

grumble if he retaliates by "paying them back in their own coin."

Of course, in many country places, where there is not a chemist within some miles, it is absolutely essential that the doctor should do his own dispensing. But in towns, where there are plenty of chemists, it is not only unnecessary for doctors to dispense, but it is unjust to the chemists and is contrary to the interests of the public. Inasmuch as it is an inducement to the chemists to prescribe. Therefore I maintain that, in the great majority of instances, medical men have only themselves to thank for this very evil which they are clamouring to stamp out.—I am, etc.,

J. K. KINSMAN BENJAMIN, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Ealing, Oct. 23rd.

SIR.—Will you kindly allow us to point out to your readers that the so-called "chemist" mentioned in the letter of Dr. T. Garrett Horder, of Cardiff, as having been severely censured by the coroner, possesses no claim to the title, inasmuch as his name does not appear upon the *Register of Chemists and Druggists* kept by the Pharmaceutical Society. On the other hand, we are informed that this man belongs to the class of unqualified medical practitioners who in this case, as in many others, thus tend to bring the name of "chemist" into disrepute.—We are, etc.,

JOHN MUNDAY,

Local Secretary, Pharmaceutical Society.

ALFRED COLEMAN,

Deputy Local Secretary, Pharmaceutical Society.

Bloomsbury Square, W.C., Oct. 25th.

INDIAN HEMP AND INSANITY IN EGYPT.

SIR.—I have read with interest the letters on the above subject lately appearing in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*. It has seemed to me a strange thing that in Egypt the natives should have the opportunities of obtaining cannabis limited as far as possible; and yet, as "Pyramid" well puts it, "be driven into the clutches of the *baccals*, who retail the vilest alcoholic compounds."

The towns and most villages of Upper as well as Lower Egypt possess one or more wineshops usually situated in a busy quarter, and kept by Greeks generally, duly licensed to retail these vile alcoholic compounds. By reason of these places, the natives are gradually being taught to break their religious vows, and the place of haschisch is "being taken by a fiend a hundredfold more potent for evil."

My experience has been that the haschisch is a harmless, nervous man as a rule. He obtains his cannabis secretly in some native smoking *café*, and, beyond an individual mental effect, the evil resulting is usually some hours' neglect of his work. He is not often the cause of "noisy behaviour or rioting in the bazaars." What Dr. Ireland says of the evils of cannabis may be said many times over as regards alcohol as sold in Egypt.

If in our zeal for temperance we attempt to stamp out a native vice, we should be careful that in doing so we do not allow its place to be taken by an evil having so far-reaching and destructive effects as alcohol has repeatedly proved to have amongst a people unaccustomed to its use.—I am, etc.,

Harrogate, Oct. 24th.

A. W. HINSLEY WALKER.

SIR.—Dr. Sidney Davies is convinced that "mania is one of the most frequent diseases of the nervous system in Egypt," but he does not mention any grounds for this sweeping assertion. If maniacs are so numerous in the country, how is it they escape observation? A raving madman is not easily restrained or kept in concealment; and the fact remains unassailed that one sole lunatic asylum, with an average of about 300 inmates, suffices for all known cases. Haschisch may, or may not be guilty of all that is laid to its charge, but, as logical people, let us have detailed facts in support of the accusations against it, and not mere *ex parte* statements.

I think it is extremely hard on a simple unoffending people—whom I know well—that quite as a matter of course, and without an atom of proof, they should be branded as guilty of "excessive venery and unnatural practices." I do not believe that in these respects they are any worse than we English people are.

The practical side to the question is that, while in deference to a mistaken idea regarding its noxious qualities, Indian hemp is sternly interdicted in Egypt; the *fellahin*, who insist on having a stimulant or a narcotic of some kind, are being driven into drunkenness. The well intentioned efforts of misinformed philanthropists are paving the way to certain destruction.

Dr. Davies seeks to strengthen his position by reference to mental aberration in the English army of occupation, and on the customary *post hoc* principle lays the blame on alcohol as "the usual exciting cause" of the affection. Now military lunacy is a very peculiar complaint, of which I happen to have had some experience. Apart from *delirium a potu*, which is a totally different thing, I am led by observation to believe that drinking has nothing whatever to do with insanity in the army. One theory is as good as another when both lack direct proof, and mine is that soldiers go mad (temporarily for the most part) in consequence of idleness. Their minds are not sufficiently cultivated to enable them to enjoy *otium cum dignitate*, and their bodily employment on foreign service is reduced well nigh to the vanishing point. They brood during their pernicious leisure time on real or fancied grievances (the latter most frequently), till their cerebral balance becomes upset. Of late years attempts have been made to provide healthy occupation for our troops abroad, but much—very much—still remains to be done in this direction. A good deal, moreover, depends on the capabilities of the station where the corps is quartered. In some it is next to impossible, for climatic and other reasons, to find suitable employment and recreation; but this is not the case in Egypt. The climate is excellent, admitting of outdoor exercise throughout the year, and there certainly ought not to be the excessive loss of service from mental affections mentioned by Dr. Davies.

In this connection it must also be remembered that amongst military lunatics there are always numerous malingers.—I am, etc.,

October 21st.

PYRAMID.

THE MEDICAL AND THE DENTAL PROFESSIONS.

SIR.—In the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of October 21st there appeared a report of Mr. Ernest Hart's address upon the "Medical Profession, the Public, and Medical Etiquette." The moment is therefore opportune to bring forward a question with regard to which the attitude adopted by the medical profession has been wholly unsatisfactory and quite at variance with that code of ethics which Mr. Hart so justly commends.

You, doubtless, will anticipate that I am referring to the treatment received by the dental profession as a whole from the medical profession as a whole. Anyone acquainted with the process of evolution which has produced the medical profession as it is now constituted cannot but wonder at the lack of sympathy that has been manifested by the mother profession to its infant offspring during its early struggles—struggles which, in many important features, bear close resemblance to those of its parent in the initial phases of the latter's existence. It is probable, however, that much of the indifference with which the efforts of the founders of the dental profession were received took origin from the ignorance of their opponents of the great influence of dental surgery as a factor in the maintenance of the general health of the public, an ignorance that a better knowledge of the interdependence of the various physiological functions, and a deeper insight into pathological processes, have since done much to dispel.

The unremitting and unselfish efforts of those who succeeded in raising to the dignity of a distinct profession that branch of surgery to which they had devoted their lives, and of those recruits who have entered that profession by the educational channels which its founders provided, have proved the most effectual means of demonstrating the necessity for its existence. The recent restrictions placed by the General Medical Council upon the registration of foreign degrees, and the regulations passed by it anent "covering" in dentistry, are welcome indications of the desire on the part of that body to foster a true professional spirit among its dental *protégés*.

An appeal will shortly be addressed to the General Medical