

THE CORONERSHIP OF CENTRAL MIDDLESEX.

WE regret to have to record the death of Dr. Hardwicke, coroner for Central Middlesex. While in the active performance of his duties last week, he was seized with an attack of apoplexy, and, notwithstanding the attention of his deputy, Dr. Danford Thomas, and of Dr. Buzzard, he died in a few hours.

Dr. Hardwicke has passed through a laborious and useful career, in which he had from the first shown a strong sense of public duty, and an earnest desire to help forward sanitary, social, and medical reforms. As a private practitioner, as a medical officer of health, and as coroner, his sympathies and his work had never been narrowed to the mere limits of his private or official duties, but had always extended to a wide sphere of humanitarian activity. He was assiduous in work at the Public Health Section of the Social Science Association, and never at any time ceased to show his interest in the public health, and in measures of social progress. Without possessing the high order of abilities of his eminent predecessors in office, Mr. Wakley and Dr. Lankester, he was, from the outset of his career, a man of some mark, and of excellent endeavour. His conduct as coroner, if it did not always escape criticism, was plainly dictated by humane predilections in favour of the prisoner, the pauper, and the distressed and the sick; and he showed no little courage, not always tempered, perhaps, with unquestionable discretion, in the performance of the duties of his office, without fear or favour. Thus far he maintained the traditions of his office, which has now been filled for three generations by medical men, who have always preferred the public interests to the smiles of other officials. It is much to be hoped that this will always be the guiding principle of the coroners of Middlesex. The candidates now in the field are Dr. Danford Thomas, Dr. Hardwicke's deputy; Dr. Diplock, Coroner for West Middlesex; and two legal candidates, the Messrs. Bolton. Our sympathies are necessarily with the medical candidates.

Mr. Ernest Hart was for twenty-four hours announced as a candidate. The following address, which he has to-day issued, explains the reasons which have induced him—although assured by the most influential and competent persons that his election was a foregone conclusion, and might, with little effort, be placed beyond a doubt—finally to decline to undertake so serious an addition to labours and responsibilities already far from slight. Mr. Hart's address is as follows.

"Yielding to friendly solicitation, and with the assurance of extensive support from the most influential members of my own and the other learned professions, and of both political parties, I consented to become a candidate for the office of coroner. On close review of the amount of time which the duties of the office would occupy, I find that it would be incompatible with my journalistic engagements, and with much of my public and social work. These I am not prepared to surrender, and therefore withdraw from the candidature. I have to offer warm thanks to the very numerous friends who have at once and spontaneously offered me their cordial assistance in the canvass, and to express my regret if I have caused inconvenience to anyone."

MR. DARWIN ON VIVISECTION.

THE following letter has been addressed by Mr. Charles Darwin to Professor Holmgren, of Upsala, in answer to a request for an expression of his opinion on the question of the right to make experiments on living animals for scientific purposes—a question which is now being much discussed in Sweden.

"Dear Sir,—In answer to your courteous letter of April 7th, I have no objection to express my opinion with respect to the right of experimenting on living animals. I use the latter expression as more correct and comprehensive than that of vivisection. You are at liberty to make any use of this letter which you may think fit, but if published I should wish the whole to appear. I have all my life been a strong advocate for humanity to animals, and have done what I could in my writing to enforce this duty. Several years ago, when the agitation against physiologists commenced in England, it was asserted that inhumanity was here practised and useless suffering caused to animals; and I was led to think that it might be advisable to have an Act of Parliament on the subject. I then took an active part in trying to get a Bill passed, such as would have removed all just cause of complaint, and at the same time have left physiologists free to pursue their researches—a Bill very different from the Act which has since been passed. It is right to admit that the investigation of the matter by a Royal Commission proved that the accusations made against our English physiologists were false. From all that I have heard, however, I fear that in some parts of Europe little regard is paid to the sufferings of animals, and if this be the case I should be glad to hear of legislation against inhumanity in any such country. On

the other hand, I know that physiology cannot possibly progress except by means of experiments on living animals, and I feel the deepest conviction that he who retards the progress of physiology commits a crime against mankind. Any one who remembers, as I can, the state of this science half a century ago must admit that it has made immense progress and it is now progressing at an ever-increasing rate.

