

Special Correspondence.

VIENNA.

*The Medical Council and the High Court of Justice.—
New Clinics.—Results of Sanatorium Treatment of
Children.*

THE fight of the medical profession against the contract system has led to a very unpleasant state of affairs, for several decisions of the Medical Council, the legitimate representative body of the profession, have been reversed by the High Court of Justice. In 1902 a friendly society was formed by bank clerks which provided for medical attendance for its members; at the same time, this society tried to engage the services of qualified practitioners for its members. The Medical Council, in a largely attended meeting, decided that any doctor accepting such an appointment should be considered as acting unethically. At a second meeting the council resolved that in future no doctor should accept a post in clubs unless he was paid a certain amount for each medical intervention. The bank clerks' club could not at first obtain a doctor, and when finally one did accept the post he was fined 500 crowns by the council. Thus the case came to the courts, the doctor refusing to pay the fine, while the club charged the council with interfering with its objects. The court annulled the decision of the council, and the appeal of the council was rejected on the ground that the resolutions of the Medical Council involved an interference with the individual rights of the practitioners and with the legitimate objects of the club. The question at present is in a very unsatisfactory condition. The medical profession cannot protect itself against "blacklegs" since the law denies the council all coercive power, and the organization is not powerful enough to embrace all practitioners.

The new gynaecological clinics are now completed. The arrangements give general satisfaction, but an unexpected quarrel, or rather difference of opinion, between the State and county council stands in the way of the opening of these modern institutes. The county council has in its function as the supreme board of health the right to send the patients to any hospital it thinks proper; but as long as the State does not pay a certain amount for the erection of the midwifery school, the council refuses to send pregnant women to the new clinics. The council is quite right in its demand, and the blame rests wholly on the State; the amount in question is a mere trifle, £12,000, and any visitors to the clinics can see that it would have been a very easy thing to save that amount in the construction of the buildings, which are lavishly equipped. The two professors concerned, Schauta and von Rosthorn, have refused to relinquish their old clinics and to take over the new ones, unless they have an assurance that the supply of patients will not be interfered with. They will continue to lecture in the old house until a satisfactory arrangement has been made between the two contending parties. This deplorable state of affairs has been the subject of unfavourable comment both in the lay press and in medical circles, and it is expected that the Government will shortly have to give way.

The results of sanatorium treatment of children in cases of tuberculosis received a very instructive illustration in the report of the "First Austrian Society for the Care of Tuberculous Children" recently published. Owing to the good weather of last spring, the children—89 in number—were able to spend five months under most favourable conditions. These were children from 4 to 14 years of age, all of them with an undoubted tuberculous affection of the lung; 34 were diseased on one side only, 59 on both sides. In 25 cases infection from the family was most likely, 28 were hereditarily affected, and in the remainder both factors were in operation. At the time of discharge from the hospital 80 children were entirely cured; in the remainder there were still some symptoms to be found. Thus, about 90 per cent. cures were recorded. The increase of weight was between 1 and 8 kilos (2 to 17 lb.). Judging from these results, it seems to be the best course to send children to such institutions as soon as symptoms develop.

Correspondence.

THE MENTALLY DEFECTIVE IN PRISON.

SIR,—In Dr. Milson Rhodes's very instructive paper on "The Mentally Defective in Prison" occurs the sentence:

The figures show that out of 183,000 prisoners no less than 173,000 had little or no education. If the sectarian educationalists who are quarrelling while Rome burns would only consider the serious importance of these figures they would see the necessity there is of impressing upon the young mind the importance of that old doctrine, "Thou shalt not."

Dr. Rhodes's figures show how great a proportion of the criminals in our prisons is mentally defective; he also shows how large a proportion has little or no education. He shows that what he is thinking of is *religious* education by speaking of "the necessity there is of impressing upon the young mind the importance of that old doctrine, 'Thou shalt not.'"

He is quite right; the results of secular education in some of our colonies seem to show how dangerous education divorced from religion is, and the general experience is that morality is not successfully taught apart from religion. But one wonders what he means when he says that the "sectarian educationalists" who are quarrelling are the obstacles to this desirable end. Is it not the sectarian educationalists, on the contrary, who are fighting for definite religious instruction in our schools against the "unsectarian" educationalists, and who are contending that religion can only be taught by those who believe it themselves. In my opinion no finer exposition of morals is anywhere available than the exposition of the Ten Commandments which is to be found in the Church Catechism under the titles of "Duty towards God" and "Duty towards Our Neighbour."

