

his views. The patient in question, who is at this moment an inmate of St. Thomas's Hospital under the care of Sir William MacCormac and myself, suffers beyond doubt from laryngeal cancer; and this disease, not chronic laryngitis, has caused the perichondritis. What Dr. Wolfenden considered to be a large abscess and incised was tumour-mass spreading externally. Hence no pus, but sero-sanguineous fluid, was poured out. The incision would never healed, the tumefaction rapidly spread, and at this moment the tracheal tube is sticking in an ulcerating mass of cancer. A fragment of this mass has been removed for the purpose of microscopic examination, and the latter, made by Mr. Shattock, has placed the diagnosis of carcinoma beyond dispute. I am ready to give Dr. Wolfenden the opportunity of personally verifying the actual state of matters.—I am, etc.,

39, Wimpole Street.

FELIX SEMON.

ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL.

SIR,—I will ask you to give me space for the following facts respecting the behaviour of the Board of Management of St. John's Hospital for Diseases of the Skin. Since my connection with the institution I have taken, or have dictated, notes of every case which came before me. After my dismissal by the Board of Management, I wrote to those in authority and asked them to let me have these notes, offering at the same time to defray the expenses incurred by purchasing new books. To this request I received a peremptory refusal from the secretary. I wrote again, asking that some of the notes, which I was anxious to refer to, might be copied by the gentleman (Mr. Jones) who was acting as clinical clerk at the time of my elimination. The answer I received was, that I might send Mr. Jones to select those cases I was anxious to refer to, but they must be copied by an official of the Hospital, for whose services I was to pay. I appealed against this vexatious decision, and in reply received an impertinent letter from the secretary.

I make it a rule of my life not to complain, but surely the facts which I have stated must demonstrate the harshness of the treatment which the Board of Management mete out, and when we remember that on this Board sit two members of our own profession, Mr. Melton and Dr. Dow, I hope I shall be considered to be justified in bringing this before the profession.

It is most irritating to have the labour of some years snatched away from us; it is doubly irritating to know that those who must realise the full value of that labour should be instrumental in supporting the conduct of those whose action might be put down to motives which I do not care to find in my vocabulary.—I am, etc.,

T. ROBINSON, M.D.

9, Princes Street, Cavendish Square, W.

SIR,—Pray allow me to correct an inaccuracy in an annotation published in the JOURNAL on April 14th. It is not in accordance with fact that "charges were brought against the administration of St. John's Hospital, following upon various secessions in the staff." Such a loose version of what really occurred is not fair to myself and my colleagues, who were the first to bring those charges to the notice of the governors, the president, and finally the public; and who, for thus doing our duty as honourable men, were vindictively dismissed by a Board, whose behaviour, both before and since, has amply proved that we were right in protesting as we did.—I am, etc.,

C. M. CAMPBELL, M.D.

37, Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square, W.

BRANCH PRACTICES IN CHARGE OF UNQUALIFIED MEN.

SIR,—It is hoped that the General Medical Council will actively enforce their memorandum in regard to the employment of unqualified assistants; and not, as has hitherto been the case, allow it to remain practically a dead letter. The memorandum appears to me to be rather vague, and to afford many a loophole of escape for the delinquent.

In Section C it is stated that irregular practice will probably not long continue to exist, because the practitioner cannot recover for services rendered by his unqualified substitute; this argument is fallacious, inasmuch as these gentry take pretty good care to insure ready money. A censure, pure and simple, even from the General Medical Council, will mean nothing whatever to many offenders unless followed up by more active measures. Who cares for a censure? As far as I have been able to gather, the General Medical Council have as yet only struck off the Register those who had already been convicted by a jury—there is nothing at all wonderful in that. What we want them to do is to go a step further—to judge and to punish those who are guilty of professional mis-

conduct. The law provides for those who offend against public morality.

I believe the Incorporated Law Society has power to strike off the rolls any of their members who are guilty solely and simply of professional irregularities, and by no means infrequently make use of their power. Let the General Medical Council do the same if they have the power; if they have not, it is quite time they took means to procure it, in order to rid the profession of the great blot that we all know exists in our midst.

The General Medical Council must do their own "dirty work," for they cannot, for obvious reasons, expect a medical man to take the initiative against an offending brother. Many of us, no doubt, know of cases of irregular practice; but if we take the "law into our own hands," we immediately incur the slur of private malice and professional jealousy. Besides, individually, the "game would not be worth the candle."

If the General Medical Council will only follow up their words by action (on information received, or otherwise), they would gain the great thanks of the profession—be respected and revered, a veritable Alma Mater, which they ought to be. At present one hardly knows what they exist for.—I am, etc.,

WALTER FOWLER, M.A., M.B., F.R.C.S.

145, Bishopsgate Without.

COMPULSORY NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

SIR,—Dr. Philpot's letter does not touch the points which are raised in mine, except so far that he accepts a responsibility for which I did not give him credit, and which I even now think that he has done chivalrously and not instinctively.

How can he reconcile his duty with his acts? He puts a clause of an Act of Parliament in force against one delinquent without having been able to show the least ill consequences from the "lâches," while he allows the 999 other persons, who, as a class, altogether ignore the provisions of the Act, to escape; he condones their disobedience to law, and makes the dual notification a farce. Infectious disease can only be stamped out by the people themselves, yet Dr. Philpot and the supporters of the dual notification clause are publicly telling them that, in spite of the Act of Parliament, it is a matter with which they have nothing to do, that it is the doctor who has to do all. By what right can he prosecute a professional brother and yet allow the whole class of non-professional persons who ought to notify to ignore the Act and neglect its provisions? He shows that it is not from a desire to compel a compliance with its provisions, otherwise he would be impartial. He is satisfied with a single notification, he proves by his own habit that a single notification is sufficient, then on what ground can he claim a right to prosecute a professional brother, and not take note of the whole class of non-professional delinquents? The law is no respecter of persons, but Dr. Philpot singles out his professional brother and lets the rest alone. If there is a duty cast upon Dr. Philpot then he has failed to do it, for dual notification is not enforced. Dr. Philpot cannot show that dual notification is efficient in stamping out scarlatina; it is not diminished in one town more than another. The Act is nowhere in existence as a dual performance; medical notification is as beneficial when voluntary as it is when it is compulsory, provided a fee is paid for the notice. The cases are at times as numerous in all districts as before notification was observed. The house in question had been disinfected by Dr. Philpot's agents after notice, immediately before the case occurred, about which Dr. Philpot has taken action.

Does Dr. Philpot or anybody else suppose that a 40s. penalty will overcome a man's determination to remain a free agent? Dr. Dalton is not likely to change his conduct at the bidding of a professional rival; he will continue to ignore the Act, and until medical officers of health are prohibited from being in private practice such action as that taken by Dr. Philpot ought not to be. I am not intending to charge Dr. Philpot with having taken this course on account of professional jealousy; it is not his nature, of that I am assured; but it is open to the charge, and it is a false move on his part which all medical men must regret that he has made.

It will be soon enough to put the penal clause in force against the profession when it can be fairly shown that repression cannot be forthcoming without it. This has not hitherto been done.—I am, etc.,

ALFRED CARPENTER.

Duppas House, Croydon, April 16th.

* * * Owing to pressure on our space, several long letters are unavoidably held over.