

at Rio de Janeiro, fifty of which have proved fatal. Assuming the reported outbreak of yellow fever to be true, it is, nevertheless, probable that the extent of the disease and the number of fatal cases that have occurred on board the *Lombardia* have been exaggerated, as we sincerely trust may prove to be the case.

A gratuity of five lakhs of rupees is, we are glad to say, being given to the troops engaged in the recent Chitral expedition. The unusually arduous character of their services and the discipline and spirit they displayed in the undertaking merit some special recognition. We sincerely trust that the admirable services of the native troops will not be forgotten.

Surgeon-Captain O'Callaghan, Adjutant of the Bearer Company which took part in the recent Ashanti expedition, was prostrated by fever when the troops evacuated Kumasi and was landed from the *Kabenda* at Las Palmas last Thursday suffering from dysentery, vomiting, and malarial cachexia. We are glad to learn that, though very weak, he is convalescing slowly.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

"THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL AND THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICES."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—My attention has just been called to some comments in THE LANCET of Feb. 8th on the few remarks I made at Netley. The fault, no doubt, is due to my indifferent speaking, but as I particularly alluded to the fact that it was now recognised the medical department were entitled to their full share of the money voted for the field training of troops, and commended the advance the department had made in the field work of their bearer companies, it is hardly fair to impute to me the design of creating an impression that the duties of the department were merely pathological and surgical. As for the rest I fear that I am unrepentant. I do not admit a distinction between the expressions "doctor," as I used it, and "member of the Army Medical Staff."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Bruton-street, W., Feb. 21st, 1896. REDVERS BULLER.

"THE REGISTRATION OF MIDWIVES."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—How far the "new woman" and the national tendencies of which that lady is the sign and symbol are to be held responsible for the strenuous efforts now being made to abrogate the Medical Acts, and to replace the time-honoured "Sairey Gamp" by a diplomatized and scientific type of midwife, it is difficult to say. The existence of such a tendency is, however, sufficiently demonstrated by the Midwives Registration Bills submitted to Parliament, to the General Medical Council, and to the branches of the British Medical Association, and while it is clearly the duty of the medical profession to safeguard and protect its legal rights and privileges, it may be a matter worthy of consideration whether there is at the bottom of the present midwifery agitation anything more substantial than a desire for the elevation and emancipation of the fair sex. The puerperal mortality, as shown by the Registrar-General's returns, which probably represent in this matter a good deal less than the truth, appears to be excessive. From 1871 to 1893 98,856 mothers died in England and Wales from puerperal fever and the accidents of childbirth, and in these days of antiseptic midwifery such a mortality must cause a good deal of searching of heart among state sanitarians. That a serious effort should be made to bring a little order out of the chaos at present prevailing on the midwifery question, and that the powers of the medical officer of health to deal with women engaged in nursing septic cases and with irregular and incompetent midwives should be largely increased, is, I think, a matter respecting which few members of our profession will be in doubt. With a view, therefore, of promoting these

objects and also preserving intact the hard-earned legal privileges of our profession I have drawn up the following.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Salford, Feb. 24th, 1896. WILLIAM FRASER, D.S.Sc. Victoria.

Suggested Outline of an Act for the Prevention of Puerperal Fever.

1. The Act shall apply to every sanitary authority in England and Wales.
2. The definition of puerperal fever shall be any septic condition occurring during the parturient period (thirty-one days from birth) and connected therewith.
3. Every medical practitioner, on becoming aware that he is attending a case of puerperal fever, shall forthwith certify the fact to the medical officer of health for the district. The medical officer of health may call for a second certificate from the practitioner in attendance as to the exact nature and progress of the case, and for each certificate the practitioner shall receive from the sanitary authority the sum of 2s. 6d.
4. Any practitioner failing to give such a certificate shall be liable upon summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £20.
5. Every medical officer of health shall upon the Act coming into operation prepare and keep a register of all women in *bond-fide* practice as midwives in his district, the said *bond-fide* practice to be certified by not less than thirty householders whom she has attended or by three registered medical practitioners residing or practising therein.
6. After the expiration of twelve months from the date of the Act coming into operation no midwife shall be placed upon the register of the medical officer of health unless she possesses a certificate in midwifery sanctioned by the General Medical Council, and no medical practitioner shall, after the expiration of the said twelve months, take any pupil midwife (except a registered medical student) or give to any person any certificate or diploma purporting to be a qualification to practise midwifery without the sanction of the General Medical Council.
7. The Local Government Board shall issue to every medical officer of health directions (which must be in accordance with the terms of this Act and its Appendix) as to the sanitary and other conditions the midwife must observe while nursing a case of labour. In every case where there are complications (a list should be added as an appendix) and where there is any rise in temperature above 100° F., or any post partum shivering (except immediately after labour), or any abdominal pain (not after-pains), or any suppression or offensiveness of the lochia, a registered medical practitioner shall forthwith be sent for.
8. Every medical officer of health shall annually send to every midwife upon his register a legibly printed copy of such instructions, and should any such midwife fail to carry out in her practice these instructions, the medical officer of health shall have power to prohibit her from attending lying-in women for any period not exceeding six months. In rural districts the midwife shall have the right of appeal to the medical officer of health for the county. Contravention of this section shall render the midwife liable to the penalties of a "prohibited person." Section 10.
9. Every medical officer of health shall make full enquiry into all deaths arising from sepsis in parturient women in his district.
10. Every medical officer of health shall have power to prohibit any midwife (not a medical practitioner) or other person engaged in nursing a case of puerperal fever from attending lying-in women for any period not exceeding two months. Any person contravening this section shall be liable, upon summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £20.
11. Every medical officer of health shall periodically inspect the premises in which the midwives upon his register reside, and should any midwife or other person habitually receive into their premises pregnant women, a register of the same, approved by the Local Government Board, shall be kept. The medical officer of health shall periodically inspect the said register and shall have power of entry into any premises of which the said midwife is the tenant or which may be used by a midwife or other person for the reception of pregnant women. This section shall not apply to public hospitals. Any person contravening this section shall be liable to the penalties of Section 10.
12. Every registered medical practitioner may report a midwife to the medical officer of health or to the examining board from which she obtained her certificate for any breach of the instructions issued by the medical officer of health, or of the conditions under which her certificate was granted, and the said board shall have power to either cancel the certificate or to prohibit the midwife from attending lying-in women for a definite period. For any contravention of this section the midwife shall be liable to the penalties attached to a "prohibited person." Section 10. This section shall not apply to medical practitioners.
13. Every registered midwife shall have the right to recover her charges for attendance as a midwifery nurse. This section shall not apply to registered medical practitioners.
14. Every medical officer of health shall have power to warn any unregistered person assuming the title of midwife or practising midwifery in his district to cease doing so if in his opinion such practice is dangerous to the lives of parturient women. Should the warning be disregarded the offender shall be liable to the penalties of Section 10.
15. Every medical practitioner upon being called to attend a case of still-birth shall forthwith certify the fact to the medical officer of health for the district, and shall receive for each such certificate the sum of 2s. 6d. from the sanitary authority. No person shall inter, or cause to be interred, or give authority for any uncertified stillborn child to be interred, without the written authority of the medical officer of health. Any person contravening this section shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £10.
16. Every sanitary authority shall pay to the medical officer of health for the duties connected with this Act any sum of not less than £2 and not more than £50 per annum.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The pathetic cry on behalf of midwives by a number of ladies, wives of members of Parliament and others, in the London newspapers some months ago seems to be lost sight of just now in the discussion on midwives' registration.