

the other is *The Lion's Whelp*, by Dr. Gilbert Irvine (Simpkin, Marshall). These men, at any rate, write of things they do know.

It is unfair to me to quote one half-sentence from a long reasoned statement in my book, showing how club practice arose, and what are its weaknesses and its strength, and how it can be set upon a fair and equitable basis by a national service and all its viciousness removed, and then to accuse me of intemperance of language. My descriptions are given in strong colouring, I admit, but they are true to nature, and it is necessary to hold up the naked truth and tell it to the people, if one desires to see the remedy applied swiftly.

Again, I am accused of saying on the one hand that a large proportion of the profession is grossly underpaid, and at the same time using the present average income as a basis to estimate the cost of a model State medical service. Now, if Dr. Bunting will turn again to the *Dawn of the Health Age*, page 52, he will see that after stating, as accurately as I knew how, the present income of the profession, I definitely state that the profession is underpaid, taking into account the duration and expense of professional training, and suggest that one-fourth additional should be added. All my calculations are based on this 25 per cent. increase in professional incomes. If Dr. Bunting does not regard it as sufficient I am truly sorry, but it must be remembered there are always two sides to any bargain, and in my opinion we might well be content with a 25-per cent. increase, at any rate as a commencement.

Finally, in my book I have nowhere attacked any person or body of persons. I may, perhaps, for the first time have publicly told unpalatable truths, not only about club doctors, but about consultants, medical professors, hospitals, public health authorities, etc.; but I am never dealing with individuals. I am dealing with the chaos of a system which loses a quarter of a million lives annually by deaths from preventable causes, which is sweating and ruining our profession, and causing untold misery and suffering to our entire community.

The persons involved in this chaos cannot help themselves by individual action, and I am not blaming them; I am trying to incite them, and the public, to take common and united action for betterment. But in the process I am rediscovering that "one cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs."—I am, etc.,

Birkenhead, Feb. 18th.

BENJAMIN MOORE.

#### QUALIFIED OPTICIANS.

SIR,—Dr. Seymour Taylor, by pointing out the similarity of the case of the midwife and the sight-testing optician, has unconsciously hit the chief point against either.

We are rapidly finding ourselves surrounded by a number of unqualified specialists, who, it seems to me, will gradually reduce the work done by legitimate practitioners.

If each organ is to have besides its consulting specialists attached to a hospital, an unqualified specialist behind the chemists' shop, the sooner the ordinary general practitioner disappears the better for him.

I am doubtful, however, whether such a result will in the end be beneficial to the public.—I am, etc.,

Eye, Suffolk, Feb. 27th.

HENRY E. BARNES.

SIR,—May I point out that Dr. Dunn's analogy (p. 406) between the chemist and optician is not sound. The chemist supplies drugs for usually progressive morbid conditions of the human body; the optician supplies lenses for mere fixed aberrations of the eye (just as an instrument maker supplies elastic leggings for varicosed legs); the morbid cases he refers to medical specialists.

It is not correct, then, to assert that "the sight-testing optician, whatever may be said of his qualifications, is exactly on a par with the prescribing chemist." Simple myopia, presbyopia and hypermetropia are not diseases; but crippled conditions needing a crutch of proper measurement, and not medicinal treatment.—I am, etc.,

London, E.C., Feb. 17th.

CHAS. HYALL WOOLF,  
Editor, *The Optician*.

#### THE SWEATING OF DOCTORS BY THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

SIR,—If "Unitas" desires an answer to the query in the last paragraph in his letter in the *JOURNAL* of

February 11th, he should obtain a copy of the *London County Gazette* for January 9th and carefully examine, with the aid of a *Medical Directory*, the lists of school doctors and assistant school doctors on pp. 14 and 15. As it is generally understood that many of those holding these appointments are willing at present to accept the terms offered for examinations, it is not likely these terms will be increased for the lesser lights outside the school and assistant school doctors; but that the London County Council can pay adequate fees is within my knowledge, as one of the school doctors has received £3 3s. an hour for a course of lectures in one of the evening schools.

Another aspect of the question of the new system of examination is the discontent of the students with the results and methods of the examinations, leading to the conclusion that the old and experienced examiners have refused to accept the terms offered, or have been supplanted by those without sufficient experience, for questions have been asked at the recent examinations outside the official syllabus, and it appears to have escaped the attention of the examiners that the examinees have already done a day's work before sitting for the examination.—I am, etc.,

February 14th.

L. L.

#### LADY HEALTH VISITORS OR WOMEN SANITARY INSPECTORS?

SIR,—For the second time within a short period I am in receipt of a circular letter from the Royal Sanitary Institute, suggesting that I should advise my authority to accept women with certificates of "lady health visitor" for our appointment of woman sanitary inspector. This urges me to bring forward a question of importance to public health departments—namely, whether the holder of such a certificate is quite the person a medical officer of health could conscientiously recommend for an inspector's appointment?

For reasons I am about to state, it appears to me that the establishment of an examination for a certificate as "lady health visitor and school nurse" was a great mistake on the part of the institute.

The circular states that already 216 women have been granted such certificates, no one of whom was obliged to produce evidence that she had served as a pupil under a medical officer of health, or that she was equipped with a good general education. Thus, the institute has introduced, or has endeavoured to introduce, into the public health service a great number of persons who, having passed an *easier* examination, now compete for appointments against those women who have (in the past) obtained the same institute's certificate of "sanitary inspector" or that of the Sanitary Inspectors' Board. If, as suggested by the circular, my authority accepted such certificates, it must lead to a large competition for every vacancy, and therefore a lowering of the salaries paid, already (in my opinion) inadequate.

Incidentally I might state my view that the title of "lady health visitor" is not a happy one. It leads to her being classed by the people with the vicar's district visitors. Therefore she is not expected to look over the dwelling, but to read the Bible, give a tract and a shilling, or an order for coals, blankets, or groceries, and then take her departure.

The institute and the Royal Sanitary Inspectors' Board will be well advised not to invite women to take exactly the same course and examination as men for qualification as sanitary inspectors, but they should institute quite a separate examination for "women sanitary inspectors," which should be of a standard equal to that of men, but complementary and not identical in its character. For example, women do not require meat inspection, slaughterhouses, or stables as subjects of study, or such a wide range of knowledge in sanitary law, but, on the other hand, they require a sound, though elementary, knowledge of diet and sick and infant nursing.

The action of the Royal Sanitary Institute has placed medical officers of health in an embarrassing position to choose whether they will recommend for election a woman with a man's training, or a woman only half-trained for her important duties.—I am, etc.,

SIDNEY C. LAWRENCE,

Edmonton, Feb. 27th.

Medical Officer of Health for Edmonton.