

Medico-Legal.

AN UNQUALIFIED PRACTITIONER.

ON November 23rd Mr. Dickinson, at the Thames Police Court, heard a charge preferred at the instance of the Medical Defence Union against one Ernest Alfred Edwards. It was alleged that the accused had unlawfully used the title "Doctor" in contravention of the Medical Acts, 1858 and 1886.

Mr. Bodkin (instructed by Messrs. Hempsons) prosecuted.

It appears from the report in the *East End News* that at a recent inquest the accused was called as a witness, and it was in consequence of a recommendation of the jury that proceedings were instituted. He had a card in his window which read "Dr. E. Edwards, M.C.S." Two witnesses had gone to the surgery. One of them, a Mrs. Cohen, saw the defendant, who diagnosed chest trouble and gave her medicine and pills. He used a stethoscope. The other witness, Mr. Tyrrell, said that "Dr. Edwards" told him he was suffering from bronchitis and bronchial catarrh, and that his bronchial tubes were closed, although witness had not even a cold. He charged 1s. for certain medicine and 1d. for the bottle.

The defendant denied having practised as a doctor. He had drawn teeth and had given medicine, but always reported a serious case to a doctor.

In cross-examination he said that although he had seen Mr. Gardner, whose death was inquired into at the inquest, he had diagnosed him as normal, although he died of syncope following pneumonia. He had had a doctor (Dr. Nunn) staying at his house, and it was he who invented the title M.C.S., telling him it meant Massachusetts College of Surgeons. He did not know Dr. Nunn's Christian name or initials.

Mr. Dickinson said it was quite clear what the defendant's intention was—clearly it was to make people going to him believe that he was a duly qualified practitioner. He now asked: Would the defendant admit that he was not such?

Defendant: Yes.

In the event Mr. Dickinson said the practice was very mischievous, and to prevent others following the defendant's example he would fine him £10 and £5 costs.

CERTIFICATES GIVEN BY MEDICAL WOMEN.

IN a nullity case now pending an order was obtained for the wife to be medically examined. The court at first refused to accept a report from a woman doctor, but after argument on behalf of the Men's Society for Women's Rights, which has taken the case up, that a report from a woman doctor was in accordance with the requirements of the law, the court agreed to accept the reports of two women doctors nominated by the court. The objection must have rested on some misapprehension of the Medical Acts; under them all registered practitioners have the same status irrespective of sex.

NURSE'S LIBEL ACTION.

A MATERNITY nurse in the employment of the Board of Guardians of the Balrothery Union claimed £500 damages for libel from a lady living in the neighbourhood, who wrote to the guardians stating that there were great complaints amongst the poor about the way the nurse attended her cases. In addressing the jury after evidence on both sides had been heard, the Judge said that it was the duty of any person in the community to call the attention of the proper authority to any neglect of duty by any person in a public position. The plaintiff, according to the excellent report of the medical officer, had discharged her duty with admirable care, but it did not always follow that a patient was satisfied with either her doctor or her nurse. The plaintiff had been completely exonerated from any blame by the guardians, and her character had been cleared beyond question. He was obliged to declare that the plea of privilege was well founded and that the verdict should be for the defendant, but he thought, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, that the defendant should pay the costs of the action.

A SWALLOWED TOOTH.

THE First Division of the Court of Session gave judgement on November 26th in an application for a new trial, in which Harry L. Richardson sued William Wallace Dickie (dentist), Glasgow, for £1,500 damages. The pursuer alleged that on February, 1908, the defender allowed a portion of a tooth to fall down the pursuer's throat into his right lung; three years afterwards, during a paroxysm of coughing, he coughed up the tooth. Fault was denied by the defender. At the trial in March last a jury under Lord Ormisdale returned a verdict for the pursuer, and assessed the damages at £750. The defender asked for a new trial on the grounds that the verdict was contrary to evidence, and that the damages were excessive. The Division (Lord Johnston dissenting) refused the application for a new trial. Lord Johnston was satisfied that the defender had suffered an injustice, and that the verdict was not only a bad one, but that it was given in circumstances which called for a new trial, and he thought he was bound in fairness to the defender to say so.

