

Actions of Medical Men," I am alluded to by name. I beg to disclaim all knowledge of how or by whom the article was inserted, and to state most emphatically that I have not, directly or indirectly, furnished any information upon which it could be framed.

CONSUMPTIVES AND LONG SEA VOYAGES.

MR. GEORGE SERJEANT (Medical Missionary to the Australian Aborigines Cumerogunga, Percy Street, Echuca, Victoria) writes: The above subject having been brought so prominently before your readers, may I be allowed to touch upon what, perhaps, is much more important to the patient, namely, the most suitable locality for consumptives in Australia? Australia is liable to very sudden changes of temperature, and many places here are most unsuitable for chest complaints. Again, some patients may find their way into a suitable locality and greatly improve in health, but after a time, their funds falling them, and being unable to obtain employment there, they go off into some unsuitable place for the purpose of earning a livelihood, and so, instead of being cured, remain invalids to the end of their days. Perhaps of all places in Australia there is none better than the town of Echuca, in Victoria. Hundreds of consumptives owe their restoration to health to this place. It is on the borders of New South Wales, on the Murray and Campespe rivers, 156 miles by rail from Melbourne, 314 feet above the sea level, with a population of over 4,000 people. The following is quoted from Brück's *Guide to the Health Resorts of Australia*: "Echuca is surrounded by forests of gum trees, which protect it from winds and impregnate the pure atmosphere with the balsamic odour of the essential oil of eucalyptus. The climate is warm, equable, and very dry. The mean annual temperature is 58.9° F. The average annual rainfall is only 16 inches, with 67 rainy days in the year; there is very little variation of temperature, and hardly any sudden atmospheric changes. The river scenery is very fine. Fishing (Murray cod, etc.), boating, steamer excursions, shooting (hares, turkeys, etc.); mechanics' institute, free library, three public parks."

Many sad cases come here during the year, some having wandered in search of health into most unsuitable towns, and spending all the means they were possessed of. These cases having come under the notice of some ladies—Mrs. Henry Varley, my wife, and others; they are on the eve of opening a Consumptive Hospital, for the purpose of receiving patients without means, and possibly a few paying ones. Any coming from England could be met by Mrs. Varley in Melbourne, who would send them safely here to the hospital, so that friends in England would have no cause for anxiety as to their welfare on landing in Australia. Those having means, and not caring for the hospital, can be directed to suitable lodgings and have the companionship of Christian friends, on writing to Mrs. Henry Varley, Kew, Melbourne.

Many influential business men in Melbourne, such as Mr. T. Kitchen, Messrs. Beath, Scheis, and Co., are subscribers, and it has the help and sympathy of Dr. Singleton, the well known philanthropist of Melbourne, and Mr. Henry Varley, the evangelist, lately from London.

A PENNY-A-WEEK FUND.

M.B. writes: In this district it is found that after contributing for a short time, the working-classes begin to agitate for representatives on the governing board, which cannot fairly be objected to. But if one workshop has a representative, why should not another? And so it comes to pass that in one hospital with which I am acquainted there are about two dozen working men representatives on a committee of about thirty members.

I must say that in this case the system has worked well enough in many respects, but here the hospital and town are small, and the staff attend the meetings and are well known and respected by the other members of committee. But in a neighbouring and much larger hospital affairs have not gone on so smoothly. For instance, some of the governors exercise to the full their prerogative of going in and out at all hours of the day, and even late at night, and systematically visit those patients who are from their own workshops, and ask "if they have any complaints to make." Of course many of the representatives are men of common sense, but there are ignorant, biased men among them, and so at next meeting of committee the house-surgeon is called on to explain "how it is that Smith has chicken for dinner, while Jones, with the same complaint, is only allowed milk diet;" or "why Robinson was refused admission after his club doctor had told him that his was a suitable case."

This is not an imaginary evil; the house-surgeons and nurses of this hospital are regularly worried before each committee meeting, by receiving a notice asking them to attend and reply to some charge against them. As to "the moral claim to relief," many of those who contribute learn to look upon the charity as in some sense a club to which they have paid their subscription, and that, therefore, they have a right to treatment.

Men who can well afford to pay a doctor send their families, or come themselves, to the out-patient department, and when told that they cannot be treated express the greatest indignation, threaten to stop their subscription, and to complain to their representative; so that for his own peace of mind a house-surgeon is often tempted to give in and treat indiscriminately all who come to him. One woman, who was told that hers was not a suitable case, informed the house-surgeon that "he had too much cheek and impudence; that the working-men had put him in his place, and they would put him out again." This is of course an extreme case, but it shows the feeling in the minds of the contributors.

I believe that in hospitals in small towns the system is good for everybody except the resident staff, whose lives are made a burden to them by constant petty annoyances; but it appears to me that it will only tend to make worse the present state of affairs in the large hospitals, and especially in those of the metropolis, where, in their eagerness for a good report, no steps are taken to prevent abuse, or to ascertain the social standing of their patients.

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BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

- The Cup of Youth, and other Poems. By S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., LL.D. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. 1889.
- Observations on Some Rare Diseases of the Skin. By Joseph Frank Payne, M.D.Oxon., F.R.C.P.Lond. With Four Plates. London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1889.
- The Guide for Irish Medical Practitioners. By Professor R. J. Kinkead, M.D., J.P. Dublin: John Balconer. 1889.
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- Blackie's Modern Cyclopædia. Edited by Charles Annandale, M.A., LL.D. Vol. II. London: Blackie and Son. 1889.
- The Ghost of Dunboy Castle. By "Huberto." Vol. I and II. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co. 1889.

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