

due to Sir John Furley for his many useful and humane inventions I must beg of you, in fairness to my dear husband, to give this letter a place in the next issue of THE LANCET.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Guildford, Oct. 24th, 1899.

SARAH NAPPER.

CANCER IN WILD ANIMALS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reviewing my article on the Pathology of Cancer in Vol. XVII. of the "Twentieth Century Practice" reference is made to a statement therein that "in the animal world it is only the domesticated that are affected; in a state of nature these diseases are unknown." With regard to this the reviewer says: "This statement is hardly borne out by facts, for though malignant disease is rare in wild animals it is certainly found." In reply to this I beg to state that I have never met with a single instance of cancer in any wild animal in a state of nature, and I know of no duly authenticated case of the kind that has ever been recorded in the literature of the subject. It is, of course, well known that wild animals that have been kept long in confinement may be thus affected, but such cases are beside the question. Therefore, unless your reviewer is prepared to substitute his dictum by some kind of proof I must stigmatise his statement as erroneous and ask him to withdraw it.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Clifton, Oct. 21st, 1899.

W. ROGER WILLIAMS.

** In the passage which we quoted from Mr. Roger Williams's article the statement was made that only domesticated animals are affected with malignant diseases and it was to this statement that we took exception, but now Mr. Williams appears to claim that wild animals which have been kept in confinement are "domesticated." With this opinion we really cannot agree. In the *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology*, 1884, page 464, an account is given of a carcinoma in a python. May we presume that Mr. Williams considers this reptile to be a "domesticated" animal? When we consider how very few necropsies are made by scientific men on the bodies of *feræ nature* we need feel no surprise that very few cases of malignant disease in these animals have been recorded. It is therefore utterly unscientific to attempt to found any general rule on such scanty data.—
ED. L.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE PROFESSION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The article on "The Organisation of the Profession" in THE LANCET of Oct. 21st demands a short reply from me, as I am the honorary secretary of the Conference Committee of the Manchester Medical Guild. You make two suggestions with which I cannot agree, viz., that the Medical Guild should postpone its proposed conference until after the International Congress of Medical Ethics at Paris and that we are trying to compete with that congress. I may say at once that we have not the slightest intention of offering any competition or opposition of any kind, neither do I see how the holding of our proposed conference can be construed into competition. The question of representation at the International Congress will be considered at the quarterly meeting of the Medical Guild on Friday next and I feel sure delegates will be elected to attend. I shall bring the matter before our local medical society at Ashton-under-Lyne with perhaps a similar result. I feel confident, too, that the proposed conference, if it is held, will also elect delegates, so that it ought to be a source of strength to the International Congress and not of weakness. So patent is this fact that to my mind it constitutes a very good reason for our conference being held before, and not after, the International Congress, for the more thoroughly organised each section of the latter is, and the more efficiently each country is represented at it, the more successful it will be and the greater good it will do. The natural method of growth also is from national to international and not the reverse. Under these circumstances, therefore, I contend that if we can get a sufficient number of societies represented it will be the wisest course to act as we have already intimated and hold our conference next spring.

I trust we may still count upon the good offices of

THE LANCET. The articles that have appeared in it from time to time have given a great impetus to medical organisation and I fancy that in the near future they are about to bear fruit. There seems to be all over the country at the present time a greater activity in this direction than has ever been apparent before and I feel that we may look confidently for some efficient steps of one kind or another being taken at no distant date.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

S. CRAWSHAW, M.B. Vict.

Ashton-under-Lyne, Oct. 25th, 1899.

** We publish Dr. Crawshaw's letter with pleasure.—
ED. L.

PRACTICAL PATRIOTISM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I beg to suggest that the medical profession (always a patriotic body) should, to show their high appreciation of the brave fellows now fighting for the honour of their country, attend their wives and families free during their absence and on the return of the reservists to civil life that they also should be treated free.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Oct. 25th, 1899.

ROBT. HUGH HODGSON.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE PROFESSION.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.)

(Continued from p. 982.)

The Ashton-under-Lyne and District Medical Society.—The Youngest Practitioners successfully take the Initiative.—Elaborate Rules on Medical Etiquette.—Unanimous Support.—Proposed Congress of British Practitioners.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE is an important manufacturing centre close to Manchester with a population of about 80,000 inhabitants, belonging almost exclusively to the working classes and to the small trading class that caters for the working men and their families. The Ashton medical men therefore cannot expect to build up high-class practices. Their income depends largely on small fees and it is consequently more necessary than is usually the case that those who can pay such fees should not escape from this obligation. The working classes here, as in so many other industrial centres, have learnt to appreciate the advantage of organising trade unions to keep up the highest possible rate of wages and of distributive coöperative societies so as to secure the utmost purchasing power for the money earned. The spirit of organisation might also be directed to the organisation of medical aid in a manner that would unfairly reduce the incomes of the medical practitioners. The latter, therefore, felt that it was also necessary to defend themselves and that by the only effectual means available—namely, by organisation. As a rule the initiatory steps to form such an organisation are taken by leading members of the profession whose influence is likely to attract a large following. The very reverse was the case at Ashton. There was no medical society, or guild, or union, or medical and chirurgical society at Ashton, and the need of some such organisation was first felt by a few of the youngest members of the profession. They met and talked the matter over. Their ideas, at first vague, gradually began to take form and at length crystallised into a definitive project. One among them finally offered to convoke a general meeting of all the local practitioners and with the approval of his friends sent out circulars to this effect. The meeting took place in the mayor's parlour at the town-hall. 20 or more local practitioners attended and some came from the neighbouring districts of Stalybridge, Dukinfield, Denton, and Mossley. In these districts there are about 50 medical practitioners. The result of the first meeting was the adoption of a resolution in favour of the formation of a society to deal with economical and ethical questions affecting the interests and standing of the profession. A committee was forthwith appointed to prepare a project of rules and the practitioner who had sent out the circulars of invitation was elected honorary secretary of the society. All this preliminary