

TO THE HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE BRANCHES.

THE General Secretary will feel particularly obliged if the Honorary Secretaries will inform him, with as little delay as possible, of any subscriptions for the current year received by them since their last lists were forwarded to Worcester.

November, 1857.

BRANCH MEETINGS TO BE HELD.

NAME OF BRANCH.	PLACE OF MEETING.	DATE.
BATH AND BRISTOL. [Ordinary Meeting.]	White Lion, Bristol.	Thurs., Dec. 3rd, 8 P.M.
BIRMINGHAM AND MID- LAND COUNTIES. [Ordinary Meeting.]	Hen and Chickens Hotel, Birmingham.	Thursday, Dec. 10th, 6 o'clock.

SOUTH-EASTERN BRANCH: SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING ON THE CASE OF MR. DELVES OF TUNBRIDGE.

ON November 18th, a Special Meeting of the South-Eastern Branch was held at the Junction Hotel, Redhill, for the purpose of considering the evidence taken before magistrates at Tunbridge on the charge preferred against Mr. Delves, surgeon, of that town, of having criminally produced abortion. C. M. THOMPSON, Esq., of Westerham, President of the Branch, took the Chair. There were also present: J. Milner Barry, M.D. (Tunbridge Wells); John Blaxland, Esq. (Tunbridge Wells); George Bottomley, Esq. (Croydon); Richard Gravely, Esq. (Newick); Henry Harris, Esq. (Reigate); C. Holman, M.D. (Reigate); Peter Martin, Esq. (Reigate); Lewis Newnham, M.D. (Camberwell); Andrew Sisson, Esq. (Reigate); Thos. H. Smith, Esq. (St. Mary Cray); Henry L. Sopwith, Esq. (Tunbridge Wells); James Stedman, Esq. (Guildford); John Sisson Steele, Esq. (Reigate); George Stilwell, Esq. (Epsom); William Street, Esq. (Reigate); Charles Trustram, Esq. (Tunbridge Wells); Wm. Wallis, Esq. (Hartfield); and J. Lucas Worship, Esq. (Riverhead).

Mr. SOPWITH (Tunbridge Wells) rose to protest against the meeting entertaining the matter at all, on the ground that civil proceedings at law were likely to arise out of the case.

Mr. SMITH (St. Mary Cray) observed, that the business to-day had no reference to any civil proceedings which might be taken hereafter; but to criminal proceedings which had been taken against a member of the Branch, and which were now entirely concluded.

The meeting decided at once to entertain the matter.

The shorthand writer's minutes of evidence were laid before the meeting.

After discussion, it was proposed by Mr. JAMES STEDMAN (Guildford), seconded by Dr. MILNER BARRY (Tunbridge Wells), and resolved unanimously—

"That this meeting, having considered the evidence produced in the proceedings taken against Mr. Delves of Tunbridge, on a charge of having criminally produced abortion, is of opinion that this charge is not sustained either by the general or professional testimony adduced; and that, whilst the members of the Branch congratulate Mr. Delves on the fact of the magistrates having on two separate occasions dismissed the charge, they desire to express their sympathy with him on the occasion, and their conviction that no stain whatever remains on the character of Mr. Delves."

It was proposed by Mr. THOMAS SMITH (St. Mary Cray), seconded by Mr. WALLIS (Hartfield), and resolved unanimously—

"That the best thanks of the meeting be given to Mr. Trustram, for the pains he has taken in bringing this matter before the Branch; and that he be congratulated on the satisfactory conclusion of this case, in which he has, both here and during its progress, shown so much intelligence and zeal."

It was resolved—

"That copies of these resolutions be sent for publication to the London medical journals, and to the local newspapers."

Thanks were voted by acclamation to the President, and the meeting adjourned.

LETTERS AND COMMUNICATIONS.

Letters or communications for the JOURNAL should be addressed to Dr. WYNTER, Coleherne Court, Old Brompton, S.W.

Letters regarding the business department of the JOURNAL, and corrected proofs, should be sent to 37, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.

Editor's Letter Box.

THE RESIGNATION OF MEDICAL OFFICERS OF ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, MANCHESTER.

LETTER FROM THOMAS SOUTHAM, LL.D.

SIR,—I am directed by the Board of Management of St. Mary's Hospital, Manchester, to send you, for insertion in your forthcoming number, the following brief summary of answers to the objections published in your issue of the 21st of November instant, and made by the medical officers who have resigned their functions at this institution. I inclose also the *Manchester Examiner and Times* of the 22nd of October last, containing a report of the special general meeting of the subscribers, called by the Board, after the resignations of the medical officers had been received, in order to take their sense upon this matter. This report, it is thought, will throw full light upon the subject.

