

Paramore treats with such scorn in the JOURNAL of March 17th? The answer to the question whether provident dispensaries are a necessity depends on the answer to yet another question, whether there is or is not a class between those called paupers and those able to pay proper fees, which is unable to find means to recompense the medical attendant, unless some special arrangements are adopted. If there is no such class then, of course, Dr. Paramore is right, and any efforts in such a direction as dispensaries must be attended by pauperisation as regards the recipient, and robbery as regards the dispenser. I thoroughly and fully believe that a fair day's work demands a fair day's pay; and if our social system was perfect, such a condition would be our normal lot. But I maintain there is such a class, and that the committee appointed at the Society of Arts has defined well the limits of such by fixing the wages at 30s. and 40s. per week. I fail altogether to see how any far-minded man can deny this if he knows anything at all about the life struggles of his poorer neighbours. At the present time there are many among the younger practitioners who charge 1s. for visit and medicine, and surely this is a sufficiently modest charge. Now, taking even this fee, and a patient with 30s. week and a family, and the patient be suffering from pneumonia or typhoid, and let it be the breadwinner. Such a case will require a visit every day, and if very bad, sometimes more often; but take it at once a day, this will mean 7s. a week, nearly a fourth of the whole week's income; and it must not be forgotten that at such a time there are many other expenses involved, so that it is not only the simple doctor's fee that is demanded, but extras in the way of food, very likely in the way of nursing, and when the breadwinner is struck down the income ceases to come in.

It will be at once answered that the man ought to belong to a club, and with truth; even then his sick pay will not equal his wages, unless he is a member of several, and if the former, then he is still less able to pay the fee above-mentioned. The case is scarcely much better when the wife is laid low, for then all the domestic arrangements go wrong; and if it is the children, then the wife's time and energies are taken wholly up with the nursing.

It has been a common experience, when surgeon to the Battersea Dispensary, to find that patients had been having the services of private medical men until their means were exhausted, and they could not afford it any longer, and so joined a provident dispensary. Having such a class to deal with, what other plan can be adopted? Some of Dr. Paramore's supporters say hand them over to the parish, but this is impossible, as under the present state of the law the parish would refuse them, and rightly so, as they certainly are not destitute, and it would not be fair to tax the great majority in order that men with 30s. a week might be provided with medical necessities. Relief must come by clubbing together, and by a fixed and continuous payment the necessary provision must be made, and this is the provident dispensary scheme. There must be a mutual accommodation on the part of the profession and those needing help.

Those who oppose provident dispensaries would lead one to infer that their belief was that mankind was specially created to supply them with the means of living comfortably, no matter what shifts the said mankind was reduced to in so doing. Dr. Paramore is ungenerous enough, in the hurry of the moment, to seize upon abuses reported about the Leicester dispensary, to sneer at the whole system, but such practices are not altogether unknown in private surgeries. There are two abuses in connection with provident dispensaries, and both of which ought to be grappled with. The first is the most crying, and it is the most difficult one to deal with—the admission of unfit people. This is not, however, a problem beyond human power to deal with. When I held a dispensary appointment, I always used to report at headquarters any case, when my own observation led me to believe the patients were not fit objects for relief. The other evil is that the dispensary staff being limited, jealousies are promoted between such staff and their brother practitioners. The cure for this is to allow every qualified man in the neighbourhood, who cares to do so, to put himself forward as a candidate, and to be accepted by the committee.

and to be accepted by the community, saying that club practice is heart-breaking, and that Kenton is quite right in saying that clubs put no wages limit to their membership, and for two reasons, the one being that clubs put no wages limit to their membership, and the other that the medical man is entirely at the mercy of the club, whereas, in provident dispensaries, he has to deal with a committee, in the main composed of men of an altogether different social standing, and from whom he obtains a fair hearing in case of any disputes. I firmly believe that no fairer scheme than that propounded by the Society of Arts Committee could be arranged both in the interests of patients and doctors.

AN APPEAL.

SIR: We beg to acknowledge with thanks the following subscriptions, received by us in acknowledgment of our appeal in the *JOURNAL* of February 18th, on behalf of the widow and three orphan girls of the late James McDonald, Esq., medical officer of Barvas, N.B. Any kind friends who may have hitherto overlooked this deserving case will greatly oblige by forwarding their subscriptions to

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The Demon of Dyspepsia: or Digestion Perfect or Imperfect. By Adolphus E. Bridger, B.A., M.D., F.R.C.P.E. London: Swan Sonnenschein, Lowry and Co.

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