

ASSOCIATION MEDICAL JOURNAL.

EDITED BY JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D.

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NEW SERIES.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SCHÖNBEIN'S OZONOMETER may be obtained in about a fortnight from this date, by applying to Mr. John Cox, Peckham. Dr. DREW, of Southampton, is intrusted with the transmission of observations to Dr. Schönbein, as is stated in a letter from Dr. Drew, which we shall publish next week.

THE METEOROLOGICAL PAGE of the ASSOCIATION JOURNAL has induced so many zealous observers in important localities to offer us their services, that we have at present under consideration the propriety of devoting next year an additional half page or perhaps even an additional page weekly, to meteorological observations. We shall be glad to receive for our private use and guidance expressions of opinion on this subject. Tabular matter is both troublesome and expensive; and unless an extension of the space devoted to meteorology be generally called for, we shall not make it.

METEOROLOGICAL INSTRUMENTS. Dr. Barker, of Bedford, has kindly undertaken to furnish, for insertion in an early number, information regarding the instruments used by himself and his fellow-contributors.

CLIMATE OF MADEIRA. The letter of Dr. Burgess has been in type for some time, and shall appear in our next number.

THE ETHICS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

THE letters in this day's number upon Medical Ethics, show that the subject is engaging attention: and the announcements of the intended meetings of the Committees on Medical Ethics and Gratuitous Advice, encourage us to hope that a new and a better order of things will ere long be instituted.

It is at least something to have recognised the necessity for amendment; and in this recognition we hail the first advance to many necessary changes and reforms, though they do not involve aught that is new in principle or action. Medical ethics are really the carrying out of the principles of self preservation and self interest. They involve no constraints but those of right feeling, and ask for no concessions but those which experience has taught to be eminently and equally conducive to the well being of society and of the individuals of which it is composed. There is little to fear in opposition—much in apathy and indifference. These are the things that bear upon the young and struggling practitioner, not on the experienced and successful physician; not on the man, whose balance at his banker's and stock invested place him beyond care, but on the country doctor, and the town general practitioner, suffering all from a competition placed beyond limit, and producing the inevitable consequence of depreciated value. In the law, no such practices are tolerated, and no such hardships exist: the public have learned, and have been taught to respect the code which governs the internal regulations of the bar; there is an acknowledged tribunal of public professional opinion against which it is in vain to war. It is not arbitrary, but is the mere generalisation of facts, deduced from experience, showing how and in what manner various contingencies can be best met, to conduce to the good of the profession and the public. This is all we have ever sought for in the medical profession, and most blind are its members

to their own interests so long as they neglect to follow a plain path leading to the correction of abuses, the sustaining of public opinion, and a more just appreciation of the rights and claims of a profession less recognised and more unworthily treated than any other body in the state. Why is this? Is it not because we have not been true to ourselves?

When the man, riding on his ass and pursued by banditti, urged him to greater speed to escape the enemy—No, was the animal's reply, the worst enemy I have ever had is the one now on my back. The worst enemy the medical profession has ever had has been found in the ranks of the profession itself; and all true reform must be from within. Jealousies and bickerings, want of union and unanimity, pride in supplanting a brother practitioner, the struggle for preference and advantage, the mere name of large attendances on the sick, irrespective of proper remuneration—these have been and are weapons daily used by the public against the profession.

Our Association has power to arrange and settle the various points of difference existing, such as no Medical organisation has ever before possessed. It has the power to make its membership a test of honour and respectability; it can create a tribunal to prevent and adjust those unseemly differences existing often for years to the entire exclusion of intercourse between fellow workers for the good of suffering humanity; it can elevate the whole status of the profession by making it more worthy to be universally esteemed and respected; and it can by its own unity show to each little knot of town-dwelling medical practitioners how they can increase their usefulness, win more extended respect, and remove the stigma of disunion and division to which they are now too often subjected.

These are great advantages which are intra-professional, and which, by regulating the conduct of each member of the Association, must tend to benefit the whole mass of the profession, and by degrees to draw all within its influence. But there are correlative advantages, in having fixed regulations for our guidance, as the public are thus made aware of what we expect and of what we shall do on all occasions. United, we are as the herd of bulls which the waiting lion could never attack; quarrelling among ourselves, we singly fall an easy prey. Boards of Guardians would in vain offer their scanty pittances for the life blood of our younger brethren, or insurance offices insult us by their subterfuges to escape a just fee, did they not feel assured that our refusal would not prevent a ready acquiescence, nay, a humble canvass for the proffered work from some medical aspirant. We again repeat it, we are not true to ourselves, or we should be more fairly and more truly used.

Our leading men who have risen over the billows and breakers of fortune's sea, and have safely landed on the shore of success, should, in justice to their younger brethren, whose hope deferred leads often onward to the grave, remember their own days of struggling and painful dependency. They should hesitate before dispensing indiscriminately gratuitous medical advice. They should pause