Factory Certifying Surgeons.

SIR,—I am inclined to ask the favour of your inserting a reply to the letter which appeared in your issue of November 19th, signed "Another Certifying Surgeon since 1868", because I find that the writer has committed himself to a practice not upheld by law.

Let me say that the Association of Certifying Surgeons alluded to was formed in 1868, and partook of a somewhat dictatorial turn, having for one of its objects the complete inspection of factories for themselves. In proof of my assertion, I would refer your readers to the *Birmingham Daily Post* of December 1st, 1868, wherein letters appeared, headed "Taxes on Manufacturers", and which were the outcome of the endeavours of the Association to arrogate to themselves certain undue powers.

It was during the early days of factory inspection that certifying surgeons did as they liked; for one of the inspectors had been a surgeon in Leeds, and largely contributed to the success of the system adopted by general consent of the surgeons, as he did in leading manufacturers on to a due appreciation of the blessings of factory legislation, in which he deservedly held so large a share. Sanctioned by him, the surgeons continued in their habit of charging fees proportionate to the capacity of the millowners to pay; for, be it borne in mind, there was no legal enactment defining what the scale was. It is true, a scale was introduced in a note to a former Act as suggestive, but it did not form any part of that Act; so, in Section 13 of the Factory Act, 1844, the inspector had the power of fixing the amount of fees and times of visits, if the occupier required him to do so; and the said section set forth the maximum amount of fees to be paid; but, where such application was not made (and in very few cases indeed was it made), the surgeon could charge whatever sum he pleased.

This state of things continued to 1878, when, in the Act 41 Vict., cap. 16, sec. 74, all doubt is removed, and the enactment passed that certain fees only shall be paid; so that now it is useless to quote the Association of Certifying Surgeons as exponents of what should be, or to give the practice of any one surgeon under the recognition of an inspector, for both are powerless to act contrary to law.

Now that I have cleared away a little, allow me to approach the subject as it is, and to reply *seriatim* to your correspondent's letter.

The half-crown fee for certificates up to five, as contended for, does not apply to such factories as have a periodical or weekly visit paid to them, nor to those factories whose occupiers send for the surgeon when several certificates are required. The Act says that, where no agreement is made between occupier and surgeon, the fees shall be those named in the following scale, viz.: "When the examination is made at the factory, not exceeding a mile from surgeon's residence, two shillings and sixpence shall be paid as a maximum amount for a visit, and sixpence extra for each person examined after the first five." Here is an absolute law; two shillings and sixpence to be paid for one or five certificates, no matter whether a visit be required to be made once a week or once a year. Of course, if hands be employed longer than the prescribed time, the inspector should find it out.

I, secondly, take exception to the practice of certifying young persons from their appearance, and without any proof of age. Such a practice would not be tolerated in the metropolis, for it is directly opposed to Section 27 of the afore-named Act, and every certificate so given can be cancelled by Her Majesty's inspector; in fact, it was the imperfections of the system obtaining before 1878, which led to the present enactment; and how can any surgeon state in the register that a boy's age is fifteen unless upon the boy's word? or how can a surgeon comply with the printed instructions in the register by giving date of birth and subscribing thereto, unless some documentary proof be given to him? In the third place, I am surprised to read that a half-time book is deemed sufficient evidence of the age of a child, when it is most particular that positive proof of age should be produced. I am inclined to think that the writer refers to the "livrêt", which contains all that is necessary for ascertaining particulars prior to employment, and not to a half-time book, which merely records the daily attendances at school.

Finally, as to mileage, your correspondent takes his view of the Act, by charging two shillings and sixpence a visit, and one shilling for each certificate, where the distance exceeds one mile. I pronounce this to be a flagrant violation of the law, which says: "Where the examination is at a factory more than one mile from surgeon's residence, the above fees (*i.e.*, those I quote above), and an additional sixpence for each half-mile over and above one mile. Now let me assume a case upon the charges so unwarrantably made. Eight persons are to be certified; distance from residence of surgeon, one mile and a quarter. The legal charge is, 2s. 6d. for five certificates, 6d. for each of the three remaining, and 6d. for extra half-mile; total 4s. 6d. Surgeon's fees, fixed by himself, 2s. 6d. for visiting the factory, and 1s for every certificate; total 10s. 6d., or an exaction from the millowner of 6s. upon a single visit.

I ask you, sir, was there not need for the legalising of surgeons' fees, and for the prohibition of the custom by surgeons of "taxing manufacturers" *ad libitum?* One cannot envy the spirit which prompts the taking of 5s. for walking to a factory a few yards beyond the mile, as candidly confessed to by your correspondent.

Comment is made also upon the 6d. fee, "which is the worst of all, but not affecting the writer very much". If it did, I fancy we should have had a hard plea for abolishing so insignificant a sum for professional services; but why was the 6d. fee inserted in the Act?

