

My experience, small as it is, seems to point to the conclusion that properly administered with due care and discrimination as to suitable cases, with the patients prepared as they are for chloroform and in the recumbent position, ethyl chloride is relatively safe and is an invaluable anæsthetic for the country practitioner. I trust that at an early date we may be in possession of reliable statistics with regard to the use and practical results of this anæsthetic.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

JAMES B. SIMPSON, M.A., M.D., C.M. Edin.

Golspie, Dec. 1st, 1906.

## THE ELECTION OF DIRECT REPRESENTATIVES.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—As considerable interest has been aroused at this election and very many medical men are desirous to know the result as soon as possible, may we use your periodical to inform the profession that we are arranging to send the information on Wednesday next to any medical man who has previously communicated with any one of us?

The necessary conditions would be: (a) A telegram form containing the name and address must have been received at latest Tuesday next. (b) Sufficient postage to cover the address and six words besides should be affixed if only the names and number of votes received by the three successful candidates are desired. (c) If all the candidates' names and votes are required in order, then sufficient postage for the address and twenty words besides should be affixed.

These telegrams can be expected by noon on Wednesday. The Registrar has stated that this procedure is in order.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ALFRED COX,

Bensham-road, Gateshead.

E. ROWLAND FOTHERGILL,

Southfields, S.W.

E. D. KIRBY,

107, Hagley-road, Edgbaston.

J. A. K. RENSHAW,

11, St. John-street, Manchester.

Dec. 5th, 1906.

## THE MEDICAL TREATMENT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—The Education Bill provides not only for the medical inspection of school children but also for their medical treatment. Before "attending to the health and physical condition" of the children it is necessary for the local authority to obtain the sanction of the Board of Education; there is to be no wage-limit, but children attending voluntary schools are to be excluded from treatment, even though their fathers pay rates. All this is of much importance, for 96 per cent. of children attend Council schools. Probably at first the local authority will only treat out-patients on Saturday mornings at the schools, performing operations for adenoids, squints, and talipes on children between three and 14 years of age, but it will soon be said that many of the cases should have been treated before three years old, and in the case of congenital ailments from birth. Lastly, it will be said that many cases cannot be efficiently treated as out-patients and permission will then be granted to establish children's hospitals in those districts in which voluntary effort is inadequate.

The object of this letter is not to express its writer's opinions but to induce others to form their own. The absence of any clear provision for the scruples of conscientious objectors and for the protection of the children of foolish parents suggests that the clause has not been fully considered even by its authors. The best course would be to transfer it from the present Bill to that dealing with the feeding of school children, a subject with which it is more closely connected. This would allow of the clause being studied by those having some responsibility in the matter.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

J. S.

Dec. 4th, 1906.

## SHIPPING COMPANIES AND THEIR SURGEONS.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—This year I had an operation upon my ear and went as ship surgeon on a steamer running to South America, where there are laws affecting all steerage passengers in

regard to their vaccination, certification, &c., especially in Uruguay and Argentina. Various shipping companies get doctors to sign their articles without giving them any information to speak of about these laws and when at sea avail themselves of the technicalities of an old "Shipping Act" and tell the surgeon that he is only a seaman under that Act, &c. Therefore they claim the right to order the doctor to vaccinate unlimited numbers of passengers without any extra pay, in the same manner as a cabin boy can be ordered to wash plates. The law of Uruguay had been in force for months and no extra pay had been paid to any surgeon for the extra work involved by that law. On arriving at Monte Video I put my foot down, and kept it down, on the ground that my signature to the ship's articles had been obtained by withholding material facts as regards my work, and the result was a crisis leading to a regular scene before a large audience and which ended in the Uruguayan doctors doing the work themselves. Since then I have made it my business to see that all surgeons on that line have a chance of knowing what is in store for them before they leave England, to the great wrath of the company and their superintendent. The whole subject is worthy of investigation, as we are shipped to regions where white men only work for high pay and despise those that do not. Perhaps some of your readers who have had similar experiences may be able to confirm my statements and so aid in inducing the shipping companies to mend their ways.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Dec. 3rd, 1906.

MASTOID.

## THE ARMY MEDICAL RESERVE.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—There is an attempt now being made to raise an "Army Medical Reserve," an attempt which must necessarily prove unsuccessful considering the conditions demanded. First, an age limit of 30 is fixed. This excludes practically all medical men who have practices of their own, and certainly all who have established practices. Secondly, two months' training at Aldershot is required. This condition must prevent the majority of the small number not excluded by the age limit from applying. An assistant can hardly hope for two months' holiday, whilst a medical officer to institution, hospital, or asylum is in a hopeless case. As far as I can see the only one eligible is the newly qualified man who has nothing better to do. He may take out his first training but unless he elects to remain idle indefinitely he can hardly hope to take out another.

The £5 offered for purchase of uniform should be at least £15.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Nov. 29th, 1906.

TOMMY ATKINS.

## SOUTHPORT SHRIMPS FROM HOLLAND.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I see by your issue of Oct. 27th that your Manchester correspondent calls attention to one of the recent convictions (Bradford) for this fraud both upon the public and the local fishermen. A short account of the "manufacture" of potted shrimps may interest you. The trade in Dutch "preserved" shrimps is one of comparatively recent date.

The shrimps are imported in large quantities ready picked heavily "faked" with boric acid and will "keep" an indefinite time. Before being potted they have to be washed, whereby a large amount of the preservative is removed; they are then cooked in the usual manner, spice, &c., added to mask their unnatural flavour, and sent out broadcast as "Southport potted shrimps" and labeled as such. The fraud is committed quite openly and the trade is a large one. Before the shrimps are washed they are a filthy mixture quite unfit for food and it is a mystery to everyone that no steps are taken by our health authorities to stop the traffic. There is a fleet of about 70 boats engaged in the shrimp fishery here and a few years ago some of the local fishermen formed themselves into an association called the "Southport Shrimpers' Amalgamation." Their catches are taken to a central depôt where they are potted and distributed, no preservative being added, or indeed found necessary. They meet with great opposition on the part of the importers of foreign shrimps and in the winter season, when native shrimps are scarce, the fishermen find great difficulty in getting remunerative prices for their catches as the dealers in foreign shrimps always have plenty in pickle which compete with them.