

Correspondence

Indigent Consumptives in the Southwest—A Warning

To the Editor:—I wish that publicity be given to the fact that this community, which is famed as a health-resort in the dry zone of the Southwest, will not give financial assistance—free hospitals or sanatorium service or transportation—to the hundreds of indigent tuberculous persons who apply for aid each year. So many incurable patients arrive here without means of support, and yet with hope of climatic cure and remunerative employment, that I desire these full explanations be made:

1. Such rainbow-chasing is a cruel hoax to perpetrate on a dying consumptive.
2. Comfort and treatment are expensive and continuous.
3. It is the rare exception, and growing rarer, that a tuberculous person can obtain employment, no matter how great his ability.

GEORGE D. TROUTMAN, M.D., Sec'y Board of Health,
Pima County, Tucson, Ariz.

Glimpse of a Great Surgeon

To the Editor:—In a recent number of THE JOURNAL (Sept. 7, 1912, p. 814), mention was made of the semicentennial celebration of the first ovariectomy performed in France by Dr. Koeberle of Strasburg, who is now living in retirement. The operation had been performed in England, Germany and America shortly before Dr. Koeberle undertook his. At that time the performance of such a daring thing as an abdominal operation was looked on as almost criminal.

About six years ago I happened to be traveling between Heidelberg and Paris. When the train stopped at Strasburg, three people entered my compartment; a middle-aged, heavy-set woman, accompanied by a gentleman who shortly after repaired to the smoker; and a very old gentleman wearing a long black coat and a high hat, from under which straggled a few locks of white hair. Looking over the top of my book, which was, nevertheless, quite interesting, I was fascinated by the appearance of this old gentleman who wore the little red ribbon of the Legion of Honor in his buttonhole. All attempts to place him, or "size him up," failed. The only thing to which I could compare him was the castle in Heidelberg—in other words, he seemed to be a grand ruin, the remains of what must once have been an imposing physique, with doubtless a marvelous personality.

A little later the lady caught the old man's eye and greeted him, asking about his health, his wife, and his castle. In his replies the old gentleman conveyed the information that he was carrying on archeologic researches, that he had not found very much of importance in his diggings, and that at his age he preferred to travel by rail, whereas his wife journeyed to their castle in Lutzenfeld by automobile.

The old gentleman answered all questions with an effort and was certainly far from interested. Before long his head dropped forward, and he resumed his meditations.

Perhaps twenty minutes later the lady again attracted his attention by remarking that the professor probably did not remember her, to which he replied, "I must confess that you are right!"

"Well," said she, "do you remember the first big surgical operation you ever performed? My mother and your aunt brought you the patient and induced you to operate."

"To be sure!" said the professor, becoming animated, his eyes glowing. "It was the fiancée of a locomotive engineer, and the next year she had twins!"

A few personal remarks were interchanged, and the train approaching his destination, he left the train.

Shortly afterward I asked the lady the name of the gentleman, to which she replied that although I could not be acquainted with medical subjects, she would tell me the story.

It seemed that this lady's mother and the doctor's aunt were very close friends, and had always predicted a big future

for young Koeberle, whom as a boy they had watched cutting open and sewing up birds. After he had been practicing for a while, a young girl who had been in their employ at various times, and whom they knew to be poor but good, began to attract a great deal of attention and to set tongues wagging in the village by the increased size of her abdomen. Rather than endure it any longer, the girl had threatened suicide, and certainly would have carried out her threat had these two good souls not persuaded young Koeberle to perform a radical operation for the cure of what proved to be an ovarian tumor, which the doctor did in the presence of a great number of physicians. This encounter in a railway train with one of the most famous European surgeons was to me so interesting that I felt that its reading might be pleasing to others.

RENÉ BINE, M.D., San Francisco.

"The First Fifteen Medical Colleges in the United States"

To the Editor:—In THE JOURNAL (April 26, 1913, p. 1318) is given a list of the "first fifteen medical colleges in the United States." In this list the Castleton Medical College is not mentioned. I quote from the *Vermonteur* for May, 1903:

The first medical school established by act of the legislature in Vermont was chartered Oct. 29, 1818. This act gave to Drs. Theodore Woodward and Selah Gridley and their associates the charter of "The Castleton Medical Academy." A subsequent act in 1819 gave them the power to "confer those honors and degrees which are usually conferred by medical institutions." The first course of lectures at Castleton began Nov. 15, 1818. In 1821 the name of this institution was changed to the "Vermont Academy of Medicine." The fatal illness of Professor Woodward in 1838 arrested the work of the school temporarily, but in 1839 a new faculty was elected and in 1841 the name was again changed to the "Castleton Medical College," and from this time for twenty years the school prospered. During the period from 1820 to 1827 a "conventional connexion" existed between this institution and Middlebury College, by which the degrees were conferred either at Castleton or Middlebury on such students as were found worthy. The Castleton Medical College for many years occupied a prominent position in the medical world. Its graduates numbered 1,542 and its faculty at various times was 41.

CHARLES W. ALLEN, M.D., Hoboken, Pa.

[COMMENT.—Our correspondent's point is well taken. It should have been stated that our previous list gave the fifteen colleges first organized, which continue to exist either as originally organized or under the names of other schools with which they merged. The following seven medical schools were organized during the same period, but later became extinct. The rank of each is shown by the figures in parentheses:

1. 1911, (7) Brown University Medical Department, Providence, R. I. Extinct 1827.
2. 1813, (9) College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Western District of New York, Fairfield. Extinct 1840.
3. 1818, (11) Castleton Medical College, Castleton, Vt. Extinct 1861.
4. 1823, (16) Berkshire Medical College, Pittsfield, Mass. Extinct 1867.
5. 1826, (19) Medical College of the Valley of Virginia, Winchester. Extinct 1861.
6. 1826, (20) Winchester Medical College, Winchester, Va. Suspended 1829. Revived 1850. Burned and extinct in 1861.
7. 1827, (22) Washington University School of Medicine, Baltimore. Suspended 1851. Reorganized 1867. Extinct in 1877.

A life chart showing all medical colleges which have been organized in the United States is to be published in the next Educational Number of THE JOURNAL, Aug. 23, 1913.—ED.]

The Physician and Public Health.—The thoughtful physician regards himself as much more than a physician to the individual case. In the larger work of eradicating communicable disease from society he is the diagnostician and health authorities must have his diagnosis before they can apply the remedial measures necessary.—*Bull. Ohio State Board of Health.*