

has decided on sending a medical man to Paris to study Pasteur's method. Dr. Ledderhose, principal assistant at the surgical clinic, will probably be chosen. Archduke Charles Theodore of Bavaria, brother of the Empress of Austria, also a distinguished physician, has arrived in Paris to study M. Pasteur's method. Subscriptions continue to arrive from societies and provincial municipalities; it would be tedious to enumerate them.

A second death has occurred, at the Hôtel Dieu, among the Russians who have been operated on for their wounds from the bite of a wolf. The sufferer presented all the symptoms of rabies. A portion of the medulla oblongata has been removed from the Russian who died last week, and M. Roux will employ it for inoculating animals.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR correspondents are reminded that prolixity is a great bar to publication; and, with the constant pressure upon every department of the JOURNAL, brevity of style and conciseness of statement greatly facilitate early publication. We are compelled to return, and hold over a great number of communications, chiefly by reason of their unnecessary length.

THE LUNACY ACTS.

SIR,—I feel it my duty to report the experience which I have lately had in certifying as to the mental condition of a supposed lunatic; believing it will afford assistance to many, and draw attention to a serious defect in our lunacy laws; and expose a grave injustice, both to medical men and to those whom they may be called upon to examine; as a premium obviously is being offered on their being able to establish the insanity of the person.

Last November, late one evening, the relieving officer of the Guardians of Brentford called on me, bringing an official printed order, signed by the Chairman of the Brentford Magistrates, commanding me to visit a very poor girl in this neighbourhood, who had been reported to him, by that poor-law official, as being insane. I was also directed to send, in writing, by that night's post, the opinion I formed respecting her condition. I reported that, although the girl exhibited many suspicious symptoms, yet I hardly felt able to certify her as being insane, but I would advise her admission into the workhouse infirmary, where she might be watched. The relieving officer, however, informed me that, as she was a suspicious mental case, she could not be admitted, there being no accommodation for such patients there. Accompanying my report was an application from myself for a fee of 21s., to which I have received no reply. I applied again with the same result. Then I wrote to Mr. Glossop, the magistrate who had signed the order, and from him I received a most kind and courteous letter, assuring me that the matter should be immediately looked into by him. In a few days he wrote again, to say that he had written to the clerk of the magistrates, and he had replied that the guardians had refused to acknowledge their responsibility, and the Local Government Board and the Lunacy Commissioners had also denied assistance. Unfortunately, just at this moment, Mr. Glossop died; but, had he lived, I feel sure he would have left no stone unturned until my fee had been delivered to me.

Mr. Hastings Draper, solicitor, of 83, Vincent Square, now kindly took the matter up, and on Saturday March 27th he made an application at Brentford, before the magistrates, on my behalf. But the decision was given against me, the magistrates refusing to acknowledge their responsibility, and also acquitting the guardians from theirs. I was, however, directed to write to the clerk of the County Board, but he referred me to Scotland Yard; and there the matter stands at present, and the reply that I shall probably next receive will probably be as unsatisfactory as the others.

The magistrates refused my application on the ground that, although the relieving officer had applied to them for assistance, and the girl, although not in actual receipt of poor-law relief, was nevertheless, virtually a pauper, the guardians could not be made responsible because she was not on their books as a pauper, and also for the astounding reason that I was unable to establish her lunacy. Therefore, it would appear that if she had been a pauper and not a lunatic, or if she had been a lunatic and not a pauper, or if she had been a lunatic possessed of means and at large, or if she had possessed sufficient, and I had failed to certify her as insane, I had no claim on the magistrates or guardians, even though I had been, in each instance, ordered by the magistrates to attend.

I think I need add little to what I have written, in order to show what a grave injustice exists, both towards the medical practitioner

and the unfortunate individual whom he may be called upon to examine; but I do not believe you will upbraid me for trespassing unnecessarily on your limited space in endeavouring to urge that immediate steps should be taken to rectify so great an evil.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

1, Florence Terrace, Ealing.

WARWICK C. STEELE.

SECTARIAN HOSPITAL NURSING.

SIR,—Don Quixote tilted at windmills and flocks of sheep; but the poor Don had a "bee in his bonnet." "Hospital Physician," in your issue for April 3rd, rides his Rosinante against something much more impalpable than windmills. Has he also a "bee in his bonnet," or does he make a too obvious attempt to lead your readers off on a false scent? Will he graciously accept a word of explanation? and will he try to believe that it is perfectly frank and sincere?

1. The object of my paper, read at the meeting of the Hospitals Association, was not to assail University College Hospital, but to convince the public that the nursing arrangements at the London hospitals are not sectarian.

2. Speaking for myself, the "objection" is to "sectarianism," and not to "Christianity." If baptism in the Church of England, confirmation in that Church, and personal conviction of the truth and reasonableness of Christianity, constitute a man a Christian, then I claim to be numbered among the friends of Christianity, and certainly object to being classed with its enemies. The real enemies of Christianity are those who make it appear irrational, fanatical, ungenerous, and unlovely. To this class belong all those who mistake their own sect and their special little circle for the broad and true religion, which seeks to include all mankind.