I am also to call your attention to the fact that no complaint had been made to the Board by the medical officers who resigned against the Rules referred to, until the meeting of which you have the above named report, and which meeting took place fully one month after the resignations had been received.

For greater perspicuity, I quote the objections *seriatim* contained in your JOURNAL from the *Manchester Guardian*, and supply the answers by order of the Board of Management.

"1. That, having been deprived by the Board of Management of our privileges as trustees *ex officio*, and as members of the Board of Management, we were thereby prevented from being present at any weekly or special meeting of the Board of Management, or any annual or special general meeting of the trustees, although, at any such meeting, the medical affairs of the hospital might have come under consideration—affairs which the non-medical members of the Board of Management were totally incompetent to understand."

1. The constitution of the Board of Management, when the alteration was made, included the whole medical staff, or, in other words, the medical officers were individually members of the Board of Management, none of whom made any objection to the exclusion of the medical men. All approved of it except two.

By Rules 65, 66, and 67, which are still rules of the Hospital, the medical officers constitute a medical Board for the consideration of medical questions, and of any alterations which may tend to the advantage of the Hospital. This Board is also a Board of approval, or otherwise of medical testimonials of candidates.

"2. That by Rules 2 and 172, we should, in future, have been compelled to attend children of any age, and in any disease, whether infectious or otherwise, at any time, during day or night, and at any distance within the extreme hospital boundaries,—with which boundaries the subscriber may acquaint himself by referring to the back of the recommendation papers, including a population of nearly 300,000."

2. Rules 2 and 172 have never yet been put into operation. When they were suggested, it was proposed that not less than six assistant-surgeons should be additionally elected for this extra work. The opposition of the medical staff has prevented the working of this rule altogether. They have so far, by opposing the increase of the staff, prevented the extension of the blessings of this charity to the poor. The Board is waiting anxiously to meet the wants of the infant population by the appointment of additional medical officers, the necessity for which is shown by your leading article.

"3. That by Rule 53, in all cases of disease which do not appear to yield to a plan of treatment pursued for fourteen days, the surgeon in attendance must summon a consultation. This rule is a direct reflection upon the professional ability of the surgeon, and Rule 78 appears equally objectionable."

3. This Rule was made for the good of the patients, and for

the economy of the funds of the Hospital, but with no possible intention of reflecting upon the ordinary medical attendant. There has never occurred a case in the Hospital where such unpleasant feeling has been produced.

"4. That by Rule 94 the fees paid by medical students for attendance upon lectures and hospital practice, are to be received by the treasurer; whilst, in all other hospitals, the medical officers are entitled to such fees."

4. When the Board heard recently that objection had been made respecting the disposal of the fees paid by medical students, they decided to give notice of the alteration of this Rule, by which alteration the fees will, in future, be left to the disposal of the medical officers. No loss has been sustained by the medical officers hitherto, inasmuch as no fees have yet been received.

"5. The following portion of rule 16:—That any officer of this institution may be suspended by the board of management for any cause which the board of management consider injurious to the hospital. No such power should be entrusted to any board where three are competent to form a quorum, and where the average attendance at such meetings does not exceed five."

5. The following is the whole Rule, and speaks for itself, and does not apply to the medical officers exclusively. The whole Rule ought to have been quoted to convey a correct idea of it. The power of appeal has been suppressed in this partial state. The Board had, under the old Rule dating from nearly the foundation of the hospital, the power of absolute dismissal, but they have now only the power of suspension with appeal.

"16. That any Officer of this Institution may be suspended by the Board of Management for neglect of duty, or for any conduct derogatory to the character of a gentleman, or for any cause which the Board of Management consider injurious to the Hospital; but that he have the power of appealing to a special General Board, on his requesting such to be called, provided such request, with the grounds of appeal, be delivered in writing to the Honorary Secretary, or left for him at the Hospital within five days after such notice has been given or sent to such officer of his suspension. If no such request be received from him within that period, he shall be considered to have vacated his office, and it shall be competent for the Board to proceed to fill up the vacancy."

In conclusion, I have only to say that the Board do not wish to occupy your space, but that they are prepared to give the fullest details confirmatory of these statements, and of all other matters relating to the management of the Hospital, which, they are confident, would justify them in the eyes of the subscribers, of all impartial medical men, and of the public in general.

I am, etc.,

THOMAS SOUTHAM, LL.D., *Hon. Sec.*

St. Mary's Hospital, Manchester, November 23rd, 1857.

CONSERVATIVE SURGERY.

SIR,—“We believe firmly that the future historical glory of British surgeons of the present day will rest on their conservative achievements.”

