

issue; and in the *JOURNAL* of October 6th, 1888, will be found a mock heroic "lay," in which, among other points, the "prior claim" is ridiculed. The ethics of "B." in claiming his strict rights, as indeed the assertion of these rights in general, must be viewed as a matter of taste, feeling, and policy, in which personal opinions may differ, without moral obliquity. We think that the supersession of "A." at forty-eight hours' notice was a piece of amazing want of courtesy and consideration, and that he has very legitimate grounds of complaint; it would surely have been possible to have given him a month's or even a quarter's notice of the change contemplated.

MEDICO-LEGAL AND MEDICO-ETHICAL.

LECTURES ON MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE.

THE third of the series of lectures under the auspices of the Council of Legal Education was delivered on January 28th at the Old Hall, Lincoln's Inn, by Dr. Waldo, Coroner of the City of London, the subject being "Death in its Medico-legal Relations." The possibility of live burial was dismissed shortly by the lecturer with the statement that from a scientific point of view it might be stated that no recorded case bore the scrutiny of inquiry. It was often of considerable importance, both in civil and in criminal cases, to determine the exact moment of death. Of the signs of death no one could be taken as absolutely conclusive of the precise moment at which somatic or general cessation of life took place. Putrefaction could not be taken as a precise index of the time that had been taken up in the process. Thus it would be impossible to say in many instances whether a given body was that of a person who had been dead one or six months. Putrefaction might be considerably delayed in the case of persons who had been confirmed alcoholics or who had been poisoned with antimony, or whose bodies had been immersed in water. The lecturer concluded by various practical recommendations as to desirable reform in the present system of death certification. One of the chief points was the registration of all stillborn children by a duly qualified medical practitioner. Otherwise the body of such an infant should be buried only upon the order of a coroner. Other suggestions were made as to the cases that should be investigated by the coroner.

BREACH OF A COLLIERY CONTRACT.

ON January 23rd a case of a somewhat unfortunate character was heard at the Flint County Court, the parties represented in the proceedings being Dr. Lunt of Mold on the one side, and Dr. T. Forcer Williams and the Phoenix Collieries on the other, with the owner of the colliery as nominal defendant in the middle. The particulars of the case, as derived from the *Liverpool Mercury*, are as follows: Dr. Lunt of Mold after a preliminary period of some nine months' work as Surgeon of the Phoenix Colliery, in succession to the late Dr. Roberts of Leeswood, asked for the signature of a definite contract, of which one clause stipulated for six months' notice on either side. At a meeting of the men this proposition was accepted, and the underground manager was authorized to sign such a contract with Dr. Lunt on behalf of the men. This he did. Meanwhile, however, the men seem to have altered their minds for some reason, and a ballot was taken, which resulted in Dr. T. Forcer Williams being elected in place of Dr. Lunt. Thereon the men's committee sent Dr. Lunt a fortnight's notice, which he refused to accept. Eventually he claimed from the mine owner a sum of some £30, which the latter had in his hands as treasurer of the men's sick fund payments. This sum Dr. Lunt claimed to be due to him in lieu of the stipulated notice. On the other hand Dr. Forcer Williams also claimed it on the ground that he was the duly-elected surgeon of the colliery. The colliery owner paid the money into court, and in the event the judge ordered it to be paid over to Dr. Lunt without costs. To the colliery owner, for whom he said he was sorry, he allowed the costs of the day, but he refused them to Dr. Forcer Williams.

CORONERS AND MEDICAL WITNESSES.

