

not agree with his principal conclusion. I am fully in sympathy with the proposed enlargement of the powers of the British Medical Association, but should be sorry to see the absorption of the defence unions by this body. We know that these unions have hitherto done their work excellently well; we do not know that they would be equally efficient if merged in the larger association. It should be remembered that medical defence has a collective as well as an individual bearing. The latter is well looked after by the defence unions, but they do not touch the former, which concerns the defence of the whole profession in any particular locality against enemies from without—e.g., the societies trading in medical attendance—and foes from within—e.g., members of the profession who adopt reprehensible practices which yet may not be "infamous" in a legal sense.

The difficulty in constituting the British Medical Association a court of control is that it has not, and cannot have, any greater punitive power than expulsion from itself, which to many is no penalty at all. The corporations, however, have already very extensive powers, which the profession would gladly see increased if they became representative bodies. It is to them, therefore, that we should turn our attention, and I invite Dr. Drage and those who think with him to support the effort which is now being made to secure representation for the Members of the largest corporation of all, the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

April 12th, 1893.

W. G. DICKINSON.

"SUBCUTANEOUS EMPHYSEMA OCCURRING DURING LABOUR."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As Dr. Moffat says in THE LANCET of March 28th, the above is a somewhat rare accident. In January of this year a primipara whom I attended showed well-marked emphysema over the thorax, face, and neck. This appeared after the second stage of labour was over and disappeared in about six days. It is of interest to record that she had emphysema in the same regions during an attack of influenza some years ago. The labour was rather tedious and the forceps were used. During the labour the patient had several bad fits of coughing (due to bronchial catarrh), which may have been the direct cause of the subcutaneous emphysema.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

April 13th, 1896.

ALEXANDER INNES, M.B. Aberd.

PUBLIC HEALTH APPOINTMENTS AND THE "LOCAL" CANDIDATE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The recent election of medical officer of health for Sunderland is but another example of the useless and irritating expenditure of time, money, and personal comfort into which busy sanitarians in important public positions are so often unnecessarily led by the specious advertisements of sanitary authorities. To corporations with no soul to save or body to kick the mere fact that a "local" candidate has declared his intention to face the starter is too often quite sufficient to ensure his success (be his merits or demerits what they may) against the most highly qualified "stranger." The applicants for the appointment in question included one of the recent temporary inspectors of the Local Government Board and the health officers of several large Lancashire and Cheshire towns. Men of proved ability and administrative experience. The Council nevertheless, by an overwhelming majority, entrusted the health interests of 140,000 people in this notoriously typhoid-stricken town to the hands of an estimable general practitioner, possessing the necessary academic qualification, but virtually without further practical experience of the duties of such a post. Comment is unnecessary; but I may, perhaps, be permitted to suggest to the town councillors of Sunderland and to others similarly actuated that under such circumstances it would in future be more straightforward to include in their invitation for applicants a statement of preference for any legally qualified local candidate. Then medical officers of health who are unable to practise the Scriptural precept and gynaecological feat of being born again (the accouchement, of course, to take place in the town they desire) will only have themselves to thank for their failure there.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

April 14th, 1896.

SEMPER VIGILANS.

FEVER HOSPITALS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The authorities of the London Fever Hospital are making large additions to their institution in Liverpool-road, presumably for the accommodation of an increased number of patients suffering from infectious diseases. The new wards will be within a few feet of my garden. Will you kindly inform me what public authority (if any) regulates the erection of such buildings, or can any person or number of persons build fever wards where they choose in London? Thanking you in anticipation,—I am, Sirs, yours obediently,

Gibson-square, Islington, N., April 7th, 1896.

H. G. D.

* * We rather doubt the conclusion arrived at, having been informed that the governors of the hospital have decided to improve their ward accommodation and to pull down some of the existing buildings, hence we should not be surprised that, compared with the past, the accommodation provided will in the future be less rather than more than it was. As regards the "few feet" referred to, it will be remembered that the limit of ascertained safety adopted by the Local Government Board and all sanitary authorities for the treatment of infectious fevers other than small-pox is actually based on the long experience of the London Fever Hospital, where the buildings intended to receive infected persons and things stand 40 ft. from the boundary of the hospital site. With this 40 ft. it was found that even where the admissions of fever cases numbered 3000 a year no spread to the houses around occurred. We can hardly believe that the governors are departing from this settled precedent of safety. We believe that apart from an injunction no remedy would apply, but we should advise our correspondent to learn the actual facts by communication with the hospital authorities.—ED. L.

LIVERPOOL.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Death of Mr. George Holt.

IN the death from pneumonia of Mr. George Holt, head of the well-known firm of Lamport and Holt, Liverpool has lost a prominent citizen and University College, Liverpool, a true friend. One of the promoters of that foundation, he ever took the greatest interest in its success, which was substantially shown by his first subscription of £10,000 which was requisite to complete its equipment for incorporation in the Victoria University. It was in its medical school that he took a special interest, and his benefactions to it have been numerous. The chairs of Physiology and Pathology were endowed by him in the amount of £10,000 each, to which was added a further sum of £10,000, for the maintenance of laboratories in those branches of investigation. In addition to these benefactions he presented its medical faculty in 1886 with the sum of £2000 for distribution during the ten succeeding years in tutorial scholarships of the value of £100 each. These have been of the greatest service to industrious students in affording them opportunities for research in special departments of the medical school which otherwise might not have occurred to them. He further fitted up in a complete manner Ashton Hall as a pathological and bacteriological laboratory which is one of the most complete of its kind in this country. Besides providing accommodation for the teaching of morbid anatomy, pathological chemistry, and bacteriology, provision is also made for private investigation in pathology. This building further contains the museums of hygiene and materia medica. This does not exhaust the list of his benefactions; a further sum of £1000 was given as a donation to the college library, to be expended in annual instalments of £100. He was also a generous contributor to the maintenance fund of the college and a warm friend of education in general. Indeed, it is probably as a benefactor of University College that his name will live longest in local memory. He presided at the annual meeting of the Royal Infirmary on Jan. 30th, looking the picture of