

eason when women with illegitimate children are to my knowledge employed in the nursing profession. I have hitherto been perfectly honest in my dealings with people when seeking employment, but these constant rejections on the score of marriage make one feel tempted to resort to untruthfulness, a course which would not trouble a person without a conscience. One lady superintendent of whom I asked the reason of the objection to married women and widows with children told me it was because they begged from their patients! I enclose my name and address and with apologies for trespassing so largely on your valuable space I am, Sirs, yours obediently,

THE WIFE OF AN UNQUALIFIED ASSISTANT.  
Jan. 3rd, 1898.

## "THE HOSPITALS, THE PROFESSION, AND THE PUBLIC."

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—Dr. Lionel S. Beale shows by the letter you publish in THE LANCET of Jan. 8th that he is labouring under complete misapprehension as to my views. I am in entire agreement with Dr. Lionel Beale that care must be taken to provide that the "one out-patient who happens to be sickening for serious illness," and indeed all cases of distressing illnesses such as he indicates, should be carefully safeguarded and provided for. The meshes of the net which there is now every reason to hope will soon be affixed to the entrance of each out-patient department must by careful thought and the exercise of infinite tact, in coöperation with the medical staff, be so adjusted as to secure that no cases of the kind shall be excluded.

I am confident that an arrangement can be come to in the out-patient departments which will secure this result and at the same time win the approval and confidence of every intelligent member of the medical profession.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

HENRY C. BURDETT.

The Lodge, Porchester-square, W., Jan. 7th, 1898.

## THE CASE FOR VACCINATION.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I shall be glad if you will allow me at this early period in the new year to invite the attention of your readers to the need for their coöperation in meeting the very active agitation which is being carried on by the Anti-vaccination League at the present time. In view of the probability of legislation during the ensuing session of Parliament in furtherance of the recommendation of the late Royal Commission an effort is being made to influence the members of the Legislature both directly (by personal communications) and indirectly (through their local constituents). To effect this latter object letters are addressed to such local publications as will admit them, not only attacking compulsory vaccination but seeking to discredit vaccination itself. It is of the greatest importance that these letters, wherever they appear, should be answered. It has been too much the practice hitherto to disregard them as in most cases unworthy of notice. To this mistaken policy is in a large degree attributable the hold the anti-vaccination agitation has obtained in many localities. To reply to them is useful in two ways: it serves at the same time to neutralise misrepresentations and to educate the public to appreciate the facts on which vaccination rests. This is work which must be done mainly by the medical profession, for few others are in a position to do it. But there is another reason why it is incumbent on the profession to undertake it. Anti-vaccinators constantly make it a subject of complaint that vaccination is the only medical prescription which is enforced by law. This is true; and it is therefore only right that as the maintenance of vaccination so largely rests upon medical opinion every effort should be made to instruct the public as to the justification for this position. I trust, therefore, that whenever any of your readers see a statement in any local paper, whether in the form of a paragraph or letter, misrepresenting the case for vaccination, if they do not themselves reply to it, they will send the paper to the Jenner Society, that it may be dealt with if practicable and desirable. I have, on

behalf of the society, during the past year replied to a large number of such letters, but it is only possible for me to do a limited amount of work of this kind and it is much better that local attacks should, if possible, be met by local defence. I shall at all times be glad to give any assistance towards this work. It is a form of warfare which needs some little training to ensure success; for the enemy is crafty, is familiar with the use of his weapons, and too often does not mind striking a foul blow when a fair one fails.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

FRANCIS T. BOND, M.D. Lond.,  
Gloucester, Jan. 10th, 1898. Hon. Secretary, Jenner Society.

## SANTONIN IN SPRUE.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I trust you will again grant me a little of your valuable space to urge upon my brother practitioners, especially those practising in tropical countries, the certainty of curing sprue by my method of using santonin. The experience I have had since I last wrote to you in 1891 confirms me in my belief that all cases yield to it. I have not yet had a failure. It has been said that the sprue of China differs from that met with in India and elsewhere. I doubt it; but granting that, it remains that since my return from China in 1894 I have had several cases invalided home from India and my treatment has cured them after they had tried everything at the hands of those who in this country are considered to be authorities on the subject. In a recent issue you review a book published by Dr. Thin on sprue. He I now see accepts my explanation of the disease, but only recommends the same old weary course of treatment—milk, rest, and change of climate. I do not think the disease of sufficient importance to deserve a book to itself; it is only another kind of diarrhoea and a chapter in any work on intestinal diseases would be quite enough. Usually the diseases to which poor humanity are subject are equally cursed by the number and variety of their cures. Sprue stands alone in being calmly accepted as incurable. But my experience leads me to believe that of all diseases it is the one which in its symptoms shows such a logical sequence that I was led to guess at its cause and publish an account of it long before I was able to verify my conclusions at a necropsy on a patient under the care of Dr. Thin and, better still, acting on my conclusions, to cure the disease wherever I met it. In conclusion I wish only to say that I lay more stress than ever on the details of the treatment as described in my published paper and the fact that the refined white santonin is quite useless.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Hotel Cecil, W.C., Jan. 10th, 1898.

CHARLES BEGG.

## MEDICAL FEES UNDER THE POOR-LAW.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—Will you kindly answer me the following question in your next issue?

I receive a parish order to attend a woman in my district. The case was one of compound comminuted fracture of the left leg. I set the fracture and visited her twice; at my own suggestion she was removed to the workhouse for the reason that she lived in a wretched hovel and there was no one to nurse her or to assist me in dressing her leg—in fact, the case could not have been properly treated where she lived. Some of the guardians have succeeded in carrying a resolution that I should be paid half the fee only. I have given a receipt for that amount on account. The chairman and other right-thinking men are of opinion that I am entitled to the full fee, as I am myself. What is your opinion—am I or am I not?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

E. P. KING,  
Medical Officer Chepstow Workhouse and District.  
Chepstow, Jan. 5th, 1898.

P.S.—The clerk told them that they could not split the fee, they must pay all or none.

\* \* We see no reason for any reduction.—ED. L.