

the best of charities is liable to be abused, and this will be the more apt to happen in the present connexion if, in the words of the above resolution, the dispensaries should be released from a central parent authority by becoming self-governing. It is possible, however, that the Association do not mean to relinquish all control over them, but to continue to exercise a more or less general supervision. If so, the danger is probably less.

The special form of abuse which occurs to my mind is that to which so many of the medical benefit clubs existing among artisans are liable—that is, the want of a rule recognising some fixed proportion of income under which applicants may avail themselves of the benefits of the provident method, above which they are held to be able to pay for medical attendance in the ordinary way. Fix the limit, say for the sake of argument, at the £1 10s. per week wage. Workmen are usually considered well-to-do who receive this amount and are of steady habits. They have frequently means of increasing it by odd work and otherwise, and are often content and able on this sum to pay small fees for regular medical attendance without applying to dispensary or hospital. If all whose weekly allowance does not exceed this were eligible for the exercise of provident practice, the efforts of the philanthropic need not slacken for want of scope, and the fixing of a maximum level of salary would exclude many of considerably greater income, and who do not belong to the working class, commonly so-called, who would otherwise flock to the place of cheap treatment, but whose natural and legitimate means of medical aid is to be found in general practice, and whose purse would be in no degree overtaxed by its moderate charges. Justice is an essential part of true generosity, and the promoters of this scheme, if they desire its advantages to circulate among those who really stand in need of them and these only, should be discriminating in its application. Otherwise all such measures must necessarily tend to corrupt, instead of improving, the methods of medical practice, and to become more and more the objects of distrust with medical men.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

June, 1883.

B. G. M.

THE PARKES MUSEUM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—After seven years of unremitting labour on the part of its promoters the Parkes Museum has at length been established as an independent educational institution. Its career has been most graciously inaugurated by the President, H.R.H. the Duke of Albany, and there can be no doubt that if it be cordially supported the Museum is destined to become a valuable centre for the diffusion of a knowledge of all matters connected with the health of the people at home or abroad, whether civilians, soldiers, or sailors. The Museum, it is hoped, will be useful for the display, in actual operation whenever possible, not only of apparatus which has met with general acceptance, but more especially for a succession of the most recent inventions in all departments of practical hygiene. The library will, it is thought, form one of the most important features of the Museum, and the council confidently hope that its value will be increased by the contributions of all who are interested in sanitation. Lectures both for professional men and the public will be organised from time to time and practical demonstrations will be given to artisans and others whose duty it is to carry out the details of sanitary work. The necessity for this was fully urged by H.R.H. the President in his inaugural address. The council is particularly anxious to afford assistance to any recognised teacher or professor of hygiene who may wish to make use of the Museum for the purpose of giving practical instructions to his pupils. In order that the Museum may flourish, the hearty support of all who are interested, and especially of those who are professionally interested, in sanitation is necessary; and we desire most earnestly to ask not only our professional brethren, but the public at large, to assist us in the work which we have in hand by becoming life members or annual members of the Museum, and by encouraging others to do the same. It may be well to add that by the deed of incorporation the control of the Museum is vested in the members by whom the council and officers are elected at the annual general meetings. At these or at special meetings ample opportunity will be afforded to all for the expression of opinion. In addition to these privileges,

members have the right of free admission to the Museum, Library, and Reading room, whenever these are open, and the further right to introduce a friend. The fee for membership is £1 1s. per annum, or £10 10s. for life membership. All communications to be addressed to the Secretary at the Museum.—We are, Sir, yours truly,

DOUGLAS GALTON, C.B., D.C.L., F.R.S. (Chairman);
G. V. POORE, M.D., F.R.C.P. (Vice-Chairman);
BERKELEY HILL (Treasurer); W. H. CORFIELD,
M.A., M.D., Oxon.; F. DE CHAUMONT, M.D.,
F.R.S.; ROGERS FIELD, B.A., M. Inst. C.E.; GEO.
GODWIN, F.R.S.; T. HAYTER LEWIS, F.S.A.;
JOHN MARSHALL, F.R.S., F.R.C.S.; J. RUSSELL
REYNOLDS, M.D., F.R.S.; EDWARD C. ROBINS,
F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.; EDWARD H. SIEVEKING, M.D.,
F.S.A.; T. ROGER SMITH, F.R.I.B.A.; J. C.
STEELE, M.D.; T. TWINING; ALFRED WATER-
HOUSE, A.R.A.; DAWSON WILLIAMS, M.D. (Hon.
Secretary); MARK H. JUDGE, A.R.I.B.A. (Secre-
tary and Curator).

THE SCOTCH BODIES AND THE BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET of last Saturday a short account is given of an interview which certain members of the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen had with the Lord Advocate, on the subject of the Medical Act Amendment Bill. The account reproduces an error, which was originated by one of the Edinburgh newspapers, in reporting that I had made the absurd statement that the extra-mural lecturers in Scotland would suffer a loss of prestige from the existence of a university majority on the Medical Board for Scotland. The verbatim report of what was actually said in reference to "prestige" is as follows:—"It cannot for a moment be pretended, my lord, that the Scottish corporations are eminent educational institutions. They are merely examining authorities; and even as examining authorities, the work they perform is, in the sense I have explained, a restricted one. . . . It has been asserted that the composition of the proposed Medical Board, and especially the existence of a university majority upon that Board, would seriously injure them and even lead to their extinction. We maintain that there are no legitimate grounds for such anticipations.—The Lord Advocate: You say 'seriously.' Do you think they would be injured at all?—Professor Fraser: It is to some extent a loss of prestige that the corporations should be put in a minority. I think it would not be possible to say there would be any real injury; but if they are placed in a minority there would be a loss of prestige. The Bill, by provisions entirely different from those dealing with the composition of the Medical Board, may restrict the number of licentiates they create; but even this is altogether problematical. If it do so, the result will not be due to the number of their representatives on the Board being smaller than that of the universities; but to the fact that a State examination, of equal value in each division of the kingdom, will be instituted, whereby some of the inducements which hitherto have attracted candidates to the Scottish corporations, will no longer be in existence."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS R. FRASER.

University of Edinburgh, June 19th, 1883.

PRESENCE OF BACILLUS TUBERCULOSIS IN AN ABSCESS NEAR THE ANUS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Six months ago a young clerk, aged twenty-one, came under treatment for hæmoptysis and other signs of phthisis; after about three months' treatment he got strong enough to return to his employment, at which he continued up to the commencement of this month. I saw him on the 5th, when he was suffering acutely from an abscess in the neighbourhood of the anus, and, fearing lest it might burst into the bowel and give rise to a painful blind internal fistula, I opened the abscess at once and let out a quantity of thin curdy fetid pus. A microscopic examination of this fluid by a half-inch object glass, after the usual process of staining, revealed the presence of great quantities of well-marked typical tubercle bacillus. Now, the presence of these