

SHIP SURGEONS.

SIR,—As one of the originators of the scheme for the amelioration of the lot of ship surgeons, I cannot allow Dr. Hadfield's letter published in the *JOURNAL* of January 7th to pass unchallenged. In his very able and concise summary of the conditions of surgeons in the mercantile marine published some time last July, he fully admitted the need for reform, but concluded by belittling the efforts of those attempting to bring this about. From his closing paragraph it must have been quite evident to any reader of both communications that Dr. Hadfield had entirely failed to grasp the import of what he termed "the manifesto" of "a warlike committee." His attention was drawn to this fact publicly in the *JOURNAL* by Dr. J. F. Elliott, acting as honorary secretary to the provisional scheme, and also by myself in a personal communication.

Dr. Hadfield's recent communication further emphasizes his original misconception, as I fail to see any clause relative to the "coercing of shipowners" in the proposed improvements made public last July.

It remains to be seen whether the new scheme initiated by the Orient Line will stand the test of time and competition. More especially when the competing company—P. and O.—refused to fall into line with it. Experience in the past has never shown shipowners to be philanthropists in regard to their medical employees any more than any other commercial firm, and there is no reason why this should be expected of them. They are engaged in business and conduct their steamers on business principles which are largely governed by the effect of competition. The new system of payment of fees for services rendered by the surgeons penalizes the Orient Company's ships in so far as P. and O. ships are concerned where services are rendered gratuitously—at any rate in the eyes of the managers.

Either there is room for improvement or there is not. The recent correspondence seems to point to the former, and the sooner this is obtained by universal combination throughout the profession, the better will it be for all concerned, including also the shipowner and travelling public. Attempts on the part of surgeons in individual companies are more or less bound to be abortive. Past experience has already demonstrated this, and shown it to be another example of the need of combined union for the common good.—I am, etc.,

Khartoum, Jan. 28th.

A. VAVASOUR ELDER.

LEAVING THE COFFIN IN THE PORCH.

SIR,—Will you allow me to suggest an important addition to "Funeral Reform," which would be invariably, under all circumstances, to leave the coffin in the porch under the care of the undertaker, and never to take the coffin *inside* the church, whether the deceased died of some infectious illness or not? In summer time it is positively most dangerous to delicate and sensitive people who have to attend the funeral, and would be particularly liable to typhoid symptoms, if decomposition has in the slightest degree commenced. The coffin should be in the care of the undertaker in the porch until the mourners come out of church after the first part of the funeral service. By that means neither the mourners nor the minister could be injured. Whatever be the origin of the custom, it is most unwise from a sanitary point of view under any circumstances or at any time of the year.—I am, etc.,

February 6th.

ESCULAPIUS.

WE have received the two portions of the section-catalogue of E. Leitz (9, Oxford Street, London, W.), which deal with projection apparatus and photomicrographic outfits. The first affords a good example of the finesse with which optical projection is carried out in these days, and the "universal" outfits and massive epidiscopes which are listed must make the modern lecturer, we imagine, feel it something of a strain to live up to them. The photomicrographic section is illustrated by some elaborate apparatus for coaxing a trypanosome into vision, and a feature of one outfit is a camera having the extraordinary extension of 40 inches. A number of specimen photomicrographs are appended, some of them representing magnifications of more than a thousand diameters. The special requirements of medical and analytical work are not forgotten.

Medical News.

DR. FLETCHER BEACH, of Coulsdon, has been elected a corresponding member of the Société de Psychiatrie of Paris.

A CLINICAL meeting of the Hunterian Society will be held in the library of St. Bartholomew's Hospital on Wednesday next at 4 p.m.

At a meeting of the Royal Society on Thursday next Miss M. Robertson will read a paper on the transmission of flagellates living in the blood of certain freshwater fishes.

THE *Saxonia*, of the Cunard Line, started for a short cruise in the Mediterranean and Adriatic last week. The *Carpattia* will leave Liverpool for a similar cruise on March 2nd.

THE executive council of the National League for Physical Education and Improvement has passed a resolution in favour of the compulsory notification of measles.

THE Invalid Children's Aid Association will hold a conference on March 15th, with the object of promoting closer co-operation between the hospitals and nursing homes, having regard in particular to the continued treatment of cases of diseases of the hip and spine.

THE London County Council has decided to extend the period of compulsory notification of cerebro-spinal meningitis for a further period of twelve months from March 13th, 1911. The first notification order came into force on March 12th, 1907.

PROFESSOR ARTHUR KEITH, conservator of the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, will commence a course of six Hunterian lectures on the fossil remains of man, and their bearing on the origin of modern British types, next week. The lectures will be given at the college on the Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in the weeks beginning February 20th and February 27th, at 5 p.m. on each day.

THE Milroy lectures before the Royal College of Physicians of London will be delivered by Dr. A. E. Boycott on March 2nd, 7th, and 9th, the subject selected being ankylostoma infection. Dr. A. F. Hertz, who will give the Goulstonian lectures on March 14th, 16th, and 21st, will deal with the sensibility of the alimentary canal in health and disease. Dr. J. Mitchell Bruce has selected a clinical study of cardio-vascular degeneration for the Lumleian lectures which he will deliver on March 23rd, 28th, and 30th. The Oliver Sharpey lectures, to be delivered on April 4th and 6th by Dr. J. Mackenzie, will deal with heart failure. The hour of the lectures, which will all be delivered at the college, is 5 p.m.

THE next quarterly meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland will take place, on the invitation of Dr. Edwin Goodall and the Committee of Visitors, at the Cardiff City Mental Hospital on Thursday next at 2.30 p.m. Papers will be read on the Wasserman reaction in mental disorders by Dr. H. A. Schölberg and Dr. Edwin Goodall, on the production of indigo in the human organism by Dr. R. V. Stanford, on gynaecological conditions coincident with mental disturbances by Mr. E. Tenison Collins, and on metabolism in the insane by Mr. R. E. Mackenzie-Wallis. Members will have the opportunity of inspecting the mental hospital in the morning, and will be entertained at luncheon by the Lord Mayor of Cardiff at 1.15 p.m.

As long ago as 1895 the local authority of Surbiton undertook, on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Owen Coleman, to make special arrangements for the supply of diphtheria antitoxin. In consequence of the circular recently issued by the Local Government Board (*BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, 1910, vol. ii, p. 485), the authority has now issued to all medical practitioners in the locality a letter stating that the district council has made further arrangements for the convenient supply of antitoxin, and inviting medical men to resort to the use of this remedy on the first suspicion of diphtheria, and to use it also for persons who have been exposed to the infection owing to close and intimate contact with cases of diphtheria. Dr. Coleman states that hitherto antitoxin has been administered prior to the admission of the case to hospital only on rare occasions, and that this means not until the third or fourth day of the illness.

THE winter dinner of the West African Medical Staff took place on January 25th at the Gaiety Restaurant, under the presidency of Dr. Prout, C.M.G., formerly principal medical officer, now of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. There was a very large attendance