

## Association Intelligence.

### BRANCH MEETINGS TO BE HELD.

NAME OF BRANCH.	PLACE OF MEETING.	DATE.
BATH AND BRISTOL. [Ordinary.]	YORK HOUSE, Bath.	Thurs., Feb. 20, 6.30 P.M.

## Special Correspondence.

### NORWICH.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

"In the midst of life we are in death." So says the Proverb; and it is a fit motto for the narrative which forms the subject of my present communication. A horrible calamity has befallen a family in this county, arising chiefly, as I believe, from the neglect of those hygienic measures which have been found so useful for the prevention and mitigation of disease, and which have of late been so strongly recommended by the profession for adoption by the public wherever the necessity for them is discovered. Perhaps there is no medical problem so completely solved as the prevention of the spread, and abatement of the malignancy, of epidemic diseases; we hear of their progress being arrested, and their evil effects eradicated, wherever proper sanitary measures are early and actively adopted to deprive them of a *pabulum* favourable to their propagation and essential to their existence. This *pabulum* I believe to consist chiefly of the secretions and excretions of those labouring under fevers; which, if mixed and exposed with other refuse material in bins, privies, or on the surface of the ground, have the power to disseminate the disease, and concentrate the poison which produces it.

To pass on to the immediate subject of my letter, I have to inform you that the locality in which the following occurrences took place was at the time a healthy one; there being no fever in the neighbourhood, and the house a recently built parsonage, of good dimensions, and placed on an apparently unexceptionable site. There is a water-closet within the house, well supplied with water from a large tank, its waste pipe leading into a capacious well-glazed drain, just outside the house, which carries its contents under-ground a long way off the premises into a ditch, too far removed to be hurtful. But there are two other privies, with open arches, through which their contents pass into an oblong square dirt-bin, situated very near the back door of the house, and very few feet from the large drain above mentioned, which could have carried all the refuse of these privies, as well as of the water-closet, to a safe distance from the house. Unfortunately, this very obvious and desirable arrangement was overlooked by the builders; and, as one of these privies was used for the conveyance of all slops, etc., from the house, this bin, into which both fluid and solid refuse was admitted, was often extremely offensive.

The family residing in this house consisted of the cler-

gyman himself, his mother, aged 82, and paralytic, his wife, six children, the eldest being about 14 years old, and several servants. The second son was at school in a small market town many miles off, but scarlet fever broke out in the place, and he was taken home. On his journey, he became chilly and faint, reached home with difficulty, and then exhibited the usual symptoms of scarlet fever in a mild form, and recovered. Soon, however, two of the other children and a servant took the fever, and in less than a week all three died. On the 20th of January, I received the following note from the husband, the first intimation I had of what was going on.

"I have lost two children and a servant by scarlet fever during the past week, and my wife is now attacked by it. Mr. —— says she has no unfavourable symptoms; but I should like much for you to come over by an early train to-morrow."

This was written on Sunday, January 19th; and, just as I was starting by train on Monday morning, I received another summons by telegraph. The distance was too great for me to arrive before the afternoon; and, before I got to the house, I was told on the road that Mrs. —— was also dead! On my arrival, a hearse was standing at the door, containing the servant's coffin; and they were bringing a child's coffin out at the hall-door, to proceed with the two to the church for interment. The wife was lying dead on her bed; she had been dead an hour or two—a sacrifice, as far as I could understand, to the laryngeal form of the disease. The day before, she had a bright eruption, and seemed to be going on well, but afterwards lost her voice, and died suffocated. I was then asked to see another child, seized with the fever that very morning—a nice intelligent little boy, of about six years of age. He was quite sensible, but pallid, cold, and complaining of pain in one side of his throat. I found the right tonsil inflamed, with commencing ulceration lower down; but he could swallow well, and took whey freely. His countenance bespoke the existence of a deadly poison in his blood; his pulse was very feeble; and, although he had a good fire in his room, was covered with warm blankets, and had hot bottles to his feet, he still remained in a state of collapse. We applied turpentine round his throat, which he said relieved him; and, when I left in the evening, he was a little warmer; but I stated my conviction that he was in very great danger.

