

Mr. G. F. Hodgson, Mr. F. E. Manby, Dr. Morris, Mr. R. H. B. Nicholson, Dr. C. Parsons, Dr. W. Procter, Dr. Sibson, F.R.S., Dr. W. F. Wade, Dr. Waters (Chester), Mr. C. G. Wheelhouse, Dr. E. Wilkinson, Mr. Samuel Wood.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and found correct.

Read letters of apology for non-attendance from Mr. Alfred Baker, Dr. E. Copeman, Dr. Alfred Carpenter, Dr. Matthews Duncan, and Dr. B. Foster.

Read list of candidates for election.

*Resolved*—That the twenty-one gentlemen whose names appear on the circular convening the meeting, be and they are hereby elected members of the Association.

*Resolved*—That the minutes of the JOURNAL and Finance Committee of this day's date be approved, and the recommendations carried into effect.

Mr. Hodgson then withdrew his motion of which he had given notice, relative to the annual meeting being held at Brighton in 1876.

*Resolved*—That the President-elect, the President of the Council, the Treasurer, Dr. Carpenter, Mr. Callender, F.R.S., Dr. Chadwick, Mr. Bramwell, Mr. Hodgson, Dr. Hall, Mr. Humphry, Dr. Holman, Dr. W. Moore, Dr. S. Monckton, Dr. Jardine Murray, Dr. Parsons, Dr. Sibson, F.R.S., Mr. Heckstall Smith (St. Mary Cray), Dr. Stedman, Mr. Salzmann, Dr. Wade, and Mr. Wheelhouse, be the Arrangement Committee, with power to add members of the South-Eastern Branch—the number not to exceed twenty-four.

*Resolved*—That there be three addresses, viz., one in Medicine, one in Surgery, and one in Public Medicine.

*Resolved*—That Dr. Sieveking be requested to give the address in Medicine.

*Resolved*—That Mr. C. G. Wheelhouse be requested to give the address in Surgery.

*Resolved*—That Dr. Alfred Carpenter be requested to give the address in Public Medicine.

*Resolved*—That the subject of the Hastings Prize Essay for 1876 be Diphtheria, its Pathology, Diagnosis, and Treatment.

*Resolved*—That it be referred to the Scientific Grants Committee to consider whether any other way of awarding the Hastings Medal would be more conducive to the interests of medical science, than the present one of awarding it for an essay on a specific subject.

*Resolved*—That advertisements be inserted in the medical journals that applications for grants may be made to the Scientific Grants Committee of the British Medical Association up to the 29th day of next December.

*Resolved*—That Messrs. Price and Co., be appointed Auditors for the year 1875 in accordance with By-Law 33.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CONTEMPT OF A CORONER'S COURT.

SIR,—With reference to a paragraph which has recently appeared in the daily press headed "Contempt of a Coroner's Court", the real facts of the case are as follows.

1. I had no notice, either verbal or written, that the inquest was going to be held.

2. I knew no fee was allowed in such cases, as I have given evidence several times before.

3. I have heard no complaint about fees from any member of the resident staff.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

THE HOUSE-SURGEON, University College Hospital.

\* \* \* The Coroner's remarks appear to have been hasty and unfounded.

### HOSPITAL ABUSE.

SIR,—Will you allow me to make a few remarks on the subject of Hospital Abuse, *à propos* of the recent article on Provident Institutions and Hospitals in the JOURNAL. Having given the subject much attention for now very many years, and feeling that it is one that deserves much more notice than it has had at the hands of the public, I naturally have read your remarks with great interest.

I hoped that, at the last annual meeting of the Association, the subject might have been brought prominently before the members by some one capable of doing it justice, and who would have obtained for it the consideration it deserves. Though I am disappointed, I will not despair that we shall soon discuss the question fully, and be able to offer efficient aid and advice on the subject to the public.

I gladly admit, with you, that in the last five years, hospital re-

form has made great progress, and believe that the necessity for it is all but universally admitted.

