

solicitor, why not also a doctor? Registration, I also say, should be compulsory; but will mere registration put down dishonourable practice from shady *registered and qualified* men? Never. Our only hope is, as I have before said, to act on their better feelings, and try to get them to respect themselves and their profession. I feel sure that upon consideration your correspondent will agree with me that it would be utterly hopeless to expect the Council to help us in doing things which we are clearly bound to do for ourselves. The question is, will an association such as is proposed help us or not? I say decidedly it will, if we can by association present ourselves a solid phalanx—I was almost going to say to the enemy—and stand shoulder to shoulder. Can it be doubted that we shall in time be able to check the canker in our midst, and once again restore ourselves to the position we once held? I totally repudiate all notion of trades unionism. I simply ask for the profession a fair equivalent for our work done to the public, and to put an end to the miserable Dutch-auction business that has arisen in our midst during the last fifteen years; and, in doing so, I am confident that if I am successful I shall be doing as much benefit to the general public as to my own profession. Finally, I ask, is action to be taken or not? I am ready to help, and to guide, if action is to be taken. I can admire your correspondent's patience, if I do not intend to practise it. Patience is the panacea for delay, he says. Very true; but it is weary waiting. We all, as school-boys, have read of the patient rustic, who, arriving at the unfordable stream, sat down "patiently" to wait till it had flowed by. Perhaps he still waits. And, as there are exceptions to every rule, and streams in the East do dry up sometimes, in time, may be, when the Council is got to take action, we all, with the happy rustic, shall pass over to the "promised land," and find compensation for our weary waiting. But when? I am afraid echo will sadly answer, When?

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

Feb. 4th, 1889.

J. H.

P.S.—I cannot reply to all your correspondents, but I should be very glad if as many as possible will put themselves in communication with me.

\* \* We have received so many letters on the above subject that we find it impossible to find space for even a tithe of them. The question is one which evidently excites widespread interest; but the correspondence elicited thus far does not serve clearly to elucidate the best means of securing a remedy for the evils complained of.—ED. L.

### RIGORS.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I have read Mr. Gilchrist Burnie's article on "Rigors: what they may indicate," in your issue for Jan. 26th, with much interest. In a paper published by me in 1881, entitled "Observations on Puerperal Temperatures,"<sup>1</sup> I wrote as follows: "A rigor is not simply an indication of the advent of the febrile condition; it demonstrates that perverted function has already taken internal possession; it is the signal of distress which the nervous system throws out on its being perturbed by the invading malady. That rigors are not always present, or, if so, unnoticed, is not singular. But it is, as usual, an experience to find, as naturally to be expected, that metric affections accompanied with much pain are signalled by a decided rigor. The recurrent rigors characteristic of pyæmic affections are to be regarded as indicating the attempts of the system to throw off the repeated doses of the poison by crises. The rigors which are not uncommonly an accompaniment of cases which are of purely mental causation are accounted for in the same way; they are manifestations of internal nervous irritation. In slowly invaded cases, where the disease is more gradual and insidious in development, the climax as shown by rigor is seldom reached. Possibly the nervous sensibilities are too much exhausted to resist the intruding evil after it has assumed such dimensions as to be of vital concern. In such cases the vitality has been previously undermined. In some terribly rapid cases of puerperal death there is no time for the exhibition of rigor; the system succumbs to the poison ere it has had time to

summon resistance. In many cases the rigor is so mild that it escapes notice, and in others I believe it is never present owing to individual peculiarity or to some of the preceding causes." The foregoing had special reference to the puerperal condition, but is pretty widely applicable. I am glad to find additional corroboration of my interpretation of rigors in Mr. Burnie's valuable clinical contribution.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

A. D. LEITH NAPIER, M.D.

Beaufort-gardens, S.W., Jan. 30th, 1889.

### MIDWIFERY FORCEPS.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—In Dr. Haslam's letter in THE LANCET of the 9th inst. concerning my forceps there are some remarks which are most misleading, and which call for an immediate reply from me.

Speaking of the handle of the upper blade, he says: "If flexed forwards (as in Mr. Blenkarne's) the thigh and calves of the patient would utterly prevent introduction." (!) Dr. Haslam must imagine the patient to be lying in a very peculiar position to have arrived at this remarkable conclusion, and his opinion is simply theoretical; whereas I have proved on several occasions by practical experience the extreme utility of my invention. Had I not done so, I should scarcely have taken the trouble to introduce my forceps to the notice of the profession. Then again, although this is a very "knowing" age, it is certainly news to me that a uterus can diagnose as to whether it is an upper or a lower blade that is introduced first, and repel the intrusion of a lower blade more than that of an upper one, the fact being that very often even a finger being introduced into the uterus will set up contraction of that organ. Lastly, in the "P.S." to Dr. Haslam's letter, he says: "The wood-cut is an inaccurate representation of my forceps." This is impossible and contrary to fact, as, to ensure there being no mistake, I had the upper blade of Dr. Haslam's forceps photographed, and it was from that photograph (of which I sent copies to yourselves) that Messrs. Coxeter and Son, the makers of Dr. Haslam's forceps as well as of my own, had the engraving taken. I will not trespass on your valuable space to enter into any minor matters, but remain

Yours faithfully,

Leicester, Feb. 9th, 1889.

W. L'HEUREUX BLENKARNE.

### CERTIFYING FACTORY SURGEONS.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I think it is quite time, seeing that employers of labour have had an interview with the Home Secretary, for the certifying surgeons to meet to consider their position, and, if thought desirable, to present their opinions to the Home Secretary. I submit that there is as much need now as there ever was for the office of the certifying surgeon for many reasons, which are obvious perhaps not so much for the purpose of filling up a certificate of age as for determining the fitness for work &c. I hope the surgeons holding these appointments will combine themselves into a society forthwith to discuss the whole bearings of the subject.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Accrington, Feb. 12th, 1889.

RICHARD CLAYTON.

### NORTHERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

#### *Newcastle Royal Infirmary.*

THE annual meeting of the Royal Infirmary has been held, and the report, on the whole, must be considered satisfactory. It is impossible in this place to refer to more than a few points of interest. The whole number of in-patients received into the Infirmary during the year has been 3175, being 175 more than were received during the year 1887. The average cost of each patient has been £3 12s. 2½d.; last year it was £3 12s. 7d. Not long ago the cost for several years was above £5 a patient; in 1887 it was £6 15s. 6d., nearly double the present amount. The number of deaths has been 194, giving a death-rate of 6·11;

<sup>1</sup> Transactions of the Edinburgh Obstetrical Society, vol. vi.