CORRESPONDENCE.

Observations on the "Code."

NEW YORK, Oct. 31, 1897.

To the Editor:—The "Code" is noble, a law irrevocable, supreme wherever the doctor wends his way, ruling an army of learned and cultured men. Its genesis is lost in antiquity. It is noble, but not more so than the unified profession whose ethics it formulates, failing only in so far as those whom it would govern are human, and to be human is to fail as well as to succeed. The "Sermon on the Mount" has been attacked, so has the Code. It has been said that a gentleman requires no "rule of conduct;" true, but all are not gentlemen, and so there is need for the rule of ethics as there is need for the "Sermon;" neither will be too old until the time has come when every man does unto his neighbor as he would be done by. However, it is not our purpose to defend; it is not necessary.

Those who as yet are breasting the current, struggling where the rocks are jagged, where the eddies swirl, fain to reach the placid waters beyond, the status of the successful practitioner of merits proved with laurels won; these are the ones who find it most difficult to correlate conduct with the exactions of the "Code."

When one by one the rungs of the ladder of fame have been courageously reached and passed, and there is an infinity between the first and the last, then it is that the individual is best adapted to the "Code." Now, a position is occupied so lofty as to be everywhere easily observed. A chance misstep and the labor of years is all for naught; and again, one now comes to love the "Code," to realize its justice, to acknowledge the verity of the principles on which it is founded. These things hold such an one in loyal and constant obedience to the ethics of "our profession."

But in what manner do its provisions apply to those for whom the top of the ladder is yet a weary climb? They more frequently fail, and the reasons are manifold. Entering on the practice of a profession already overcrowded, finding competition keen and uncharitable in the struggle for sustenance, they see apparently well-founded cause for sometimes disregarding the mandates of a Code which, did they but know, would prove their best, most steadfast friend. In these days of newer economics and rapidly changing ideas, it is difficult to get the younger men to properly regard principles of conduct which some are pleased to term "idealistic" and "not applicable to the times." They forget that the "Code" was made for one and all, makes the weak the equal of the strong, eliminates mediocre competition, is the crystallized wisdom of the army that has gone before; that it never grows old, for, like the drama of Shakespeare, it is founded upon a truthful interpretation of human nature, in which there is little change from Galen's time till now. Even those most prone to break the rule can not but acknowledge its high place.

Our profession is everywhere banded into groups whose object and duty it is to have a proper regard for the general welfare, and to enforce the principles which we know are for the good of all. If an erring brother filches from you your purse, or what means the same, illegitimately deprives you of a patient, do not overlook the action, grow cynical, sneer at the "Code," but rather place the circumstances before the properly constituted society. Then the erring brother will be called upon to walk the "straight and narrow path," and if he chooses not to do so will be branded for what he is. Patient endurance under such circumstances makes he who endures a party to a course of action which, if prevalent, would undermine the very foundations of the profession. So take heed; for upon you who have the way before you much is depending, and let it not again be said that four young physicians of New York City successively bid for an expected *accouchement*, the fourth and successful bidder agreeing to take the case for \$5.

E. S. B.

Homeopathy vs. Rational Practice.

LA PORTE, IND., Oct. 22, 1897.

To the Editor:—Yesterday I received from my publishers, the W. T. Keener Company, the JOURNAL for September 25, on pp. 661-2 of which is notice of my little book "Principles of Medicine." Will you permit me to correct the erroneous impression which the closing words of that notice are likely to have made upon your readers? The writer quotes me as follows: "'It is perfectly well known that a very large majority of us homeopaths do not repudiate practices which we think useful, although they are not instances of homeopathy.'" The quotation is (substantially) correct, but his interpretation of it is misleading when he continues: "In other words, according to our author, whatever he is satisfied cures the patient is homeopathy." Look again at his quotation from me: We "do not repudiate practices which we think useful, *although they are not instances of homeopathy.*" Does that bear the interpretation that he has put upon it?

I have great confidence in the utility of so defining the cure sought in any given practice of homeopathy as to distinguish that cure from any sought in rational practice, and in the utility of discussing homeopathy as a matter of *opinion*.

Very sincerely, CHAS. L. MACK, M.D.

A Misrepresentation.

CHICAGO, Nov. 8, 1897.

To the Editor:—In *Leaves of Healing*, dated Oct. 30, 1897, edited by Mr. J. A. Dowie, copies of which have been liberally distributed to Chicago physicians and others, appears the following in the guise of an alleged quotation from a paper read by myself to the Sunset Club:

"The doctors of Chicago are divisible into three classes, the first are liars, the second are damned liars, and the third are experts and they are the biggest liars of all."

At the meeting of the Sunset Club March 1, 1894, I read a paper on "Expert Testimony," in which occurs the following passage (official report, p. 3): "But closer familiarity with the practical workings of the system reveals a still more serious flaw, one which has given rise to the time-honored epigram that witnesses may be divided into three classes: liars, damned liars and experts. Instances of deliberate lying by expert witnesses are not unknown; our real-estate friends furnish especially brilliant examples."

A comparison of these two quotations renders comment unnecessary.

WILLIAM T. BELFIELD, M.D.

Edema Universalis(?)—Varia.

DETROIT, MICH., Nov. 5, 1897.

To the Editor:—A year or so ago I was called to see a baby three months old having pronounced edema of the extremities, anasarca of the scrotum and a general puffiness of the eyelids, face, etc. The urine on chemic and microscopic examination showed no abnormality to account for the affection. Heart and lungs normal.

Recently Dr. Steinbrecher of this city, in his regular family practice, saw a somewhat similar case, save that there was no anasarca of the scrotum. Heart and kidneys were normal in this case also.

In the literature at my command, containing the most recent and voluminous reference works, I fail to find a description of a similar condition and would therefore ask you whether or not I am justified in calling it edema universalis?

I approve of your continued efforts to establish a department of health. Such an organization would put the medical profession at once on a higher scale, at least so far as the respect from the people is concerned. It would also lead to a uniformity of health laws for each State and Territory of the United States and possibly also uniformity in the licensing of