ATTENDANCE BY REQUEST.

S. W. writes that some time ago a lady telephoned to him to call on her sister and afford professional assistance, and later asked him to procure a consultant. Neither he nor the consultant have been able to get their fees. He wishes to know what remedy he has.

** The difficulty in this case is to know whether the lady who telephoned was acting for herself or only as agent for her sister. In the latter instance the sister, only would be liable. Again, if the former intended to take on herself any liability, was it simply that of guarantor, or did she intend to take on herself the whole liability? In the former case, to enable our correspondent to recover, it would be necessary, in accordance with the Statute of Frauds, that she should have given a written guarantee. In the latter, no written guarantee would be necessary, but it would be requisite for the doctor to show that when he was asked to attend the case it was clearly implied that the attendance was to be at the cost of the person making the request. Unless the lady who telephoned clearly gave our correspondent instruction to attend her sister at the former's cost, his only remedy is against his patient.

The Services.

LONDON VOLUNTARY AID DETACHMENTS.

THE inspection report of Colonel Valentine Matthews, County Director of the Territorial Force Association of the County of London, shows that on October 31st seventy Voluntary Aid Detachments, with a *personnel* of 1,980, had been registered. Some are efficient and well organized, while others are merely small classes of first aid and home nursing with no particular organization. Few are possessed of any equipment beyond a small quantity for instructional purposes. All commandants, it is remarked, should possess copies of the War Office scheme for the organization of voluntary aid in England and Wales, though it is true that neither from that publication nor from the War Office can they obtain a definite idea as to the probable duties of the detachments raised in London. Women's detachments should devote their energies little to first-aid work, much towards acquiring a practical knowledge of nursing. All members of all detachments should be able to cook to some extent, and one or two members should aim both at special proficiency in cooking and at ability to improvise fireplaces and utensils. Detachments mentioned as apparently efficient and working on the right lines are those of the Chelsea, Camberwell, Kensington, Marylebone, Greenwich, and Woolwich Divisions, and the Women's Sick and Wounded Convoy Corps, and the Jewish Women's Divisions of the British Red Cross Society.

Obituary.

GEORGE CHRISTOPHER TAYLER, M.D.,

TROWBRIDGE.

DR. G. C. TAYLER, of Trowbridge, died with tragic suddenness on the morning of November 23rd, at the age of 67. He had previously appeared to be in the best of health and was fully engaged in work, but was seized with an attack of angina in his consulting-room, and passed away within twenty-four hours. He was the *doyen* of the medical profession in the district in which he practised, and his loss is keenly felt by his colleagues and the public at large.

Dr. Tayler commenced his medical career early, being apprenticed to his father at the age of 14. He matriculated at London University in 1862; obtained his medical training at St. Bartholomew's Hospital; took the degree of Bachelor of Medicine and the diplomas of the colleges in 1866; and passed to the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1871. The career thus early begun was strenuously followed during the remainder of his life. Shortly after leaving the university he joined his father in practice in Trowbridge, and at the time of his death was senior partner in a firm which included his brother, Dr. H. P. Tayler, of Bradford-on-Avon, and two sons. Besides carrying on an extensive private practice, Dr. Tayler held at some time the position of M.O.H. to the Trowbridge Urban District Council, Medical Officer to the Trowbridge and Melksham and the Westbury and Whorwells-down Unions. His practice was a very wide one; he worked early and late with unflinching cheerfulness, devoted himself with equal assiduity to poor and rich, and was one whose experience and wisdom were widely sought. In addition to his work he was an ardent member of the British Medical Association and a past-president of the Bath and Bristol Branch; he was the first chairman of the Trowbridge Division, and was seldom absent from a Divisional meeting.

In private life Dr. Tayler was a man beloved of all who were brought into contact with him. A man of simple tastes, of unassuming modesty, of generous and unselfish nature, his counsel was sought by many, and his hand