The next evening, just in time for me to start by the mail-train, I received the following telegram: "The little boy is dead; the eldest son is taken; please to come by the first train." I arrived in the middle of the night, and found the eldest son but slightly ill, and, fortunately, in another house, a few hundred yards from the parsonage. I stayed all night; and he was not worse in the morning, having neither eruption nor sore-throat, and only complaining of occasional sickness. Our next care was to empty the parsonage-house, destroy all stained linen, and remove the father, the infant about a year old, and the son who had been the unfortunate means of communicating this fearful disease, to a distance at the seaside; for the double purpose of removing them from the poisonous locality, and of taking immediate and decided steps to

# Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS. The following members of the College, having undergone the necessary examinations, were admitted Licentiates in Midwifery at a meeting of the Board, on February 12th:—

Brumwell, Joseph Cowley, Burnley, Lancashire; diploma of membership dated July 26, 1858  
 Dobson, Thomas, L.S.A., Fleetwood, Lancashire; Jan. 29, 1862  
 Dye, David Hyman, L.S.A., London Hospital; Nov. 13, 1861  
 Edge, Stonard, L.S.A., Heavtree; December 2, 1859  
 Fowler, James, L.S.A., St. Thomas's Hospital; April 11, 1861  
 Jenner, William, Highworth, Wiltshire; January 31, 1862  
 Lewis, Charles, Berehaven Mines, co. Cork; June 18, 1852  
 Marshall, Walter Thomas, Birmingham; Nov. 12, 1861  
 Meggy, Frederick, Stockwell; January 28, 1862  
 Ray, Robert, Victoria, Australia; January 30, 1862  
 Sheppard, Wm. Matthew, L.S.A., Geelong, Australia  
 Smith, Joseph, York; July 30, 1861  
 Stamper, James Fenton, L.S.A., Haverfordwest; May 1, 1861  
 Weekes, William Hampton Carlile, Hurstpierpoint, Sussex; February 3, 1860  
 Willett, Edmund, Kennington Park; January 29, 1862

## APPOINTMENTS.

HEADLAND, Frederick W., M.D., elected Assistant-Physician to the Charing Cross Hospital.  
 \*HULKE, John W., Esq., elected Assistant-Surgeon to the Middlesex Hospital, in the room of W. H. Flower, Esq., resigned.  
 IRVINE, John W., Esq., elected Honorary Surgeon to the Liverpool Dispensaries.  
 MORGAN, John E., M.B., elected Physician to the Salford and Pendleton Royal Hospital and Dispensary.

ROYAL ARMY. The following appointments have been made:—

GAINS, Staff-Surgeon G. E., to be Surgeon 6th Foot, *vice* C. M. M. Miller, M.D.  
 O'BRIEN, Staff-Assistant-Surgeon T. M., to be Assistant-Surgeon 100th Foot, *vice* T. Liddard.  
 HUME, Deputy Inspector-General T. D., M.D., to be Inspector-General, *vice* J. Forrest, M.D., C.B.  
 MILLER, Surgeon C. M. M., M.D., 6th Foot, to be Staff-Surgeon, *vice* Guins.  
 RICKARDS, Staff-Assistant-Surgeon A. K., to be Assistant-Surgeon Royal Artillery, *vice* Sharp.  
 SMITH, Staff-Surgeon-Major A., M.D., to be Surgeon 47th Foot, *vice* Singleton.

To be Staff-Assistant-Surgeons:—

LAMB, Staff-Assistant-Surg. H., from half-pay, *vice* T. M. O'Brien.  
 QUINLAN, Staff-Assist. Surg. P., from half-pay, *vice* A. K. Rickards.  
 WHITE, Staff-Assistant-Surgeon S. G., M.D., from half-pay.

VOLUNTEER CORPS. The following appointments have been made (A.V.=Artillery Volunteers; R.V.=Rifle Volunteers):—

LARMUTH, J. H., Esq., to be Assistant-Surgeon 3rd Administrative Battalion Cheshire R.V.  
 MURIEL, J. T., Esq., to be Assistant-Surgeon 1st Administrative Battalion Suffolk R.V.

To be Honorary Assistant-Surgeon:—

ARROTT, D., M.D., 1st Forfarshire A.V.

