

"AN OFFICIAL DANGER."

G. W. T. writes: Two years ago I had a similar experience to "A Victim," in having my name erased from the *Medical Register*, and only found it out accidentally. On applying to the National Vaccine Association for a supply of lymph, I was refused, and duly informed I was not a registered medical man. Imagine my surprise; for I had been in practice and had made no change of address for over fifteen years. I received no letter informing me of the changes, and had been in "blissful ignorance" of my position, until by a mere chance I was enlightened. Incensed, I wrote the Edinburgh Registrar, but could get no information, further than that my name had been removed some two years ago. It has since been restored, but only after being mulcted of the registration fee of five shillings.

Something must be wrong that such should occur. Evidently we have no assurance that our names are on the *Register*. It might be well for others to look to their registration, in case they may find to their dismay, if not loss, at some later period, that they are among the list of unregistered, therefore illegal, practitioners.

"* "Something must be wrong," no doubt, in this and like cases, but the wrong would seem to rest with the practitioner himself. The Registrar is bound by law to keep the *Register* correct. With the view of securing this accuracy, it is necessary for the Registrar to inquire from time to time, if the original registration remains correct; he therefore addresses the persons registered, and if the Registrar does not receive an answer for which he asks, after a certain time he sends a second application; if he receives no reply to the second inquiry, it becomes his duty, according to Clause xiv of the Medical Act, to remove the name from the *Register*.

Attention is called annually to this clause of the Act by notices in the medical journals and by special advertisement. G. W. T. no doubt overlooked the printed inquiries sent to him from the Medical Council Office.

THE FORCEPS AND THE PERINEUM.

MR. ALEX. D. H. LEADMAN, L.R.C.P. Ed. (Boroughbridge, Yorkshire) writes: The relief from pain is a very marked feature of the present day, and our clients, knowing that we possess the power, are not slow in demanding its exercise. Women of these days are not so tolerant of labour-pain as of yore. "Can you do nothing to help her?" is a uncommon cry. "Will you come? and please bring your instruments," is a request I have often heard. Ergot increases pain, and if pushed too far may cause rupture of the uterus, and always more or less bother with the placenta. As a country practitioner of seventeen years' standing I most unhesitatingly give my opinion in favour of the forceps, and I can look back with pleasure to the hours of bodily pain and mental anguish which I have saved many a mother, who, in the olden days, would have been left unaided, until so exhausted that when forceps were used fatal results often followed. The doctrine of "non-intervention" is exploded, and no one but the priest of a decaying faith would endeavour to maintain it. Cultivate observation, and practical experience will alone be the guide when instrumental interference shall be required or not.

ANOTHER PRACTITIONER OF THE OLD SCHOOL writes: I am glad a "Practitioner of the Old School" has lifted up his voice against the reckless use of the forceps in midwifery by the rising race of medical men. I by no means deprecate the use of forceps in suitable cases, but I do most urgently protest against any practitioner, old or young, applying them indiscriminately, often not so much to relieve the patient from suffering, as to get the case over.

I was taught by the late Dr. Arthur Farre, and I quote from notes taken from his lectures delivered at King's College, where he says, after mentioning the circumstances calling for their employment, that there are three things that are not arguments for their use. "1. Solicitation of the patient; 2, to gain experience; 3, for your own convenience." I fear these rules are sadly neglected at the present day. "Meddlesome midwifery" is, in my opinion, the cause of far more trouble than if we let Nature take its course unaided. In some respects the old practitioners sinned far more than we do by their frequent vaginal examinations, the hand being constantly thrust into the vagina and uterus to dilate the parts by the school of Hunter and Denman. As to the administration of ergot of rye, no doubt that was just as much abused formerly as are the forceps now; but not if the rules laid down by Ramsbotham and Churchill were followed.

With regard to the application of forceps, except in very urgent cases, such as flooding, convulsions, etc., I think if practitioners were to follow the advice constantly given in the medical journals, never to apply them without the concurrence and assistance of a brother practitioner, many perineums would be saved, and not a few reputations retained. We do so in surgical operations even of a very simple character. How much more ought we to do so in midwifery operations, where two lives are at stake.

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BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

- The Skin Diseases of Infancy and Early Life. By C. M. Campbell, M.D., C.M. Edin. London: Baillière, Tindall, and Cox. 1889.
- Psycho-Therapeutics, or Treatment by Sleep and Suggestion. By C. Lloyd Tuckey, M.D. London: Baillière, Tindall, and Cox. 1889.
- A Reference Handbook of the Medical Sciences. Edited by A. H. Buck, M.D. Vol. VII. New York: William Wood and Co. 1889.
- A Textbook of Medical Jurisprudence for India. By J. B. Lyons, F.C.S., F.I.C. Revised as to the legal matter by J. D. Inverarity, Barrister-at-law. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co. 1889.
- A Treatise on Marks' Patent Artificial Limbs with Rubber Hands and Feet. New York: A. A. Marks. 1889.
- The Pathology, Clinical History, and Diagnosis of Affections of the Mediastinum. By Hobart Amory Hare, M.D. Philadelphia: P. Blakeston, Son and Co. 1889.
- Footprints of a Profession; or Ethics in Materials and Methods. By H. C. Meriam, D.M.D. Second Edition; revised and enlarged. St. Louis: Th. Dental Journal and Library Association.

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