I have been highly gratified with the above observation, given in your review of one of our standard works on surgery; and am delighted to know that we have so noble and brave a champion in the cause of conservative surgery. Having had good opportunities of witnessing the steady advance of surgery in the hospitals, both north and south, of our land, I may perhaps be justly allowed to express an opinion on the subject, and to join you in your good example of honourable mention of the great luminaries of the day in this branch of our art.

To Syme, truly, must the civic crown be awarded for conservative surgery: to his firm and comprehensive mind, to his bold, independent, and heroic exertions in the cause, the surgeons of the present day are deeply indebted. When I mention the honoured name of Fergusson as “second in command”, I shall only arouse the feelings of deep gratitude and veneration of hundreds of young surgeons, whom he has sent forth from King's College to all parts of the world, as steadfast believers in his doctrines, and enthusiastic imitators of his practice. May he long continue to uphold so honourably the good cause!

The names of Jones, Page, Mackenzie, etc., etc., with a host of others, deserve our highest praise; but, on examining the cases in the wards of our provincial hospitals, which may vie with many of the London schools, I find nowhere the true

principles of conservative surgery more fully, scientifically, or efficiently carried out, than in the surgical wards of the Manchester Infirmary, under the zealous guidance of Mr. Jordan, Senior Surgeon to the Hospital. Here we find the true and decisive principles and practice of the art carried out, from the most simple to the most complex operation. 'Tis an extraordinary instance, certainly, of the love of science evinced by this veteran in surgery, who, we may suppose, looks on his art as “glory like a circle in the water, which never ceaseth to enlarge itself.”

On some future occasion, I hope to be able to offer you a general outline of the present state of conservative surgery in the hospitals of the north of England.

I am, etc., OBSERVER.

November 24th, 1857.

RETENTION OF PLACENTA.

LETTER FROM B. W. BROWN, Esq.

SIR,—In the JOURNAL of November 14th, you gave us an account of a case of “Manslaughter” by a practitioner in midwifery, with comments. In the JOURNAL of Saturday last, I have read the proceedings of an inquest, from which it would appear a Dr. Rolph has been charged with professional neglect in the treatment of a case of retention of placenta. Having had a large share of obstetric practice during the past thirty-six years, it has been my province to be consulted in similar cases; but perhaps a more flagrant instance than the following has not fallen to my lot to manage.

Mrs. Knifton, aged 21 years, residing about three miles hence, and in the enjoyment of the best health, was taken in labour of her first child, and was attended by an ordinary midwife. It appears that there was nothing remarkable in the labour; it was comparatively an easy one, and of short duration. The birth took place shortly after 3 o'clock one Tuesday morning, about three weeks ago. The placenta remained. The midwife made repeated attempts to remove it, and at length separated the funis, and left the woman, thinking that “Nature would finish it”. On the following evening, as the placenta continued “fast”, the woman's friends, as well as the female practitioner, began to be alarmed by her particular appearance; and at a midnight hour, nearly *forty hours* after the birth of the child, I was summoned to render assistance.

Upon proceeding to an examination, I inquired of the midwife, who was present, what she had done with the cord. “Oh, sir, it slipped off,” was her reply; “and she thought Nature would manage very well, for the after-birth would rot off.” I doubted at first whether the placenta had been left, for the parts had become so normal that there might not have been a recent delivery; but, on placing my left hand on the abdomen, it was evident that matters were not as they should be. The vagina, however, being rather capacious, I passed my hand up to the os uteri, which I could not reach before with my finger; the os was thrown considerably backward, and a great height up, and was so firmly contracted that it was with difficulty I could introduce one finger. However, I could readily distinguish the placenta. I then endeavoured gently to dilate the os uteri, which receded considerably until I made pressure with my left hand on the abdominal parietes. At length I was enabled to introduce two fingers, or a finger and thumb; but all my efforts to dislodge the mass proved abortive, without danger of drawing down the whole body of the uterus. I therefore contented myself with trying to break up the foreign body, and bring it away piecemeal, as much as I could. It was evident, however, that there were some strong adhesions; and I was compelled to leave some adherent portions, which could not be detached without producing more mischief than I felt justified in making. The poor woman expressed herself considerably relieved, and thanked me much. She progressed favourably until the fifth day; lactation had supervened; and the lochial discharge was natural. The patient was suddenly seized with a shivering fit, with cold perspirations, etc.; and there was excessive tenderness and tumefaction of the abdominal region, with feeble pulse. The woman was evidently sinking, and died on the following morning, at 9 o'clock. My treatment was opium, henbane, calomel, salines, etc., and hot cataplasms to the uterine region.

It will be evident to your readers that death in this case resulted from puerperal inflammation, after prolonged retention of placenta.

I am, etc., B. W. BROWN.

Wymeswold, November 22nd, 1857.