

readers who have not seen its annual report for 1897 will be interested to learn that it is described therein as "a nursing school for all England."

The west-end philanthropist, though far too polite to say so, appears to think the east-end doctor neither a man of education nor a man of honour. He does not ask us for help or advice in conducting a most difficult and essentially professional enterprise; he does not deign to employ logical arguments to meet our objections; and, finally, as instance Mr. Pritchard, he is surprised and a little hurt because we are not content to hold our tongues and squeeze what indirect advantage we can from an institution supported by charity. While we are willing to accept the larger share of blame for this as due to our supineness in the past we insist that concession should not be wholly on our side and hope that in the face of recent difficulties and failures the house committee of the Plaistow Maternity Charity will adopt the two initial reforms we are suggesting—viz.: (a) abolition of all fees in maternity cases and (b) adequate representation of the local medical profession upon the committee of management.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

R. BUKSH.

FRAS. E. BROMLEY.

J. HEFFERNAN.

P. NAPIER JONES.

Plaistow, E., Sept. 20th, 1898.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In THE LANCET of Sept. 17th you publish a report on the Abuse of Nursing Charities from your Special Commissioner which I cannot allow to pass without a brief comment on some of the facts therein shown. Your Commissioner reports: "Thus a general practitioner related to me that a nurse from the Plaistow Maternity Charity came to him and asked for his assistance in a case of retained placenta. The nurse said that she had been to several other medical men and they had all refused to have anything to do with the case. My informant likewise refused. He argued that medical men should not be thus utilised at the last moment to get a nurse out of a scrape."

No doubt this gentleman would attend a case of chronic drunkenness, where delirium tremens or other complications had supervened, though not called in till the very last moment, but he would not attend a poor woman in imminent danger on the supervention of a complication which could not be foreseen and in what may quite well have been up to that point an ordinary case of labour. Would he have refused to attend the woman if when he had got to the house he had for the first time discovered that a midwife was in attendance? and would it have made a difference to him whether that midwife was trained or untrained? From your Commissioner's report it would appear that he would have assisted the untrained woman's patient but not the trained woman's. And yet the object of the training is, to a great extent, to teach the nurse to know when to send for medical assistance, and, indeed, trained midwives are bound to do so. It is evident that much valuable time was wasted in the case while the nurse, who, after all, could only act as the messenger of the patient, was trying to get qualified attendance for her patient.

May I point out some of the logical consequences of such an abuse of medical position? 1. The nurse will in the future not trouble to call in a qualified practitioner if at all doubtful of his opinions, but if the case be urgent will proceed to operate for herself. The first rebuff, at all events, will appear to her to justify her in thus acting. In a more difficult case she will send for a medical man whom she knows is disposed to help her patients, and this will involve the introduction of fresh medical competition into the district. 2. The nurse will be, to a certain degree, compelled to get more highly trained than she is at present and this will not be too favourable to the pecuniary interests of the trades unionists. 3. Medical men who attend people in such emergencies will be boycotted by their (trades-union) neighbours and they will then be between the coroner's warrant and their neighbours' ill-will. 4. The public will not patronise men whom they know to be bound by rules which disregard everything but the pecuniary necessities of trade. Trades unionists cannot stop from obstructing all measures which interfere with the extension of their trade; logically, they are bound to go on. Unfortunately for the pecuniary interests of the medical profession, its

duty is to stop the spread of that very condition which fills its pockets. If once we sanction such proceedings as those I have quoted—forced, perhaps, to do so under penalties—farewell to our honour as medical men.

In view of the fact that the parish medical officer is bound to attend under such circumstances it is hopeless to try to prevent the patients of midwives from receiving qualified medical assistance when their condition requires it, and if what is evidently a local agreement to this effect were to become at all general, general practitioners would soon be left to enjoy their own society at their own cost. There is a right and a wrong way of filling one's pocket. These gentlemen have started on the wrong path. Let us hope that they will stop and that their example may prove a warning to others. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

F. R. HUMPHREYS.

Fellows-road, South Hampstead, N.W., Sept. 19th, 1898.

"TUBERCULOSIS AND THE MILK-SUPPLY."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—One of the statements made in the lecture on Tuberculosis and the Milk-supply, published in THE LANCET of Sept. 17th, is slightly inaccurate. It was based on information given to me just before the lecture, but a more detailed examination of the cases show that one of the cow-sheds had not been examined, and in two cases instead of one the veterinary surgeon failed to see evidences of disease of the udder. Page 736, second column, line 10 from the bottom, instead of "Dr. Rivers informs me," read "Dr. Niven informs me that after receiving the results of my examinations the Sanitary Committee asked Mr. King to visit the cow-sheds from which milk had come which had been found tuberculous. Mr. King found that in fourteen out of the sixteen byres he examined there were cows with diseased udders," &c.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Manchester, Sept. 17th, 1898.

SHERIDAN DELÉPINE.

SUNSTROKE OR DELIRIUM TREMENS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—That sunstroke should be followed by mental derangement is *a priori* probable, and if there have been any authenticated cases of such a sequence during the heat wave it would be very interesting to have them recorded. Sunstroke has for long been recognised as one of the antecedents of insanity and a large number of cases of the latter malady come under care with a history of the former, but upon strict investigation it is almost constantly found that the symptoms of the "sunstroke," while they do not agree with the classical course of that malady, bear a striking resemblance to those of delirium tremens.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Catford, S.E., Sept. 16th, 1898.

CHAS. MERCIER.

ANILINE COAL-TAR DYES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The interesting and important case of death from effects of poison introduced into the skin by the use of stockings dyed with some poisonous dye referred to in an annotation in THE LANCET of Sept. 10th should draw professional and public attention to the serious results which often occur to persons who wear coloured hose, &c. Some years ago I drew attention—in the International Health Exhibition in London, 1884—to the evil effects of wearing hose dyed with aniline coal-tar dyes, showing the stuffs so dyed which I had collected from cases in which the patients had consulted me about certain eruptions caused thereby, and I went thoroughly into the matter with the assistance of my friend Dr. Hind, then medical officer of health to Manchester, and we found not only the aniline dyes such as rose aniline, rocceline, and azobenzole red were very injurious to the skin if absorbed, producing violent inflammation and dermatitis, but that the fixing products, such as bichromate of potash, arsenic, &c., also produced the same very irritant effects. The septicæmia caused in the above instance at Hull might have been caused by the dye. I may mention two or three