

times? It is perfectly impossible to permit matters to go on as they are. The discontented minority are not yet strong enough to eject those in power, but they are and have been strong enough to spoil the game at every turn, and they are determined enough to continue their efforts indefinitely. I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Birmingham, Aug. 7th, 1891.

LAWSON TAIT.

DISCUSSION UPON ANÆSTHETICS AT BOURNEMOUTH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—You will perhaps permit me to point out some inaccuracies in your report of the above. I was asked to open the discussion, which I accordingly did, taking up the clinical side of the question. The valuable communications of Dr. Lauder Brunton and Drs. Gaskell and Shore dealt wholly with the experimental as opposed to the clinical side of anæsthetics. I can only correct errors of commission in the report of my own remarks; those of omission, although seriously affecting the force of the thread of argument, are, I have no doubt, necessitated by want of space. I was speaking not from personal experience, but from published reports of dangers and difficulties under anæsthetics, and stated (1) persons in health died under chloroform, but in no case had a death, to my knowledge, occurred in a healthy person whilst under ether; (2) children and parturient women do die under chloroform. Comparing these statements with your report, you will see it represents me as having said the direct converse, and, further, with contradicting myself.

I am, Sirs, yours obediently,

Mortimer-st., W., Aug. 11th, 1891.

DUDLEY W. BUXTON.

ALCOHOL AND LONGEVITY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I did not intend troubling you with any further observations on this subject, since I have already stated in your columns, under a full sense of public responsibility, that your suggested explanation of the effect of the transfers upon the mortality of their respective sections was not well based. I made this declaration after having had the opportunity of yearly studying the inner working for over seventeen years, as well as after an exhaustive investigation into the mortality experience of the entire institution from its commencement down to a recent period. This being the case, I preferred to leave the question to the judgment of the medical profession; but as some of my friends are desirous that you should not be left under any misapprehension, any more than you would wish it yourselves, I ask you to allow me to add that, if you consider that the whole or any important number of those transferred from the abstaining to the general section have dropped by death, it will be sufficient to state that out of the 470 transfers from the abstaining to the general section, the mortality rate has been about .94 per cent. per annum; and out of the 725 transfers from the general to the abstaining section, the rate has been about 1.16 per cent. per annum.

There are further abundant grounds, the minutiae of which I will not intrude upon you; that justify me in repeating that the effect either way is barely noticeable, either statistically or financially.

I am not without hope that I shall enlist the support of a journal of the scientific standing of that of THE LANCET, and of that large body of the great profession of medicine of whose views it is the exponent, for a cause that has both public morals and the private well-being of the human race for its end. I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

RALPH P. HARDY.

Norfolk House, Victoria Embankment, W.C.,
Aug. 7th, 1891.

HUMAN OR ANIMAL LYMPH?

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have seldom read a more thoroughly practical description of the great differences between human and animal lymph, and one in which I entirely agree, than that contained in the annotation at page 305 of THE LANCET of Aug. 8th, 1891. The vaccinator who cannot withdraw vaccine lymph from a ripe, uninjured vesicle without in-

curing "the risks which arise from this puncture," in my humble opinion has a great deal to learn; and the vaccinator who does not scientifically use even the crust from a case of calf-lymph vaccination is, in my opinion, guilty of most reprehensible neglect in wasting valuable lymph. I use the word "scientifically" advisedly, for that method of scraping the eruption on the abdomen of a wretched calf and making it up into a kind of pomade is quite as unscientific as, though less successful than, the Hindu inoculator who pounds up the crusts with treacle and flour, and pastes it over an abraded surface at the base of the right thumb in males and the left in females! The vaccinator who applies clamps to the base of the eruption on the abdomen of a calf knows as little about vaccination practically as the one who, after he has taken all the lymph that flows spontaneously from a scientifically punctured vesicle, presses out with his fingers a *great quantity of serum and a very little true lymph*; while the vaccine dealer, who sells a little lymph in a tube for one shilling and a great deal in the same sized tube for one and sixpence, is as ignorant of the method of scientifically filling and closing tubes as the one who boils the lymph in sealing up the tube! Had Sheffield been vaccinated by arm-to-arm vaccination instead of so much vaccination from stored lymph, we should never have known of such an outbreak of small-pox, and the world never heard of such an attempt to bolster up a system of wholesale spurious vaccination, or rather irritation. The greatest enemy which vaccination has to contend against, and which is really the cause of the present Royal Commission on Vaccination, is the appalling ignorance of the subject from a purely practical point of view. Your space is valuable, so I will not ask for more of it, than to thank you again for the clearness with which a most important subject is placed before your numerous readers.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ROBT. PRINGLE, M.D. Edin.,

Blackheath, S.E., Aug. 1891. Brigade Surgeon, H.M. Bengal Army.

NORTHERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Newcastle Royal Infirmary.

THE question of rebuilding or removing the Royal Infirmary from its present site has been under consideration for some time, for in its present condition it is admitted on all hands to be inadequate to the demands made for accommodation, and, indeed, it is also behindhand as to modern requirements. The result of a late discussion made it very clear that the medical staff, while anxious for the enlargement and alteration of the building, did not wish it removed from its present site. So that upon the whole the erection of a new wing finds most favour with the governors, and a motion has been carried for a committee to report at an early meeting upon the best manner of attaining this object.

New Home for Incurables.

The committee of the Newcastle Corporation have reported that the plans of the proposed new home for incurables have been presented to the Charity Commissioners, who require alterations which will cost £500. The committee recommended that the increased expenditure, bringing the total cost for the home to £15,500, be agreed to.

Tyne Port Sanitary Authority.

The report of the work of the Tyne Port Sanitary Authority for June and July states that 2362 vessels had been visited. There had been twenty-nine cases of sickness on board ship. The report of Dr. H. Armstrong showed that several persons had been admitted to the floating hospital, and one had died from enteric fever.

Sunderland.

The ninety-second annual report of the Sunderland and Bishopwearmouth Infirmary states that the number of patients who received treatment during the past year was 4860, being an increase of 278 over the preceding year. The number of in-patients was 2159, an increase of 286, and the number of out-patients 2701, a decrease of 8, as compared with the previous year. Of the in-patients, 1257 were surgical cases (including 374 accidents of a serious nature), and 902 were medical cases. The total income