CORRESPONDENTS are particularly requested by the Editor to observe that communications relating to advertisements, changes of address, and other business matters, should be addressed to the Manager, at the Journal Office, 161A, Strand, London, and not to the Editor.

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A Grave Social Problem.

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Sir,—In your Journal of December 3rd, 1881, there is an article for which the writer ought to be thanked by the whole of the profession. As well remarked, there are two hostile camps; and it is most difficult to ascertain what is the most prudent course to pursue in bringing this "neglected field of inquiry" into notice before the profession. A most eminent physician who has had much experience writes to me, and says: "There are no statistics on which reliance can be placed." This is quite true; the degrading habit is rarely sought out by the practitioner, just because his knowledge of mental breakdowns is too superficial. Mental medicine is not taught at our schools or colleges; and the young medical man is exceedingly weak when called to treat or to decide upon treating cases of mental mischief arising from the habit that has been practised. The same physician also writes that: "I do not absolve girls or women; indeed, I have found mental breakdown, which really means a diseased nervous centre, ended in the patients themselves; but the frightful mischief is 'hereditary', and the sooner the teachers of mental medicine begin to instruct their pupils, the sooner may we expect to be able to attack one of the greatest foes of our race. I am in possession of facts in relation to this matter that are perfectly appalling; indeed, to my mind, they are horrible; and no doubt my brethren are cognisant of the same kind of facts. The ministers of religion seem quite incapable of staying the enemy; in fact, reasons might be given upon that head. Possibly some of your readers will step into the arena, and combat that which, to my mind, next to "alcoholism", is the destroyer of numbers of our poor fallen fellow creatures.—I am, yours, etc.,

Ar old Member.

Str.—Will you kindly allow me to say that the name of the author of Mornality—the be essay noticed in the leading article of the last issue of your paper

able and interesting leader refers, is not exactly that discussed in my book. I am very anxious to make this statement, lest the nature of my book might be in any way misunderstood. Perhaps (as you consider it "well worthy of the attention of all those who are in any way responsible for the up-bringing of boys") you will oblige me by letting me say that its publishers are W. H. Guest, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row, London; and Messrs. Sullivan and Charles, Dublin.—Obediently yours,

MAURICE C. HIME. Obediently yours,
Foyle College, Londonderry, January 16th, 1882.

THE COLLECTIVE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

SIR,—From your remarks about the above, it might be inferred that the gentlemen mentioned in your article originated the idea of joint work; I beg to inform you that they did nothing of the kind, and in proof refer you to a work published by me in 1879, page 103, in which the proposal will be found. The work is entitled The Medical Profession, and was published by Fannin. In the same work will be found suggestions for altering the law relative to post mortem examinations, without which alterations, let me tell you, the pathological innings of your Collective Committee will be simply poor indeed.—Your obedient servant,

THOMAS LAFFAN.

W. S. will find, in Churchill's Medical Directory for 1831, page 1178, or 1882, page 1191, a Local List of Practitioners resident abroad possessing British qualifications.

THE PERIOD OF MEDICAL STUDY.

"Facile omnes, cim valenus, recta consilia agrotis damus."

SIR,—There has recently been a smart discussion in the Journal as to whether three years are sufficient for mastering "die gross' und kleine Welt" comprised in the study of medicine, the general consensus being that that time is much too short. This seems to have been the opinion of Goethe, who makes the Student in Faust

This seems to have been the opinion of Goethe, who makes the Student in Faust say:

"Drei Jahr' ist eine kurze Zeit,
Und, Gott! das Feld ist gar zu weit."

And Mephistopheles (not a very respectable authority to be sure) says:

"Ein Titel muss sie erst vertraulich machen,
Dass eure Kunst viel Künste übersteigt."

Mr. W. S. Smith, Chemist (by Examination, and Associate of the Pharmaceutical Society) has issued a little book which shows that these notions are antiquated and behind the age, and that medical knowledge falls on us "like the gentle dew from heaven", so that any kind of special study is entirely unnecessary. At his Pharmakopocion may be obtained ready prepared medicines which will cure bilious headache, cold in the head, cold in the chest, diarrhoca, debility, eczema, gout, sciatica, lumbago, gravel, neuralgia, rheumatism, spasms, hysteria, and many other complaints "too tedious to mention", as was said in the programme of a concert. This being so, Mr. Smith has proved himself a great public benefactor. For why, instead of a man bothering himself with study, going into funking-rooms, and then before griffins of examiners, who bite and do not bark, and perhaps subjecting himself to the annoyance of being plucked, should he not supply himself with a stock of these medicines, which would be quite sufficient for all the cases that he is likely to meet with in practice? In this way, his patients will be treated "citò, tutò, et jucunde", and without much trouble to himself. The author of such a contrivance is really deserving of having a golden crown voted to him, who in these days, when so many are sent to their last account by over-study and slaps on the hand from cruel pedagogues (vide newspapers passim), has, by an encheirdion, if I may so call it, such as the present, rendered all such pernicious waste of time as study in the search of remedia malorum unnecessary. It now only remains to remind the student of what Faust says of his own and his father's meddling with medicine:

"So haben wir, mit höllisc

So haben wir, mit höllischen Latwergen, Weit schlimmer als die Pest getobt."

