

This would also ensure the cases coming before the justices acting in the asylum district, who would be accustomed to the work. It would be advisable, however, to have both ordinary medical certificates filled up before the patient is removed.—I am, etc.,
Springfield House Asylum. DAVID BOWEN, M.D.

SIR,—There ought surely to be no difficulty as to the meaning of the words "under proper care and control."

In the course of two or three years' work as house-surgeon in hospitals, it was more than once my misfortune to admit a lunatic into a general ward, and I know only too well both the effect on the other patients and the awful irritability caused in dementia by the attentions of a nurse unskilled in that particular class of case.

It would be interesting to know what Dr. Snow's justice of the peace would have said from the bench to a man who had engaged a surgical instead of a monthly nurse, and had lost his wife in consequence?—I am etc.,
Bassingbourne. PHILIP H. KIDD, M.B.

MANAGEMENT OF IMPACTED LABOUR.

SIR,—Dr. W. Elliott Porter asks the question: "Are Lawson Tait's operations justifiable?" and then he says he thinks not, because he has had under his care from other medical men and in his own practice several women with contracted pelves, and in whom he has brought on labour some twenty-five or more times. Such a conclusion is simply a specious misrepresentation of what I said. In only one of my cases was there any choice between induction of premature labour, and the operation which I performed in that case, after careful consultation between the patient's medical adviser, her husband, and herself, the unanimous election was that she should have a living child. She was therefore allowed to go on to the full time, and had the operation successfully performed. Her child is still living, having grown a fine healthy boy, and I think she and her husband had a perfect right to choose between the murderous operation and that which gave both lives. If the patient, on the contrary, were to elect to have artificial labour induced at a time when the child would not live, no one could complain of the choice; but that mothers do desire to have living children is conclusively proved by the fact that at the present moment I have waiting under careful watching no fewer than three cases who prefer, with full knowledge of the facts and with the perfect concurrence of their ordinary medical advisers, to wait for the performance of the operation, which I shall perform upon them in due course. In none of the three cases would it be possible for a living child to be born.

As for the carrying out of the same proceeding for placenta prævia in an emergency, the question can only be settled by an accurate knowledge of the mortality of this terrible complication. When I repeat that I have had the lamentable experience of an association with seven cases in which all the patients have died, I think I am perfectly justified in voting for any kind of change of treatment which will offer a prospect of a modification of these results.

The quotation of any number of cases of women who have repeatedly had premature labour brought on is no argument upon the question. In these cases there is a choice: the choice lies with the patient; but in cases which are met with at the full time the decision must lie between a murderous eviscerating operation and the operation of removal of the pregnant uterus, which promises to have a far lower mortality. I do not in the least degree object to any kind of criticisms of my proposal, but these criticisms must be based upon what I say, and not upon what others imagine I say. Previous assertions as to the inaccuracy attributed to me concerning craniotomy statistics have been efficiently set at rest by Dr. Swayne, and the final judgment of the profession will not depend upon *a priori* statements, but upon the firmer basis of empirical results.—I am, etc.,
Birmingham. LAWSON TAIT.

ALLEGED INCREASE OF CONSUMPTION IN SAN REMO.

SIR,—The statement has been widely circulated that consumption has greatly increased amongst the native population of San Remo, and this in consequence of the influx of consumptives from abroad. The purpose of my letter was to elicit the proof or evidence, especially statistical, on which the statement is based. Dr. Ruata, in his letter, does not address himself to this point at all.

Whatever may be the reliability of the statistics of mortality throughout Italy, the facts as regards San Remo are as I have stated. Some considerable time since I was furnished with the official particulars of the deaths of 1,412 persons, of which 208 related to foreigners. Not one of the certificates of death was signed other than by the "medico-necroscopo," nor can I call to mind a single instance in which a certificate was attested by the medical man in attendance. In the case of 52 foreigners, whose deaths were entered on the register, there were no corresponding certificates at all; and I may mention that during the twelve years I have practised in San Remo, I have never been required to furnish a certificate of death.

I might enlarge on this subject, but that is not my purpose, which was, and is, to elicit the statistical or other trustworthy evidence on which the alleged increase of consumption in San Remo is based.—I am, etc.,
Lucerne. ARTHUR HILL HASSALL.

THE SALE OF POISONS TO IRRESPONSIBLE PERSONS.

SIR,—I wrote the Pharmaceutical Society concerning the above, and received a reply to the effect that the Society would take action against any of their members who had infringed the Pharmacy Act of 1861.

As the secretary had misunderstood my meaning, the following two letters passed between us:

1. Copy of letter dated May 23rd, 1890, to Richard Bremridge, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—There has been no infringement of the provisions of the Pharmacy Act of 1868.

But a patient of mine has been able to obtain, since July last (1889), about £20 worth of opium and morphine from three chemists.

Now, what I want to know is, whether your Society is willing to help on any movement for putting the sale of opium in such large quantities to irresponsible persons under stringent restrictions? Surely that one person can legally be supplied with £20 worth of a poisonous remedy points to the uselessness of the Act in its present form.

I am laying the matter before the British Medical Association with a view to getting it placed in hands which can procure legislation on the subject.—I remain, very faithfully yours,
EDWARD H. RYAN-TENISON.

2. Copy of letter dated May 27th, 1890, to Edward H. Ryan-Tenison, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your inquiry, I have every reason to believe that the Society would give due consideration to any reasonable proposition for the amendment of the law as to the sale of poisons.—I am, yours faithfully,
RICHARD BREMRIDGE.

It is therefore plain that the Pharmaceutical Society are willing to help forward any remedial legislation on the above point.—Yours, etc.,
Bexhill-on-Sea. EDWARD H. RYAN-TENISON.

A DISCLAIMER.

SIR,—My attention has been called to a pamphlet entitled "The Successful Treatment of Leprosy, by P. G. Unna; with Notes by J. L. Milton," etc. I desire to have it understood that I know nothing whatever of this publication, and that the use of my name on its title page is wholly unauthorised and unwarranted.—I am, etc.,
Hamburg. P. G. UNNA.

THE DISCUSSION AT THE MEDICAL SOCIETY ON ABDOMINAL SURGERY.

SIR,—I think Mr. Nairne is hardly fair in accusing the general surgeons of attacking the specialists; they have merely been defending themselves from the attack which Mr. Lawson Tait led against them, and have carefully avoided wounding their adversaries.

No doubt, as he says, it is better to be quite efficient in one trade than "Jack of all and master of none;" but it is better to be master of all a trade than a foreman in one of its branches only.

When your correspondents place the specialist's skill in diagnosis and treatment so far above that of the general surgeon, they forget that there are two sorts of specialists—the one, most eminent and necessary, that comes by a gradual but natural process of evolution from the best of the general practitioners; the other, the artificial specialist, who is so either because he is not a good enough man for a general practitioner, or thinks himself wasted as such. One of this class probably could not, as Mr. Lawson Tait would put it, make both an anchor and a hair spring for a watch—a feat that any good engineer would be quite capable of performing; though no doubt the man who had made nothing but