

Major Lawless, R.A.M.C., has been discharged from hospital to duty.

Dr. Howard Tooth has returned from South Africa after eight months' service with the Portland Hospital.

The hospital ship *Simla* has left Cape Town for England with Major W. B. C. Deeble, R.A.M.C., in charge of the sick and wounded, among whom were Major A. O. Fitzgerald, R.A.M.C., Captain Crawford, R.A.M.C., Lieutenant Croly, R.A.M.C., and Civil Surgeons W. B. Bennett and J. G. Willis.

The Welsh Hospital, now in Pretoria, has been increased from 150 to 200 beds.

The Imperial Yeomanry Branch Hospital at Maitland has about 70 patients.

Civil Surgeon J. Prestwick died from pneumonia on August 23rd at the General Hospital, Howick. Civil Surgeon H. A. Scott died from enteric fever at Pretoria on August 24th.

Lieutenant A. H. Benson, Militia Medical Staff Corps, has left Cape Town for England.

In an engagement near Warmbaths on Sept. 3rd, Mr. A. Cradock Fry, 9th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, was taken prisoner while attending a wounded man.

THE OPERATIONS IN CHINA.

Captain B. H. McCalla, of the United States vessel *Newark*, in a report to the United States Navy Department, wrote: "I beg also to suggest and ask that the following mentioned officers of the naval forces acting concurrently for the relief of the Legations in Peking be offered medals for aiding the United States force under my command and for supporting us in action, by reason of which our loss of killed and wounded was not greater." Captain McCalla's list includes the names of "Fleet-Surgeon Thomas M. Sibbald, R.N., and Surgeons Edward B. Pickthorn and Eric D. Macnamara, R.N., for skilful treatment of 25 wounded Americans, notwithstanding they had the care of a great number of their own wounded."

DEATHS IN THE SERVICES.

Major George Hilliard, C.M.G., R.A.M.C., at the General Hospital, Newcastle, South Africa, on Sept. 7th, from a gunshot wound in the abdomen. He received his medical education at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated as M.B. and B.Ch. in 1885. He became Surgeon-Captain in 1887 and served with the Ashanti expedition under Sir Francis Scott in 1895-96, being awarded a star. He was promoted to be Major in February, 1899.

The Secretary of State for War has approved of revised regulations for the Army Nursing Service, which are to be taken into use at once.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

"PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As the writer of the address which originated the present correspondence on this subject, perhaps I may be allowed to express my sympathy with Dr. James Ryley in his repugnance to any adoption by our profession of the methods of trade unions. I am convinced that such a course will alienate professional opinion and indefinitely delay the progress of reform. But while we cannot adopt the crude methods of the boycotter, it is necessary that we should have some means of bringing pressure to bear on those among us whose standard of ethics is so low as to be a source of injury and discredit to the whole body. It seems to me that the remedy lies in the education and elevation of the aforesaid professional opinion. The chief method of attaining this end is the encouragement by every possible means of local organisations. Every new-comer to a town or district should be informed that he is *expected* to become a member, and not to belong to the local society should stamp a man as an "outsider" in every sense of the word. Thus professional opinion could in every case be brought to bear on all disputed points. There should be an official code of ethics placed in the hands of every man on his qualification, and students should be taught that infringement of this code would prove an effective

bar to an honourable career. At the same time no attempt should be made to obtain legal sanction for any such code. It was rightly said at the recent Paris Congress that "Deontology (the science of duty) has nothing to do with the civil law, which it entirely goes beyond." Also, "There are means of suppressing crime—these are punishments; there is another for correcting manners—this is example."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Sept. 10th, 1900.

W. G. DICKINSON.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reply to the letter of Mr. W. E. Wyllys in THE LANCET of Sept. 8th, p. 769, I wish to express my great pleasure that he agrees (although he does not say why) as to the desirability of a central representative body. I am delighted also to hear that the district committee of which he is the secretary are prepared to help the institute doctors in any really urgent case. This is to me quite a revelation, and contrasts curiously with the subjoined resolution and with the rejection by the committee of my own modest proposal. I have inquired carefully and cannot discover that an institute doctor has, under any circumstances, been met by any member of the district committee. But I am informed that when a member of the district committee was in despair over a bad case of post-partum hæmorrhage he accepted the aid of one of the institute doctors and rewarded the latter by cutting him (figuratively) the following day. To justify my own position I quote, precisely, the resolution of the district committee, passed unanimously at the annual meeting on Jan. 29th, 1897—a resolution never modified, never rescinded, and still in force:—

That this district committee of the I.M.P.A. holds that those medical men who accept the posts of surgeons to the Great Yarmouth Friendly Societies Institute (considering the circumstances under which it was established) are acting in contravention of the rules and ethics of the profession; and therefore no member of this district committee can meet such surgeons in consultation, or hold any professional intercourse with them. Further, that medical practitioners in the town and neighbourhood (whether members or non-members of the committee) who do consult with institute surgeons are, in an equal degree, acting against the ethics of the profession, and accordingly members of the district committee *must*, under their rules and by-laws, refuse to meet such practitioners in consultation, or to have professional intercourse with them in any way whatever.