-I am, etc., W. P. Y. (Jersey).—The usual fee for administering an anæsthetic for the extraction , of teeth is $\pounds \tau$ 1s.

of teeth is £1 is.

JUVENILE ODDFELLOWS.

SIR,—If any of your readers will favour me with any particulars concerning the admission of lads into an Oddfellows' Lodge I shall be much obliged. I am surgeon to a lodge, which proposes to form a juvenile's branch. I. What should be the limits of age? 2. What amount of examination is customary? 3. Is a fee {4. If so what f) on examination usual or desirable? 5. What payment per annum should be asked for? The members of the lodge pay me 5s. per annum each; any living beyond three miles from the lodge-room pay me Is. per mile each visit. No fee on entrance examination; what is usual?—Yours obediently, LODGE SURGEON.

TRAINING OF NAVAL MEDICAL OFFICERS AT HASLAR.

SIR,—A letter signed "R. N." appeared on the 7th instant, which ought not to pass without comment, as it is so uncomplimentary to the sister service, to which we owe very much, and at the same time depreciative to a great extent of military medical officers in general. I know from my personal experience, which I may counterpoise with that of most officers on the active list, and superadding the opinions of many of the naval "Netley êlêves", as they are contemptuously termed, that a very different value might be laid on them than that your correspondent is disposed to concede. They might rather say that the knowledge and the general tone imparted to these "êlêves" do not afterwards find an adequate field in the naval service. The writer is evidently not of them, and he may, in his own conceit, be substantially competent to judge of younger—I would not say better—men. The future must be waited for, until it shows whether or not the Netley "êlêves", when placed in such commanding positions as your correspondent would wish it to be inferred he has held, prove themselves at least equal to the occasion in practice, as I have no doubt they will; and perhaps they will attribute that, in an advancing age, to the teaching they received under the staff of able professors at Netley.

As an educational establishment Haslar has once notably failed; let us hope that it may now be more fortunate, but for my part I am inclined to believe it can never be brought up to the standard of Netley without more funds being devoted to making it so.

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making it so.

I am persuaded that all naval medical officers of standing do not entertain the same sentiments as "R. N.", and I, for one, enter this protest against any such imputations and slurs as these being cast on army medical officers in general, and on Netley as a teaching establishment, as they are unmerited, and gratuitous from prejudice. The profession in the navy owes much to Netley, and I admit that, by a longer association there, it would have been rendered a still greater debtor to it. a longer association there, it would have been rendered a still greater debtor to it. The fact is, that the Admiralty, in order to travel as long and so far as possible in its own old tracks, has deemed it expedient to remove its "élèves" from Netley and transfer them to Haslar; but it may be soon found that mere expediency is but a short-sighted policy in dealing with the medical profession. At present, discontent exists throughout all ranks of the Naval Medical Service, and candidates do not overabound; and the Admiralty, waiting for a turn of tide, is modestly asking for just as many "élèves" as will fill the vacancies of the past quarter, when they are really in want of five or six times as many to make up the greatly reduced active list.—Yours gratefully,

ANOTHER M.D., R.N.

Sir,—I shall be very pleased to receive from any brother member any particulars as to medical practice in South Africa; the mode of going out; what to take as really necessary, etc. If any person who may have been there would kindly enter into private correspondence, I should be much favoured and exceedingly obliged.—I am, yours truly,

S. AFRICA.

THE DENTISTS' ACT.

THE DENTISTS' ACT.

SIR,—May I suggest the following view of the state of things brought about by the above Act of Parliament to Mr. Stevenson, viz., that it is not we who are brought down to the same low position of equality with the unqualified, but they who are placed on our higher one. Truly, this may not be a desirable state of things, and is vexing to anyone who has spent much time and money on his education to fit him thoroughly for his profession, but as long as there is such a thing as vested interest, I fail to see any other way than the one followed by the promoters of the Bill for putting our speciality on a sound basis.—Yours truly,

MORTON SMALE, Medical Tutor to Dental Hospital of London.

So Seymour Street, W.

89, Seymour Street, W.

A MEDICAL man named William Jones was charged at the Carlisle assizes with an assault upon four girls. A jury having been empanelled, it was, however, found that he was suffering from mental disease and from delusions of long standing. After full evidence to this effect, the jury found that the prisoner was insane, and incapable of pleading, and he was accordingly ordered to be detained in custody during Her Majesty's pleasure.

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