

symptoms are to be deprecated among members of the profession, if only for the reason that to draw attention to a subject is not necessarily to recognise its importance. We recommend, however, to the perusal of Mr. Lennox Browne our obituary notice of Dr. Hans Wilhelm Meyer (p. 1613), and the substantial claims that it contains for the recognition of the services of that learned physician and certain of his *confrères*.—ED. L.

"THE SECRETARY OF STATE, THE SOCIETY OF MEMBERS, AND THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your otherwise correct annotation on the subject of the intervention of this society in connexion with the amendment of By-law 16, you have omitted to mention that the Secretary of State agreed with our main contention, which was that the Council (as at present constituted) is not fitted to be the sole and uncontrolled judge as to what is "infamous conduct" on the part of a member. Under the by-law as proposed, it was pointed out by Mr. Asquith that "the only question which could be decided by a court of law would be whether, in 'the opinion of the Council,' a member had offended against the terms of the by-law, thus leaving the action of the Council wholly uncontrolled." Under the by-law, as amended by the Secretary of State, the Council has full powers to deal with offenders, subject to the salutary control of the law-courts.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
Southfields, S.W., June 17th, 1895. W. G. DICKINSON.

THE SUPPORT OF HOSPITALS AND THE ABUSE OF THEIR SERVICES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As a medical man having some knowledge of the immense abuse of the out-patient department of hospitals and of the disastrous effect this has upon my own profession, I felt great difficulty in my capacity of churchwarden in giving my sanction to devoting the offertories on "Hospital Sunday" to the fund which goes by that name. It does not appear to me to be right to give money dedicated to God's service to a fund which is divided up amongst a number of institutions who admittedly make little or no attempt to confine the expenditure of the donations to the purpose for which they were given; while, on the other hand, the money is partly expended in carrying on a grossly unfair competition with a profession which is noted for its charitable acts. My vicar had, I found, made arrangements long since, in accordance with the custom of previous years, by which the offertories of Hospital Sunday were to be given to the Fund, so that I did not interfere with them on this occasion; but I do feel that since you issue a Supplement showing the needs of the hospitals, it is not unreasonable to ask you also to publish a statement showing the attempts which are being made by the hospitals and dispensaries benefited by this Fund to devote money given to them to charitable purposes—i.e., entirely to the objects for which the money is given—and so defending it from abuse.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,
June 10th, 1895. PEOPLE'S WARDEN.

THE ELECTION OF MEDICAL OFFICER TO THE LAMBETH INFIRMARY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your issue of June 1st there was an advertisement for the post of medical officer to the Lambeth Infirmary. The chief points in it were—the candidate "must possess the medical and surgical qualifications prescribed by the orders of the Local Government Board"; "he will be required during term to give lectures to the probationers under training at the infirmary"; and "the entire management of the infirmary, whether medical or otherwise, is placed under the control of the medical officer, rendering it essential that he should be possessed of good administrative capacity as

well as professional skill and experience." There are over fifty candidates, myself amongst the number. I have just heard that the finance committee, in whose hands is placed the selection of four or five candidates to go before the full board, last night passed a resolution, with one or two dissentients, that all those candidates who did not possess an M.B., M.D., or F.R.C.S. degree be struck out. Now, Sirs, I think a proceeding of this kind ought not to be kept a secret. It is most unfair to all those candidates who have not got these degrees, and who thus wasted their time and money in sending in their applications. It may act (and probably will) in a manner most prejudicial to the interests of the board itself, and also the ratepayers, because the man most fitted for the post may be amongst those struck out, for it by no means follows that because a medical man has an M.D. degree therefore he is capable of taking charge of the Lambeth Infirmary, which is really a hospital with over 600 beds. It is also most stultifying to the board itself, for if the members had originally intended to limit the candidates in this particular way they would have said so in their advertisement. Why, then, should this committee override the board? The committee also fixed the minimum age at twenty-eight. I hope you will not think that I write this as a disappointed candidate. Personally, it makes very little difference to me; but I think that such peculiar methods of selection ought to be exposed, for if this is taken as a precedent it must of necessity debar many efficient men from applying.—I enclose my card and am, Sirs, yours obediently,
June 18th, 1895. M.R.C.S., &c.

P.S.—The election is fixed for the 26th inst.

"THE BOYLE LECTURE AT OXFORD."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I am very much obliged to you for indicating where I could find Professor Crum Brown's lecture fully reported. I have now read it more than once with considerable interest, but also, I am bound to add, with some perplexity. If the distinguished lecturer will pardon my saying so, his diction is not always perfectly lucid. Here, for example, is a passage which for the life of me I cannot construe into either rhyme or reason. "If we call the line along which we look during the pause between two jerks a glance-line, we may describe the whole phenomenon by saying that the glance-lines are fixed relatively to fixed external objects, whether the head is rotated or not. This, of course, means that during a pause the eyes are rotated relatively to the head about the axis on which the head is really rotated, in the opposite sense and through the same angle as the head." Now what on earth do these words mean? They are all simple, commonplace expressions, employed apparently in consonance with the ordinary rules of grammar, but the more I pore over the passage the greater grows my bewilderment. To the Professor, with the context in his mind, the meaning doubtless is as plain as a pikestaff, but I freely confess I am quite unable to fathom it. After such an admission of incompetence I am almost afraid to insist on the two objections raised in my former letter, and yet one of them, at all events, seems to me in my ignorance to be well founded. If, however, I am to be hung (as seems probable) I may as well have my sheep—provided, of course, I am not thereby seeking to trespass too far upon your kindness and space.

As regards my first objection I find that Professor Crum Brown does not assert that "when the head is moved rapidly in one direction the eyes have to move to a corresponding extent." On the contrary, he talks of fixing the eyes on a point and keeping them so fixed while rotating the head. He is well aware of the power we all possess of moving our heads while steadfastly regarding a fixed object, and yet he commits himself without limitations to the following statement: "What has been said seems to show that our immediate sense that the earth and what we call fixed objects on it are fixed is a consequence of the way in which we move our eyes, and, in particular, of the way in which, by a suitable movement of the eyeballs, we involuntarily and unconsciously compensate movements of the head, voluntary or involuntary, conscious or unconscious."

As regards my second objection I have only to add that in my humble opinion there is nothing in the lecture to diminish its validity. According to Professor Crum Brown the force controlling the compensatory movements of the eyes is