

Oct. 16th, 1896, which the superintendent kindly sent to me on this very question?

My stay upon the Medical Council may be long or it may be short. But if Mr. Bryant thinks for one moment that I deliberately concoct statements to wilfully mislead the Medical Council or that I am going to accept his suggestion of "apologising" to the Council because I have been "guilty" of making a statement true in word and fact, then all I can say is that he has not taken my measure with accuracy.

If Mr. Bryant will refer to page 2 of the above annual report he will find that not only are *out-patients* treated for threepence per week, but that *in-patients* are treated for from 1 to 3 guineas per week. Practitioners would be also edified if, in his reply, he would state the maximum and minimum fees charged by the Practitioners connected with Guy's *in pay patients*, above or exclusive of the 1 or 3 guineas per week. If he will further refer to the Report of the House of Lords on "Metropolitan hospitals," 1892, p. 10, he will find further documentary reference to the sales of charity at Guy's.

Awaiting his reply,

I am, yours obediently,

ROBERT R. RENTOUL.

THE NEED OF ORGANISATION IN THE PROFESSION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have received a pamphlet entitled "The Just Claims of the Provident Dispensary System" by the secretary of the Provident Medical Association,¹ and have no doubt but that most other London medical men have had copies sent to them. The pamphlet emphasises strongly the necessity for organisation amongst medical men, and as this formed the subject of a paper I had the honour of reading before the Hunterian Society in 1895² I venture to send you a few observations on the pamphlet in question. In many of his remarks, as contained in the pamphlet in question, I agree very cordially with the writer, but I disagree with him *in toto* as to the result he arrives at in respect to the fees to be received by medical men attached to provident dispensaries—one of the crucial points.

I must premise that I am able to state on the strength of the observations of a patient of mine—observations covering fifty years' work in a leading builder's office—that wages have increased within the period I have mentioned some 80 per cent., that about 80 per cent. less work is done, and that the work on the whole is inferior to what it used to be, and that, as we all know, there is a marked tendency amongst this class in the direction of undervaluing (from a monetary point of view) the services of medical men.

It is fairly certain that the expenses of living have not increased in the same proportion as wages. Per contra, a medical man cannot, I think, live on less than £400 per annum, with an additional £200 for his trap. If he be properly paid his income, therefore, should amount to at least £600 per annum. The author of the pamphlet evidently considers that "between 4½*d.* and 6*d.* per attendance, whether at the dispensary, the doctor's surgery, or at the patient's house," is a fair remuneration. In order to earn an income of £600 24,000 patients per annum would have to be seen, or at the rate of about 66 per diem all the year round at 6*d.* each. If he does confinements the additional income so earned will probably allow him to have his Sundays free, but would not pay for holidays. In order to be able to earn this, starting at a far less income at age twenty-three or so, he has to lay down capital and to devote five years to acquiring his professional knowledge.

Does it not emphasise the necessity for organisation amongst us when we are assured by one who ought to know about it that such are the conditions under which we should expect to live? The reasons adduced are want of medical union and competition with "charitable" organisations, and not because we know less than we did or do our work less satisfactorily.

Into the fallacies respecting the declarations made by candidates for membership respecting their incomes, the amount of responsibility attaching itself to medical officers

of provident dispensaries as to the admission of well-to-do persons into the dispensary—in respect to both of which I think he takes a totally wrong view—I will not enter. I feel that the challenge thrown down should not be allowed to remain unanswered, especially since the author states that "the interests of the general medical practitioner have been placed (in the 'Battle of Clubs') somewhat in opposition to the various means by which medical advice is being obtained." It would appear that it is time they were.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

ROWLAND HUMPHREYS.

Fellows-road, South Hampstead, N.W., June 7th, 1897.

THE SUPPLY OF TETANUS ANTITOXIN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I notice with some interest a case of traumatic tetanus treated successfully by antitoxin reported in THE LANCET of June 5th by Dr. Chalmers. Curiously enough, this case and a similar one, of which the notes were published in THE LANCET of April 10th, 1897, occurred in June of last year. In sending up those notes I drew attention to the difficulty of obtaining a supply of antitoxin, and Dr. Chalmers has further emphasised this fact. I wish to point out that so long as the only places at which the antitoxins can be obtained are either Messrs. Allen and Hanburys, Messrs. Burroughs and Wellcome, or other chemists in London, if the want arises on a Saturday after those firms have closed their places of business a delay of forty-eight hours is at present unavoidable. That forty-eight hours may mean a matter of life and death in some cases is indisputable. Surely it is time that a supply of the various antitoxins should be kept by the Public Health Departments in the various large towns throughout the kingdom, so that when required they should be easily obtainable at short notice.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Brighton, June 7th, 1897. ARTHUR H. BUCK, F.R.C.S.

MESCAL INTOXICATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In my note on the above subject in THE LANCET of June 5th I neglected to mention that I obtained the buttons through Messrs. Potter and Clarke, 60, Artillery-lane, E., who are able to supply them in small quantities.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

Carbis Water, Lelant, Cornwall, June 9th, 1896.

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Your suggestion regarding the publication of an official programme of the proceedings on the 22nd inst., by which all, even the poorest, of Her Majesty's subjects witnessing the spectacle should be able to identify the various bodies—the troops, colonial corps, and detachments—representing the colonies and dependencies of the British Empire, strikes me as a very wise and excellent idea. The occasion is altogether unique, and the opportunity should not be lost for enabling everybody to realise the geographical extent of the various territories within the sphere of British influence and under the British flag. It would obviously add immensely to the interest of the occasion if those taking part in the procession could be readily identified by the crowds of spectators as the panorama of living pictures passed along. What is wanted is that the power and responsibility of this country, the interdependence of Great and Greater Britain, and all that this implies in the way of the ties—social, commercial, and sympathetic—uniting them with one another, of which the Queen, as the head of the Empire, is the symbol, emblem, and token, should be brought home and impressed upon the imagination of the people. The official guide should be of small and handy size so that its pages could be easily turned over and referred to, and it might also be sufficiently illustrated to fulfil its purpose. It should not cost more than a penny or a halfpenny. It would sell in thousands—possibly millions—and realise a large profit, and the surplus, after the payment

¹ A paper read at a special meeting of the Council of the Charity Organisation Society on Jan. 4th, 1897.

² Medical Magazine, June, 1895.