

be glad if the General Medical Council can do anything to help his appeal for justice. There seems to be a doubt about the Council's power, but I shall support any movement that is possible. I go to London to-night.

"Faithfully yours," "W. THOMSON."

"To Timothy Holmes, Esq."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I read with great satisfaction the letter of Dr. Rentoul in THE LANCET of last Saturday and consider the insertion of it a magnanimous act, and I venture to say that nothing could have shown the profession more clearly the openness of its columns to the contributions of those of all shades of opinion, and that persistence in such a course will supply a want which is, and will be, more appreciated day by day. Although I know Dr. Rentoul well, intimately to a certain degree, yet I "did not know half which the letter contains," but I cannot agree with the view expressed in the editorial comment appended to it, which is apt to give the impression that the midwives' question is a monomania or fad of his. Surely his letter has disproved conclusively any such view, and yet there is a phase of it which is as great a satisfaction to his friends—namely, that "he cannot get away from it"—as it is disagreeable to his opponents, that the midwives' question "cannot get away from him." I will not trespass further on your space.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

G. H. BROADBENT.

Ardwick-green, Manchester, Nov. 24th, 1896.

BEATTY v. CULLINGWORTH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I am sure that the whole of the profession will rejoice to know that the verdict of the jury in the above case was in favour of the defendant. I sincerely trust that a fund will be inaugurated for the payment of Dr. Cullingworth's costs out of pocket. To this end I shall be very pleased to contribute the sum of twenty guineas.

Believe me, very truly yours,

D. LLOYD ROBERTS.

St. John-street, Manchester, Nov. 23th, 1896.

AN ACOUSTIC BLADDER SOUND AND VAGINAL STETHOSCOPE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The same idea occurred to me as has been carried out by Surgeon-Captain Richard Heard, but for the purpose I have adapted the phonendoscope. I found that instrument so useful in abdominal examinations that I first attached to it a modification of Hyde-Salter's globular stethoscope, an instrument I have long used for detecting early pregnancy. I found this combination so useful for detecting faint pelvic sounds that I further adapted a small sound screwed into the peg-hole of the moveable disc of the phonendoscope, which sound may be of steel or vulcanite, the latter, perhaps, giving the better results of the two.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Birmingham, Nov. 24th, 1896.

LAWSON TAIT.

"THE ETIOLOGY OF ACUTE RHEUMATISM."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Your summary of Dr. McClymont's paper on the Etiology of Acute Rheumatism, read before the Hunterian Society on Nov. 11th,¹ contains one or two errors which, in the interest of historical accuracy, I trust you will allow me to correct. It is there stated: "Dr. Newsholme had shown that acute rheumatism was an urban disease and occurred more often in places situated in valleys; it occurred, also, when the mean soil temperature was raised. He had also shown that where the soil water was in excess acute rheumatism was very prevalent." The two last statements are mutually destructive, a high soil temperature being obviously inconsistent with an excess of soil water. THE LANCET of March 16th, 1895 (pp. 660-665), gives the real gist of the conclusions at which I had arrived, which are so opposed to all previous conceptions of the conditions of soil favourable to rheumatism. It is there shown that the great epidemics of rheumatic fever, wherever the necessary data could be ascertained, occurred in dry years—especially when there had been a succession of such dry years—

and that they never occurred except when the subsoil water was abnormally low and the mean earth temperature for the year was exceptionally high. As to the two first statements quoted above there is, I think, sufficient evidence to show that rheumatic fever is an urban rather than a rural disease; but I know of none of a satisfactory character to show that it is specially prevalent in valleys. The immediate fatality (case-mortality) from rheumatic fever is so small and the place of ultimate death from the disease may be so remote from that of the locality in which the disease has been acquired that death returns have only a slight value in the solution of this problem. Some more certain indications may be gathered from Scandinavian countries, in which every case of rheumatic fever is notified to the public authorities. Until the same far-sighted policy is adopted in this country our knowledge of the natural history of rheumatic fever must remain incomplete, though I have been able to adduce sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it occurs in great epidemics and pandemics at irregular intervals of years, and that these epidemics occur only under the conditions of soil-temperature and deficiency of moisture already indicated.—I am, Sirs, yours obediently,

Brighton, Nov. 24th, 1896. ARTHUR NEWSHOLME, M.D. Lond.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION IN FRANCE: THE SAGE-FEMME.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—If an object-lesson on the effect on the medical profession of the licensing of midwives and the extension of privileges to chemists is wanted in England it can be obtained by contemplating the profession abroad. The French medical profession has let go to sage-femme and chemist so many of its sources of income that it now of necessity appeals for the most part to a rougher and poorer class of men than in England. I have met several men who have qualified in France as both medical practitioner and chemist, but they always chose the better part and practised as chemists. If the English medical profession in a generous or careless spirit follows a foolish example and gives away its privileges, the smarter English youths will become dentists and chemists.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

D. W. SAMWAYS, M.D. Lond., D.Sc. Camb., &c.

Menton, Riviera, Nov. 14th, 1896.