I can understand a narrow ecclesiastic. It is one of the privileges of a certain class of ecclesiastics (of all sects) to be limited in knowledge and infallible in judgment—the more limited, the more infallible. But that a man who has had a scientific education, like "Hospital Physician," and presumably still remembers the generous breadth and the moderating discipline of such an education, that he should claim for one sect the possession of all religious truth and wisdom—this is indeed a phenomenon.

3. Now that the real facts are known, and it is proved that the nursing at the London hospitals is not sectarian, the matter is of much diminished public importance. If University College is satisfied with its position, and with the general condemnation of reasonable men, all I can say is: "'Tis true, 'tis pity; pity 'tis, 'tis true.'" Let us hear no more of the matter.—Yours faithfully,

60, Highbury New Park.

GEORGE W. POTTER.

PRIZE FOR SOUND-DEADENERS.

SIR,—A medical friend has recently sent me an extract on the above subject from your JOURNAL, of October 31st last, from your report of the proceedings of the Council of the British Medical Association, at a meeting held in the Council-room on October 14th, 1885, in which you state as follows. "Dr. Ward Cousins brought before the Council the question of the refusal of Mr. Bartlett to give the prize of £20 for his sound-deadener, after it had been awarded to Dr. Ward Cousins at Liverpool"—it should have added, "in 1884." As this very misleading statement has led to my medical friends suggesting that the circumstances under which I took this course ought to be made known, in justice to myself, I hope you will kindly allow me to state what they were. My offer was made in a letter, dated July 23rd, 1882, and contained, amongst others, the following condition: "The award to be made during the annual meeting in 1883." No award was made in 1883; therefore, no claim could be made on me, as I never renewed my offer. I should like to add, that I decided not to renew my offer, because I was convinced by an aurist that it was impossible to obtain the amount of sound-deadening that I was aiming at, as he informed me that sound is conveyed through the nose and mouth, and also by the bones of the head as well as by the ears, to the sound-nerve; and, therefore, no apparatus affecting the ears alone could produce it.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

The Shrubby, Redditch.

R. S. BARTLETT, J.P. and D.L.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD PROVIDENT DISPENSARIES.

SIR,—Permit me, as the Honorary Secretary of the Pendleton Branch of the Provident Dispensary referred to in Dr. Orchard's letter, which appeared in your JOURNAL of March 27th, to make a few remarks with reference to the charges contained in that letter.

The five cases of alleged abuse, to which Dr. Orchard directs attention, have been cited in a local newspaper. When, however, I asked

for full particulars, and promised that, if they are furnished, a complete inquiry shall be instituted, and if the cases are found to be unsuitable for the dispensary, they shall immediately be struck off the books. Dr. Orchard replied that, in his opinion, "an investigation of the cases mentioned would lead to no satisfactory result." In this manner, serious charges are brought against the management of an important institution without any attempt to substantiate them.

The only particulars furnished, upon which it is possible to found an inquiry, are those relating to the case of a member who joined the dispensary after Dr. Orchard first laid his complaint.

Dr. Orchard is not quite correct in stating that "each dispensary is managed by a working-man's committee, who have the power to admit any person as a member, and are subject to no controlling authority." As the operations of the subcommittee, which Dr. Orchard calls a "working-man's committee," have, in all cases, to be approved by the general committee, which, in Pendleton, consists of gentlemen of undoubted social position, and embraces the names of a clergyman, a Catholic priest, two Dissenting ministers, a Member of Parliament, and two magistrates, besides others well known in the district.

The object of these gentlemen is to admit, as members only, those artisans and others whose earnings enable them to pay the necessary small weekly contribution, but do not enable them to pay the ordinary fees to medical men, without causing a great and continuous strain upon their resources. That such object is fairly carried out in Pendleton is evidenced, I think, by the fact that, after urgent request on my part, reliable particulars of one case only, out of 3,600 members, have been sent for investigation.

As to the "residuum" of the working-classes, which Dr. Orchard states "ought to be members of the Provident Dispensary," I may, perhaps, be permitted to say that we in Pendleton shall be only too pleased to receive them, if they will pay the usual weekly contribution; but this, of course, is a *sine quâ non*. That a portion of this "residuum" has already been absorbed by the provident dispensary system, is shown by the fact that some persons, who formerly were dependent upon the Medical Charities, are now members of the Pendleton Provident Dispensary.—Yours obediently,

Buile Hill.

HENRY HARWOOD.

PAPAIN AND DYSPEPSIA.

