

in a town where most of the heads of families do not get 30s. a week.

"Practitioner's" remarks about the anæsthetic fee quite convince me that he resides in a part of the country where the inhabitants take a perfectly ideal view of the deserts of their medical attendants and he has done well not to declare where his home is, otherwise he might have had some of us who are less fortunately placed coming to take up our abode in his neighbourhood. Taken altogether I do not see that we could have adopted a scale much better adapted to our special circumstances. We do not put it forward as an ideal or recommend other societies to follow us in this matter. Our great object was to get union in the profession and in that we have succeeded beyond our greatest expectations, and it is in this respect that we should be glad to be an example to others.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

S. CRAWSHAW, M.B. Vict.

Ashton-under-Lyne, Nov. 11th, 1899.

### THE CONFERENCE ON MEDICAL POLITICS AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I shall be glad of a further opportunity of bringing the above before the notice of the readers of THE LANCET. A combined circular and agenda paper has been sent to every medical practitioner in Northumberland and Durham and also in Middlesbro', but one knows from experience that, take what precautions one may, somebody is sure to be missed. Any practitioner who has not received a circular will please consider this an invitation for Wednesday, Nov. 22nd, at the College of Medicine, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

This meeting will fulfil many useful purposes. It should bring together a large number of practitioners from all parts of the north. It will give many of us our first opportunity of meeting in the flesh Mr. Horsley, Mr. Brown, and Dr. Glover, our Direct Representatives. We shall hear an account of their work and their opinions on the medico-political questions of the day, and they will hear our views on these questions. From the exceedingly kind way in which all three gentlemen accepted the invitation I am sure they are looking forward to an opportunity for exchange of views which occurs but seldom. It will be a misfortune, nay, more, a disgrace, to the northern practitioners if a very large attendance does not assemble to greet our representatives.

Mr. Victor Horsley will speak on the constitution of the General Medical Council and its procedure and on the organisation of the profession by means of the British Medical Association. Mr. George Brown will address himself to the work of the Council in relation to medical reform, to reforms still needed in the constitution and functions of the Council. Also, he will touch on current topics such as contract work, the Conciliation Board, the Hunter case, and effete corporations. Dr. Glover's address will deal *inter alia* with the general work of the General Medical Council, its virtues and its defects; the Conciliation Board; and the unity of the profession and its effective organisation. These three speeches contain sufficient interesting material to occupy easily the whole of an evening, but the intention of the meeting being interchange of opinion these addresses will occupy only about half an hour each. The meeting will then be thrown open for questions and discussion on these and similar topics. Later the feeling of the meeting will be taken on the important question of illegal certification of midwives and others, and as opinion in the north is very strong on this point and the representatives themselves are not all of the same mind an interesting and useful discussion and division may be expected. Lastly, the question of the advisability of an increase in the number of Direct Representatives will be put to the meeting in the form of a resolution.

It will be absolutely necessary, if we are to get through this programme, that a start should be made at the hour fixed, viz., 6 P.M. This means the sacrifice of an evening on the part of those interested, which is not too much to ask when it is considered that Mr. Horsley, Mr. Brown, and Dr. Glover, all very busy men, are not only willing to sacrifice an evening, but two days, in order to be present. The Committee of Arrangement, on whose behalf I write, urges on the medical practitioners of the northern counties to look upon attendance at this conference as a duty owing not only to themselves but to the representatives who go in their

name to the General Medical Council, and who need and welcome all the moral support which they can get. For the benefit of practitioners coming from a distance I may mention that refreshments will be on sale in the College at reasonable prices.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ALFRED COX,

Honorary Secretary to the Arrangements Committee.  
Cotfield House, Gateshead, Nov. 13th, 1899.

### CHRISTMAS DINNERS FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The Corporation has again granted the use of the Guildhall for the annual banquet to the ragged school-children of London and the Prince of Wales has once more sent me a donation to, if I may quote the words of His Royal Highness, "the excellent fund which you are again kindly raising for providing dinners and hampers for the poor and crippled children of the metropolis at Christmas." Last year, after providing a banquet at Guildhall for about 1400 poor children, I was enabled to send 4324 hampers to deserving little cripples whose affliction very often keeps them prisoners in one-room homes from year's end to year's end. I trust that with the renewal of your valued sympathy and assistance we shall do better still this year by increasing the number of hampers to 5000. May I ask your readers to help me again this winter to brighten the lives of some of London's little cripples? Subscriptions should be sent to me here marked "Children's Fund."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

W. P. TRELOAR,

Ludgate-hill, E.C., November, 1899.

Alderman and Sheriff.

### THE MEDICAL AND SURGICAL CONSULTATIVE INSTITUTION OF BIRMINGHAM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Advertisements are appearing in the Glasgow daily papers at present, intimating vacancies on the medical staff of the "Medical and Surgical Consultative Institution, Birmingham."

Can you afford me any information regarding this "Institution"? My own inference is that it is a purely commercial enterprise paying fixed salaries to medical men and devoting the surplus to dividend, in which case the members of the staff, if not actually subject to penalty at the hands of the General Medical Council, cannot occupy an enviable professional position. I may, however, be mistaken, and will be glad to learn the nature of the undertaking and the status of the staff. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Nov. 15th, 1899.

CONSULTANT.

\* \* We cannot speak of the status of the staff for we do not know if the institution as yet possesses a staff. We have refused to insert the advertisement of these vacancies for reasons that will be found briefly stated in an annotation in our issue of Nov. 4th, p. 1245, entitled, "The Degradation of Consultation." Our correspondent is also referred to a leading article in THE LANCET of May 20th, 1899, p. 1374, with the same title.—ED. L.

### "VACCINATION OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In a leading article on the above subject in THE LANCET of Nov. 4th, p. 1311, you refer to an expression used by a correspondent of the *Times* that the Local Government Board had, "by a legal *tour de force*," given vaccination officers a position which they had not possessed previously, and you question the accuracy of the statement, but you omit the words by which it was qualified to the effect that this *volte-face* was one "which the public can scarcely be expected to understand, though it is the natural sequence of the legislation of last year." The statement finds its justification, so far as the reference to "the legislation of last year" is concerned, in a fact which the writer of your article has failed to appreciate—viz., that the instruction to the vaccination officer that he should not undertake legal