

the majority of the members of the profession now combine to make the British Medical Association the great and powerful representative authority which it should be I see no chance of the profession exerting its full force either in the way of maintaining internal discipline or as a political factor.

The corporations have quite failed to recognise the fact that circumstances have changed and with a tenacity worthy of a better cause they cling to methods quite a century old. Under these circumstances the best policy before the profession will be found to be to say to the corporations, "by all means keep to your old world methods; we will make a corporation in which the meanest of its members will have a voice and an interest." Your article raises a second point, that of the position of a member of the General Medical Council with reference to his membership of such an association. Surely at the present time it has been shown pretty conclusively that corporation representatives sit on that Council, not to consider the interests of the profession as a whole, but the interests of the particular corporation which they represent. Why then should not members belonging to a representative body sit on such a Council? Your remarks on this head—if proof were needed at all—prove the necessity of the profession being considered as a whole and not as a mere collection of cliques, each one arrogating to itself superiority. If the corporations did not refuse corporate existence to the bulk of those who are connected with them the matter would be upon a different footing. As it is, absolutely unrepresentative of the profession as a whole or even a part, these bodies in every way promote disunion, which a united representative authority would discourage.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,
Hatfield, March 22nd, 1896. LOVELL DRAGE.

ACCIDENTAL RASHES IN TYPHOID FEVER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The cases of accidental rashes occurring in typhoid fever simulating scarlet fever, published in THE LANCET of March 21st, are of considerable interest, especially, I take it, in connexion with the question of isolation. Scarlatiniform rashes during typhoid fever have come under my notice twice during two epidemics, but the following case of erythema scarlatiniform occurring during varicella appears to me unusual.

The case was that of a child aged three years who had been ailing six days; the patient had varicella eruption in various stages on the scalp, face, neck, chest, and abdomen; the symptoms were very slight. Two other children in the house were also suffering from it. On the seventh day a punctiform scarlet erythematous rash appeared over the whole of both upper and lower extremities, the temperature rose to 101° F., and the pulse to 140, the throat was normal and the tongue clean; there was conjunctivitis of the right eye. On the eighth day the rash was the same, the tongue was slightly coated with white fur, the temperature was 98·6°, the pulse 130, and the throat normal. On the ninth day the rash had quite faded, but fresh vesicles appeared on the abdomen. On the tenth day the tongue was quite clean, the conjunctivitis cleared up, and the patient was apparently well. At no time was there any albumin in the urine. No desquamation followed; the patient was under strict supervision for three weeks after. There was no scarlet fever in the neighbourhood at the time. Erythema in its many varieties is not uncommon in the district. No cause could be connected with the case with regard to medicine or diet. I have no doubt many practitioners have observed similar cases, and know how careful they had to be not to give a too hurried diagnosis.

I remain, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Newark-on-Trent, March 25th, 1896. ERNEST RINGROSE.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF PENTAL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I trust that I may have misinterpreted Dr. Prince Stallard's paper and the subsequent discussion as reported in the syllabus of the proceedings of the Society of Anaesthetists in THE LANCET of March 14th. Dr. Stallard reported 150 cases of the administration of pental with one death; Dr. Dudley Buxton compared the reported cases of Gurlt

(600, with three deaths) and Snow (238, with two deaths); in all, 988 cases with six deaths. Unless I have misread these figures we have the appalling mortality of one person out of every 164 to whom, in the practice of these anaesthetists, pental was administered to save a minute's pain. (The average duration of unconsciousness was in Dr. Stallard's cases seventy-six seconds.) The president is reported to have said that he was delighted to see members of the society pursuing their investigations into various drugs likely to become good anaesthetics. It is surely time that some old-fashioned practitioner like myself, who believes that the first object of a medical man is to preserve life, should protest against the use of so dangerous an anaesthetic, the advantages of which are stated to be: (1) that the patients recover quickly (if they recover at all); (2) no coughing, struggling, or dislike to the drug; (3) small amount required; (4) absence of after effects; (5) longer anaesthesia than nitrous oxide gas; and (6) simple apparatus. Besides five other stated disadvantages we have the fact that it is at least 100 times more fatal than other anaesthetics. I have practised surgery for more than thirty years and during that time have either myself administered or been responsible for the administration of anaesthetics in several thousand cases, and, happily, I have only seen one death (from chloroform in a prolonged abdominal operation). I cannot but compare my own experience and that of others in the use of the more ordinary anaesthetics with these reported cases of the results obtained from pental, and once more, although no specialist on the subject, protest emphatically against any further sacrifice of life from its use.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
March 27th, 1896. THOMAS JAMES WALKER, M.D. Lond.

MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION BILL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The second reading of the Midwives Bill is fixed for May 6th. In the meantime we wish to urge that the following action be taken immediately by each practitioner: 1. He should at once write to his Member of Parliament asking him to strongly oppose the second reading of the Bill, enclosing a copy of the "Reasons" against registration which may be obtained on application to the honorary secretary at the undermentioned address. 2. He should call at his earliest on the local political secretary of his Parliamentary division and ask him to communicate with his Member of Parliament his own feeling and that of local practitioners. 3. He should join at his earliest his local political association or club and ask its secretary and leading workers to write to his Member of Parliament, giving him copies of the "Reasons." 4. He should call a meeting of local practitioners, pass a resolution against the Bill, send a copy to their Members of Parliament, and ask them if they will receive a deputation of local practitioners. The same meeting should appoint a deputation and provide for the payment of travelling expenses. The local political secretary would arrange for it with their Members of Parliament.

We do not place much faith in the passing of mere abstract and academic resolutions or the signing of petitions. If the majority of practitioners in each Parliamentary division will write at once to their Members of Parliament asking them to oppose the Bill, sending them a copy of the "Reasons" signed by local practitioners, obtain the help of their local political secretary and of their local political and lay friends, these practical methods will give the best results. A list of Members of Parliament will be found in *Whitaker's Almanac*, pp. 135-145, and the address "House of Commons, London," will find them. As it is necessary that all opposition be organised in London, will practitioners please let the honorary secretary know the replies from their Members of Parliament? Funds are required to successfully oppose the Bill; we therefore propose that a "Midwives Bill Opposition Fund" be now formed. Copies of the "Reasons," pamphlets, and other information may be obtained from the honorary secretary.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,
C. CAMPBELL, W. W. HUGHES,
L. DRAGE, L. KIDD,
J. M. DOLAN, LAWSON TAIT,
G. C. SHUTTLEWORTH, R. R. RENTOUL (Hon. Sec.).
78, Hartington-road, Liverpool, March 28th, 1896.