It is interesting to note how the field of vision of the medical eye, from its centre to its periphery, is filled with the wicked institute surgeon and how entirely the patient is ignored—no room for him whatever. I was not the only absentee from the meeting, for the resolution was passed by an oligarchy of six. I have had the temerity of making the following atrocious proposition:—

That we meet institute doctors in consultation in the case of men properly belonging to clubs who are dangerously ill, and urgently, so far as can be ascertained, in need of further advice.

I have just received a note from Messrs. Moxon and Wyllys (president and secretary respectively) that it is "the resolution of the district committee to adhere to its position and consequently to reject your proposal." Very curious for persons who are prepared to help the institute surgeons, &c., is it not? Why, Sirs, my proposal is simply common humanity, and no threats of ostracism or of boycotting from the district committee shall persuade or frighten me to depart from it. *Re* London consultants, Mr. Wyllys denies my statement. Surely it is due to me to do more than this and to explain, as secretary, what is the attitude of the district committee towards these gentlemen. I press for a reply on this point.

On the subject of boycotting I have permission to quote the following letter I lately received from a much-esteemed consultant, whose aid we G.P.'s of Yarmouth are frequently invoking:—

My personal feelings quite agree with yours. I have long felt that such trades-unionism ill becomes a profession which is supposed to consist of educated gentlemen and that *the only effect*, so far as I can see, is to reduce in the eyes of the lay public what ought to be a noble profession to the status of a trade. This boycott has the effect (and there is no use shutting our eyes to the fact) of lowering the social status of the profession in the view of the educated public—a thing which we must all deeply deplore, and which I fear will in the future help to deter the *better* class of the youth of to-day electing to choose medicine as an honourable profession.

As I am a very busy man medically and municipally, with little time to spare, I hope, Sirs, this is the last communication I may have to make to your columns on "Professional Organisations." With many thanks for your editorial comments,

I remain, Sirs, yours faithfully,

JAMES RYLEY, M.D. Lond.

Great Yarmouth, Sept. 10th, 1900.

"THE COVENTRY DISPENSARY."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I hope the profession in Coventry does not endorse the language of Dr. Richardson Rice when he says that he will give "the consultants of Birmingham an opportunity of deciding whether in the future they are prepared to uphold the honour of the profession or the interests of their pockets." May we put aside for the moment the honour of the profession, which does not appear to be in question, and remember that this is a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, in which a section of the medical profession of Birmingham is to be asked to make a definite pecuniary sacrifice in order to help the profession in Coventry to raise their fees? I have already stated that I have every belief in the willingness of the medical profession in Birmingham to give the most careful consideration to any application coming to us from the profession in Coventry, but language of this sort does not help matters. It makes one wonder whether the failure hitherto experienced by the profession in Coventry to obtain the desired changes in the organisation of the dispensary may not have been due to this unconciliatory, indeed I might say the discourteous and quarrelsome, temper displayed by those who unfortunately are put forward as their spokesmen. There are many men in the profession who urge with incontrovertible truth that no boycotting resolution would justify a refusal to render assistance in an urgent case and therefore there is always a loophole by which those who do not wish to be bound by it may escape. If the scheme is to succeed there must be a strong unanimous feeling that the reforms asked for are wise, moderate, and just and that those who ask for them are animated by a genuine desire for reform and not by animus against an institution, or the persons connected with it. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Birmingham, Sept. 11th.

ROBERT SAUNDBY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I should not have troubled you further, but Dr. Saundby speaks of my letter as being uncandid and unfair and as causing him irritation. I have no quarrel with Dr. Saundby and certainly should not like to be unfair to him, but I should like to remind him that at Ipswich he asked "why the men came to the meeting year after year howling at the Coventry Dispensary," and if he can reconcile such a statement with rendering assistance to the cause of reform in Coventry I shall have nothing more to add. My letter in THE LANCET of August 25th has fully explained the situation, and as all the statements are accurate I cannot do more than supply the facts. Dr. Saundby was appealed to, as I have stated, to support the profession in Coventry, and we who laid the case before him were representing the majority of medical men practising in the town.

