

that subscriptions could not be obtained unless the privilege of recommending patients were annexed to them. Now I know this to be a great delusion. Is it probable that the sort of people who maintain the charities in England contribute their money for the purpose of obtaining a "privilege"? Was this the motive which prompted the gifts to the Coventry weavers—to the poor Indian rice-growers—or to the Lancashire spinners?

But how do the facts stand? I imagine that many of the privileged hospitals in London envy the subscription list and donations of the Royal Free Hospital, although not enjoying the *prestige* of a school, or of a fashionable staff. Some of the largest subscription lists in England look insignificant enough by the side of that of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, though the town is not rich; yet on the fly-leaf of its reports I read that noble sentence, "that the selection of patients who are to be admitted, shall be regulated solely by a regard to the relative urgency and severity of their ailments." In this town there is a children's hospital, now in its seventh year. The governors have no privilege whatever, not even that of electing the medical officers. The annual subscription list already amounts to nearly £1100. There is, then, no reason for the averment that the public are not ready to support hospitals for their own sake, as necessary public charities.

I must not lengthen this letter by further remarks. It appears to me that the time has come for taking the verdict of our brethren on the question; and I propose, in pursuance of this belief, to open a discussion upon it at the Oxford meeting of the Association, should there be a section devoted to the general policy of the profession.

I am, etc., T. P. HESLOP, M.D.

October 1867.

#### IS PHTHISIS A ZYMOTIC DISEASE?

SIR,—A man may as well claim to be the founder of the Pyramids of Cheops, as to be the author of the "idea" that phthisis is an infectious disease. Time out of mind, the inhabitants of southern Europe have firmly believed such to be the case; and the executors of many a deceased "consumptive" have had to pay heavily for the garniture contaminated by the poisonous breath of their friends. Even in this country the belief is not uncommon, though no scientific or other sufficient arguments have been adduced to support it.

But when Dr. W. Budd brings forward his zymotic theory of phthisis, he does so not as one who hazards casually a mere doubt or guess, but as one who is prepared to deploy a host of arguments for its defence, and to combat foot by foot the received doctrines on the subject.

I am, etc., JOHN BEDDOE, M.D.

Clifton, October, 1867.

SIR,—With respect to tubercle being a zymotic disease, I can testify that the idea existed many years ago in the mind of the late Mr. Burdett, who formerly practised in this town. It is about sixteen years since he ceased from active practice; and, as far back as twelve years ago, I often conversed with him, and listened with pleasure to the relation of his "experiences," gained during nearly forty years of hard work. He most thoroughly believed that phthisis could be transmitted by the breath from one person to another, and used to give many instances confirmatory of this belief. Consequently, he objected to any one sleeping with a consumptive patient, or to young people being employed as nurses, and insisted upon plenty of fresh air being admitted to the patient's room.

It is not difficult to believe that zymotic matter may be exhaled from the lungs of a tuberculous patient, which, falling on ground predisposed to receive it, may generate the disease in an apparently healthy individual.

I am, etc., J. M. HEWARD.

Stamford, October 1867.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, EDINBURGH.—At a meeting of the College, on the 16th instant, the following office-bearers were elected for the ensuing year:—*President*—J. Spence. *Treasurer*—J. Gairdner, M.D. *Librarian*—A. Inglis, M.D. *Secretary*—J. Simson, M.D. *President's Council*—J. S. Combe, M.D.; A. Wood, M.D.; J. Dunsmure, M.D.; J. D. Gillespie, M.D.; W. Walker; H. D. Littlejohn; *ex officio*, J. Gairdner, M.D. *Examiners*—J. Simson, M.D.; W. Dumbreck, M.D.; A. Inglis, M.D.; R. Omond, M.D.; J. Dunsmure, M.D.; P. D. Handyside, M.D.; J. D. Gillespie, M.D.; H. D. Littlejohn, M.D.; P. H. Watson, M.D.; D. Wilson, M.D.; J. Smith, M.D.; D. M. C. L. Argyll Robertson, M.D. *Assessors to Examiners*—S. Combe, M.D.; J. Syme; W. Brown; A. Hunter, M.D. *Conservator of Museum*—W. R. Sanders, M.D. *Officer*—J. Dickie.

