

ten beds which are all that we can provide in this house. We have learnt, too, after repeated efforts, that it is impossible to rent a house for such a purpose; and we have found that the one we now occupy is in many ways unsuited to our work—it entails great and unnecessary physical exertion on our staff, some want of comfort to the patients, and it lacks the complete sanitary arrangements which we need. And this is very important, especially as most of our patients are dying either of consumption or cancer, and the question of ventilation and sanitation becomes therefore imperative. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that the only course open to us is to buy a house and adapt it to our purpose; and for the funds for this (£5000 would cover all expenses) we are going to appeal to the public. It would be rash to expect business men to give the money on our unsupported appeal, though we have a right to make it, for though we are in a sense private the work is public. We make no private stipulations; if the case is medically eligible we offer the next vacancy (it is all now that we have to offer); but if you, who have known and watched our work from the beginning and seen our books, would endorse the appeal, then there could be small doubt that what is needed would be provided.

"I am, dear Mr. Bryant, your obedient servant,

"CLARA MARIA HOLE,

"Mother Superior, St. James's Servants of the Poor.

"The Hostel of God, 58, The Chase, Clapham, S.W."

### QUALIFIED NURSES(?).

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It has often struck me as a remarkable fact that, although London appears literally to swarm with "hospital nurses" in picturesque and appropriate costumes, it still remains as difficult to obtain a really efficient nurse upon short notice as it has ever been within my recollection. The following instructive example of the great ease and rapidity with which the modern "trained nurse" is manufactured may perhaps throw some light upon the curious discrepancy observed between the quantity and the quality of these ladies. A uniformed and certificated nurse was recently sent to me with the highest recommendation by a relative of a lady who was under my care. The nurse expressed her readiness to take charge of my patient—a serious and somewhat complicated medical case. Upon inquiry I ascertained that this "trained nurse" had never received any systematic instruction in medical or surgical nursing, that her entire professional training had been accomplished in *eight weeks* at a certain lying-in hospital in London, and that at the expiration of the above period of probation she had obtained from the authorities of this hospital a "first class certificate" as a monthly nurse. In answer to an expression of surprise and alarm on my part the nurse assured me that her training had been exceptionally long, since the majority of the pupils of this beneficent charity obtained their certificates at the end of five weeks.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Seville-street, S.W., May 17th, 1893.

JOHN CAHILL.

### "DRASTIC TREATMENT OF EARLY GONORRHOEA."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your obituary notice of the late Mr. Cotes it is stated that "he advocated in the pages of THE LANCET a drastic treatment of early gonorrhœa, supporting his views, which have since been fairly generally adopted, by a large number of successful cases." Assuming this to mean that the treatment described in February, 1892, has been "fairly generally adopted," there must be by this time in existence a large body of evidence concerning its value, and I venture to suggest that if some of those who have had experience of the treatment would publish the results the latter would probably be of interest to many readers of THE LANCET.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Old Burlington-street, W., May 24th, 1893. ARTHUR COOPER.

### ASEPSIS AND SUPPURATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the interests of the rising generation of medical students I venture to make the following protest. Mr. Silcock in an address that he read before the Harveian

Society on May 5th, 1893, used these words:—"Occasionally owing to the use of a septic ligature or some inadvertence in the endeavour to maintain asepsis more or less suppuration may and does occur, and that it should occur is not surprising." Now, Sirs, it seems to me that this is not a statement that will encourage the rising medical students to pay that particular and detailed care to the points that train and influence a successful antiseptic or aseptic surgeon. Of course, I do not presume to criticise the speaker's methods, but I do want it to be generally recognised that to some surgeons "more or less suppuration" is not only a surprise, but also a reproach, and is a result that stimulates them to exert every endeavour in their power to prevent a recurrence of such a complication.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, W., May 22nd, 1893.

G. L. CHEATLE.

### "DEATH CERTIFICATION."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the course of my examination before the Select Committee I was asked (with reference to a proposal that all cases of uncertified deaths should be referred to the police surgeon of the district) some questions as to the appointment and position of police surgeons generally, and as regards those outside the metropolitan area I was able to give only the very limited amount of information which I had gathered from communications received from various parts of the country whilst acting as honorary secretary of the Metropolitan Police Surgeons' Association; nor do I know where there is any further information available. Will you, therefore, permit me to ask through the columns of THE LANCET those members of the profession who act in this capacity to be kind enough to write to me stating: (1) The name of the force for which they act; (2) by whom they are appointed; (3) the mode and average amount of their remuneration?—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

129, Dulwich-grove, S.E., May 22nd, 1893. H. NELSON HARDY.

### "THE VACCINATION DEBATE."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It is generally regarded as a work of supererogation to flog a dead horse, but if even the corpse of a one-time refractory quadruped gives a post-mortem kick, and especially if such a ruling passion strong in death has the sympathy of some portion of the community and the benevolent or calculating neutrality of the Government, an additional lash may be justifiable. In your leading article on the vaccination debate you have administered such an additional castigation which it is to be hoped will produce in the dead horse of anti-vaccination the becoming quiescence of an orderly corpse. A cynical but profound philosopher—Thomas Carlyle—consoled himself in the presence of *outré* popular upheavals, or, indeed, upheavals however initiated, with the reflection that if a wall is built off the plumb it will fall and the teaching of experience will rectify the ravings of misconception. On this principle those capable of appreciating and weighing evidence might be vaccinated and allow others to take the chances of non-vaccination. In the case of those who had attained to years of discretion and remained deaf to the teaching, the unanswerable teaching, of experience, probably the only argument (which, indeed, might fail to convince them) would be an attack of confluent small-pox emphasised during a lifetime by the possession of a mutilated hide. But, in the interests of those incapable of defending themselves or of judging for themselves—namely, children—it is scarcely worthy of the Government of the country to run the risk of allowing the sins of the obdurate parents to be visited upon their innocent offspring. This, however, in the comparatively isolated action of Sir Walter Foster, the Government may be said to have practically done, and in view of the close balance of the political parties of the hour their action may be electionally prudent. The purchase, however, of a momentary advantage at the cost of a sacrifice of the teaching of experience may be dearly earned. The weak in a civilised State demand the protection of the strong and cannot be betrayed by either party in view of the political exigencies of the hour and of the next general "counting of noses." Your outspoken utterance, therefore—not that of the profession merely, but of the inevitable conclusions of "common sense"—deserves the thanks of the community.

Debating a subject even with the ignorant may, however,