

Hancocke Wathen, and David Samuel Davies, M.B., to be Acting Surgeons.

RIFLE VOLUNTEERS.—1st Dumbartonshire: John Mac-callum Cameron, Gent., M.B., to be Acting Surgeon.—1st Pembrokeshire: Surgeon Edward Picton Phillips is granted the honorary rank of Surgeon-Major.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE BEQUEST OF SIR ERASMUS WILSON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I observe that a proposition has been made by Sir Spencer Wells to devote a large portion of the magnificent bequest of Sir Erasmus Wilson to the formation of a Physiological and Pathological Institute. I sincerely hope that his proposition will be carried into effect. I cannot conceive of a more desirable object for the College to undertake than the foundation of an institution of this kind, one which would for ever perpetuate the College fame, and bring credit on all those who now have a voice in its councils. I believe also the proposal would receive the sanction and support of the whole profession. I have every reason to think so from the fact that, when three years ago the Association for the Advancement of Medicine by Research was founded, all the leading and most distinguished men in the profession came forward to maintain in the strongest terms the absolute necessity of providing some means for the furtherance of our science and art by more precise methods. The earnestness of these gentlemen was shown by the readiness with which they opened their purses to aid in the object which they had at heart. With all their liberality, however, the private subscriptions of medical men could afford but scanty means for the development of so large and important an object. Our Colleges have no funds to undertake it, and Government will not assist. It is only therefore by the liberality of private individuals that any hope can be entertained of rearing an institution devoted to pure science. The opportunity has now arrived when this can be done; an opportunity which may not occur again for another age, and one which now taken advantage of will surround the president with glory. A learned body has it in its power to found an institution to be devoted to pure science, untrammelled by any conditions to mar its usefulness. I feel sure too that such a foundation would have been quite in accord with the feelings of the bequeather.

That interest in biological work has not departed from us is proved by the popularity of Professor Michael Foster's laboratory; but we want something still greater, something more national. At the present time a large number of workers are obliged to seek their means of investigation abroad, and, what is more lamentable, a considerable number of young men of scientific tastes, to be met with in all our medical schools, are forced to relinquish their good intentions for lack of opportunity. I do therefore trust Sir Spencer Wells's proposal will become a reality; there is a crying necessity for an institution where physiological, pathological, and therapeutical research can be carried out, and the College has now in its hands the power to rear such a one in our midst. This will indirectly bring with it large practical advantages, and the College therefore will also have the satisfaction of knowing that it is acting as a public benefactor—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Grosvenor-street, W., Oct. 1884.

SAMUEL WILKS.

STOPPING TEETH AT GENERAL HOSPITALS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you permit me to bring before the profession by means of your journal a subject which to my mind is of the most vital importance to the public—viz., that general hospitals should make provisions for the stopping of teeth? How many instances do all of us see where good teeth are sacrificed merely for the want of proper attention at the commencement of the decay, to say nothing of the innumerable instances where teeth are extracted daily from patients who attend the various hospitals simply because the operator

is aware of the fact that such patients have not the means to have their teeth stopped, and thus he extracts them rather than allow the sufferers to be in continual pain. Now what does this mean? That healthy young persons of poor circumstances are forced to sacrifice their teeth, and thus when they reach advanced age their health is broken down by chronic indigestion and the very many other maladies allied thereto, to say nothing of the loss of nature's gift, a good set of teeth, which is of no small matter to one's beauty, especially to marriageable young women. As general hospitals take up every other branch for the relief or cure of diseases which flesh is heir to, why not this most important branch? I feel confident that if the treatment to which I refer were once to be established, we should not have the slightest trouble in carrying out the good work, without experiencing any difficulty or incurring expense, so to say, to already overtaxed institutions. I am certain there would always be double or treble the number of students who would be delighted to fill the office of dental dresser for fixed periods, as in the other departments of hospitals; indeed many of such dressers, who intend following dentistry, would be receiving instruction at the same time at the dental hospitals; but even those who do not intend doing so would take a delight in the work merely for the sake of the experience in acquiring the art of stopping teeth. I devoted some time, when a student, to acquiring the knowledge of extracting teeth under the supervision of the appointed dental surgeon of the hospital to which I belong; and although I do not follow dentistry, even in its simplest forms, I feel the immense advantages I have gained in being able to diagnose, I may say, at a glance the pathology and necessary treatment which ought to be adopted in different maladies of the mouth—a knowledge which I feel sure I should not have possessed had I not had some experience in such matters.

By way of conclusion, I may mention that only recently one of my domestics asked leave to go to a hospital for the purpose of having two teeth extracted, as she could not afford to have them stopped, and the dental hospitals (Leicester-square and Great Portland-street) were so far distant. "Besides, everyone cannot go there!" On looking at the teeth I found that they were the two anterior lower molars, and as I considered them not too far decayed to be stopped, I sent her to a dentist. The result is that she has thus saved two useful teeth, which will, in all probability, last for years.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

Baron's Court, S.W.

R. FITZROY BENHAM.

LUNACY LAW AGITATION AND SUICIDE: THEORY *v.* COMMON SENSE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have to express my thanks for your insertion of my letter in your last issue, and for having acceded to my request that you would favour me with your judgment upon the facts related. I trouble you again with reluctance, but the matter seems to me important enough to justify further discussion. Your verdict is that "the fault was obviously that of the friends," and you remark that "it is nothing to the point that the husband was eighty." I cannot have made clear what I wished chiefly to emphasise—viz., that the patient had no friends. The age of the husband is very much to the point, because, by reason of his age, he was unable to cope with his wife in her excitement. But, leaving this case for a moment, what has hitherto been the course usually pursued by a medical man whose patient, being attacked by insanity, requires treatment such as in his judgment cannot be pursued at home? He recommends treatment in an asylum. Asked to advise what asylum, he advises. He explains the requirements of the law; he sees the necessary forms gone through; and if, as so frequently happens, the case is of a nature to make personal action on the part of the patient's friends unwise, he recommends application being made to the asylum superintendent to select some one from his staff to accompany the patient from home. What could be more in accordance with common sense? with common humanity? What could be less open to the charges of "fussy interference" and "discreditable touting"? As to the law of the matter, the Lunacy Acts say nothing. They tell us that such and such conditions having been fulfilled, the superintendent may "receive"; they are silent as to whether he may or may not "send for" the person to be admitted