

method of analysis that he has adopted. If Dr. Rake has further opportunities of prosecuting his research I would suggest that he might adopt a method by which his results can be more accurately compared with those obtained from normal blood which he quotes. The particular points to which his attention should be directed are: (1) Soaking fibrin in water for some hours is not sufficient to free it from corpuscles (it is better to place it under a running stream of water, kneading it frequently in order that all parts of the coagulum are exposed to its action); (2) fibrin dried on blotting-paper cannot be accurately spoken of as dried fibrin—dried fibrin is fibrin which has been exposed in a hot-air oven at 110° C. for some hours until it loses no further weight from evaporation of water; (3) after this the mineral admixture has still to be deducted, this being ascertained by weighing the ash left after ignition.

I remain, Sirs, yours truly,

King's College, Jan. 9th, 1892.

W. D. HALLIBURTON.

THE ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I thank you for your notice of the claims of the Royal Medical Benevolent College at Epsom for professional and public support. Since speaking at the festival in 1890, I have been advised that if I can now collect £26,000, and can show a strong subscription list for the foundationers, in addition to a good, sound, successful school, I shall have but little difficulty in obtaining an amended Act of Parliament to secure the benefits we desire for our pensioners. In doing this great charity to the aged, we shall be doing an incalculable good to the school, to foundationers, as well as to the sons of medical men or other boys attracted to the College by the excellent education we offer.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

C. HOLMAN,

Reigate, Jan. 11th, 1892.

Treasurer to Epsom College.

SHAKESPEARE'S DEATH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With reference to the correspondence lately contributed to your columns respecting the cause of Shakespeare's death, let me be allowed to state that on two occasions on which I had occasion to witness the testament of soldiers affected with delirium tremens, or, as they themselves say, "delirium tremendous," both of whom, however, recovered, I was particularly struck with the resemblance of their signatures to that appended to the similar document of the great dramatist. I can see nothing disgraceful or unlikely in the fact that a retired poet, actor, and playwright in the age of James I., and much later, having died from a debauch, aggravated by the medical treatment in vogue down almost to our own times, and indeed not unusual within my own memory. Ben Jonson we know, from the testimony of Drummond, of Hawthornden, and other witnesses, to have been a habitual abuser of alcoholic stimulants. "Drink," says the above writer, "was the element in which he lived." And from other evidence, and even from his own doggerel, we know that Shakespeare, both in London and after his retirement to Stratford-on-Avon, had the reputation of being a boon companion. No doubt the disease may have been intensified not only by antiseptic medical treatment, but also by the malaria of an insanitary English village of the period. Marlowe's case is not dissimilar.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

R. LEWINS, M.D.,

Surgeon Lieutenant-Colonel.

Army and Navy Club, Pall Mall, Jan. 5th, 1892.

COMMUNICABILITY OF PHTHISIS FROM MAN TO LOWER ANIMALS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—A patient of mine, with a tubercular family history, died at the age of fourteen of acute tuberculosis. His two pets, a dog and a rabbit, which were often to be seen in his bedroom, and very frequently on his bed, died a short time afterwards of what appeared to be phthisis, a prominent symptom being a constant cough. A veterinary surgeon who examined the dog pronounced the cause of death to be consumption. From the facts stated I think it

might fairly be inferred that the disease was communicated from the patient to the dog and rabbit.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

J. ARMSTRONG, M.B. Edin.,

Late Senior Physician, Liverpool Infirmary for Children.
Liverpool, Jan. 12th, 1892.

REMOVAL OF THE GREAT TOE-NAIL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I am frequently called upon to remove the great toe-nail by surgical operation. Till within the last year or two I have followed the usual method by dividing the nail down the middle with a pair of scissors, and tearing away each half separately with forceps. Of late I have adopted another plan, which I venture to recommend as much better. Observing, as all must have done, the readiness with which a splinter of wood inserts itself beneath the nail, I take a piece of ordinary deal lath about four inches in length, pare one end thin, and adapt it to the size and shape of the particular nail. The thin edge, previously oiled, is passed rapidly beneath the nail down to its root and the hand raised, thus completely detaching the nail from its bed in about two seconds of time. The advantages claimed for this simple operation are threefold—its extreme ease of execution, its rapidity, and the very slight injury inflicted on the soft parts. I am justified in recommending its adoption by the approbation of others who have tried it.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

Benson, Oxon., Jan. 8th, 1892.

A. G. FIELD, F.R.C.S.

SMALL-POX AT DEWSBURY AND BATLEY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In an editorial note of last week's issue you comment severely on the inaction of the sanitary authorities in Dewsbury and Batley. I wish to put you right as far as Dewsbury is concerned. A corporation hospital for the reception of infectious disease was erected four years ago. All cases of small-pox occurring in this sanitary district, whether paupers or otherwise, are treated there. Your note anent the action of the guardians is not a whit too strong.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Dewsbury, Jan. 11th, 1892.

W. F. WATTS, M.O.H.

THE PREVENTION OF INFLUENZA.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The value of small doses of quinine as a prophylactic during outbreaks of influenza has been so marked in my hands, both in 1890 and at the present day, that I deem it worthy of extensive trial and trust that it will prove itself in other hands as reliable a means of prevention as it has done in mine. I prescribe a three-grain sulphate of quinine tabloid to be taken daily at breakfast, and to be continued until the epidemic disappears from the locality.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Canterbury, Jan. 6th, 1892.

H. BLANC, M.D., F.R.C.P.

THE EDINBURGH ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF REFORM IN MEDICAL EDUCATION.

(BY A CORRESPONDENT)

THIS Association has quite recently been called into existence by the fact that the draft ordinances in medicine issued by the Scottish Universities Commissioners are unsatisfactory and the reforms proposed by them inadequate. The Association consists mainly, but not entirely, of the younger men who are lecturing or teaching in the school, and also of graduates interested in the advancement of medical education; it also includes a few University assistants. Already the Edinburgh Colleges and the Association of Extra-mural Lecturers have presented statements to the commissioners which have in the main dealt rather with the relations of the intra-mural and extra-mural schools than with what might be regarded more purely as reform or advance in the methods of teaching and the curriculum of study. The members of the new Association are men who