Still, though the lay authorities of some of the metropolitan hospitals have taken effective measures to ascertain the true state of things, with sincere desire to act on the information obtained, it is painfully evident that others are either unwilling or unable to do so. I can make all allowance for the amiable weakness that indisposes us to inquire whether it is one's duty to assist the poor in all their trials and with providing the ways and means of relieving all who will accept our help. It certainly allays the pleasure of giving, to find that our alms are misapplied, or, perhaps, productive of injury, by destroying the *morale* of those who receive them. Can it be doubted that it is a characteristic of our times, that people in all grades of society scramble for the endowments that were intended for others?

The well-to-do are not ashamed to accept the provisions made for the poor scholar, the poor gentleman, the poor widow, the poor orphan.

Perversion surrounds us on all sides. It is almost, if not quite, impossible so to devise money that it will not be misapplied when intended for charitable purposes. What wonder, then, that hospitals are abundantly abused?

That they are abused by all classes is beyond controversy: by the subscriber who sends his dependants to them, by the prosperous tradesman, the well-paid clerk, the better paid artisan, by "the gentleman and lady of *limited* means" (a very large class when they are their own assessors).

Let the authorities of the London Hospital ask the medical men of the East End if the hospital is abused, instead of enacting the farce of "issuing a series of questions to each member of the honorary (and honourable) medical staff" (who know little or nothing of the social condition of their patients), if they really wish to know the truth and are not content with foregone conclusions. And I may state, with all deference, that, if the hospital is not much abused now, it certainly was during the many years I was officially connected with it; and I have yet to learn that any effectual steps have been taken to diminish the evil.

Of St. Mary's, University College, and Charing Cross, one can only conclude that the lay authorities are content to close their eyes and ears to unpleasant facts, and remain deluded.

It is certainly no part of the duty of the medical staff to consider the eligibility or ineligibility of their patients; but it is obviously the duty of the governors to see that only proper applicants are admitted as either in- or out-patients; and it is only just to the subscribers, the patients, and the medical officers, that every reasonable means should be employed to exclude improper objects.

Now, I maintain that usually no such care is taken at hospitals; it seems no one's business to ascertain the position of applicants, so, consequently, it happens that only now and then a flagrant case comes to light; the governors and medical staff alike are ignorant as to the rest.

To the honour, be it said, of the lay authorities of the Moorfields Hospital, effectual steps were taken some years ago to grapple with this social disorder, and six hundred applicants were refused in one year. Now, I am sure no one connected with that hospital would assert that all improper objects are detected and excluded; but, if six hundred cases were refused in a year, who can doubt the magnitude of the abuse? I may add that the number of ineligible patients constantly diminishes, probably in consequence of the publicity of the investigation, though many have learned to evade the Secretary's vigilance and scrutiny, and have even been detected in fraud.

But, in conclusion, sir, allow me to ask the opinion of the medical men engaged only in private practice, and I venture to predict such an overwhelming wave of testimony as would silence all cavillers and demand the public recognition of the immensity of hospital abuse.

I am, sir, faithfully yours,  
J. C. WORDSWORTH, F.R.C.S.  
London, October 1875.

### COMPULSORY REGISTRATION OF DENTISTS.

SIR,—I shall esteem it a favour if you will permit me to state that I fully sympathise with Mr. S. Hamilton Cartwright's views, as expressed in his letter to you of the 30th ult. It is pretty generally known that I endeavoured, some years ago, to bring about the wholesome reform which he advocates; but I was forced to retire, because I found that I should have to fight the battle almost single-handed.

I regret that I am at present unable to take up in detail the various matters of which Mr. Cartwright's letter treats as, with your permission, I may possibly do at some future time; but it may be serviceable to the cause he advocates, to mention in the meantime that I have for some years past conducted my own practice upon the system which he would be glad to see extended, and have deputed to skilled me-