MEMBER sends us a cutting from the *Dorset and Somerset Standard* with an account of an inquest held concerning the sudden death of a man aged 41. On the evening of his death he was in excellent spirits, talking and laughing and joking. He had his supper and afterwards went to the closet in the back yard of the house in which he lived. Shortly afterwards he was found there by a friend, and bleeding from his nose and face caused by a fall from the seat. He was carried into the house, where he died almost at once. A doctor who had attended him previously for sciatica and lumbago was called and pronounced life extinct, and very properly declined to certify as to the cause of death. No medical evidence was called, and in a somewhat prolonged and contradictory speech the coroner said "that he did not propose to call any medical evidence, and that in his large experience he never called a doctor as a witness unless it was absolutely necessary, as he knew he could always depend upon an intelligent jury coming to a satisfactory conclusion. It was simply absurd for medical men to require a fee to tell them what they already knew, and that they must consider economy and not waste guineas and pounds." It was given in evidence that the deceased had suffered from sciatica and lumbago. The coroner, in summing up, said there was no doubt that in consequence of deceased's illness he had become much debilitated; that the blood was caused by the fall; and that in his opinion the deceased had died from syncope or heart failure. The intelligent jury agreed, and the inquest was concluded.

*** It seems on this occasion that the coroner acted as judge, medical witness, and jury, and settled the cause of death in a manner which we can only characterize as haphazard. We consider that he should have summoned the medical man who had attended the deceased, and should have ordered a necropsy, which would have revealed the true cause of death, when a certain instead of an uncertain result would have been obtained.

SURGEON R.A.M.C. writes to inform us that he was suddenly called from a military hospital to see a child who had been run over in the street. He went at once, rendered temporary assistance, and sent the child on to the civil hospital, where it died the same afternoon. An inquest was held, and our correspondent is surprised that the house-surgeon of the hospital was called to give medical evidence in preference to himself, he having been called first to see the deceased.

*** It is within the power of the coroner to call such medical witness as he may consider advisable to give the necessary medical evidence. In the present case he probably selected the house-surgeon who had attended the deceased child until the time of its death; the jury being satisfied no further medical evidence was required. There is no law or rule requiring the coroner to summon the first medical man who may have been called to see a case, and in this case the coroner adopted the usual course in summoning the medical man who last attended the deceased previous to death.

QUALIFIED MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AS DENTISTS.

L.D.S.—In the columns of the *Birmingham Daily Post* a correspondent raised the singular contention that a qualified medical practitioner has no right to practise dentistry, and as his letter elicited no reply we are asked for an opinion.

*** Medical practitioners always have, and unfortunately always must, under certain conditions of practice do, dental work, and a certain number of medical practitioners have devoted themselves to this branch of practice as a speciality. The modern development of dentistry however undoubtedly requires special training, and we should think it must be very exceptional for a medical practitioner who has not had special training to attempt filling or the supply of artificial dentures. In the case complained of a medical practitioner is said to "perform extractions, sometimes followed by supplying artificial teeth which he has made in Birmingham or elsewhere." It is absurd to raise any question about extractions, but the supplying of artificial teeth, "made in Birmingham or elsewhere," is unusual for a medical practitioner; still, a medical practitioner may specialize as a dentist if he chooses to do so. Section III of the Dentists Act, 1878 (41 and 42 Vict., cap. xxxiii), which penalizes the assumption of the title of dentist by unregistered persons, expressly exempts qualified medical practitioners.

OPTICIANS AND EYE-TESTING.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us a cutting from the *Standard* giving an account of the Livery dinner of the Spectacle Makers' Company. We regret to see that the Master, Mr. Alban Gibbs, who presided, announced that in future there will be two forms of examination—one for proficiency in general optics and the other in sight-testing. After all the professions made by the company, we regret to see that it has given way to the clamour of what we believe to be the less educated portion of the trade. We can only express the hope that no qualified medical practitioner will give his sanction to this encouragement of quackery by the Spectacle Makers' Company, or assist as an examiner upon any terms.

MEDICAL TESTIMONIALS IN TRADE ADVERTISEMENTS.

F. G. P.—The general rule is against giving letters or testimonials to be used for purposes of trade advertisements, although this would not perhaps apply to the limited use of the letter for circulation amongst medical practitioners only in the immediate neighbourhood, but our correspondent must take care that this limit is not exceeded.

A QUESTION OF FEES.

