I do not need Mr. Bayly's invitation to collaborate with those who will keep to the truth and avoid the ridiculous and lurid which has disfigured some aspects of a probably beneficial antiveneral campaign. I am, etc,

London, W., Sept. 20th.

CHARLES RUSSELL.

POLICE SURGEONS' FEES.

Sir,—As a divisional police surgeon of the county of Wiltshire, I write to say that I heartily agree with Dr. Wilbers Green in his remarks on police surgeons' fees (September 11th, p. 413).

The scale of fees for police surgeons of this county was drawn up as far back as 1896, and although the police have received a considerable increase in pay, the fees for their medical officers have not been revised except in the case of payment for examination of recruits. This examination has naturally to be a searching one, and takes considerable time; yet the fee paid was only 2s. 6d. On application to the committee for an increase it was raised to 5s. a head. Surely in these days it is still inadequate. The application for a revision of the other fees which were fixed in 1896 was not acceded to.

It is to be hoped the British Medical Association will take the whole matter up. I am, etc.

R. STEELE.

DOSEMETRIC CHLOROFORM.

Sir,—Dr. Fairlie's article on a simple method of continuing ether administration with the Vernon Hettner inhaler (BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, September 18th, p. 438) is of interest as advocating the more extensive employment of dosimetric chloroform anaesthesia. Excluding cases of sepsis, where the danger of acidosis precludes the use, chloroform still occupies a valuable place, and its dangers can be, as he remarks, discounted by the employment of a percentage inhaler. Personally, I prefer the one I described in the Lancet of April 1st, 1916, as with it there is always an excess of air, rebreathing is impossible, and in addition it is without valves and cannot get out of order. Ether can be substituted after the induction with chloroform by merely pouring in ether to replace the chloroform. With percentage methods I feel that the anaesthetist's motto can indeed be, "Adiemt tham saxo omne metum, in aurum uranum et dies dormia."

Many who swear by the drop method have learnt that to laugh at danger means that it comes all the sooner.

Chloroform is by no means disagreeable to take; it is powerful, so that any degree of anaesthesia and relaxation can be produced, and the after-effects are usually slight. Having recently had four doses of my own "smoke," and being free occasions, I can honestly as a patient testify to the unpleasant after-results. Personally, I know I fainted for a week after; hence my hope that the present disregard of chloroform may lessen and that its employment in suitable cases will again become popular. Anaesthetists should remember that ether is not the only substance to produce sleep. Voltaire, I think, remarks: "Je suis assez semblable aux girouettes, qui ne se font que quand elles sont roulées." The absurd man is he who never changes. I am, etc.

London, Sept. 15th.

T. W. HIESCH.

PRICE OF PETROL ON THE CONTINENT.

Sir,—In his article in the JOURNAL OF SEPTEMBER 18th (page 441) Mr. Massac Buist writes that "in France something over 12s. a gallon is paid for petrol." I think he has been misinformed, or possibly he has mistaken shillings for francs. During a recent tour in France I found that the price of petrol varied from Fr. 12.50 on the quay at Antibes to Fr. 13.50 at Lille. The French bidon contains 5 litres, which is nearly 8.75 gallons, so that the price was a little less than 12½ to 13½ francs per gallon. This is a heavy increase of price for the French to pay, as before the war we could buy 

ence three round about 2 francs for a gallon. But it is a small amount compared to the British tourist; at present he is paying 5s. 3½d. a gallon in England, and the 12½ francs he has to pay in France is, at the present rate of exchange, less than five shillings.

I cannot, therefore, understand why Mr. Buist is satisfied that vendors of motor fuel "would be much in pocket if they ceased selling motor fuel in this country and disposed of all they could secure in markets overseas." I would rather suspect the vendors of being as commercially minded as any other group, and particularly from what a visit to France has taught me, in regard to dealers in motor tyres at home. I bought a tyre in devastated Arras for £3 (at the current rate of exchange) of exactly the same size and make for which I had paid £13 in London. The inner tube for it costs £2 1s. 9d. at home and can be bought in France for £1 6s. I can produce the English and French lists of the same products at the same dates, but shoeing my car in France I can save over £20. The difference of £5 on the price of a single tyre seems difficult to explain, and it certainly suggests some profiteering in this country. I am, etc.

September 22nd.

STCLAIR THOMSON.


We announced last week, with deep regret, the sudden and unexpected death at Knocke, on the Belgian coast, of Sir William Babtie, on September 11th. He was found lying dead in an armchair in his room at the hotel where he had been staying for some time with Lady Babtie and his daughter. The body was brought to London and an inquest was held on September 16th. The coroner, who found that death was due to natural causes. William Babtie was the eldest son of the late John Babtie, ex-provost and J.P. of Dombarton, and was born on September 7th, 1859. He studied at the University of Glasgow, and in 1880 graduated M.B. and obtained the L.R.C.P. and S.Edin. diplomas. In the following year he entered the Army Medical Service as surgeon-lieutenant, and in 1899 was appointed to the rank of surgeon-general after thirty years' service. He was senior medical officer in the island of Crete in 1897, and for his services during the troubles there was awarded the C.M.G. During the South African war he served as staff officer to the principal medical officer with the Natal army; he was present at the actions leading up to the relief of Ladysmith and the subsequent operations in Natal and the Eastern Transvaal.

Babtie won the V.C. at the battle of Colenso on December 15th, 1899, for his conspicuous bravery in attending wounded under heavy fire and in attempting to save Lord Roberts, who was lying mortally wounded. The official record in the London Gazette of April 20th, 1900, ran as follows:

"The wounded of the 14th and 66th Batteries, Royal Field Artillery, were shot, and I rushed to where the guns were, without any medical officer to attend to them; and when a message was sent back asking for assistance, Major W. Babtie, R.A.M.C., rode up under a heavy rifle fire, his pony being hit three times. When he arrived at the guns, where the wounded were lying in sheltered corners, he attended to them all, going from place to place exposed to the heavy rifle fire which greased anyone who showed himself. Later on in the day Major Babtie went out with Captain Congreve to bring in Lieutenant Roberts, who was lying mortally wounded on the veldt (after a gallant attempt to save the guns). This was also under a heavy fire."

A graphic account of how Babtie won the Victoria Cross was contributed to our columns by Sir Frederick Treves on April 28th, 1900, p. 1949. Apart from this gally act Babtie's services in the South African war were recognized by mention in dispatches and promotion to lieutenant-colonel, and he received the Queen's medal, with five clasps. In the years that followed he held the appointments of Assistant Director-General A.M.S. at the War Office from 1901 to 1906, Inspector of Medical Services 1907-10, Deputy Director-General A.M.S. 1910-14. In March, 1914, he was appointed Director-General at Melbourne, which regarded him, as D.M.S. India, as partly responsible for the breakdown of medical arrangements in the operations for the relief of Kut: "He was considered of sufficient importance to be