

IDIOTS' HOME.

SIR,—Can you, or any of your readers, inform me of a suitable institution where a young man, twenty-seven years of age, almost an idiot, could be received? His friends can afford to pay about £1 a week for him. He was once in an asylum for a short time, but was discharged as unsuitable for a lunatic asylum. I think I have read of such an institution been built by Professor Holloway, but cannot find the paper. Any information on the subject will be thankfully received by yours faithfully,
L.K.Q.C.P.

* A case such as the above, whose friends can afford to pay £1 per week, would, we think, be received at Earlswood, or Essex Hall, Colchester. Failing these, "L.K.Q.C.P." might try the Star Cross Idiot Asylum, Exeter. Into this last asylum, a friend informs us that he has been able to obtain the admission of patients when he has failed at Earlswood and Essex Hall. Holloway's institution, to which our correspondent refers, is an institution for lunatics, and is not yet open.

A "FRIENDLY" MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND ITS MEDICAL OFFICER.

SIR,—Last April I was elected as medical officer to an "Odd Fellows' Dispensary", and, on May 12th, commenced my duties, which were, to attend dispensary from 9 to 10.30 A.M., and from 6 to 7.30 P.M.; to visit patients unable to attend dispensary; and to attend midwifery, "as far as practicable with the discharge of the duties of the dispensary". A dispenser was provided by the Society. Previous to my election, the secretary led me to believe that the total number of members was three thousand, including wives and children. I afterwards found that the wives and children were in addition to the three thousand, thereby raising the total to between nine and ten thousand.

The average number of attendances at dispensary each day was forty, and the number of patients on the visiting list per week, for the first month, averaged fifty-six. No conveyance was found, nor was there any allowance made for hiring, so the visiting had to be done on foot. The extent of the district was a radius of three miles from the dispensary, which was situated as near as possible in the centre of the town, and the patients who required visiting lay scattered all over the district. Being a stranger to the place, I had the greatest difficulty in finding out the residence of each.

After one month's hard work, I was surprised by complaints of negligence being brought forward against me at a weekly meeting of the committee, none of which were true, neither did they originate from the patients. In consequence of them, however, I wrote a letter to the committee, denying the charges made against me by their "sick visitors", expressing my dissatisfaction with the manner in which the dispensary was managed, and complaining of the misconduct and gross carelessness of the dispenser. I also told them that the work was too much for one medical officer, and requested them to supply me with a qualified assistant, so that the duties could be performed with more satisfaction to the members and benefit to the Society.

The answer I received was, one month's notice that my services would not be required after August 12th. During my three months of office, I prescribed for over 3,000 at dispensary, visited upwards of 700, and attended 12 cases of midwifery. Shortly after I commenced, I had occasion to find fault with the dispenser for giving medicines to one of the patients which I had not prescribed, also for his irregularity in attendance; and, later on, I was obliged to complain of his negligence in dispensing; so I requested the committee to dismiss him, and supply me with a "duly qualified dispenser", according to our agreement. I also objected to his undertaking my duty at dispensary, and prescribing for patients during my absence, he being unqualified, and therefore in my opinion totally unfit to do so. However, the committee thought differently; and, on every occasion that I was absent, he was made by them to take my place, and prescribe for a roomful of patients, which I need not say gave great dissatisfaction to all who required advice.

He was a member of one of the lodges, and a "coal agent" by trade, in which capacity he was also employed by the committee. For this reason, they got his services as dispenser at a very low rate, and, that being a great consideration, they deemed it better to keep him, and dismiss me.

From the commencement, the treatment I met with from the committee was characteristic of the men who composed it, the secretary being the most officious and insulting of the lot. On the other hand, I experienced great kindness and consideration from the patients, and it was with feelings of regret on my part that my connection with them as medical officer terminated so soon.—I am, sir, yours truly,
GEORGE H. ORMSBY, L.R.C.S.I., etc.

2, High Street, Wood Green, N., September 20th, 1881.

PERPLEXITY (Hemel Hempstead) must state his requirements a little more exactly, and in detail.

ATMOSPHERIC DISINFECTION.

SIR,—In this week's JOURNAL there was a short account of a small apparatus, very artistic in its design, for the purpose of diffusing one of the products of the distillation of coal in the atmosphere. We have long been acquainted with the fact that much benefit is derived from the diffusion of carbolic acid in the treatment of whooping-cough; and I believe this method of treating the malady has become very general. The principle, too, is very ancient; for if we may credit history in such a matter, the plague of Athens was arrested by Acron of Argirentum, who lighted large fires in different parts of the city and burned various volatile substances by which the air was purified.

