The children are in rage and filth and look idiotic. In the same street there are sober men earning only 20s. and 23s. a week”—the former man was earning 27s. per week. Both appeared as those who were informed, as well as the valuable yearly returns of Dr. Hope, the medical officer of health of the City of Liverpool, would amply repay study, and, as these all deal with facts, and facts are the most important in their bearing on the subject.—I am, etc.,

DESAWAYS, W. Wales, Jan. 21st.

WILLIAM CARVER.

—* We received on January 19th a communication from Professor Karl Pearson stating that, owing to the death of a son, a remainder to Sir Victor Horsley and Dr. Mary Sturge had to be postponed for a week or two. It did not seem necessary to publish this statement last week, but as, owing to the derangements caused by the printer's strike in London, we had to inform Professor Pearson that we were unable to receive a reply this week, seems desirable now to state the fact.

IS PONOS KALA-azar?

SIR,—It was with very great interest that I read in the Journal of Tropical Medicine of January 2nd of Professor Ronald Ross having received from Professor Galli of Rome, news of his discovery of the Leishman-Donovan body in a case of "ponos" from Spetsai. This discovery, when corroborated and confirmed (as, doubtless, will soon be the case), will remove from the category of the leishmaniasis disease, the common belief that facts and suggestions made in my paper read at the Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association in July, 1909, that ponos was not a disease sui generis, and that all known facts pointed to its being really kala-azar.

Once granted that ponos is kala-azar there would appear to be an excellent opportunity for investigation as to the carrier of the disease. It is generally believed that kala-azar is an insect-borne disease, the common bed-bug being suspected to be the carrier, and now that ponos has been shown to be kala-azar under another name it should surely be easier to discover the missing link between the Leishman-Donovan body and the patient in a small island such as Hydra or Spetsai, where insect pests are few, than in a vast area such as that where kala-azar is found in India, where insect life teems.

No work of this nature is likely to be carried out in the islands themselves, and only a medical man accustomed to entomological and bacteriological work, and speaking the local language (Greek or Albanian), could hope to be successful in tracing the connexion or even to point out the way to success.

Professor Galli's discovery, however, will have the effect of removing from the nomenclature of tropical diseases a local name which was in itself a confession of ignorance.

I am, etc.,

GEORGE A. WILLIAMSON, M.A., M.D., D.P.H., D.T.M.

LARNACA, CYPRUS, Jan. 12th.

SWABS LEFT IN THE INTESTINE.

SIR,—May I be permitted to offer my congratulations to Mr. Ryall upon the issue of his defence in the case of Abbott and Wife v. Ryall, and at the same time to express my sympathy with a surgeon who did his best, and that successfully, to a patient whom Nature, uncontrolled, would have removed from this world. The case, to my mind—which is now governed by an experience of a quarter of a century of kaleidoscopic changes in the art of surgery—raises issues which are of a grave nature to those who do their best according to their convictions from acquired knowledge, and also by the adoption of personal resources, to save their clients for the blessings of the prolongation of life.

The first issue, to my mind, is the necessity on the part of the medical profession of creating an ethical code in order to guide those members of the profession who feel it their duty to follow such a code. If the code be not alleged wrongful testiment by other members of their profession. The second issue I consider to be the necessity of creating a tribunal before which members of the profession may be brought for public trial on account of violating that ethical code through ignorance of the existing methods of treatment, and to give their reasons for disagreeing from methods adopted by defendants in cases of prosecution.

The medical profession, as I understand it, desires the public to be duly safeguarded against risk to life from ignorant and careless action taken by its members; at the same time, it is no less jealous of the reputation of its progressive art that its members be allowed to do everything in the interests of the patient, without being in any hand-craft, and new remedies in treatment, the evolution of the science and art of medicine. Lawsuits will not deter dreamers of progress from pursuing their aims in art, medicine, and science.

I venture to deal with some points raised by the prosecution and also by the defence. With the latter I should like to deal first, because, for the last decade, I have on occasions left not one, but two, swabs inside the bowel after completing the suture. My confession comes easy, because I have done it originally, like Mr. Ryall, because I copied it from a well-known surgeon at Linsinne; whether it is his invention or not I do not know, but I have had the opportunity of witnessing him do it in his own invention of gastro-enterostomy en Y on different occasions.

I tried to avoid the inclusion of such swabs within the gut by means of a mechanical device—a shouldered three-bladed forceps—but I confess it has not answered in all the cases where it might theoretically be useful, and I have had to fall back upon the device seen by me at Professor Roux's clinic.

The point on behalf of the defence to which I would like to draw attention is that Mr. Marshall Howard, F.R.C.S., in cross-examination, stated, p. 176: "... I would have examined the bowel with an electric lamp, and could then have pulled the swab out with a forceps."

And in re-examination: "He had never heard of a swab being left in this kind of case"; and "there was, in his view, considerable risk of at least one stool passing through the swab. The sigmoidoscope was used for searching for obstructions in the bowel."

Can any reasonable medical man—not layman—with extensive practical knowledge of the use of the sigmoidoscope agree for one moment that that instrument should have been used in this particular case? Would its use not have been highly dangerous? Does the profession not know of cases where its use in ordinary examination of the sigmoid flexure (not indeed one that has been recently sewn up) has caused the death of a patient?

I submit, with deference, that the opinion expressed by the present distinguished President of the Divorce Court, Sir Samuel T. Evans, in a case in which he took part seven years ago, is the sound one:—"It is a reasonable assumption of this nature would be a matter of interest for a learned medical society to discuss, but not for a jury of laymen to pass a verdict upon."—I am, etc.

CARDIFF, Jan. 21st.

J. LYNN THOMAS.

TUBERCULOSIS AND STATE INTERVENTION.

SIR,—In the Journal of January 21st the Joint Honorary Secretaries of the Conference on Tuberculosis, recently held at Edinbubh, charge us with making "ambiguous and misleading" references in the preface of the second edition of the Congress of Consumption, to what took place at the conference. They give the actual terms of the resolution to which we referred. It was as follows:

"That the special attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Government, and Parliament be directed to the importance of giving the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis a prominent place in the proposed scheme of invalid insurance."

A conference of experts considers the question of the working man in relation to tuberculosis. It decides to ask the Government to consider the great importance of dealing in a prominent manner with not only the prevention, but the treatment, of tuberculosis in a State insurance scheme. Whether the Government have decided to take such a step without meaning that some form of State intervention in regard to tuberculosis is necessary, we are accused of saying what is not the fact. For some reason the joint hon. secretaries contented themselves in their letter with a section