DR. JAMES MURPHY (Sunderland) writes: Some months ago a lady brought me her son to have my opinion as to the advisability of an operation on him. I recommended an operation and explained what it would be, the risk, etc., and the lady said she would think the matter over and let me know, and left without paying the fee. Not hearing anything further from her, I sent her a reminder a few days ago, and she called to-day and said, "I do not owe you any money; I did not follow your advice and the boy is dead, therefore I derived no benefit whatsoever from the consultation." N.B.—The fee is in my pocket at present.

THE KEELEY INSTITUTE.

DR. JAMES EDMUNDS (Kemp Town, Brighton) writes: In an advertisement of the Keeley Institute I see an extract from a letter by me in *Health* of September 23rd, 1892. That letter was written by me at the request of Dr. Andrew Wilson, and I have nothing to correct in it from subsequent experience of the treatment of these inebriate cases. But the letter was written strenuously in presence of what I believed to be an untruthful and malicious attack upon Dr. Keeley—an attack from which I desired to emphatically dissociate myself. The letter has given offence to the profession, and in deference to professional feeling I have asked the Keeley Institute to favour me by not again quoting any part of that letter. I shall be in Italy and I shall not see any of the next eight or nine numbers of the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*.

RELATIONS OF MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES.

W. W. H., referring to our note under this heading on p. 112, remarks that we made no comment on what he regards as the "most serious part of the offence—namely, the calling in of another practitioner without the knowledge of the medical man in charge."

*** As the medical officer of health had already expressed regret for having done this on the spur of the moment we did not think it necessary to say any more about it.

THE TITLE OF "DR."

W.D.C.—A Bachelor of Medicine of the University of Cambridge may certainly put "Dr." on his visiting cards.

PRIVATE HOSPITAL FOR OUT-PATIENTS.

A CORRESPONDENT draws attention to a private hospital for out-patients which is being carried on in the Harrow Road, London. We have referred the matter to the Ethical Committee.

MEDICAL ETIQUETTE.

MALIFAX.—As a general rule a practitioner who has attended a case as *locum tenens* for a medical neighbour is not free to supersede him. In the present case the patient had left the town, and so ceased to be a patient of her original medical attendant. Something would depend upon the duration of the interval, which our correspondent does not state. If this has been more than a year we think he would be free to take the case.

TGNORAMUS asks if it is unprofessional, and whether the General Medical Council has power to prevent a medical man writing a medical book for the laity? He refers to the advertisements of the *Dietetic Cure of Obesity* and of the *Origin and Nature of Man* in the *Daily Mail* for January 26th.

*** It is desirable that the public should be better informed upon many questions relating to individual and public health, and yet there are many pitfalls to be avoided in the writing of such works if the author is to escape being charged with a desire to advertise himself rather than to benefit the public. If such books are written in such a way as to avoid these grounds of complaint they may be advertised in non-professional newspapers, but the practice of advertising distinctly medical books in lay newspapers has been formally condemned by the Royal College of Physicians in a resolution passed on June 9th, 1873.

W. states that he was called in to a patient during the absence of the regular medical attendant and was asked to meet him in consultation on his return. It was then arranged that our correspondent was to see the patient in consultation two or three times a week, but he complains that he had no further communication about the case. He heard after some weeks that the patient was convalescent, and wrote to the patient's medical attendant to protest against the way in which he had been treated, and to say that he should send in his account to the patient instead of allowing his previous attendance to count as work done as a substitute. He asks whether he has acted rightly in the matter?

*** Our correspondent has a perfect right to charge for his services which were not rendered at the request of the regular medical attendant. It very frequently happens that arrangements as to future consultations come to nothing, although they may be made at the express wish of the patient and are concurred in at the time by the medical attendant. We may suspect the cause, but it is obviously impossible to complain, as the patient can, if he pleases, insist upon the arrangement being carried out.

COST OF SANITARY ALTERATIONS IN A HOUSE.

