before addressing his communication to your columns on the 16th ult. had awaited our explanation in answer to the letter which he wrote to us on the same day.

We are, Sirs, your obedient servants,
KUTNOW BROTHERS, Limited.
(FRANK W. JOWETT, Secretary.)

Farrington-road, London, E.C., Oct. 1st, 1902.

THE MANCHESTER MEETING OF THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have only just noticed the report of the Ethical Section of the British Medical Association at the annual meeting in THE LANCET for August 9th, p. 391, in which I am reported to have characterised "club practice as immoral, because it led to the neglect of surgical and important cases which the club medical officer passed on to the hospital." What I said was that club practice to any large extent led to a moral and mental degeneration of the doctor and an absolute loss of dignity. I defy any man with a large club practice to maintain the moral standard and standard of efficiency in his work with which he started his career. Everything that can be shunted on to the hospitals is got rid of at the earliest opportunity to save trouble. Methodical habits go to the wall and the man becomes a mere prescribing chemist whose object is to do as little work as he can without offending the members of the lodge or slate club, in order to earn this settled quarterly payment." How delightfully dignified is the position, after having had some petty quarrel with a club member, of being summoned before the lodge meeting to answer for your conduct and to be haled (unless you want to lose the post) into the smoke reeking bar-parlour of a fourth-rate pothouse and there to be heckled by the half-drunken denizens of the Pig and Whistle. Your reporting of the Ethical Section left much to be desired and I must protest against the utter balderdash with which you have labeled me.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Acerington.

ELWIN H. T. NASH.

* * We print the above letter because it confirms what our Special Commissioner has so often stated in regard to the degrading effects of club practice and the tendency to send to the hospital cases that could be treated by private practitioners which results therefrom. In regard to our report of his speech at the meeting of the Ethical Section, which Mr. Nash politely qualifies as balderdash, his version shows that the summary given of his remarks was much the same as his own. We said that he "qualified club practice as immoral, because it led to the neglect of surgical and important cases which the club medical officer passed on to the hospital," and we still claim that this is as complete a summary of his speech and of the above letter as can well be given in a single sentence. Perhaps Mr. Nash thinks we ought to have given a longer account of his speech, but space is limited, and yet the amount we devoted to the meetings of the Ethical Section was greater than that given in other journals.—ED. L.

THE CERTIFYING OF LUNATICS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—We should be glad if you could inform us whether it is the usual practice for the Poor-law district medical officer to certify all pauper lunatics in his district irrespective of the fact that they are being professionally attended by their own private practitioner. In this district when we have a case to be certified we inform the relieving officer of the fact and the matter then passes out of our hands. The Poor-law medical officer is called in and he signs the necessary papers and pockets the fee. We believe that in many districts the relieving officer requests the attending practitioner to sign the certificate and arranges the interview with the magistrate, &c. The point we wish to get at is whether it is probable that the guardians instruct their relieving officer to call in their own medical officer in every case, or whether it is likely to be a private arrangement between the relieving officer and the medical officer. If the latter be

the case it is obviously unfair to the other men and the matter should be rectified without delay.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Sept. 20th, 1902.

FAIRPLAY & CO.

* * The Poor-law district medical officer is often, on appointment by the guardians, told that it is one of his regular duties to certify pauper lunatics, although in some districts the relieving officer requests the attending practitioner to sign the certificate. The relieving officer usually follows some general instruction from the guardians as to the medical officer who should be asked to sign the certificates. Anything like a private arrangement between the relieving officer and the particular medical officer is wrong and might easily make both parties liable to prosecution. The recent scandals connected with certain Poor-law unions in which the relieving officers had received payments from proprietors of private asylums in connexion with the certifying of lunatics will be fresh in the memory of our readers.—ED. L.

NOTES FROM INDIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

The Plague Epidemic.—Scientific Research in India: a New Board of Advice.

A FURTHER increase is reported this week in the mortality from plague throughout India. The deaths were 4862 as compared with 4371 for the previous seven days. In Bombay city 44 deaths were recorded, in Bombay Presidency 3626, in Karachi 3, in Madras Presidency 173, in Calcutta 24, in United Provinces 193, in Punjab 56, in Mysore 63, in Hyderabad 72, and in Berar 33. The cities of Bombay and Calcutta both show an increase. The disease is active in the Mofussil districts of Bombay but it is slumbering elsewhere. At Kasauli and in the neighbourhood of Simla it shows signs of spreading. The following medical officers who are to be employed in the inoculation campaign of the Punjab Government have arrived from England: Dr. J. Elkington, Dr. G. Bond, Mr. J. Gardiner, Dr. G. C. P. Forsyth, Dr. G. Rouseman, Dr. R. Mitchell, Dr. J. Miller, and Dr. J. H. Rankin.

Scientific research in India is being developed and fostered by the Government of India. Two mining experts have been added to the geological department, a cryptogamic botanist has been appointed whose special duty it is to study the fungoid diseases of agricultural products, a botanist for Madras whose attention will be mainly devoted to economic inquiry has been permanently retained, an agricultural chemist is at work, a curator of economic products with special qualifications as an economic chemist has been recently secured, a skilled entomologist is about to be obtained, and an inspector-general of agriculture has been appointed. There is to be a central advisory board to insure that the work of scientific research is distributed to the best advantage. It will comprise the heads of the meteorological, botanical, forests, survey, agricultural, and veterinary departments, and it will act as an intermediary between the Government and its scientific officers. To complete this very admirable scheme is required a similarly constituted board with a full staff for the original investigation of human diseases. There are many complaints calling for further research—for example, the dubious remittent fever, epidemic dropsy, of which small outbreaks have occurred both in Calcutta and Bombay, the so-called acute hepatitis of infants, a disease of puerperal women shown by continued diarrhoea with fever, the frequency of tetanus amongst the newly born, and the "pot-bellies" of nearly all native children. Clinical observation has done little, and more scientific research with regard to these conditions is wanted.

Sept. 5th.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.—At the Bath Police-court on Sept. 24th the Bath urban sanitary authority summoned a tradesman for recently establishing in the city the offensive trade of a fellmonger or dealer in hides and skins without the consent of the sanitary authority. The magistrates imposed a fine of five guineas with five guineas costs,