

It will, perhaps, now have become plain to the reader that "H. G. T." has not called our attention to any unconsidered point. His contention that the agglomerating power of the blood is not an absolute criterion of immunity is a contention with which we have absolutely no quarrel. On the contrary, it is a proposition to which we ourselves endeavoured to draw the reader's attention. We, however, endeavoured to see this question to scale, and to display it to the reader in the light of the much broader fact that the sedimentation reaction may serve as a practically useful test of immunity.

Doubt on this subject is in our opinion not admissible, for it is not possible to doubt that, given two otherwise similar animals, one of whom possesses, and the other does not possess, this sedimenting power, it will in every case be the one who possesses it who will be immune against infection.—We are, etc.,

A. E. WRIGHT.
D. SEMPLE.

Netley, Feb. 9th.

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH.

SIR,—In your remarks on the medico-legal case, *Graham v. the Tudor Publishing Company, Limited, and Another*, in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of February 6th, it is stated that Mr. Adie "ceased to be a registered medical practitioner, but so far as we can learn still retained his diplomas from the Colleges of Surgeons and Physicians at Edinburgh."

In regard to that statement I have to inform you that the Royal College of Surgeons on October 21st, 1896, after due citation of Mr. Adie, recalled his diploma and declared the same to be void.—I am, etc.,

FRANCIS CADELL, Secretary.

Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Feb. 8th.

A CENTRAL HOSPITAL BOARD FOR LONDON.

SIR,—The question of hospital management is so peculiarly one which ought to be taken in hand by our profession, that it is almost superfluous to call attention to the opinion expressed by Mr. Sydney Holland at the Hospital Reform Association meeting, to the effect that if abuse exists in the out-patient department, and that if the members of the various hospital staffs are aware of it, it is clearly their duty to approach the managers of hospitals upon the subject. The scheme propounded by Mr. Loch is one which, on the face of it, is to be looked upon with a certain amount of suspicion. But, if the medical profession is unable or unwilling to come to some agreement upon the whole question of hospital management, it appears to be a matter of certainty that the power to do so effectually will slip from its grasp.

The enormous proportion of persons in receipt of free medical relief demands attention from all classes of the community. If the working of the Poor Law had resulted in the provision of gratuitous medical relief to anything like the same proportion of persons, there can be no doubt that the outcry upon the subject would have been loud. The present condition of affairs is as demoralising to the community as it is to the profession. Since I have been examining this question I have been struck with the fact that appointments to the medical and surgical staffs are very often practically life appointments. The system of life Fellowships at the universities was found wanting, and the present system of re-election of Fellows at the end of stated periods is a much better one, so far as the education of undergraduates is concerned. Whether or no the education of medical students would not be improved by a judicious weeding of the teachers from time to time is certainly a question which merits consideration. Promotion by mere seniority is always of doubtful expediency. It appears to me to be a great opportunity for those who have the reins in their hands to show their skill in driving an awkward team. If they are unable to rise to the occasion, they cannot reasonably complain at the reins being taken from their hands.—I am, etc.,

Hatfield, Feb. 7th.

LOVELL DRAGE.

DIET IN TYPHOID FEVER.

SIR,—In the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of January 30th I have read with interest and satisfaction the paper of Dr. S. West, in which he traverses the revolutionary views of Dr. Barrs on the dieting of enteric fever patients. Had Dr. Barrs

confined himself to entering a plea for a curtailment during the early convalescence of enteric fever of the strict dietary rules which are laid down by most writers of authority, I would have willingly joined hands with him, for I am one of those who believe that when the morning temperature has fallen to normal for two or three successive days, we have evidence that the specific fever process has run its course, and an indication that we may safely commence to judiciously increase the liquid nourishment of our patient.

At this period of the fever I am in no way concerned with the evening rise of temperature, which is almost invariably present for a week or more after the morning temperature has fallen to normal. This evening rise is not an evidence that the specific element of the fever still remains, but merely tells us that the nervous system has not yet recovered its equilibrium, and upon that sign of nervous disturbance the administration of increased nourishment will have only a beneficial effect.

So far then I am entirely in accord with Dr. Barrs, but with his views as to the proper dietary during the acute stage of fever I am in direct issue. His convictions are totally opposed to the very limited gastro-intestinal digestion which, in my experience, is almost invariably present in the acute stage of enteric fever, and I feel convinced that a consent to the morbid food cravings of an enteric fever patient in the acute stage will ever be fraught with disastrous consequences.—I am, etc.,

RICHARD H. QUILL, M.D.,
Brigade-Surgeon-Colonel, A.M.S.

Chatham, Jan. 31st.

THE HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF THE FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

SIR,—Mr. Heath's assumption of the office of censor, and his irrelevant attacks upon my Election Committee and myself in a discussion on Mr. Anderson's case, rendered it necessary for me to dwell with some emphasis upon the remarkable series of errors into which he has fallen. This necessary emphasis he describes incorrectly as unnecessary wrath, and then, after an apology for one error about myself, proceeds *more suo* straightway to fall into another. It surprised me not a little to find that, although he had not known that I made a "lengthy oration" in December, 1885, he possessed special knowledge that I communicated it "in advance to a now defunct journal."

The simple fact is that after the meeting a Member of the College came to me and asked me to let him have it in full for publication in the *Medical Times*, and I complied with the request. With regard to Mr. Heath's remarks in his last letter, I must explain that the term "collegiate interests" implied election to the Council for which I was intending to come forward, and the succession to offices at the College. Mr. Heath elected to limit its signification to application for a single office, and he it was who introduced the subject of my candidature for a seat on the Court of Examiners. Although I objected to such limitation, I felt bound to challenge Mr. Heath's assertion of the superior eligibility of the candidate preferred to me. I could defend myself in no other way, and Mr. Heath has now vindicated my modesty by abandoning his more eligible candidate. Evidently feeling, however, that it was necessary to justify my exclusion in order to remove the cap which he himself fitted on to those in office, he once more shifts his ground, and proceeds to justify my exclusion by suggestion and innuendo. His words imply that while I was on the Board I was not an efficient examiner, and he bases this on official information which he is not at liberty to divulge. This is a serious imputation, serious both for him to make and for myself to suffer under, and I must call upon Mr. Heath either to prove the truth of my implied inefficiency as an examiner in anatomy and physiology, or to disavow it as publicly as he has made it. There is no middle course open to him which would be consistent with honour.

Meanwhile I must be allowed to say that any such imputation on me must be as absolutely unfounded as it is entirely new to me, and when Mr. Heath formulates his imputation and produces some scintilla of evidence, I shall know how to deal with them and disprove them.—I am, etc.,

Wimpole Street, W., Feb. 9th.

WALTER RIVINGTON.