## OBITUARY.

### MR. JOHN WIGHTMAN OF YORK.

WE receive with great regret the announcement of the death of Mr. John Wightman, F.R.C.S.E., which took place at his residence in York on Friday morning, October 18th. The local paper writes: "The great urbanity of his manner and amiability of his character endeared him to all who knew him, and his remarkable talent and skill in surgery secured him a reputation very rarely equalled. The soundness of his judgment in consultation, in both medical and surgical cases, was well known; and his death will cause a blank difficult to fill up. He died from the effects of a railway accident which occurred near Thirsk, when the night mail train ran into a goods train a few weeks ago, by which one of his legs was bruised and ultimately mortified."

Mr. Wightman was a member of the Association, and a thoroughly upright man. He was in practice many years at Cawood, but spent the last thirteen years of his life in York.

## MEDICAL NEWS.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.—The following members of the College, having been elected Fellows at previous meetings of the Council, were admitted as such on October 17th:—

Roberts, Stewart Blacker, M.D. Aber., Selhurst Park, South Norwood: diploma of membership dated November 26th, 1841

Taylor, James, Wargrave, Henley-on-Thames: May 8th, 1840

APOTHECARIES' HALL.—Names of gentlemen who passed their examination in the science and practice of medicine, and received certificates to practise, on Thursday, October 17th, 1867.

Hullah, Robert, St. Thomas's Hospital  
Marwell, Edward Cleaver, 17, Cambridge Road, Hammersmith  
Nutt, Charles, Royal Hospital, Portsmouth

At the same Court, the following passed the first examination:—

Bostock, Alfred Stileman, St. Bartholomew's Hospital  
Rouch, James Ryall, St. Bartholomew's Hospital  
Smith, George William, Guy's Hospital

### APPOINTMENTS.

OWEN, A. L., B.A., M.B., appointed House-Surgeon to the Royal Free Hospital.  
ROBINSON, Charles H., L.K.Q.C.P.I., appointed Demonstrator of Anatomy to the Ledwich School of Medicine.

### BIRTH.

AUBIN. On October 20th, at Great Eccleston, near Garstang, the wife of Thomas J. Aubin, M.D., of a daughter.

### MARRIAGES.

PIGOTT, John Alfred, Esq., second son of the late Samuel James Pigott, Esq., of Dublin, to Leontine Honoria, eldest daughter of Michael RYAN, M.D., of Dublin, at St. Stephen's Church, on October 17th.  
RAINS, Samuel, Esq., Surgeon, of Hulme, Manchester, to Catherine, only daughter of William REDFERN, Esq., of Derby, on October 9th.

DONATION.—Mr. Thomas Walker of Canard has just presented £1000 to the Sydney Infirmary.

KING AND QUEEN'S COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS IN IRELAND.—At the annual stated meeting, held on the 18th of October, 1867, the following officers were elected for the year 1867-68:—*President*—Fleetwood Churchill. *Censors*—Samuel Gordon, V.P.; William Moore, Wensley Bond Jennings, Arthur W. Foot. *Treasurer*—H. L. Dwyer. *Registrar*—Lombe Athill. *Honorary Librarian*—T. W. Belcher. *Librarian on Dun's Foundation*—H. J. Fennell. *Representative on the Medical Council*—Aquila Smith. *Professor of Medical Jurisprudence*—R. Travers. *Agent to Dun's Estate*—R. U. Roberts. *Examiners in Midwifery*—J. Ringland, Geo. Johnston. At the same meeting the following Licentiatees were duly elected Fellows:—Marcus Eustace, Thomas Hayden, James Little; and the following gentlemen were duly elected Honorary Fellows:—Sir J. F. Oliffe, M.D., F.R.C.P. Lond.; Wm. Farr, M.D., F.R.S., D.C.L. The President and Fellows proceeded to elect a King's Professor of Midwifery, on the Foundation of Sir Patrick Dun; and a ballot having taken place, Dr. E. B. Sinclair, a Fellow of the College, was declared duly elected. This was the first election held under the Amended School of Physic Act of 1867, and the attendance of Fellows was numerous, over thirty being present.