C.F.—Whether the owner or the leaseholder is responsible for the expense incurred by re drainage depends entirely on the terms of the lease. The owner can, we believe, recover from the leaseholder if the latter has a lease similar to the majority of leases, stating that "all expenses and outgoings are to be paid by the tenant." It is improbable that there is any special clause exempting the drainage or that part of the drains not under the house from the conditions of the lease.

MEX.—We cannot say what view the General Medical Council would take were the case brought before them; everything would depend on the surrounding circumstances.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

Degree Days.—Hilary Term: Thursday, March 17th. Easter Term: Thursday, April 28th; Thursday, May 10th. Trinity Term: Thursday, June 16th; Thursday, June 23rd; Saturday, July 9th.

Degrees.—*B.M., B.Ch.*: H. W. Kaye, Magdalen College; D. R. Pike, Jesus College; F. P. Nunneley, Brasenose College; F. L. Golla, Magdalen College; C. M. H. Howell, Trinity College; P. N. B. Odgers, Lincoln College; A. G. Gibson, Christ Church.

Radcliffe Travelling Fellowship.—As announced in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of December 19th, 1903, p. 1626, the examination for this Fellowship will commence on Tuesday, March 1st. Names of intending candidates must be sent in to the Radcliffe Examiners, University Museum, Oxford, on or before Tuesday, February 9th.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

Royal Visit.—His Majesty the King has graciously announced his intention of visiting the University on March 1st, on the occasion of the opening of the new buildings for the Medical School, the Sedgwick Geological Museum, the Botanical Laboratory, and the Law School and Library.

Appointment.—Dr. H. K. Anderson, Caius, has been appointed University Lecturer in Physiology, in succession to Dr. Langley, appointed to the Professorship.

Tropical Medicine.—The regulations for the establishment of an examination and diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene were approved by the Senate on January 28th.

Degrees.—The following degrees were conferred at the Congregation on January 28th: *M.D.*—J. K. Garrood, St. John's; E. M. Light, Clare. *M.C.*—J. K. Murphy, Caius. *M.B. and B.C.*—Q. L. V. Foster, King's; W. Hill, Emmanuel. *B.C.*—C. F. Hardie, Queens'; H. R. Fisher, Emmanuel; S. J. Steward, Downing.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM.

COURT OF GOVERNORS.

The fourth yearly meeting of the Court of Governors of the University of Birmingham was held on January 28th, the Chancellor (the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain) presiding.

Annual Report.—In moving the adoption of the report, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Alderman F. C. Clayton) reviewed the work of the past year. He mentioned that a professor of education had been appointed, and that there had been instituted a Huxley Lecture; the first of these lec-

tures would be given by Sir Michael Foster in the Town Hall on March 16th. He also referred to the new buildings of the University, and said that great progress had been made in them during the year, and that there was hope that there would be some regular work done there as early as October next. The income of the University, as compared with the previous year, showed an increase of £4,600, most of which was due to grants of money from local authorities. The expenditure, on the other hand, had increased by about £3,500. The gifts to the endowment fund up to the end of last September, exclusive of land promised, amounted to £390,000, of which about £17,000 was still outstanding. Already £80,000 had been spent on the new buildings, and a sum of £183,000 was invested in properties and other securities.

The Principal, Sir Oliver Lodge, in seconding the adoption of the report, said that it had been contemplated that a large and influential deputation, which should represent all the universities of the United Kingdom, should wait on the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the purpose of getting a sum voted every year to be devoted to higher education. He thought that possibly one to two millions would be required. He explained that the duties of the new chair of education were not to be confined to the ordinary educational work which was carried on in the University, but the education of a much wider district. He commended the idea of Bishop Knox, who suggested that the country should be divided into a sort of educational heptarchy, each province being presided over by its own university. The establishment of a system of inspection and examination of secondary schools seemed to him to be necessary.