"What improvements in medical practice may be directly attributed to physiological research is a question which can be properly discussed only by those physiologists and medical practitioners who have studied the history of their subjects; but, as far as I can learn, the benefits are already great. However this may be, no one, unless he is grossly ignorant of what science has done for mankind, can entertain any doubt of the incalculable benefits which will hereafter be derived from physiology, not only by man, but by the lower animals. Look, for instance, at Pasteur's results in modifying the germs of the most malignant diseases from which, as it so happens, animals will in the first place receive more relief than man. Let it be remembered how many lives and what a fearful amount of suffering have been saved by the knowledge gained of parasitic worms through the experiments of Virchow and others on living animals. In the future, everyone will be astonished at the ingratitude shown, at least in England, to these benefactors of mankind. As for myself, permit me to assure you that I honour, and shall always honour, every one who advances the noble science of physiology.—Dear sir, yours faithfully, CHARLES DARWIN.—To Professor Holmgren."

THE WAR IN THE TRANSVAAL.

A CORRESPONDENT has sent us the following information, under date of February 25th.

The medical arrangements for the campaign are as follows: Principal Medical Officer of the Forces, Deputy Surgeon-General Holloway, C.B.; Principal Medical Officer of Lines of Communication, Brigade-Surgeon Sinclair; Senior Medical Officer of the Field Force, Surgeon-Major S. B. Rowe; Senior Medical Officer of Colley's Division, Surgeon-Major J. A. Scott; Senior Medical Officer of Wood's Column, Surgeon-Major P. W. Stafford; Sanitary Officer of the Force, Surgeon-Major C. H. Giraud. There will be two field hospitals in each column; in charge of No. 1 Field Hospital, Colley's Division, Surgeon-Major Babington; in charge of No. 2, Surgeon-Major W. Keir; in charge of No. 1 Field Hospital, Wood's Column, Surgeon-Major W. P. Smith; in charge of No. 2, Surgeon-Major Barker. Newcastle, in Natal, 170 miles north of Maritzburg, is the base; and here the base hospital will be in charge of Surgeon-Major Stokes. Two rest houses for convalescents of sick will be placed intermediately between Newcastle and Maritzburg, each in charge of a medical officer. The station hospital at Maritzburg, in charge of Surgeon-Major Elgers, will receive all sick and wounded sent down from Newcastle. There are, at present, at the last-mentioned place, over one hundred wounded men. Several operations have been performed. The medical officers at present at Newcastle in charge of the wounded are Surgeons-Major Stokes and Babington, Surgeons McGann, Ring, and Drury.

March 3d.—I mentioned, in my last letter, the disposition of the medical officers intended for duty with the two columns of the Field Force; but the disaster which occurred on the 27th ult. at the Amajuba Mountain, and the death of Sir George Colley, may alter the arrangements already made. The last engagement adds 8 officers and 123 men to the previous number wounded—about 190 men and 6 officers—or a total of 14 officers and 320 men, 130 of whom are at Mount Prospect camp, about sixteen miles in advance of the Newcastle camp on the Pretoria road, and the remainder are here in the base hospital, which consists of twelve huts, supplemented by marquees as required. You will have received full accounts of all three disasters, and of the numbers of killed and missing in each. At the last reverse, Sir George Colley, Captain Maude, 58th Regiment, and Surgeon-Major Cornish, were killed, and Surgeon Landon died from his wounds the following evening. Both medical officers were shot through the chest. Captain Morris, 58th Regiment, was shot through the shoulder, but the lung was not involved; Lieutenant Hill, 58th Regiment, obliquely through the right forearm; and Lieutenant Lucy, also 58th Regiment, through the left thigh, without injury in either case to the bones. Captain Romilly, of H.M.S. *Boddica*, was shot in the stomach. The other officers are returned as slightly wounded, and are doing favourably. A few of the wounded at the fight of the Amajuba Hill struggled off the field towards the camp on the evening of the fatal day, but succeeded only in reaching the farmhouse of a man named O'Neill, midway between the camp and Amajuba, and there the night was spent. The majority, however, remained all night on the field, and were only recovered next day by the ambulance party with Surgeon-Major Babington. To give some idea of the rugged nature of the