

being possible to push the rudimentary femoral head to within half an inch of the anterior superior iliac spine. The right foot was in a position of marked talipes equino-varus, the left in that of severe calcaneo-valgus.

All these deformities were congenital, and yet in spite of their extent the child could walk about without assistance and had done so ever since the age of two years. The body-weight was transmitted to the ground through the outer border of the cuboid and anterior part of the os calcis in the right foot and the projecting head of the astragalus on the inner side of the left foot. The knees were held perfectly stiff, and the pelvis sank on the femora at each step, the characteristic waddle of congenital dislocation of the hip being extremely well marked; the abdomen was held prominently forward, and the shoulders thrown well back. On Aug. 17th the deformity of the feet was corrected by operation, Mr. Wright performing double astragalectomy. While the patient was under the anæsthetic forcible attempts were made to further flex the knees, but without avail.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ARTHUR H. BURGESS, M.Sc., M.B. Vict., M.R.C.S. Eng.,
House Surgeon, Manchester Children's Hospital, Pendlebury.
Sept. 27th, 1897.

INFECTION AND THE NOTIFICATION ACT.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Your annotation on "Infection and Parental Responsibility" in THE LANCET of Sept. 11th induces me to make a few remarks on a subject I have frequently ventilated and which has direct bearing on the above. Why do parents ignore the responsibility the above Act places on them? From many years' experience I have no hesitation in saying that it is not from ignorance, carelessness, or from a desire in all cases to even avoid the medical man's bill that they do not call in medical aid; but it is to avoid the loss of the wage-earning factors of the home that accompanies the consequence of notification.

The avoidance of the medical man's bill in mild cases is undoubtedly an inducement, but not in all, since a large number of juveniles of the artisan and other classes belong to clubs, and there would be no reason for not claiming the services of the medical officer which they were entitled to, particularly when in my experience a child aged six years drew 6s. a week when under the medical officer's care. The fact is that in most families of this class the elder children bring in several shillings a week by doing odd jobs out of school hours—boot-cleaning, butcher's errand boys; and, in fact, in many cases are employed to take out the medical officer's medicines. The mother, too, goes charring or takes in washing, and all these sources of income are cut off the moment the medical officer appears and notifies. Further, the husband, perhaps a baker or a milkman, must either give up work or leave his house for some weeks in cases of some diseases. If these restrictions were not enforced the Act would be useless. I confess I have ever found parents willing to carry out advice and instructions, but they have clearly stated the grievance they considered they had. And I must say, on looking over a record of some years, I find that since the Act was adopted in the majority of scarlet fever cases I was only called in to the more serious at the commencement, and in most when some sequelæ of the disease were manifest, the usual being nephritis and dropsy. Then all came out, with such remarks as, "Yes, the child did complain of sore-throat, was sick, and the neighbour's children are ill, but I never saw any rash, and did not think it could be scarlet fever. I have seen no peeling," &c. In some cases even when pointing out that the latter symptom was present in addition to the nephritis which had alarmed them they would not believe the child had the fever. I believe this experience will be found to be not uncommon. But I have constantly, realising the hardship to the poor in such cases, asked if it could not be remedied.

Section 9 of the Notification Act says: "Any expense incurred by a local authority in the execution of this Act shall be paid as part of the expenses of such authority in the execution of the Acts relating to Public Health, and in the case of rural authorities shall be general expenses." The Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, Section 20, provides for any expense incurred, including reasonable remuneration of any veterinary surgeon employed under Section 4, and as "part of the expenses of such authority," &c. (same as above), and Section 6 provides for the free disinfection of

bedding, &c., at the expense of the authorities, as also for *compensation* to the owner when damage (loss) is sustained.

Now, Sirs, why should not the poor be compensated for in many cases the serious loss they suffer in carrying out the necessary isolation of the whole family? I feel sure that the only way to reap the full benefit of these Acts is to do so, and I have no hesitation in saying that if it were done parents would be as willing to help medical men, instead of as now thwarting them, in stamping out these infectious diseases as we are ourselves. Moreover, penalties for infringement of the Act could be rigidly inflicted, as all sentimental grounds for leniency would be removed by knowing that the parent suffered no loss from carrying out the Act. Under the head of "general expenses" and "as part of the expenses of such authority in the execution of the Acts relating to public health" I submit that local authorities have the requisite power to make good the few shillings' loss sustained by the enforced idleness of the mother and healthy children. "The execution of the Acts" surely means the *efficient* execution, and if, as I assert, the efficient working of the Act can only be obtained by removing all cause for concealing facts on the part of the public by making good the loss, it is a rightful and legal charge as the "general expenses."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ELLIOT DAUNT, M.R.C.S. Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond., D.P.H.
Sept. 20th, 1897.

"IMMORALITY AMONG SCHOOL BOYS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Hime's article in THE LANCET of Sept. 4th is necessarily helpful. The question of immorality amongst boys is one which requires bold yet careful handling. It is a matter, as he points out, that must be attacked alike by the medical man, the parent, and the schoolmaster. Dr. Hime, I take it, is thinking simply of masturbation. Everything that he advocates for the suppression of the evil is excellent, nothing, perhaps, that he says being of such importance as the insistence of all boys entering thoroughly into the school games and sports. He says nothing about diet. The principal meals should be breakfast and midday dinner. Eggs and so forth may also be allowed for tea, but supper should be quite a light meal, a glass of milk or cocoa with bread and butter or biscuits being quite sufficient. No healthy boy requires alcohol, but when it is allowed it should be consumed only at the midday meal. Masturbation is looked upon as "a solitary vice." It is not always so; the worst examples of it are those where boys openly masturbate themselves before their fellows, or even stimulate the passions of others by, so to speak, masturbating their comrades. Undoubtedly these are the boys that do the greatest amount of harm, and who deserve the severest form of punishment for their misdeeds. Perhaps I am trespassing too much upon the schoolmaster's domain when I suggest that even these boys should not be expelled offhand. They would undoubtedly deserve a sound thrashing, and the reasons for which they have been punished should be known throughout the school. Any head-master would, I am sure, follow the punishment with kind but severely applied advice.

I have had, of course, to talk to boys upon this subject, and I never fail to try to impress them with the "beastliness" of the habit. I tell them that we kick a dog if we catch him doing the same thing—kick him and call him a dirty brute. Solitary masturbation needs a more kindly way of treatment. Here, at least, the boy has some conscience; he is ashamed of what he is doing and does it on the sly, and very frequently is quite unaware of the harm that he is doing to himself. That this particular form of the vice requires kind as well as firm treatment is evidenced by such facts as these—that I have spoken with schoolmasters and athletes of large repute, who have owned to me that in their younger days they had yielded to the temptation. Warned in time, however, they gave up the habit. It should ever be borne in mind when dealing out punishment for this offence that, after all, the offenders are only gratifying one of the strongest impulses of nature at an age when natural desire powerfully asserts itself. Boys, we must also remember, are not the only offenders; girls, men, and women are by no means always saints in this respect. Yet, remembering all this, and weighing well the strength of passion and the weakness of poor humanity, the offence has to be controlled, nay, has to be prevented. A repetition of open beastliness after due punishment and warning can only be further dealt with