"THE USE OF CALF LYMPH BY PUBLIC VACCINATORS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I regret that in your editorial note to my letter in THE LANCET of Nov. 21st you evade the chief point of it. Written warning as to the use of calf lymph was given by the Local Government Board to the vaccinators of Islington only eighteen months after the first departure from the printed instruction, but this departure was due to the sanction given by the Board's own inspector. This sanction became the Board's by virtue of the act of their inspector, just as a railway company is responsible for any accident caused by the ignorance, carelessness, or inadvertence of one of their officials. The public vaccinators who were not responsible for the departure have had their awards withheld as a punishment, whereas punishment implies, or ought to imply, responsibility. You call this a hardship, I call it an injustice. It seems from what you say that we are all acting illegally, or, as you so euphemistically put it, are engaged in making "departures from the instructions"—the vaccinators in using tube calf lymph, the guardians in paying for it out of public funds, and the Local Government Board themselves in making the 20 per cent. regulation. The droll and unfair thing is that only the vaccinators are put in the stocks. Like you, I hope for happier times and the advent of better legislation. Will you allow me, as a public vaccinator of over sixteen years' experience, to express my views very briefly on two subjects connected with public vaccination—namely, inspection and the supply of tube calf lymph?

First, with regard to inspection. Inspection of the stations should be made two or three times a year and without notice given. At present an inspection resolves itself into a more or less pleasant chat about the weather, numbers, insusceptibility to vaccination and the like, and then the infrequent visitor is off. The inspector should inspect everything

¹ THE LANCET, Nov. 21st, 1896.

about the station and write in a book for the purpose a brief report of what he has seen, the cleanliness of the place, and his impressions generally. This report book should be laid before the guardians at their next meeting, or before whatever body may in the future be entrusted with the arrangements for public vaccination. This board or council should have a standing committee to visit the station and see for themselves how the work of vaccination is carried on. Had guardians in the past, through some such committee, come more in touch with our work, there would in my opinion have been much less objection displayed towards vaccination than has unfortunately been exhibited.

Secondly, as to the supply of tube calf lymph to public vaccination stations. There can be no doubt that a large number of parents prefer their children to be vaccinated with calf lymph, while others, again, prefer them to be done from other children. Why not satisfy both classes of parents at the public stations without any of the hesitation or objection or discussion that must inevitably take place if the public vaccinator tries to comply with the wishes of the Local Government Board at a station where tube calf lymph is supplied him for use and at which parents are informed by conspicuous notices on their vaccination papers that they can have it if they prefer it? The only problem to solve is how to obtain this calf lymph perfectly fresh and from a source the Local Government Board approve of. That can be easily solved. For example, in Islington, which is the largest and most populous parish in the metropolis, there are two vaccination officers and five public vaccinators, each of the latter, as I have said before, receiving weekly three tubes of Dr. Renner's calf lymph. In future the vaccination officers should be instructed to call in the morning at the calf station or stations (for more than one are needed in this vast city) appointed by the Local Government Board, and receive from the vaccinators there the requisite number of tubes of calf lymph freshly taken and placed in envelopes containing the date and the number of the calf from which the lymph was taken, and also officially sealed. These envelopes should be delivered by the vaccination officers to the public vaccinators, and the latter should be stringently bound to use only that calf lymph at their stations on that same day. The calf lymph taken in the morning would thus be used before there was any chance of it losing its efficacy, and its source would be guaranteed by the Local Government Board. What applies at Islington would apply at the other parishes of London, to which alone in these suggestions I refer, as I know nothing of vaccination in the country and provincial towns.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ANDREW D. DUCAT, M.D. Edin.

