

AMENDMENT OF THE CORONERS ACT.

SIR,—I see in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of February 27th that Sir Walter Foster on February 19th introduced a Bill in the House of Commons to amend the Coroners Act of 1887. I wish to point out a very important fact (which certainly affects medical men) regarding the "appointment" of coroners and deputy coroners in large towns such as Bristol. It appears by the Act of 1887 that "any fit and proper person, etc.," can be appointed coroner for the city, but that the coroner can only nominate a barrister or a solicitor as his "deputy."

It is clear from this that a medical man may be appointed coroner but not deputy coroner, and as the deputy is so usually appointed coroner when that post becomes vacant, I think our medical friends in the House of Commons would be doing the medical profession a service if they could get the clause relating to the appointment of "deputy" coroner altered, so as to include medical men as well as barristers and lawyers in the list of those eligible to act as "deputy."—I am, etc.,

J. PAUL BUSH,
Surgeon to Bristol Royal Infirmary and to
Bristol Police Force.

Clifton.

OBSTETRIC TEACHING IN LONDON.

SIR,—A perusal of Mr. Ernest Hart's interesting notes on the La Charité Hospital, and in connection with his remarks about obstetric teaching in London, has recalled my experiences of it as gained in London.

In an important hospital in London, after two courses of lectures on midwifery, the raw student was put "on the list" and went to a case of labour, which he was supposed to know all about from theoretical knowledge, and could only have the help of someone with experience if he considered it necessary to send for "the O. A.," who perhaps was overtired through sleepless nights and being called to the aid of many novices in the field of practical obstetrics. If the student were dissatisfied with this system he would go to one of the lying-in hospitals in London for a week or more, according to his means or desire for more extensive knowledge.

This is my experience of one of them. Whatever time he chooses to spend within the hospital, waiting to be summoned to a case, has to be spent in a room containing a table, two wooden chairs, and a sofa, with nothing on the bare floor. In this particular students' room was a pair of forceps which we used as a pair of tongs, for want of anything better with which to keep up the fire. There was also a foetal skull.

While sitting by the bedside of the patient a midwife directed us about every fifteen minutes to make a vaginal examination or whatever she considered necessary. After the labour was over, and the binder put on, we saw no more of the case, unless we asked permission of the resident medical officer to accompany him on his rounds in the morning.

This gentleman we saw only once more, and that was when he was summoned to a case of "flooding." Of the physicians attached to the hospital, we were not privileged to have even a glimpse. When asked whether we could see the obstetric instruments, we were told we should ask for special permission.

At the end of the week we left with a certificate of having attended as many cases of labour as occurred during that week, qualified to undertake anything required in obstetrics. I may mention that my fellow student came from Cambridge, where apparently there are no means of obtaining a practical knowledge of obstetrics.—I am, etc.,

MEDICUS.

A JOURNALISTIC OUTRAGE.

SIR,—I am surprised to find that a contemporary of yours called the *Gentlewoman* publishes each week a column entitled "Medicos under the Microscope," which gives an account and portrait of some more or less known surgeon or physician in London. In spite of the editorial statement at the head of the column, "that the subjects have had no hand in their preparation, nor even knowledge of their production," I think their professional brothers would like some assurance from these gentlemen that these descriptions are in fact published without their own co-operation. If men of good professional reputation permit such puffs to appear in a "lady's" newspaper, I fail to see how the rank-and-file can be expected to

refrain from undignified methods of self-advertisement.—I am, etc.,

Westerham, Kent.

ARTHUR MAUDE.

** The whole series of articles is most objectionable. It was begun, and is we believe being carried on, in face of energetic protests on the part of gentlemen whose sense of propriety it outrages, and who vainly sought legal protection from this infringement of their privacy, and the imputations to which it gives rise on their professional honour. It is a grave defect of the law that it does not protect medical men from the obtrusive and offensive publicity inflicted on them against their will, and it is a great reflection on the courtesy and good feeling of the persons editorially responsible that they should thus run counter to the rules of good taste and propriety in introducing the reporter into the consulting rooms of their victims, and inflicting this unsought and ill-bred advertisement and criticism. Something beyond protest is needed to check this most offensive development of the New Journalism, and it is a question worth discussing what course of action is best suited to the circumstances. If, however, it were publicly stigmatised as it deserves, this form of proceeding might cease even to be thought profitable. It seems desirable that the gentlemen whose names and personality have been made thus free with, should make a united public protest. The first victim was, we believe, the President of the Royal College of Physicians.

COUNTY GALWAY INFIRMARY.

SIR,—As one of the "two doctors" referred to in Professor R. J. Anderson's letter in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of February 20th, I trust you will afford me space for reply.

1. Dr. Anderson suggests that the "letter published in the Blue Book" was sent to the Queen's College Commission in 1885, and that consequently we were guilty of inconsistency—to use a mild term—when in 1887 we were candidates for the vacant surgery of the County Infirmary.

He suppresses that the letter was written in 1878 to the President of the College, published by him in his annual report; that the Government took no steps in the matter; and that, legislation not having taken place, the surgery could only be filled on the old lines.

2. It is not the fact that "the same two doctors opposed the presentment."

3. Dr. Anderson suggests that an offer to take charge on equal terms and with patients under entire control was made to the professors of the medical faculty by the governors of the infirmary.

He suppresses, although having been a member of the College Council at the time he knows, that:

a. The medical professors offered to act if the governors would place the medical and surgical charge of the institution under their care, on equal terms and with equal rights.

b. That the governors refused, and would only admit the professors under Dr. Colahan.

c. That the governors had passed a resolution forbidding any operation to be performed except by the "surgeon in charge."

d. That the offer he alludes to was a scheme drawn up by Dr. Colahan, which the medical professors agreed to accept, provided that by so doing they did not forfeit liberty of action as to pending legal proceedings, and provided that the governors recognised that this scheme placed them all, including Dr. Colahan, on equal terms at the infirmary; and that Dr. Colahan refused to allow this acceptance to be laid before the governors.

e. That of the "three professors who subsequently consented to act," Dr. Colahan was one, and Dr. Anderson another, he not being a member of the medical staff of the college.

4. Dr. Anderson suppresses the facts that on the application for a grant of £200 in December, 1891, the Council offered to consider it favourably if the governors would admit the five medical professors on equal terms; that the governors contemptuously refused (January, 1892), and resolved to keep the infirmary open as a hospital for pay-patients only, and to exclude the students.

5. He suggests that Professor Pye and myself, on our own initiative, approached the Irish licensing bodies, and, *mirabile*