We all inherit innumerable tendencies from our innumerable ancestors. Many are contradictory; all cannot be developed. We try to choose those which we wish to grow and repress the others. In this process environment, the enlightening of the conscience, and the strengthening of the will are of prime importance; but this is education; and more, this is religious education, and it is what "sectarian educationalists" are fighting for. The most "sectarian" of them are also the strongest in favour of the rights of others.

Allow me to quote a sentence from the annual address of the Vicar of St. Albans, Holborn, just published (W. Knott, 26, Brooke Street, Holborn, E.C., page 7). Speaking of the schools, he sets forth the principles of that most "sectarian" of parishes as follows:

"Church teaching for Church children by Church teachers," and equally "Jewish teaching for Jewish children by Jewish teachers," and this principle to be carried out all round.

What these most "sectarian" Churchmen are fighting for is the freedom of all religious bodies to teach their own religion, which they (as well as Dr. Rhodes) believe lies at the base of all morals.—I am, etc.,

London, W., June 28th.

F. H. CHAMPNEYS.

SIR,—In connexion with Dr. Milson Rhodes's contribution under the above heading (p. 1568), it would be valuable to trace forward the further social history of some of the older boys and girls who at 16 years of age leave the schools provided for the mentally defective. Some work of this nature is already being done by "after-care committees." In the large towns the elementary education of this class of child is being conducted in special schools with an adapted curriculum. In compiling statistics and reporting on this inquiry it would have to be remembered that the managers of Roman Catholic schools steadily decline to send forward their mentally defective scholars for a medical examination preparatory for admission to these special schools, and the parents of such children are encouraged to defy the law when put into operation to secure the attendance of these children in the appropriate school.

I have suggested to a well-known member of Parliament that he should inquire of the Home Secretary whether the elementary school history of all prisoners under mid-age could be traced and recorded, or part of the personal history entered on admission. It is possible that many persons whom prison surgeons call "W. M." (weak-minded prisoners) have passed through special schools for the

mentally defective. Such schools have now been in operation for nearly a decade.

Probably medical superintendents of asylums for the insane would also find pertinent facts if they systematically investigated the school history of all new admissions.—I am, etc.,

STANLEY B. ATKINSON, M.B., J.P.,
Chairman of a Group of Special Schools.

London, W.C., June 28th.

SIR,—The profession will doubtless read with interest the article on the mentally defective in prison in the JOURNAL of June 27th.

After a three years' experience as a visiting justice I can fully endorse what Dr. Rhodes states.

We certainly need some change in the treatment of many of those criminals of a very low type who so often come before us both when we are on the bench and again later on for their misconduct whilst in prison. Many of these weak-minded convicts apparently never realize what they have done that is against prison rules till they are charged. Prison life does not tend to improve the mental qualities of the ordinary convict, whilst, in my opinion, the mentally defective man degenerates still more, for the ordinary present prison system is far too severe for this type of man. So long as he discharges his duties satisfactorily his mental state naturally escapes observation, and it is only his occasional outbursts that call attention to his weakness.

If the Commissioners now appointed could devise some plan such as separation of this class from their fellow-prisoners, with less severe work, or, better still, as suggested, send prisoners who are thus mentally defective, and have only committed some minor offence, to some State farm, their occupation there and the treatment they would then receive would probably benefit them, so that on their discharge they would be less disposed to return to their former evil ways, and the number of confirmed convicts would thus be reduced.—I am, etc.,

W. A. SATCHELL, F.R.C.P. Edin., J.P.,
Visiting Justice to H.M. Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
Ealing, W., June 30th.

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS AT THE CLINICAL MUSEUM.

SIR,—We have recently developed a somewhat novel feature in connexion with the clinical museum of the Polyclinic Post-Graduate College. Our museum consists almost exclusively of portraits, models, etc., illustrating the features of disease in the living subject. These have been collected from all available sources, and comprise, in addition to original drawings and photographs, a vast number of engravings, plates, etc., taken from atlases and other published works. The collection had accumulated to such an extent that it became very difficult to know how to display its contents. Although our museum, which was built for the purpose, is large, it became very inconveniently crowded. We were reluctant to put the drawings away in portfolios, where they must of necessity become comparatively hidden. The expedient devised has been to clear the floor of the museum for the purpose of the temporary display of special collections, whilst the great majority remain in drawers.

