Correspondence

Sir Frederick Treves An Ardent Supporter of Animal Experimentation

To the Editor:—In the *Journal of Zoöphyly* for May, 1909, p. 45, is a quotation from an address of Sir Frederick Treves, from which any unsuspecting reader would infer that Sir Frederick is utterly opposed to vivisection. I sent him a copy of that journal and have received in reply the letter which follows this. You observe that he refers to a letter published in the *London Times* on April 18, 1902 [which has appeared in *THE JOURNAL* and in other medical periodicals]. This was noticed editorially in the *British Medical Journal* on April 26, 1902, p. 1042. Inasmuch as the *British Medical Journal* is gone over with a microscope by the antivivisectionists every week, it is impossible that this should have escaped their attention, even if they did not see the original in the *London Times*.

In spite of these facts, this misquotation from Sir Frederick Treves is constantly and flaringly made in the *Journal of Zoöphyly*, in some of the publications of the New England Antivivisection Society, and probably in others. Surely seven years after such a disclaimer common honesty would require that these allusions be suppressed.

W. W. KEEN, Philadelphia.

Prof. W. W. Keen:

Dear Sir:—I notice from certain papers sent me from America that the antivivisection party are as active in your country as in mine.

I notice also that the methods which have covered the antivivisection party with contempt and ridicule in this country are being reproduced in America.

In England the improper use of my name has very nearly ceased owing to the persistent circulation of the enclosed letter [the one in the *Times* above referred to.—Ed.] and the repeated publication of the fact that I am—as every sane medical man must be—an ardent supporter of vivisection.

The fact that your name has been brought into the matter has led me to trouble you with this letter in the hope that you may be able to make use of it should you consider the matter worthy of notice.

FREDERICK TREVES,
Kingston-on-Thames, Eng.

Old-Age Pensions for Physicians

To the Editor:—I read with interest Dr. Magruder's letter, published in *THE JOURNAL*, May 22, p. 1682, suggesting the establishment of a national home for aged or infirm physicians. Would not a system of old-age pensions be preferable? Many physicians in need of such a retreat as a national home would provide, could not share its advantages because of distance, illness or domestic reasons. I believe that a pension fund placed in the keeping of a board composed of successful business men, or some trust company, the income from this fund to be paid to such worthy physicians as are in need by reason of old age, illness or accident is what we need.

C. BUSEY, M.D., Clearwater, Idaho.

Congregational Practice and Contract Practice

To the Editor:—Several press reports of my paper on "Congregational Practice," read by title before the American Academy of Medicine, tend to convey the idea that I favor the ordinary form of contract practice. Without anticipating the publication of the paper, I may say that it proposes a much broader scope of professional service, which would be put into execution only by a gradual development of professional and public opinion, the basis of payment being only one of the details. Ordinary contract practice starts with a false conception of the value of services and usually involves bad faith both as to demand and fulfillment.

A. L. BENEDICT, Buffalo, N. Y.

Miscellany

THE MIDWIVES OF BALTIMORE

A Report to the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland

MARY SHERWOOD, M.D., BALTIMORE

The Evening Dispensary for Working Women and Girls of Baltimore, in cooperation with the Mothers' Relief Society, organized three years ago an obstetric service which cares for indigent parturient women in their homes. Early in this service it was learned that the conditions of the practice of midwives in Baltimore city are, in the light of twentieth century medicine, well-nigh intolerable.

The investigation of the midwives of New York made by Miss Crowell under the auspices of the Public Health Committee of the Association of Neighborhood Workers in 1906 (*Charities and the Commons*, Jan. 12, 1907; abstracted in *THE JOURNAL*, Feb. 23, 1907, p. 712), with the legislation resulting therefrom, suggested a similar study in Baltimore as a basis for asking for legislation on the practice of midwives in Maryland. A special fund for this purpose was contributed to the organizations named by lay women who in their social and philanthropic work had been impressed by the conditions surrounding childbirth among the poor. A committee, consisting of Dr. Lillian Welsh, Dr. Elizabeth Hurdon, and myself, was appointed to direct the work.

The committee has had the cordial cooperation and active assistance of the health department in making this study. It was fortunate in securing the services of Miss Alice H. Small, a trained social worker, to undertake the actual investigation.

Miss Small has personally interviewed the 150 midwives in active practice in the City of Baltimore. The facts she has obtained have been tabulated in a form similar to the tables given in Miss Crowell's report. While our investigation was in progress a report on the midwives of Chicago was published in *THE JOURNAL* of the American Medical Association (April 25, 1908, 1, 1346). These two reports, with ours, give data for an interesting summary and comparison of the conditions of midwifery practice tolerated in three large American cities.

The committee desires to place before the faculty the following facts brought out in our investigation:

1. More than one-third of the births reported at the Health Department are reported by midwives. During the period covered by our tables the percentage of all births reported by midwives was 40.7.

2. There is no adequate registration of midwives, as the law making registration compulsory has no clause providing for notification of change of address; the only knowledge of such change is gained by birth certificates. The registration called for by the health department preliminary to our investigation was the first for many years.

3. No qualifications are required for registration as a midwife. Any one may qualify with no questions asked. Of the 150 included in our tables, 42 (28 per cent.) had foreign diplomas; 9 had American diplomas—worthless as indicating any adequate training; 99 (66 per cent.) gave no evidence of training of any kind. Thirty-seven (24.7 per cent.) could neither read nor write. Twenty-five (16.7 per cent.) could not speak English. In Chicago there is practically no illiteracy, and in New York the percentage is much lower than in Baltimore. The large number of negroes in our number accounts for the high percentage here.

4. There is absolutely no supervision of the work of these midwives. The one law relating to the practice of midwives, secured by this faculty largely through the efforts of Dr. Hiram Woods, provides a penalty for neglect of attention to the eyes, yet an analysis of their practice shows that 3 only out of 150 use a weak solution of nitrate of silver for the eyes, while the remainder use anything from breast-milk to bichlorid of mercury of unknown strength. Sixty-six per cent. care for abnormal cases; they perform version and remove the delayed placenta by internal manipulation. Of the bags examined 41 were found to be clean and in good order; 51 were dirty; 44 midwives had none. A very small number use antiseptics for the hands and sterilized tape for the cord. On account of lack of supervision even well-trained