

nature of his practice and the state of his banking account; and, when considering the matter, he should as far as possible remain uninfluenced by the enthusiasm of his acquaintances. If their enthusiasm were based upon financial considerations alone there would be less to be said against it; but motoring is a distinctly pleasurable occupation in itself, and those who are able to indulge in it are apt to be less influenced by the purely business aspect of the question than should be the man who has still to take the plunge.

THE IRISH POOR LAW AND THE PROFESSION IN IRELAND.

DR. SAM'L AGNEW (Lurgan) writes: The agitation in the Irish Poor-law Medical Service for the redress of grievances has evoked much sympathy amongst the profession in England, as testified to by the resolutions passed by the British Medical Association last year at Swansea. The most powerful lever we can use to move the Local Government Board will be the dearth of candidates for vacant dispensaries, and in order to discourage young medical men from applying for such vacancies, might I suggest that those practitioners who were so fortunate as to escape from the allurements of the Irish service and settle in England during the latter half of the last century should give us their experience, and contrast the possibilities of the prospects of success in each country? I know myself probably a score such, and I do not believe that any single one of them has ever had reason to regret the change he made. Indeed, I believe all such with whom I have been acquainted have been able to invest very largely out of their savings, whilst their brethren on this side of the channel have been struggling to make ends meet. I would further suggest that when they require assistants or *locum tenentes* our brethren in England might ask some of the heads of the colleges here to recommend young men who would be willing to accept the appointments. They would be certain to get good reliable men, who would be thoroughly up to date. The salaries given would command the very best, and be a greater attraction than the miserable fees they would receive if engaged in dispensary practice.

ERRATUM.—The number of cases of small-pox under treatment at Bristol on June 21st was 3, and not 37, as printed last week.

THE OBSTETRIC BAG.

DR. JOHN R. HAMILTON (Hawick) writes: In the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of June 4th Dr. Ballantyne, of Edinburgh, in a very careful article on asepsis, concludes by pointing out the danger of the midwifery bag—the danger dreaded by him being the harbouring of different varieties of bacteria in and about the bag. No doubt bacteria will rest on the bag—as they do on glass, on the walking-stick, on the umbrella, and on a variety of odds and ends about a room. Young obstetricians forget that parturition is a natural process, ending satisfactorily if not over-meddled with. It can hardly be compared with surgery, which deals with the abnormal. Absolute aseptic midwifery is an impossibility. I believe, with Dr. Ballantyne, that the bag of to-day is dangerous, but the danger lies in its size. It can hold too many instruments of offence—more potent to damage than the most subtle germ, and at the same time being the germ's true friend. I would recommend all young practitioners to procure a very small leather bag if they desire to be successful obstetricians. They will find in the course of twenty-five years few mishaps if they keep their hands clean and do not fuss too much.

OLD PHARMACY.

DR. THOMAS TUCKEY (Par Station) writes: I have an old Delft jar exactly like No. 3 in Dr. Plowright's interesting article; it is white glaze, with the usual scroll, and angel with spread wings; on the scroll is printed STOM. C.V. GPM. P. Will any reader kindly tell me what old pharmaceutical preparation it is?

It is not R. "Recipe" take of. This is proved by the ingredients being in the genitive case in a well-written prescription. For example: *R. Succo pomorum agrestium libram dimidram; syrupo de Rubo Idaeo unciam unam. Fiat gargarisma. Opera Thomae Sydenham.* Sydenham Society, p. 503.

GENERAL REGISTRATION OF HOURS OF BIRTH.

M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. writes: It has occurred to me that it might prove very useful and interesting if the Registrar-General instructed the registrars of births throughout the country to obtain the hours of births as well as the days of the week on which they take place, and published a well-digested statistical record of the results, arranging them in individual town and country groups. The record should be at least an hourly one, and if carried out very completely for a year or two, if not permanently, might perhaps lead to the discovery of some lunar cycle, or the effects of social customs in different districts that the local medical men could best interpret.

RAISING SUBSCRIPTIONS.

TORQUINIAN writes: There is no organized system in our profession for raising subscriptions: recently £250 was asked for and I doubt if it is got yet, whereas if we had an organized system for collecting, five thousand subscribers of only 1s. each would bring in the sum without any one feeling the weight.

EARLY PREGNANCY.

WITH reference to a case recorded in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of June 18th, at p. 1472, of pregnancy in a girl of 12 years, a correspondent has forwarded a copy of the *York Herald* for October 19th, 1881. This contains a reference to a case in which a child of 8 years of age only was found encainte at Rillington, Yorks, in 1880. Early in the pregnancy the case appears to have been reported by a Dr. Dodds to the police of the locality, who, however, neglected for some months to take any action. When they did so the father, a young man of the neighbourhood, fled to America. Owing to this miscarriage of justice the Home Secretary held an inquiry and addressed a letter to the Chairman of Quarter Sessions for the East Riding of Yorkshire. It is in an account of the proceedings of the Sessions at which this letter was considered that a reference to the case is contained, no material details being furnished, beyond the fact that the girl's age was 8 and that she was delivered of a male child in March, 1881.

LETTERS, COMMUNICATIONS, ETC., have been received from:

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BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

- Ueber Immunität bei Syphilis nebst Bemerkungen über Diagnostik und Serotherapie. Von Dr. Franz Nagelschmidt. Berlin: August Hirschwald. 1904. M.1.60.
- Report on the Plague in Natal 1902-3. By Ernest Hill, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H. C. London: Cassell and Co. 1904.
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- A Manual of Optical Diagnosis by means of Microscopical and Chemical Methods. By Charles E. Simon, M.D. Fifth Edition. London: Henry Kimpton. 1904. 21s.
- A Practical Treatise on Medical Diagnosis. By John R. Musser, M.D. Fifth Edition. Vol. 1 and 2. London: Henry Kimpton. 1904. 3 vols. 38s.
- Easily Grown Hardy Perennials. By George H. Vos, B.A., etc. Editorially supervised by T. W. Sanders, F.R.S., F.R.H.S. London: W. H. and L. Colingridge. 5s.
- The Human Sternum. Three lectures delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons, England, November, 1903, by Andrew Melville Paterson, M.D. London: Williams and Norgate. 1904. 10s.
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- Twenty Years of Psychical Research: 1882-1901. By Edward T. Bennett. London and Edinburgh: B. Rimley Johnson. 1904. 1s.
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- Des. Edited by George W. May. London: The Health Resorts Association. 1904.
- A Manual and Atlas of Medical Ophthalmology. By Sir William E. Gowers, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S. Fourth Edition. Edited by the Authors and Marcus Gunn, M.B., F.R.C.S. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1904. 14s.
- Medical and Surgical Report of the Presbyterian Hospital in the City of New York. Vol. 1. January, 1904. Edited by Andrew J. McCosh, M.D., and W. Gilman Thompson, M.D. New York: Trow Directory Printing and Bookbinding Co.
- Manual of Practical Ophthalmology. By George A. Berry, M.B., F.R.C.S. Edin., Edinburgh and London: Young J. Pentland. 1904.
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