In these special collections we exhibit, in classified order, all that the museum possesses in illustration of the topic concerned. After remaining on display for a month or more, the collections are removed to make way for others. We have on display at the present time two collections which must shortly be removed, and it is on their account that I now ask your kindly aid to make known to those who have not yet visited them that they can be seen for yet another fortnight.

One of them concerns the eruptions caused by the attacks of blood-sucking insects and other parasites on the skin. This subject has been comparatively neglected in our systematic works, and I feel assured that an inspection of the pictorial illustrations which are here arranged side by side will much help the practitioner to a more definite knowledge of a really important class of maladies. It comprises many of those which have been described under such names as prurigo, lichen and urticaria, and of those to which the adjectives *urticatus*, *urticans*, *pruriginosus*, *haemorrhagicus*, *infantilis*, *aestivalis*, etc., have been applied.

Our second special exhibition is of representations of the different forms of *Xanthoma* and its allies—the eruptions which are associated with disorders of the liver and the circulation of bile elements in the blood. In this collection we show upwards of forty portraits, many of them of great interest, and a few unique. They are grouped under the heads of *Xanthelasma* and its variations, including the sebaceous and sudoriparous forms: *Icteric xanthoma* and *Glycosuric xanthoma*.

I must not trespass further on your space than to add that both these exhibitions must be removed in a week or two, and that meanwhile any one wishing to inspect them will be welcome at the Polyclinic, 22, Chenies Street, Gower Street.—I am, etc.,

London, W., July 29th.

JONATHAN HUTCHINSON.

THE PRESS AND QUACKERY.

SIR,—Writing on the subject of the traffic in quack medicines, Dr. C. Lloyd Tuckey suggests that "Parliament and the press have only to be sufficiently enlightened on the subject to put a stop to a grave public scandal." I should like once more to point out that no help in the suppression of quackery is to be expected from the newspaper press. When I have on previous occasions stated that the majority of papers, including many of those which would scorn the suggestion that they did not stand in the very front rank of journalism, are virtually suborned by quackery, I have used that strong expression advisedly. A slight study of the press will make the fact evident to any one. Many of the leading papers are deriving great incomes from fraudulent advertisements, and most of the inferior papers, following their example, show themselves willing to add their editorial endorsement to the statements of rogues prepared to pay the price; their columns are crowded with fraudulent puffs. I have lately pointed out in the JOURNAL that editors of great papers, who on occasion formerly exposed and denounced quackery, can no longer discuss the question without great danger of stultifying themselves grotesquely. They can never be certain that a puff of the quack they refer to will not appear in the same issue, and even in juxtaposition with their article. Great numbers of papers now either suppress or greatly curtail reports of the law courts in which the methods of quackery are laid bare. The Royal Commission—which we will get if we work properly for it—will, if wisely carried through, unfold the whole sordid tale, and will bring disgrace to men who, whilst setting themselves up as censors of morals, are at the same time engaged in amassing wealth by abetting a traffic not only vile, but cruel.—I am, etc.,

Earlswood Common, June 20th.

HENRY SEWILL.

THE SOCIALIZATION OF MEDICINE.

SIR,—Dr. Whitby in his letter on the above subject instances the education legislation as an example of the little harm done to a profession by its socialization. Surely this is a dangerous example to put before our profession. Those who can remember the effect of that legislation on the then teaching profession will hardly favour its adoption in the case of their own. No doubt, Eton, Harrow, Rugby, etc., were not much affected by the Elementary Education Acts, but I have no hesitation in saying that in many cases the rank and file of the teaching profession of the time were simply ruined. On the ruin another teaching profession has arisen; it may be a better one—considering what it has cost the nation, it ought to be—but it is not the same. If the profession of medicine were similarly socialized, as Dr. Whitby would seem to desire, another also might be created, possibly a better, but only on the ruin of the existing one. As Eton, Harrow, etc., continue to flourish in spite of the revolutionary changes of a generation ago, so a considerable section of our present profession would not be greatly affected even by such drastic changes. But it would be otherwise with the rank and file, to which most of us belong. Possibly we are the "weaklings who would be driven to the wall." Nothing could be more disastrous for us, and if, as Dr. Whitby suggests, this change has got to come, we, at least, can hardly be asked to welcome it. The real curse of the present day is State interference, and in the future this evil does not seem likely to decrease. There always have been, and always must be, public medical services, but the