Highbury, N., Nov. 23rd, 1896.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reference to Dr. Ducat's letter in THE LANCET of Nov. 21st kindly allow me to narrate my experience. When I was first appointed public vaccinator of this district, which is an extremely large one and sparsely populated, I found the vaccination in a deplorable condition—30 per cent unvaccinated and the station system a dead letter. I commenced vaccinating with Dr. Renner's lymph, paying for it myself, and I may say *en passant* that I had 95 per cent. of success with first vaccinations. There are four stations at distances from my house necessitating travelling one hundred miles a year. The average attendance is 1.5 and the total fees per annum is from £2 to £3. With the small number of attendances and the long distances arm-to-arm vaccination is an impossibility. Yet the inspector will not give me the grant because of the calf lymph; and the department threatened last year to ask me to resign, but thought better of it when they found there would be no one fool enough to accept the office. What I do now is this: I vaccinate patients with Dr. Renner's lymph privately at their own homes when I happen to be near and if they cannot pay give them it. This is a much more convenient plan for me, and as the fees are so small it would pay me to be rid of an appointment which only brings red-tape inspectors down to find fault with hard-worked men and who do not appreciate the difficulties of vaccination in country districts. I trust the department will not continue to refuse to recognise calf lymph vaccination especially in the face of the recent Commission report.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Patrington, Nov. 21st, 1896. W. H. COATES, M.B. Durh. &c.

THE READING OF PAPERS AT CONGRESSES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Early last summer I received an autograph letter—not a circular—from the secretary of the Sanitary Institute stating that the committee of the Institute thought “the prevention of deaf-mutism” a subject which ought to be discussed at the Newcastle Congress and asking me to read a paper. The date of the paper was fixed *absolutely* for Monday, Sept. 7th, after I pointed out to the committee that I had engagements which made my absence from Glasgow very difficult.

I should say that I am not a member of the Institute. I went to Newcastle only because the committee asked me. As is so often the case, my paper was crowded out. As a protest I wrote asking my expenses. Although I have satisfied the committee by sending copies of their letters fixing the date of the paper that the fault lay with them they refuse to refund my expenses. I write this letter to warn your readers who may have similar requests made to them by the committee of the Sanitary Institute and in the hope that my protest may tend to the better management of affairs in the future.

I am, Sirs, yours sincerely,

Pollokshields, Glasgow, Nov. 19th, 1896. JAMES KERR LOVE.

“ON THE SERO-DIAGNOSIS OF TYPHOID FEVER.”

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In his article in THE LANCET of Nov. 14th on what he well terms “Sero-diagnosis” Professor Widal expresses surprise that I, in my communication on the same subject in THE LANCET of Sept. 19th, did not make more reference to his work. I should have been glad to do so had the facts allowed it. My article appearing in your columns was written on July 15th, just before terminating my stay in Vienna and my work in Professor Gruber's laboratory. At that time I could only refer to what I can still do no more than call Professor Widal's short communication of June 26th. That communication contains no mention of the improvised method. Both methods are practically identical with those of Gruber and Durham;¹ and the latter one resembling, but, I maintain, less exact than, the method employed by me. Professor Widal presumably elaborated between his communications of June 26th and July 24th. Now my method we were employing in Vienna from March onwards. The agglutinating action of some human sera (and especially of that of typhoid patients) I had observed at that time, and it was mentioned by Professor Gruber at the Medical Congress in Wiesbaden on April 9th, when he also pointed out that dilution would consequently be necessary in using the reaction for diagnostic purposes. Professor Widal appears to imagine that this was not known until his communication of June 26th. In view, then, of the individual differences of power of human serum, and having regard to my own experience, I must, in spite of what Professor Widal writes, believe that exact measurements should accompany each observation.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Berlin, November, 1896.

ALBERT S. GRÜNBAUM.

“WORDS OF WISDOM.”

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—THE LANCET of Nov. 21st contained an address by Dr. Wadham to the students of St. George's Hospital and an annotation in which you paid it a very happy and just tribute by speaking of it as “words of wisdom.” May I be allowed to add to what you said in appreciation of the address that the part which struck me most forcibly when I heard it delivered was that which emphasised the value of sympathy. The medical knowledge of to-day may be considered as foolishness in the future, but the power of sympathy is eternal. It was his capacity for sympathy, believe me, more than his knowledge of the world which enabled Dr. Wadham, whilst he ruled supreme as dean of

¹ As a matter of history it should be observed that these investigators pointed out the agglutinating properties of immunising serum previously to Pfeiffer and Kolle.