

erroneous impression of the Oxford Medical Mission. This is one of the branches of the Church in Bermondsey and its object is the special care of the sick and dying among the poorest classes. Complaint was made at the inquest referred to that patients were treated at the Mission without regard to their circumstances. This is not true. Inquiry is always made and patients are daily refused. I have made special inquiry about the child referred to. I learn that the mother was wholly without means and was supported by friends while looking for work. The child was only seen once at the mission house. It was brought again when none of the medical staff were present and the mother appears to have been referred by the clergyman to the nearest practitioner. I may say that in any case you cannot call this an "abuse" of a medical charity, seeing that the funds are almost wholly provided by the secretary and a few Oxford men who know perfectly well how their money is used. When the Mission was started last winter I called on a number of the local medical men and said we were most anxious not to interfere with their practice and that if ever they pointed out to us a case of undeserved treatment we would stop it at once. We have had no complaint and one leading medical man has given us most valuable help.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
JOHN STANSFELD, M.A. Oxon., M.R.C.S. Eng.,
Nov. 9th, 1898. L.R.C.P. Lond.

"THE LANCET ANALYTICAL COMMISSION ON SHERRY: ITS PRODUCTION, COMPOSITION, AND CHARACTER."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—We read in THE LANCET of Nov. 5th a letter from Dr. H. Howard Murphy respecting your very able article on the above-named subject. Dr. Murphy says that having questioned several friends "in the trade" he is assured that the blending of sherry is essential and universal, and that the blending consists of adding water, spirits, curaçoa, burnt sugar, &c. How any members of our trade can have made such a statement as this surpasses our understanding, for, speaking with many years' experience, we are in a position to say that Dr. Murphy has been grossly misled.

We are sherry shippers and have the pleasure of shipping Jerez wine—sherry such as described by your Commissioner—to many of the leading wine merchants in the United Kingdom, firms old-established and of the highest integrity, and we shall be pleased to put Dr. Murphy in communication with any of them he may wish, when we are certain they will to his satisfaction prove the sherry that they import is supplied to the public exactly as they receive it and that in the vast majority of cases it is bottled straight from the cask in which it is imported. Different vintages of sherry are blended together in Spain but not in England; blending of this kind, however, is a very different thing to the mixing of wine with the ingredients named by Dr. Murphy's informants.

We trust that Dr. Murphy will investigate the matter further, when we are convinced that he will be satisfied that he can with every confidence recommend the wine, upon which we are, indeed, glad to see you have been able to report so favourably.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,
WILLIAMS AND HUMBERT.

17, Mincing-lane, E.C., Nov. 7th, 1898.

P.S.—We take this opportunity of pointing out, also, that in a paragraph in the *St. James's Gazette* of Nov. 3rd it is stated that fine sherries are not to be obtained at a price which brings them within the reach of all and that fiery blends coming *viâ* Hamburg take the place of choice dinner sherry. This is not so. Genuine and good sherry is now cheap and the most humble cellar could contain a small stock, and, moreover, Cadiz wine is now lower in price than any blend coming from Hamburg; so that there could be no object in importing from that port. We have the best authority for saying that the amount of white wine now coming from Hamburg to the United Kingdom is infinitesimal.

THE MOSQUITO AND DRINKING WATER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Is it advisable to allow the mosquito to have access to drinking water? In view of recent research work I should certainly think not. And when the water-supply is in

the vicinity of dwellings the recent work connecting the mosquito with malaria appears to discountenance such a proceeding. But apparently this view of the matter is not accepted by all tropical practitioners, for I know at least one gentleman who advocates that mosquitoes should be encouraged to breed in water-supply, on the ground that by devouring any organic matter which may be present the larvæ purify the water. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Nov. 5th, 1898.

C. H. E.

THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL AND THE UNQUALIFIED ASSISTANTS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Am I mistaken or is it really the case that in spite of its regulations the General Medical Council will not take the initiative in enforcing their observance? I am informed that any grievance which one practitioner may have against another in the matter of unqualified assistants will receive no attention if reported to the Council. Or, to be plainer, the Council will simply act as a tribunal before which a case of the kind may be brought, but the conduct of the case and the expenses thereof are left to the complainant. The Pharmaceutical Society protects those whom it registers and on information investigates and prosecutes offenders. Surely registered medical men merit the same protection from the General Medical Council. It is a very unpleasant thing for a man to have to act as his own policeman. Often among a number of medical men in a small town only one of them will be at all injured by another keeping an unqualified assistant. For two reasons he has to quietly submit to this unfair opposition. First, informing the General Medical Council privately is of no use; he must occupy the invidious position of prosecutor. Secondly, were he willing to do this the expense is prohibitive. The result of this is that the Council's late regulation is set at defiance by all who think they can do so safely.

In my own case one of my opponents employs and sends round visiting patients in my district an unqualified man. I am obliged to put up with it or render myself odious to those among whom my opponent and his assistant are popular by acting as his prosecutor. Were the General Medical Council ready to take the initiative on my positive information my path would be perfectly smooth, as, though I am the only man affected by this breach of the regulations, there are others who for aught the public know might be the informants. I also know of another case in which a personal friend of my own is acting as unqualified assistant to a practitioner who has a lucrative practice as well as private means. His salary is £30 a year and time for attending classes. Only last month appeared an advertisement for a surgery attendant "able to ride and cycle." What does that mean? Simply an unqualified assistant and the setting at defiance of the Council's regulations. The unqualified assistant would disappear entirely and a great injustice to medical men in a small way of practice be removed if the Council would do its rightful duty and enforce the observance of its laws with its own hand.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Nov. 7th, 1898.

JUSTICE.

NOTES FROM INDIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

The Plague Commission.—Rabies in India.—Madras and its Plague Measures.—The Progress of the Plague.—The New Plague Regulations.—The English Plague Nurses.

THERE is plenty of work for the Plague Commission—the only regret is that it was not appointed sooner. The immense quantity of plague literature which has been accumulated consists for the most part of official reports and from a medical point of view is of little value. It is said that the Commission will deal chiefly with the origins of the different outbreaks, the manner in which the disease is communicated, and the effects of curative serum and preventive inoculation. It is to be hoped that it will collect evidence from unofficial and independent persons. The two civil officers of Indian experience are Mr. J. P. Hewett, secretary to the Government of India Home Department, and Mr. A. Cumine, I.C.S. The names of the medical members have not yet been published here. Mr. C. T. Halifax, Deputy Commissioner, Lahore, has been selected for appointment as secretary.

Almost every week some European is bitten by a rabid dog