The Chancellor of the University said that it would be a great pity if, in any application which was made to the Government, any idea that would dispense individuals from their personal duty in the matter should arise. He pointed out that if any attempt were made to throw the whole charge upon the Government, they would thereby lose for themselves all that they gained by the local patriotism which was being evoked, by the local self-denial and earnest interest which followed upon it.

Both the Chancellor and the Principal in their speeches made reference to the desirability of providing residential hostels for the students and of obtaining more land for athletic purposes.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY.

MESSRS. E. M. ASHCROFT AND H. THORP obtained the Diploma in Public Health at the Examination held in January, 1904. In future two examinations will be held annually instead of one as heretofore.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.

The ordinary quarterly comitia was held at the College on Thursday, January 28th, the President Sir W. S. Church, Bart., in the chair.

The Horace Dobell Lecture.

The President announced that Dr. Klein, F.R.S., would give the first Horace Dobell Research Lecture on November 22nd, 1904, and that Dr. Payne had been reappointed FitzPatrick lecturer for the ensuing year.

The College Seal was set to a "Declaration of Trust" accepting on the part of the College a sum of £500 Consols in trust to endow, for a term of years, a lectureship at the College, to be called "The Dr. Horace Dobell Research Lectureship" the conditions having been already agreed upon.

Members.

The following gentlemen were admitted as Members: S. J. Aarons, M.D. Edin., D. Forsyth, M.D. Lond., L.R.C.P., A. E. Jones, M.D. Lond., L.R.C.P., L. M. Scott, M.A., M.D. Aberd.

Licences and Diplomas.

The Licentiatehip of the College was granted to 112 gentlemen. In conjunction with the Royal College of Surgeons the diploma in public health was awarded to the following gentlemen: J. F. E. Bridger, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., A. Caddy, M.D., B.S. Lond., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., A. G. Caldwell, M.D., B.Ch., R.U.I., J. W. E. Cole, B.C. Cantab., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., B. H. Comerford, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., A. S. David, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., A. S. Dowton, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., L. W. Dryland, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., G. Elliott, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., A. R. Falconer, M.B., B.Ch., New Zeal., E. C. Freeman, Major R.A.M.C., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., G. D. Freer, M.B. Lond., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., D. A. Hughes, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., M. B. Ker, Major I.M.S., M.B., C.M. Edin., J. E. Linnell, M.B., B.C. Cantab., B. R. Lloyd, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., S. I. Pritchett, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., C. Ryley, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., A. E. Smithson, Major R.A.M.C., M.B., B.C. Cantab., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., P. T. H. Stedman, M.B. Lond., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., A. H. Thomas, L.S.A., G. S. Wallace, M.B., Ch.B. Glasg., E. C. Watts, M.D., C.M. Edin., F.R.C.S. Edin.

Oliver Foundation.

Dr. George Oliver offered to present £2,000 to the College in trust to endow a lectureship or prize, with a view to encourage the application of physiological knowledge to the prevention and cure of disease and the prolongation of life.

The offer was accepted, and a cordial vote of thanks to Dr. Oliver for his generous gift was passed with acclamation.

Class Experiments on Animals.

A communication was received from the Home Secretary asking the opinion of the College on the question whether experiments on living animals before classes are necessary for the adequate teaching of pharmacology.

A committee was appointed to consider the question and to report further to the College.

Physical Deterioration Committee.

In response to a request from the Secretary of the "Physical Deterioration Committee" of the Privy Council asking the College to nominate a physician to give evidence, Drs. Eustace Smith, Ashby, and Robert Hutchison were nominated to give evidence on the questions of the nutrition of young children amongst the poor and the deleterious effects arising from the use of artificial foods. It was left to the President to further nominate a physician to give evidence as to lunacy amongst the poorer classes.

A further report, dated December 17th last, was received from the Committee appointed July 2nd, 1903, "On the Physical Disability of Army Recruits."

After carefully considering the supplementary matter thus furnished the Committee adopted the following resolutions, and suggested to the College that they should form the substance of the reply to be sent to Mr. FitzRoy's communication: