

among us may be stimulated to make ourselves still more familiar with its teaching, I do most earnestly commend this branch of study to my fellow-workers and fellow-students. I am, etc.,

A. W. BARCLAY.

23A, Bruton Street, February 21st, 1865.

INVESTIGATION OF DISEASE.

LETTER FROM A. RANSOME, M.B.

SIR,—It is possible that the object of the paper "On the Need of Combined Medical Observation" may not be thoroughly understood by some of your readers, and disappointment may result from want of clear apprehension of the means which I am anxious to see employed.

Many important medical problems cannot be solved by detached individual observation; the weight of evidence necessary to true induction can only be amassed by associated labour. Thus, Dr. Durrant's "Retrospective Notes" on the action of remedies, etc., are valuable, as giving the carefully noted results of his experience; but they need corroboration by many others, before sound conclusions can be drawn from them. And these observations must be made with method, in concert; and must be organised by skilful leaders. To carry on the metaphor quoted by Dr. Durrant, it is not by our present desultory guerilla warfare that we shall prevail over our difficulties: our forces must be drawn together and headed by officers who will direct the operations, marshal the facts, and, most important of all, who will carefully examine our weapons, and exclude all weak or inefficient materials.

I have ventured to express the opinion that the central governing body of our Association would most fitly perform this important duty, and have urged that they should appoint a subcommittee "to devise the best means of obtaining the evidence of members of the Association upon questions having a practical bearing."

The Association is now promoting a most worthy object—the formation of a Provident Fund for medical men; but surely it would not be less worthy or less important that we should combine for other than internal work; that we should attempt to remove from the profession the stigma of uncertainty upon subjects which at the present day ought not to be permitted to remain undecided.

If the Council would take the lead in this matter, there can be little doubt that they would be well supported by their members, and a most useful society of observation would be formed. We might hope not only that a rich harvest of results would be gathered in, but the labourers themselves would get good by the labour, and would gradually strengthen and train their powers of observation.

The work, however, must be well organised, and needs careful guidance; otherwise we cannot hope to obtain that well tried and carefully sifted evidence which is required. I am, etc.,

ARTHUR RANSOME.

Manchester, February 14th, 1865.

[Is our correspondent aware that a Committee was appointed at the London meeting of the Association in 1862, for the very object to which he refers? That Committee drew up very careful schedules of queries concerning the actions of remedies on diseases; but their labours have not been duly rewarded. Might it not be well to start again upon the same basis, with any improvement which experience may have suggested? EDITOR.]

MEDICAL EVIDENCE AT CORONERS' INQUESTS.

LETTER FROM JAMES EDMUNDS, M.D.

SIR,—As imputations have been cast upon me in respect to my mode of giving evidence at coroners' inquests where the reputation of other medical men has been concerned, and as such imputations, although utterly groundless, have obtained a wide publicity, I shall be glad, as a member of the Association, if you will favour me with the insertion of the inclosed copy letter; and I am prepared to furnish evidence to the same effect from several other medical gentlemen with whom I have come into contact as medico-legal witness deputed by the coroner, and with whom I have not the honour to be otherwise acquainted.

If any gentleman feels aggrieved by my want of caution when occupying so responsible a position, I shall be happy to meet his complaint, if submitted in writing to the British Medical Association; the condemned party to pay ten guineas to the Medical Benevolent Fund, and make such other amends as the adjudicators may impose.

I am, etc., JAMES EDMUNDS.

82, Gower Street, Bedford Square, February 1865.

"22, Essex Street, Islington, February 20th, 1865.

"My dear Sir,—I well remember your evidence at the inquest of one of my policemen, whose family accused me of neglect in the case, because I did not go to see him myself about every two hours through the night. . . . I had great reason to thank you for your honest and manly evidence, and your determination to uphold the character of the medical profession.

"Believe me, dear sir, yours faithfully,

"J. B. MATHER,

"Surgeon & Division of Metropolitan Police.

"Dr. Edmunds."

A BAD LOT. The following medical officers of the United States army have been cashiered. Assistant-Surgeon Owen, 16th New York Heavy Artillery, for stealing from the United States, and embezzlement, and defrauding the government: to be dishonourably dismissed the service, with loss of all pay and allowances due him from the United States. It shall be deemed scandalous for an officer to associate with him. Surgeon J. H. Thompson, 124th New York Volunteers, for cowardice. Assistant-Surgeon John V. De Grasse, 35th United States Coloured Troops, for drunkenness on duty, and appropriating to his own use liquors belonging to the medical department. Assistant-Surgeon James Henderson, 201st Pennsylvania Volunteers, for appropriating to his own use medical supplies, and appearing before officers and enlisted men in a state of intoxication. Assistant-Surgeon Avery, 3rd Missouri Cavalry, for habitual drunkenness and neglect of duty. Assistant-Surgeon Christian Miller, of the 8th United States Coloured Troops, having been put in charge of the transportation of one hundred and fifty, as he admits, wounded men who had nothing to eat all day, as he reports, left Deep Bottom without making any preparation for their comfort or providing for them food, and when reaching Bermuda Hundred was found personally intoxicated from, as he says, a grain and a half of morphine, and a half gill of whisky, so as to be unable to do his duty, is ordered by Major-General Butler to be and is dismissed the service of the United States with the loss of all pay and allowances. Assistant-Surgeon N. S. Drake, 16th New York Cavalry, for messing and drinking with enlisted men.