generally-accepted definition of that disease—that "gout" is a chronic inflammatory disorder characterized by paroxysmal attacks of inflammation of the joints associated with formation of chalk-like concretions (urates) in and about the joints.

Dr. Bradshaw suggests that the case was one of acute nephritis, that the deposit of urates in the tissues was the result of the suspension of the functions of the secretory elements of the kidney, whereby uric acid accumulated in the tissues and was carried to uraemia in the human subject.

A weak point in this analogy is the fact that uraemia is now generally believed to be not simply dependent on the retention of urea in the system. Apart from that, his theory of the connexion between gout and the kidney, and his attempt to isolate an eliminating organ being suspended, is not supported by the pointed statement of fact (Fig. 7) that the secreting elements of the kidneys—the convoluted tubules—were singularly healthy, notwithstanding the existence of marked disease in adjacent structures.

I would point out that Dr. Bradshaw does not indicate a single respect in which the histological features illustrated differ from the type of gout as above defined, and I am pleased to observe that we are in substantial accord in believing that the case was one of an "acute and fatal intoxication for which the labelling of medical men is singularly unimportant". One delightful feature of the Bradshawian criticism reminds one of the Shakespearean humourist who, in dealing with the Baconian theory, admitted that the plays were not written by Shakespeare but by another man of the name. —CHALMUR WATSON.

Edinburgh, Jan. 17th.

―DOCTORS IN PARLIAMENT.‖

SIR,—In view of a probably approaching general election, I am glad to see letters in the British Medical Journal urging the necessity for more doctors in Parliament. More medical men are certainly required in the House of Commons for the sake of the profession, but there are even better reasons for wishing to see them there—they are greatly needed for the sake of the country. Medical measures, amongst which I class measures dealing with the feeding and welfare of the people, are engrossing more and more the attention of the Legislature, and must be dealt with by an assembly which fully understands them.

For more than twelve years I have had ample opportunity of watching the control of medical institutions by lay and by mixed medical and lay committees and, without entering into undesirable detail, I would state my clear conviction that no merely lay body, however intelligent, however empowered to consult medical men outside itself, can safely administer public medical affairs. For safe administration of public medical affairs, I am convinced that medical men in reasonable numbers must be the actual members of the governing body. I believe further that this is as true in local matters as in local matters, and that consequently there is a great need at the present time of adequate medical representation on all bodies dealing largely with medical public questions. This is particularly the case in both Houses of Parliament, on the Privy Council, and on the County Councils.

The medical profession is by no means a wealthy one, and the number of its members with sufficient means and leisure to represent a constituency in Parliament is necessarily limited. But I fancy that, if the national need for medical members of Parliament were once grasped by the profession, more medical candidates would be forthcoming for election. It is a great pity that we possess no fund which could be used for defraying expenses of medical candidates. The fact that their presence in the Commons would be a clear gain to the whole profession constitutes, it seems to me, an obvious claim upon the whole profession to share the burden of expense. —I am, etc.,

W. GORDON.

Exeter, Jan. 9th.

SCHOOL CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL.

SIR,—I have read with much interest the articles by your Commissioner on board schools, and especially the article in the British Medical Journal of January 16th, which gave such an admirable account of the Passmore Edwards Education Society, and the work of the Children’s Happy Evening Association.

Some of your readers may be interested in a further effort which is being made by the Women’s Industrial Council in this direction. ‘The Council lately appointed, and the line proposed by your Commissioner, appealed for funds to enable it to start “recreation classes” for school children whose mothers have to go out to work, and who therefore miss home life and parental care until perhaps the late evening.

APPEAL.

The Women’s Industrial Council is anxious to follow in London the example set by the Kirchertore or recreation schools of Germany. The aim is to keep safely the hundreds of school children certain carefully-chosen children who owing to poverty or family circumstances cannot be properly cared for in their homes. Such, for instance, are those children who live alone and whose remaining parent has to be at work all day. It is desired to obtain the use of the infat departments of certain elementary schools from 3.30 to 5.30 p.m. for five days a week, and introduce to these schools to games, drill, classes in various handicrafts—such as carving, basketmaking,—etc.—in sewing, and in drawing. Half an hour would thus be set aside for airing the rooms at the close of the afternoon session. A light meal at very low prices might be provided. One paid superintendent would be required for each school; the rest of the work would be carried on by voluntary helpers, while the school premises is it hoped would be lent free of charge. It is desired to set two such schools going immediately as an experiment, and voluntary helpers are forthcoming for both. The expenses of each are estimated at about £1 a week. A sum of £100, that is, will carry on the two recreation schools for about a year. For this sum we now appeals to the public. The neglected children of to-day are the criminals of to-morrow, the wastrels, and the paupers of to-morrow. Every little one who can be taken from that dangerous and demoralizing play-ground, the street, and can be taught to find pleasure in healthy games, physical exercise, and intelligent occupations, will become, not only better and healthier persons, but also less burdensome and more useful members of society. To preserve children from evils of life is the truest philanthropy and the truest economy, and the children for whom we plead are those who are least able to help themselves.

SIR,—With the sanction and sympathy of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, President of this hospital, who has graciously associated himself with the appeal, a meeting will be held, under the auspices of the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, at the Mansion House, 3 p.m. on the 26th inst., to promote the appeal of this hospital for funds to enable it to undertake a work of this kind which is absolutely necessary to bring it up to modern requirements.

May I earnestly beg you to give the hospital your valuable help and support at this meeting?

ST. BARTHOLOMEW’S HOSPITAL.

SIR,—The hospital is the only hospital for the sick within the City limits. It is of great antiquity, and has carried on a vast work of mercy and charity, and on the same site for nearly 600 years. The value of this work will be realized when it is known that in the last fifty years of the nineteenth century the hospital gave relief to more than 7,000,000 of the sick poor. For many generations it has been a prominent centre of medical wealth, and its pupils are found in every part of the empire.

St. Bartholomew’s has not asked the public for help for more than 150 years, but now help is urgently required to meet the demands made by the hospitals, which are engaged in teaching medical science. These demands, with the requisite addition to the hospital site, will cost not less than £500,000. —I am, etc.,

LONDON, E.C., Jan. 15th.

TREVOR LAWRENCE, Treasurer.

THE POOR-LAW SERVICE IN SCOTLAND.

SIR,—The Poor Law medical officers of Scotland owe you a debt of gratitude for the zeal with which you from time to time champion their cause in the British Medical Journal. Dr. Macrae’s case is but a sample of the spirit which in many parts of this country is manifested towards the medical officers, and unless such treatment be rendered impossible by legislation the time is not distant when the services of qualified medical men will be absolutely unable to be performed in the remote Highlands of Scotland. In this connexion let us sin-