

and it was my good fortune to be present at Moorfields some years ago, when Mr. G. Lawson extracted with my electro-magnet a splinter of metal from the anterior chambers of two patients.

I will merely add that my observations on the use of the magnetic needle, with cases illustrating its value, were put on record some years since.—Yours truly,
Sheffield, Oct. 1889. SIMEON SNELL.

MEDICAL AID ASSOCIATIONS AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—An attempt having been made here to start a branch of the National Medical Aid Company, and a Medical Aid Fund for the families of a Lodge of Oddfellows, a meeting of the medical men of this district was called to discuss the question, and, as a result, the following pledge has been signed by twenty-one out of twenty-three of those either in or retired from practice; one of the exceptions is a retired surgeon, the other a practitioner who has promised to sign it as soon as he is free from his medical refereeship, of which he has sent in his resignation to the National Medical Aid Company. Such societies have been so disastrous elsewhere to our profession, that we feel it necessary to make a stand against their establishment here. I subjoin a copy of the pledge, in order that our profession in other places may be encouraged and strengthened against such combinations against its welfare:—

“We, the undersigned members of the medical profession of Malvern and its neighbourhood, taking into consideration the fact that there are well-established provident dispensaries in our midst, pledge ourselves not to undertake the care of families of members of friendly societies at a contract rate of payment.”—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Malvern, Sept. 30th, 1889. STANLEY HAYNES, M.D.

NAPHTHALIN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Referring to the article on naphthalin in THE LANCET of last week, I should like briefly to draw attention to the great temporary value of this antiseptic in cases of infantile diarrhoea and fetid urine. Rickets—by far the greatest creator of infantile diseases, the neurosis maker, the slime producer on respiratory, colonic, and vesical mucous membrane, and the bone deformer—is the chief parent of stinking stools and foul urine. Naphthalin in cachets, containing two grains for each year of the age of the infant, and given twice or three times a day, will alleviate the path of recovery whilst the dietetic errors are being rectified. Naphthalin will not restore health to any mucous membrane flabby from rickets, but it will tend to do so, assisting in the process of recovery. A return from a rachitic constitution to a healthy one can never be brought about unless an attempt be made to increase vitality, whilst the metabolism is brought back to healthy modes of working by, in one word, a diabetic diet. The treatment of rickets, for one week at least, is the treatment of diabetes. A meat diet even without milk, persevered in for a few days, has caused slimy, worm-infested motions to disappear, bronchitis to subside, and nocturnal restlessness to be replaced by calm, refreshing sleep.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Oct. 1st, 1889. ANGEL MONEY.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE IN LONDON.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In view of the remarks made in the first paragraph of your leading article of last week, may I ask you to favour me by inserting in your next number a copy of a letter which I wrote to Mr. Ritchie when the Notification Bill was in Committee.

I have the honour to be your obedient servant,
EDWARD SEATON.

George-street, Hanover-square, Oct. 2nd, 1889. “August 4th, 1889.

“To the Right Hon. C. T. Ritchie, M.P., President of H.M. Local Government Board.

“SIR,—Having been one of the earliest advocates of the notification of infectious diseases to sanitary authorities, and having taken an active part in securing its adoption and its subsequent practical working, I may address you on the Bill which is now in Committee, and which will soon become an Act of Parliament. I understand that the London

County Council is promoting, or intending to promote, an amendment that notification should be made to them. If this proposal means that the County Council claims to be the first to be informed of the existence of infectious disease, I beg to remind you that, at present, that body has no executive duties with regard to those diseases; and that to make it in the first place the recipient of the information would be to the disadvantage of “the executive”—viz., the vestries and their medical officers of health, and consequently to the public. If the proposal means that the County Council desires to receive information periodically as well as the Metropolitan Asylums Board, then it would be easy for them to obtain that information from the Asylums Board, which, as the hospital providing authority for London, is part of “the executive” and has a well-recognised claim on medical officers of health. Information obtained from that Board or given by it once a week would be surely sufficient for any purposes the County Council may have in view. There is precedent for such a course in the case of your honourable Board’s medical department, which receives information once a week from the medical officers of health in the notification towns. I cannot think of any valid reason why the County Council should have earlier or more frequent information than that which is supplied to the medical department of your Board.

“I beg respectfully to submit my representation and argument to your consideration, and have the honour to be

“Your obedient servant,
“EDWARD SEATON.”

THE MAYBRICK CASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—If judges and juries could see through Dr. Kerr’s spectacles would-be poisoners would have a good time of it. When he says that the evidence on every point was very much stronger against Miss Smith than against Mrs. Maybrick, he surely forgets that on the first indictment against the former the verdict was “innocent.” I have spoken to many here on the subject of the Maybrick trial, and I have only met with one who did not consider the case “proven” against the prisoner. I leave Dr. Kerr to his own opinions, but believe I am justified in saying that his suggestion that a Scotch jury would have brought in a verdict of “not proven” in the Maybrick case is an imputation on the national intelligence which must be repudiated.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
Partick, Glasgow, Sept. 30th, 1889. R. KIRK, M.D.

* * The discussion of this subject must now cease.—ED. L.

BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Scarlet Fever in Birmingham.

AT present there seems to be no abatement in this epidemic. Seventeen new cases were reported on Monday last, as against eleven on the Monday preceding. Seven patients were discharged from the Borough Hospital and eight were admitted. The new wards have been rapidly built, and now afford increased accommodation for forty patients; the number in the hospital stands at 320, so that the additional space will enable the authorities to provide ample room for the purpose required. A letter has been addressed to the local press by the Chairman of the Health Committee, stating that the danger has been much exaggerated. He points out that the city at the present time is suffering from one of those recurring periods when scarlet fever reaches the height of its development, and that, owing to the improved sanitary condition of the town, and the steps taken for isolation and treatment of the patients; the visitations occur at much longer periods and made no appreciable addition to the death-rate. Thus, “during the decade 1870 to 1879 the number of deaths from scarlet fever in this city averaged 419.1 per annum, the numbers in the years 1874 and 1878, when the scarlet fever waves reached their highest points, being 737 and 995 respectively; while during the nine years 1880 to 1888 inclusive they only averaged 114.7 per annum, and up to Sept. 27th the number for this year has been but 87.” These facts are conclusive in themselves, and when it is added that most of the cases are of a mild type, it will be recognised that the causes for alarm are not so great as many people are inclined to believe. Among the hospital nurses all the infection has been of a light kind, and, with the exception of two, they are all convalescent. Mr. Eustace Hill, whose condition was at one time reported as dangerous, I am glad to learn is in a fair way of recovery.

Queen’s College.

The annual conversazione and distribution of prizes took place on the 1st inst., the Warden, the Rev. W. H. Poulton, presiding. It was stated that the total entry in the medical