The object of this letter is to point out the difference between burning a substance and diffusing it in the atmosphere. For example, a strong solution of carbolic acid and water will burn with a smoky flame, but the carbolic acid will be consumed, and not diffused, so that practically there is no benefit whatever from igniting the disinfectant. The question naturally suggests itself, What is the best plan to adopt for obtaining the most perfect diffusion of a disinfectant, assuming that noxious germs may be destroyed in the atmosphere in this way? Carbolic acid has an advantage over the other products of coal-distillation in one important particular. If a solution of, say, one of acid to forty of water be evaporated at boiling-point, the vapour will not vary in its percentage of contained acid, but will continue of the same strength during the process of evaporation, and there will be no residue if pure acid be used. Some of the fragrant gum resins and turpentine may be treated in the same way, and their volatile constituents diffused in the air; but owing to the fact that they are volatilised unequally, and some at lower temperatures than boiling water, the same equal diffusion does not obtain.

In order to show the practical value of treating this subject scientifically, I may mention that directions for inhaling carbolic acid are sometimes given which would not be of the use intended, as, for example, when a patient is told to add thirty grains of carbolic acid to half a pint of hot water. The actual amount of carbolic acid inhaled or diffused into the air by this method would be infinitesimally small,

for the amount of acid evolved would bear the same proportion to the amount of aqueous vapour as the thirty grains bear to the half-pint of water. These remarks, I hope, will indicate the principle on which atmospheric disinfection depends.—I am, yours obediently,
ROBERT LEE.

6, Savile Row, September 1st, 1881.

GALL-STONES.

SIR,—I have read with much pleasure the discussion on jaundice opened by Dr. Lauder Brunton at the Ryde meeting of the Association, and reported by you in the JOURNAL for September 17th. The incidental remarks on the treatment for the prevention of gall-stones interested me especially. For some years, I was in the habit of using in this complaint a method of treatment suggested to me by the late Dr. Warburton Begbie of Edinburgh, and from which I have seen benefit. The treatment consisted in administering a course of pills composed of the green iodide of mercury, manna, and soap. A useful point in diagnosis was, at the same time, told me by Dr. Begbie. He considered, when gall-stones were present, there was pain, jaundice, and vomiting; when only inspissated bile was passing, there was no vomiting, only pain and jaundice.

Since Professor Rutherford read the result of his valuable researches on the action of remedies on the liver, before the Edinburgh Medico-Chirurgical Society, it struck me that iridin, from its action on the liver, might prevent the formation of gall-stones. I accordingly tried it in the first case I met, and found the result most encouraging. Since then, I have used it in many cases, two or three of which I may mention. I give the iridin in pills consisting of iridin gr. i; pil. rhei co. gr. iv; one to be taken every night at bedtime, till twelve are taken. If necessary, some saline mineral water may be given in the morning. A course of these pills should be taken, say, once in two months.

About two years ago, a lady had a very severe attack of gall-stones; and, being treated on this method, has had no more attacks. Another lady, who frequently suffered from this complaint, and went to many medical men without obtaining relief, consulted me eighteen months ago. Iridin was ordered; and, last week, I received a letter from her husband, thanking me for my prescription, and informing me that, since I had prescribed for his wife, she had not had an attack of her formerly frequently-recurring and troublesome complaint. A legal gentleman, who was a martyr to this malady, which returned with great frequency, and caused much prostration by the severity of the attacks, on trying my treatment, recommended to him twelve months ago, has escaped during that time a return of the disease.

I have written this letter with the hope that others may give this remedy a trial, and record their experience.—I am, yours, etc.,
P. A. YOUNG, M.D.
Portobello, Midlothian, September 21st, 1881.

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BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

A Treatise on Chemistry. Vol. III; Part I. By H. E. Roscoe. London: Macmillan and Co. 1881.
Transactions of the American Gynecological Society for the Year 1880. Vol. v. Boston: Houghton and Co. 1881.
Medical Electricity, with Ninety-six Illustrations. By R. Bartholow, A.M., M.D. London: H. Kimpton. 1881.
Dramatic Singing. By Walter Hayle Walshe, M.D. London: Kegan Paul and Co. 1881.

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