

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

### SOUTH WALES.

#### *New Seamen's Hospital at Cardiff.*

ON August 7th the Marquis of Bute laid the foundation stone of the new Seamen's Hospital at Cardiff, in the presence of a large number of visitors and others interested.

The present hospital dates back to 1866, and consists of a converted frigate, *The Hamadryad*, which was fitted up as a hospital, with accommodation for 50 in-patients, at a cost of about £1,400. It was originally moored in the East Bute Dock, but in 1867 was removed to the west side of the Glamorgan Canal.

This hospital has been of great service to the sailors visiting Cardiff, and up to December 31st over 222,000 patients had been treated, about 16,000 of these being in-patients. The hospital has been fitted up and maintained by voluntary contributions. The present income is about £2,400 per annum.

The idea of the new hospital was originated as a means of commemorating permanently the Diamond Jubilee of Her late Majesty. The new hospital is estimated to cost when equipped and furnished rather over £30,000. Of this, £10,000 has been contributed by the late Marquis of Bute during his lifetime, and in his will he made provision for a contribution up to £20,000.

The site of the new hospital—also given by the late Marquis—is close to the present hospital ship, and convenient as regards access, but very great difficulty has been experienced in laying the foundations, owing to the very soft nature of the soil. The new hospital will have 54 beds. It is hoped that it will be completed in about fifteen months' time.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE MEDICAL CURRICULUM OF THE SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES.

SIR,—The letter of "A London Teacher" in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of August 9th on this subject would hardly be worth notice were it not that in addition to being misleading and erroneous it also insinuates that the professors, for the sake of fees for themselves, endeavour to "spin" men who have not attended their classes. As a matter of fact, the professors' salaries are independent of the number of their classes—they are the same if the class numbers four or four hundred.

Your correspondent laments that in Edinburgh University, for instance, the students are taught the views of their professors. Take the second professional subjects, and the absurdity of the lament is at once apparent. I should imagine that in the majority of schools in the empire medical students are taught anatomy, physiology, and *materia medica* according to the views of the most eminent and highly-qualified masters of these subjects, and who else should be named for each than Sir William Turner, Professor Schäfer, and Professor Fraser?

Would it be better to have students trained in the views of an anonymous "London Teacher?" But the amusing character of your correspondent's lament is best realized when it is pointed out that nearly all the professors of the subjects for the Second and Third Professionals are men from the London schools. They would make ideal examiners in London, but are wicked professors in Edinburgh. Can it be the rigorous Northern climate that has brought about their moral descent?

It is hardly worth while to point out the other egregious misstatements in your correspondent's letter. They are patent to any one who knows anything about the examinations and the examiners.

I hold no brief for the professors. I realize that like other men they have their weaknesses, and a prominent one has been an undue desire to see the sons of some of them sitting in the seat of the assistant professor. But Professor Schäfer's proposed modification of the curriculum—to forbid hospital attendance until anatomy and physiology have been finished

—has, I think, the great drawback that men are not brought into touch with the practical work of their profession until the two last years of their course. Two years is not long enough time for practical training in medicine, surgery, and midwifery.

The only alternative would be to make the Second Professional Examination at the end of the second instead of the third year of study, but by that time, even without any hospital attendance, hardly any man would be ready for a professional examination of the present standard. By all means abolish the anomaly of the Professor of Surgery lecturing to a mixed audience of second year and final men. Let him give the benefits of his lectures to final men, and let the juniors have elementary instruction in the general principles of antiseptics, treatment of fractures, bandaging, from a well-qualified surgical tutor. The student's time will not be unduly taken up, and his interest in his anatomy and physiology will be awakened by seeing something of the practical application of these sciences.—I am, etc.,

August 13th.

M.D. EDIN.

SIR,—The letter of "A London Teacher" might have been passed over with the contempt it deserves, had it not appeared in the columns of the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*. But when such sweeping statements and charges are made without a shred of evidence being adduced in support of them, perhaps you will allow an Edinburgh man to characterize them as false as far as that University is concerned. The statements that I unhesitatingly thus describe are the following:

1. "Unless a man has taken out the University classes it is practically impossible for him to pass."
2. "If he quotes other authorities in support of a theory or of another view different to what is taught in the University, he will almost certainly be badly 'marked.'"
3. "Textbooks need not be consulted at all, and candidates who follow the methods of 'English' authors and London medical schools have little chances of success."

With regard to statement number one, of course a student must attend some University classes in order to take the University degree, but that is not the point here. If this charge means anything it means that the students who take extra-mural classes, or qualifying classes out of Edinburgh, practically cannot pass. The records of extra-mural and colonial students give this statement a direct contradiction.

As for statement number two, does "A London Teacher" know that some of the gentlemen who have to examine students come from English medical schools? And, further, how does he know what men are badly marked for, unless he has thus marked them himself?

As for textbooks, probably the majority of those recommended are by "English" authors, some American, according to the recognized worth of the books.

Lastly, the professors are paid by salary, independently of the number of students attending their own classes, which disposes of the innuendo concerning fees.

If "A London Teacher" replies that he is not referring to Edinburgh, then it is unfortunate that he should have mentioned no other Scottish university by name. If he is referring to Edinburgh, then I submit that fair play demands he should give proof at the same time that he attempts to cast a slur on the honesty of examiners in a particular medical school. All examiners are human, and no doubt in Edinburgh, as in London, and as in every other school in the world, an examiner is pleased to have his own views recognized. There is no harm in that, but to say that the "views of other authorities are discounted" is as ridiculous as it is untrue.—I am, etc.,

August 9th.

AN EDINBURGH M.D.

SIR,—Does "A London Teacher" (a teacher of what?) realize the gravity of the indictment he prefers against the Scottish universities, or rather the University of Edinburgh? Shorn of verbiage, his letter can be summed up in one sentence, as follows: The students at the Scottish universities are imperfectly taught and inadequately examined.

He accounts for the lack of duty on the part of the professors, all honourable men, but how does he account for the