SIR,—In your issue of April 3rd, Dr. George Herschell has given a short account of papain as regards its physiological action and its use in dyspepsia. I should like to make a few remarks on the statements he has made on both these heads. First, as regards the action of papain. Professor Finkler makes an assertion, which Dr. Herschell evidently accepts, that the ferment digests in acid media. This assertion, however, is not correct. In the experiments published in the *Journal of Physiology* (1884), I showed that, though fibrin or albumen was partly dissolved in acid media when papain was present, there was no digestive action, no formation of peptones, unless the acidity was slight, equal to one-quarter of that of the normal gastric juice; and even in this case the action was very little. I cannot but think that, in estimating the "digestion" in acid media, Finkler estimated the amount of proteid passing into solution, and not the amount of peptone formed. The fact that papain does not act in acid media is important, inasmuch as it contra-indicates the administration of the drug by the mouth. Secondly, as regards the two kinds of papain, those of Finkler and Christy. There is only one proteolytic ferment in the papain-juice, a ferment, as I have shown, closely associated with an albumose, and having a definite action, that is, it converts animal proteids into peptones, with the formation of an intermediate globulin-like body, and leucin and tyrosin as bye-products. Therefore, Finkler's papain is only a less active preparation of the ferment than Christy's; for how, indeed, the latter cannot, as Dr. Herschell has stated, be considered a "true catalytic ferment," I cannot conceive. The reason given for such a statement is inadequate; moreover, it is readily proved by experiment that papain (Christy) has the action I have just mentioned, namely, the formation of peptones from fibrin, this being a true catalytic action.

In conclusion, sir, I would suggest to Dr. Herschell to try whether papain (Christy) would not give the same results in dyspepsia as papain (Finkler). I am sure it would. I would further state that, in this JOURNAL, in July, 1885, I detailed a method of the preparation of peptonised food by papain.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

135, Gower Street.

SIDNEY MARTIN.

THE medical officers of Nos. 1 and 2 districts, Tuam Union, reported last week that 33 children in their districts still remained unvaccinated.

THE REPEAL OF THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS.

SIR,—The enclosed letter of Dr. Quain appeared in the *Western Morning News*, in connection with a speech of mine here in opposition to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. I think the common-sense views of so eminent an authority, if read by the members of the profession, would act as an incentive to bring about, even now, some mitigation of the evils which must follow the inconsiderate repeal of these Acts; and I send it for insertion in your columns.—I am, yours faithfully,

J. H. PULESTON, M.P.

House of Commons, April 6th, 1886.

"My dear Mr. Puleston,—The purport of my remarks to you on Tuesday evening, in reference to the subject of contagious diseases, amounted to this. The old adage, that 'prevention is better than cure,' is daily more and more acted on by the medical profession. This is especially manifested in the prevention of diseases by the adoption of measures which check the spread of contagion. The principle applies to the lower animals as well as to man, and we thus witness the successful operation of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act in the prevention of such maladies as rinderpest, pleuropneumonia, foot-and-mouth disease, etc. In man, we see how, under judicious and proper control, the spread of many contagions, such as cholera, typhoid fever, small-pox, etc., is prevented. With this object, we have the Registration of Diseases Acts in operation in several boroughs, with most beneficial results. For the life of me, I cannot see why the foul and terrible disease, to which the Contagious Diseases Acts have special reference, should be secured the freedom of universal diffusion by being exempted from all control. Why should political interests or morbid sentiments be allowed to assist, not in checking, but in the propagation of, disease, and its consequent suffering—even death? Such action is cruelly retrograde. The time cannot be far distant when it will be regarded nearly as criminal knowingly to communicate disease to another person, whether that disease be small-pox, scarlet fever, or syphilis, as it is now to sell an adulterated article of food, or to administer a poisonous drug. Those who come after us will look back with amazement on the action, or it may be inaction, of those who allowed disease and suffering to exist and spread, which the exercise of common-sense and right feeling might have prevented."

NAVAL AND MILITARY MEDICAL SERVICES.

ARMY MEDICAL SCHOOL.

SIXTY surgeons, on probation for the British Medical Service, and sixteen for the Indian Medical Service, joined at Netley on April 1st, to attend the summer session of the Army Medical School. The introductory lecture was delivered on the following day, by Professor Boyes Smith, who drew largely from his wide field of Indian experience for the subjects of his discourse. The talented lecturer, in the course of his address, paid a very eloquent tribute to the valuable services of his predecessor in the chair, Professor Maclean, C.B., in advancing tropical medicine, and especially expressed his gratitude for the kind and ready help he had afforded himself when entering upon his present position in the school. The large number of seventy-six surgeons sent to go through the present session, has caused some difficulty in providing the necessary accommodation, and a certain proportion have been lodged in different houses in the adjoining village of Netley.

THE WOOLWICH DIVISION OF THE VOLUNTEER MEDICAL STAFF CORPS.

THE War Minister has sanctioned the formation of a Woolwich Division, of one hundred men, for the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps. The non-commissioned officers and men will be of the same class as those in ordinary volunteer corps, and three medical officers and one quartermaster will direct the company; which, for military purposes, will be under the control of the district military principal medical officer, the same way that Engineer Volunteers are under the Commanding Royal Engineer of the District.

London, Edinburgh, and Woolwich, are thus recognised as medical volunteering centres, but no reason exists why Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Portsmouth, Plymouth, and other cities and towns, should not start the same work. At first, local subscriptions would be needed to begin the movement, but as the capitation grant became available, the expenses would not be heavy.

It is understood that, during the summer months, at Woolwich, opportunities will be taken to combine the medical staff corps, and the medical volunteers, for drill and practice parades, similar to those