## BIRTH.

FLETCHER. On January 31st, at 18, Morlington Terrace, Liverpool, the wife of \*F. D. Fletcher, Esq., of a son.

## DEATHS.

COLQUHOUN, James, M.D., late of the Madras Light Cavalry, in Edinburgh, on January 27.  
 GALEN. On February 6th, at Aberdeen, aged 28, Margaret, eldest daughter of John Galen, M.D.  
 HALLSWORTH. On February 4th, at Atherstone, Jane, wife of S. M. Hallsworth, Esq., Surgeon.  
 LAMB, George, Esq., late Physician-General in Calcutta, aged 74, on February 8.  
 STENSON, Nathaniel, M.D., at Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, aged 86, on February 8.

VACANCIES. The following appointments are vacant: Physician-Accoucheur to the St. Marylebone General Dispensary, by the death of Dr. Henry Davies; House-Surgeon to the Royal Dispensary and Infirmary, Windsor.

## TRIAL FOR LIBEL.

Court of Queen's Bench, Westminster, Feb. 8th.

WELLS v. WEBBER.

THE plaintiff, Thomas Spencer Wells, sued the defendant, William Webber, to recover damages for a libel published in the *Medical Circular* on the 9th of October, 1861. The defendant pleaded only the general issue. The charge made by the defendant against the plaintiff in the libel was, that he had left a copy of a pamphlet, *'Vesico-Vaginal and Recto-Vaginal Fistula'*, in question with the "boots" at the George Hotel, at Buxton, Derbyshire, "to be placed in some conspicuous place," and that it was accordingly "exposed by him on the post-shelf at the hotel, where ladies of all ages, and gentlemen, and other people, go to seek for letters." The libel described the plaintiff's proceeding as a "violation of decency," and a "flagrant disregard of social privileges, to say nothing of so quackish as well as indecent a mode of advertisement." The plaintiff stated, that in the month of September last he went to the George Hotel, at Buxton, with two friends, Mr. Parker and Mr. Sadler. They dined at the ordinary in company with the defendant and some other parties. The defendant had formerly been a candidate to be elected Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, and had been blackballed, and, as the plaintiff was unwilling to take up his cause, a coolness had ensued between them; but when they met at the ordinary the plaintiff spoke to the defendant, and they appeared on friendly terms; and, after dinner, they retired to the smoking room, and some conversation took place between the defendant and the plaintiff's two friends, in the course of which the defendant gave a very glowing account of his professional exploits, and particularly of his victories over the homœopaths. In the course of the conversation, the defendant, speaking of the plaintiff, said, "If Mr. Wells had said of me what I have said of him, I would not speak to him." The next morning, at 9 o'clock, the plaintiff and his two friends left for Chatsworth, and, while they were waiting for the omnibus at the door, the postman delivered to the plaintiff a letter, containing six copies of his newly printed lecture. One of these he gave to his surgical friend (Mr. Sadler), and said he thought it would be only civil to give Webber (the defendant) one, and he called the "boots," and asked him to deliver it to the defendant. One of the plaintiff's friends (Mr. Parker) asked the "boots" whether he knew the defendant's bedroom, and being answered that he did, he told the "boots" to deliver it to the defendant there. The plaintiff and his friends then left, and heard no more of the matter till the 9th of October, when the plaintiff's attention was called to the following article in the *Medical Circular* of that date:—

"MR. SPENCER WELLS AND THE VISITORS AT THE BUXTON HOTEL.

"To the Editor of the 'Medical Circular.'

"We learn that on the 25th ult. an illustrative little book, purporting to be a lecture on 'Vesico-Vaginal and Recto-Vaginal Fistula,' delivered in May, 1861, in the neighbourhood of St. George's Hospital, London, by T. Spencer Wells, Esq., F.R.C.S., surgeon to the Samaritan Hospital, etc., and reprinted from the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, was left as a gratuity at the George Hotel, Buxton, by the author, as some documents forwarded to the College of Surgeons, of which we subjoin a copy, will show:—

"(Copy.)

"George Hotel, Buxton, Sept. 26th, 1861.

