric changes. Fortunately, there are signs that we are waking up to this necessity, and medical men can hasten it by making their voices heard in the matter.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Bournemouth, Jan. 14th, 1901.

F. W. CORY.

FENCING AS A THERAPEUTIC MEASURE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I venture to suggest to the profession that the exercise of fencing is not sufficiently used as a remedy in many of the incipient neuroses of adolescence. And my suggestion would involve its adoption more particularly in the case of young girls. As an old student of the foils I am sure that no other pastime open to both sexes can compare with it as a natural diaphoretic, as a training for the brain, the eye, the nervous and muscular systems, and if the proper

dress (or undress) be adopted (in girls) the perfect freedom of such costume may be elevated into a future habit which even may discard the "exigencies" (so harmful) of society clothes in their extreme and usual manifestations. In my own practice I have, I am glad to say, never neglected the "prescribing" of the foils, but I am half-sure and half-afraid that it is an omitted recommendation with the profession at large.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

GEORGE H. R. DABBS, M.D. Aberd.

Shanklin, I. W., Jan. 14th 1901.

THE PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY AND DOCTORS' SHOPS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—We have just seen the article upon "The Employment of Unqualified Dispensers" in THE LANCET of Jan. 5th. There is in the article an error in fact which we think should be pointed out—viz., the writer says: "The Pharmaceutical Society had instigated no less than 46 prosecutions of unqualified druggists' assistants." This is not so. The 46 prosecutions in question were all against doctors' unqualified assistants for selling poison in shops belonging to doctors, and in each case a conviction was secured. We think this correction gives additional weight to the views of the article.—We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

P. MORISON AND SON,

Solicitors to the Pharmaceutical Society in Scotland.

Edinburgh, Jan. 12th, 1901.

"ISOLATION HOSPITALS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As medical officer to the Hospital for Infectious Diseases at Bishop's Stortford, will you kindly allow me a few lines of explanation regarding the statements which appeared in THE LANCET of Jan. 5th (p. 64), in a letter signed by Mr. Edgar Pittway? I wish to confine myself purely to matters of fact. The two children, W. N— and A. F—, referred to in Mr. Pittway's letter were discharged from the hospital on Dec. 16th. Both children were quite free from any discharges from either the eyes, ears, or nose, as ascertained by myself. Desquamation in the case of W. N— was completed. A. F—, at the end of nearly the seventh week had not desquamated at all. M. F—, a sister of A. F—, was admitted to the hospital on Dec. 25th, nine days after her sister had returned home. She was then desquamating freely all over the body. M. N—, a brother of W. N—, was admitted to the hospital on Dec. 27th also desquamating generally. As he was desquamating freely on his hands the process of desquamation was obviously of some standing.

With these facts before me I cannot agree with Mr. Pittway's conclusion that the "return" cases were the cause of the second outbreak of scarlet fever at Henham.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Bishop's Stortford, Jan. 16th, 1901.

E. D. AGNEW.

THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It would be most interesting to have an answer to the question—"What is the object of the annual meeting of the Fellows and Members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England?" We are advised by advertisement that a meeting will be held and we are invited to attend. Some of us do so at expense and inconvenience to ourselves, when a voluminous report is placed in our hands which we have never seen before, and consequently we have never had any opportunity to acquire the slightest knowledge of its accuracy or contents, whereas the Council have, or should have, a complete mastery of the same and a defence of any weak spots which may be detected at the meeting. This has at last been remedied by the strenuous efforts mainly of the members. Certain proposals are put forward at the meeting and are put to the vote, and as often as not these proposals are carried *nem. con.*, but at the next meeting of the Council our unanimous vote is tabooed and the very opposite is carried by the Council.

Now if I found that any other society, scientific, social, or