Does Dr. Saundby wish your readers to understand that he usually acts in a dual capacity, one as President of the Council of the British Medical Association and the other as a consulting physician of Birmingham—in the former position supporting the profession against a condemned institution, and in the latter supporting the institution against the profession? Surely the fact of his being approached as the President of the Council should not lead him to suppose that he was not acting as one of the profession in Birmingham.

In conclusion, I quite agree with Dr. Saundby that false charges would not hasten the cause of reform which Coventry seeks to apply to its professional life, but a thorough mastery of the facts by him would in all probability bring this discussion to a close. I am, Sirs, your faithfully,

Coventry, Sept. 11th, 1900.

EDWARD PHILLIPS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have read with considerable interest the letters upon the Coventry Dispensary and I do not wish to further prolong the discussion, as I think I observe in Dr. Saundby's recent letters to the journals a desire to aid the profession in stamping out these degrading conditions of unjust and uncalled-for medical aid regulated by a lay element which totally disregards the advice and counsel of its medical officers. The Coventry Dispensary is entirely under the control of a committee of men who have so much confidence in themselves and in the management of that which seems to be the business and training of a medical man that they not only have sole charge of the finance, but exercise their

prerogative as to how these medical men must carry on their profession.

The real reason of this terrible condition of things is this, that this institution has grown so large that even at the rate of nearly one farthing per head per week, which is about the sum paid to the medical officers, the return in the aggregate amounts to something over £300 a year to each medical man, and the certainty of this substantial sum overrules the professional instincts expected to be found in those belonging to so learned and honourable a calling. Nevertheless, I do hope that by the assistance of the heads of the profession, and of those who should set an example by action or by advice, the day will come when the medical men of the Coventry Dispensary will return to the fold of that great body of registered practitioners who, from their liberal education and the oath of allegiance to their *alma mater*, should do all such matters and things to the honour of the noble calling to which they belong.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

CHARLES WEBB ILIFFE,
Coroner, North Warwickshire.

Willenhall, Coventry, Sept. 11th, 1900.

"THE CAUSE OF CARIES OF THE TEETH."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have followed with much interest the correspondence in THE LANCET on the above subject. I fully agree, on general biological grounds, with the views of the writers who hold that disuse or imperfect use of the jaws during growth tends to lead to the faulty condition of jaws and teeth so frequently met with in the newer generations of civilised men, and of those who have recently come under the influence of civilisation. In my opinion the condition, as far as the jaws are concerned, is one of "imperfect evolution" and "stunted growth" rather than of "atrophy"—which latter term implies a previous normal condition in the individual affected. I also subscribe to the view that disuse of the teeth tends to their deterioration and degeneration prematurely. But this, as are most etiological problems, is a complex one. I beg to be permitted to bring to the notice of those who are working at the elucidation of this subject, as well as your readers generally, a paper read by me before the Odontological Society of Great Britain (and published in the Transactions of that society in January, 1890), entitled, "Nasal Obstruction and Mouth Breathing as Factors in the Etiology of Caries of the Teeth and in the Development of the Vaulted Palate." In this paper I claimed for these factors an important share in the production of caries and vaulted palate, but the paper appears to have escaped the notice of recent writers on the subject. Ten years' further experience has only added strength to my conviction that in nasal obstruction and mouth-breathing we have an even more powerful and more common factor in producing these abnormalities than in the character or mode of preparation of the food.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

SCANES SPICER, M.D., B.Sc. Lond.

Welbeck-street, W., Sept. 12th, 1900.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—You have kindly published a letter of mine in THE LANCET of Sept. 8th suggesting that the removal of the wheat-germs from the flour by roller-milling causes defective teeth owing to mal-nutrition. As I wish to keep the two points—defective teeth and caries of the teeth—as far as possible distinct, it is hoped you will excuse me again addressing you. As is mentioned in the report of the Decay of Teeth Committee of the British Medical Association the mouths of men working in flour-mills invariably present extensive decalcification of the enamel and dentine. In milling 2 per cent. loss by waste is reckoned in converting wheat into flour. Much of this waste floats in the air, and the men working in the mill are likely to have a proportion of unfermented wheaten starch in the mouth, and, owing to the action of the saliva, an almost continuous supply of lactic acid bathing their teeth. When the wheat-germs are in the flour a proportion of the starch is converted into grape-sugar during baking, and thus lactic acid is evolved while the bread is in the oven; instead of, as when there is no diastase in the flour, being evolved in the