"This pamphlet was left last Tuesday evening, or the following morning, with the 'boots' of this hotel (by Mr. Spencer Wells), to be placed in some conspicuous place, and was accordingly exposed by him on the post-

shelf at the hotel, where ladies of all ages, and gentlemen, and other people go to seek for letters. We, the visitors now assembled here, especially those of us who have young nieces and daughters staying with us, cannot but express our indignation at so revolting a violation of decency, so flagrant a disregard of social privileges, to say nothing of so quackish as well as indecent a mode of advertisement. Such a means of notoriety among professedly orthodox practitioners is very sickening. We hope this reproof will have the effect of preventing the extension of so demoralising a system of publicity.

“W. ANDROS, President.     “GEO. W. EVANS.  
R. J. GRIFFITHS.             AUST. ODLIN.  
CHARLES POLHILL.             CHAS. MITCHELL, B.A.  
S. S. BRITTAIN.             R. EVERE.

“Copy of the Letter of the landlord of the hotel, addressed to the Visitors, thanking them for their protest against the course adopted by Mr. Spencer Wells.

“George Hotel, Buxton, Sept. 26th, 1861.

“Gentlemen,—I am much obliged to you for the course you have taken, as I fully concur in the sentiments you have expressed relative to the indecent pamphlet ‘by T. Spencer Wells, F.R.C.S., etc., London,’ which was handed to the ‘boots’ (to be laid where it would be seen!) by a person who left this hotel, in company with two other visitors, on Wednesday morning, and who, I have reason to believe, is the author of it. I also conclude he is known to the medical gentleman forming one of your number, as ‘he left his compliments for him’ at starting ‘to Chatsworth on his way to town.’ The pamphlet to which you have appended your protest will, therefore, be transferred to that gentleman, with a copy of this letter, and an intimation of your expressed opinion, that it should be forwarded to the College of Surgeons, of which, it appears, the author is a Fellow. The ‘boots’ was, of course, not aware of the contents of the book so handed to him, and therefore did as he was directed. I am not aware that such an obscene publication has ever before been left exposed at this house; and, in order to prevent a repetition of so disgusting and discreditable an occurrence, I have given strict orders to my servants to bring at once to me all such pamphlets and advertising papers which may hereafter be left with them.

“I have, etc.,     “E. LEES, pro WILLIAM LEES.  
“To the President and Gentlemen of the

Diningroom and Drawingroom.

“[We have deemed it necessary, in the course of our duty, to publish this correspondence, inasmuch as we are informed it has been forwarded to the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons for its consideration.

“What that body may decide with reference to it we shall hereafter know; but as we cannot believe that Mr. Spencer Wells, who is the ostensible editor of a medical journal, would intentionally offend public decency, some explanation of this occurrence is absolutely required, in vindication, not only of his own sense of propriety, but of the character of the profession.—ED. *Med. Circular.*”]

Upon inquiry it appeared that the documents in question had been sent to Dr. Ross, the editor of the *Medical Circular*, by the defendant, accompanied with a private letter addressed by the defendant to Dr. Ross, in the following terms:—

“Tunbridge Wells, Oct. 4th, 1861.

“Dear Ross,—You will see by the inclosed that our friend of the *Bath and Wells Advertiser* has been playing the fissure (fisher) man in the north upon his fistula or pipe essay. I have forwarded the pamphlet, with Mr. Lees’s letter, to the College of Surgeons, as I was requested, without further note or comment. Our *short jacket* friend has, I have no doubt, distributed at other hotels and houses, in his peregrinations in northern lati-

tudes, his illustrative descriptions and exposures of parts indicative of the origin of his great genius. I will send you by next post a copy of my answer to Mr. Lees’s letter, so that you may be the first to show up the showman, who evidently has an appreciable knowledge of the usefulness of advertisements to those who cannot otherwise persuade people that they are dustmen qualified to sweep. I have been desired to send copies to all the journals. I shall cause them to be delivered at the office of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL and the *Lancet*. I shall leave the College to deal with Spencer (and his tales) of the Times. I declined to sign the protest of the visitors for reasons which will appear. Buxton air and baths have done wonders for me; my general health is greatly improved. I will give you a call next week, as I want to have a few minutes talk with you.

“In haste, yours very truly,     WILLIAM WEBBER.”

As soon as the plaintiff saw the article in the *Medical Circular* he placed the matter in the hands of his solicitor, who obtained from Dr. Ross the originals of all the documents, and also the private letter, and this action was forthwith commenced. It appeared that the defendant had sent copies of the same documents to the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, but the editor of that journal did not publish them; and he also sent the documents to the Royal College of Surgeons, who, through their secretary, had called upon the plaintiff for an explanation, but had taken no other steps pending this action. The plaintiff, in the most distinct manner, swore that he had only circulated a few copies of the pamphlet, and those among professional friends, and said he should himself have been much disgusted if he had known that a copy of it had fallen into the hands of ladies or unprofessional people. It appeared that the defendant, who had been in the first instance blackballed, was afterwards elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons; but, for some reason which was not explained, he declined to sign the by-laws. The defendant called no witnesses.

Mr. HUDDLESTON, in his address to the jury for the defendant, said he accepted entirely the statement made by the plaintiff, that he had not given the pamphlet to the “boots” “to be placed in some conspicuous place,” but, as the plaintiff himself said, to be delivered personally to the defendant. He therefore was ready, on the part of the defendant, to make an ample retraction and apology for what he had published; and he hoped that after that the plaintiff would think that his character had been sufficiently vindicated, without calling upon the defendant for damages. In estimating these damages, the jury must look at the circumstances, and they could not fail to see, from the internal evidence of the documents, that the “boots” had failed to do what he was directed, and that in consequence the pamphlet in question had been improperly exposed to view.

In the minds of the visitors the blame of that exposure naturally rested upon the defendant, who was considered as the plaintiff’s friend; and he (defendant) was therefore induced to send the documents in question to Dr. Ross, along with a private letter, which the learned counsel admitted was in bad taste, but which was never intended for publication. The learned counsel hoped the jury would not do more than give a moderate amount of damages.

The LORD CHIEF JUSTICE, in summing up, said: The plaintiff in this case asks for compensation for a very serious libel; in which he is charged, he being a professional man, with having placed in a conspicuous position at an hotel at a public watering-place, frequented by families and persons of respectability, who have wives and daughters and nieces staying at that place, a book for the base purpose of advertising his work—a book utterly unfit to be seen by women, above all, by women of refined and delicate minds. We all know that the purposes of science, and, above all, those of the medical science, require that works should be written and illustrated in a manner necessary for the promotion of the medical science, in

its ministration to the relief of human infirmity; but every one must feel that, however it may be justifiable and right that such illustrations should be submitted to the inspection of those whose scientific attention is to be called to them—if a person were to expose a work in which there were delicate portions of the female organisation shown; and, above all, if, with reference to diseases of this peculiarly delicate character, the very hand of the operator is described as in immediate contact with those parts of the female organisation, were to leave it in a position where it would be exposed to be taken up by females of respectability, he would be unworthy of his profession, and unworthy the name of a gentleman, and deserve to be expelled from all society. This is the charge deliberately made against the plaintiff; and it appears to me that he had no alternative, the moment he saw his character was impugned in a public journal, and knowing that the College of Surgeons, of which he was a Member, had been addressed on the subject, but at once to challenge his accuser in a public court of justice, and there appear to vindicate his own conduct. And it appears to me idle in the extreme to talk about a gentleman being thus assailed, and thus accused, sitting down and writing an explanation to a man who, without asking him for any, had been the one to propound these charges, and put into circulation accusations of so formidable and so serious a character. It is admitted now that the whole charge is destitute of the slightest shadow of foundation. You have not only the account from Mr. Wells himself, but from his two friends, gentlemen of perfect respectability, who have stated in this court; and the learned counsel for the defendant does not ask you for a single moment to disbelieve it. (His lordship then gave an outline of the case, and then proceeded.) It turns out that there was not the shadow of foundation for this charge against the character of Mr. Wells. The learned counsel for the defendant has suggested that with that the plaintiff should be contented with an apology, and that there the matter should drop. In the first place, this observation may, however, fairly be made. Supposing this pamphlet to have been put by the boots in the place where it was found, and it was there seen by some of the visitors at the hotel, and had excited their indignation, I cannot help thinking, if that matter were brought to the knowledge of a member of the same profession, with whom Mr. Webber had, at all events, been on apparently civil and friendly terms the night before, he might have suggested, "There must be some mistake in this; this must be an accident. I think, before you can take any decided steps in the matter, you had better inquire if it has been done purposely. And nothing can be worse, and no man can feel more strongly than I do. You had better write and ask him about it." This does not occur to Mr. Webber. On the contrary, he enters warmly at once, without any opportunity of explanation, into a course of direct, hasty accusations against Mr. Wells. However, that he might have done from perfectly honest motives, and with perfectly honest intentions, although one would say he might have been more generous and more fair towards a brother practitioner. I must say I cannot refrain from expressing my very great astonishment and regret that any consideration whatever should have induced Mr. Webber from going into that witness-box and giving you an account of how it came to pass that he took the part he did. If he had come forward and said, "This pamphlet was found in a conspicuous place in the hotel, and when it was inquired how it got there, the boots represented that he had been desired by Mr. Wells to place it in that or in some conspicuous position; the visitors of the hotel were indignant, and they called on me as a medical man to assist them in bringing the plaintiff to account for conduct so improper; and I acted under that honest sense of indignation, believing the representation of the boots to be true;" if he had said that in

a manner to carry conviction to your minds, I should have said, under these circumstances, "You ought to be satisfied with what has taken place; there has been error on the part of the defendant, but it has been an honest one, springing out of an honest feeling; it is enough that the plaintiff's character is vindicated from these imputations, and you will be satisfied with a retraction and apology." But, gentlemen, when the defendant prefers to trust to the last words of an ingenious counsel, rather than to the impression which the evidence, honestly and straightforwardly given, might have produced on your minds, it leaves them open to the serious imputation on his part of stimulating parties who here express their indignation into a course of action exceedingly improper. And is not that confirmed when we turn to this letter (the letter to Mr. Ross), written in the worst spirit that it is possible to imagine, conveying a charge of the nature, and asking the editor of a public journal to give it insertion? Now, couple that letter with the fact that, when the old master of Mr. Wells (Mr. Sadler) spoke of his pupil having distinguished himself in the medical profession, the defendant thought it necessary to say, "If he had spoken of me as I have spoken of him, I never would speak to him again." It is for you to say what you believe to have been the *animus* by which the defendant was actuated in publishing these most serious and grave charges. If you believe him to have been acting honestly, from a sincere indignation at the supposed conduct of the plaintiff, if you believe that he had nothing to do with the exposure of the pamphlet, you will take a very different view of the case from that which you would do if you believed that he had anything to do with placing it in the position in which it was found, or anything to do with putting a false construction on the conduct of the plaintiff. He is placed in the most unfortunate position by not having been called into the witness-box, and not having insisted on an opportunity of explaining to you all the circumstances under which he has been induced to take the course which to-day he cannot but say was improper. The charge against the plaintiff is a most serious one. If you believe that to have been preferred with malignant and with sinister and bad motives, you cannot sufficiently mark your sense of such conduct as that which the defendant who stands before you does not justify. However, if he acted honestly, though rashly, in your view, the damages would be very different; but, in any case, in this matter it is for you, and not for me.

The jury retired, and, after an absence of half an hour, returned into court with a verdict for the plaintiff; damages, £300. The Lord Chief Justice certified for a special jury.

NEW COUNTY HOSPITAL FOR HAMPSHIRE. A new county hospital is about to be built at Winchester, the present building being in a dilapidated condition, and in an inconvenient situation. The site chosen is an elevated position, and more advantageous in every respect than the present one. Subscriptions to the extent of nearly £5000 have already been received.

REMOVAL OF THE STATUE OF DR. JENNER. During the last few days the public have been surprised, on visiting Kensington Gardens, to find the statue of Dr. Jenner, of small-pox-vaccination celebrity, standing, or rather sitting down, with its usual air of placidity, on a bran new pedestal in Kensington Gardens, in the vicinity of the stone bridge spanning the Serpentine, on the Bayswater side. The statue, it will be remembered, was some time ago promoted to a distinguished place near the Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square; but it has been suddenly removed to its present position in Hyde Park.

M. PAMARD. It is said that M. Pamard, the new deputy, who has given rise to so much discussion about his assumed title of "member of the Academy of Medicine,"