As the Act of 1878 was extended to every place, however small, and therefore including many very poor occupiers, it was humanely settled that a 2s. 6d. fee should not be demanded, especially as the only lad employed might leave in a week; and, moreover, the surgeon is relieved from going to the factory. The system works well, and has been the means of inducing many to obey the law, when the exaction of 2s. 6d. would prompt them to evade it. I see no great difference between signing a book and looking at a boy in one's surgery for a minute, and taking 6d. for it, and pulling out a tooth for 1s.—an operation requiring skill and judgment, as well as the entailment of much longer time.

I have written a long letter; and, if you will be good enough to publish it, I hope it may produce the effect desired, that of convincing certifying surgeons that the law is now absolute, and so simple that no one can err in carrying it out.

—Your obedient servant,
J. B. LAKEMAN.
Home Office, Whitehall, S.W.

Vaccination.

SIR,—It was stated in the JOURNAL that the report of the Conference on Vaccination, held in July 1879, and published in this JOURNAL, has been published separately. Please say who is the publisher, or where the report may be had.—I am, etc.,
MEDICUS.

*** At the office of the JOURNAL, 161A, Strand; price, 1s.

Restoration of the Extensor Power of a Finger.

SIR,—Can any of your readers give information likely to be useful in the following case? A man had a severe contused wound on the back of his hand, amongst other things, partially destroying a portion of the extensor tendon of the middle finger. It is impossible to bring the two ends together; and what I propose is, to unite the distal fragment to the neighbouring tendon of the ring-finger; and, if it should be too short to be brought in apposition, would it be justifiable to separate off a slip from the tendon of the ring-finger, and unite it to the ruptured end? I do not care to run the risk of possibly destroying the sound tendon if anyone should have tried and failed before. I can find no information on the subject in any of the books within my reach.—I am, etc.,
PETER TYTLER, M.D.
Manchester, December 11th, 1881.

Immediate Arrest of Bleeding from the Nose.: A Correction.

SIR,—An error in punctuation in my last week's Memorandum makes me seem untruthful. There ought to have been a comma after the word "country", and a full stop in the next line after the date. As a matter of fact, I have informed *private* correspondents of the names of probable makers of Dr. Rose's instruments, although adding that no one (so far as I am aware) has an exclusive property in it.—I am, etc.,
JOHN K. SPENDER, M.D.
Bath, December 20th, 1881.

SIR,—Will you kindly tell me where I can obtain the drugs you mention in the JOURNAL of December 10th; to wit, "Resorcin and its allies"?—Yours faithfully,
T. D.

*** Wholesale, of Zimmerman and Co.; or through Corbyn and Co., Allen and Hanbury, or Martindale.

Umbilical Hernia.

SIR,—I should feel much obliged if any of your correspondents would kindly give me their opinion of the value of the umbilical belts for infants in curing umbilical hernia. Also, can they recommend any better contrivance?—Yours faithfully,
Longtown, Abergavenny, December 14th, 1881. L. THAIN.

Women Doctors in Eastern Countries.

THE following extract from a letter received from a gentleman travelling the north of China, dated October 14th, 1881, has been sent to a contemporary for publication, by Miss Isabella Thorne, Secretary for the London School of Medicine for Women: "While at Tien-tsin I called on Miss Howard, M.D., the lady doctor who so successfully treated Lady Li, the wife of the viceroy Li Hung-Chang. I found her exceedingly pleasant, and she invited me to be present at the opening of her Hospital for Female Patients on the 8th inst. This was a grand affair. Li Hung-Chang, attended by many mandarins, came to take part in the ceremony. The Hon. A. Angell, the American Minister, was passing through Tien-tsin on his way home, and was asked to say a few words on the occasion. It was a curious coincidence that he had been president of the University in America where Miss Howard had studied, and he himself had signed her diploma. This made it exceedingly interesting to him, and he did not fail to allude to it in his speech. Ladies did not take part in the ceremony, but Miss Howard came into the reception-hall and by an efficient interpreter expressed to Li Hung-Chang her thanks for the support he and Lady Li were giving to her undertaking. Li stood while Miss Howard was there. She then retired to her own apartments and Dr. Mackenzie, of the London Mission, did the honours of the reception. After we had walked round, we returned and partook of tea, coffee, cakes, etc., and shortly afterwards Li retired also, and an interesting ceremony came to an end."

WE have received the first two sheets of a letter under the heading, "Has the Duration of Human Life in England increased during the last thirty years", from which the last sheet is missing, with the name of the author.

COMMUNICATIONS, LETTERS, etc., have been received from:—
Mr. George Sankey, Maidstone; Dr. Lewis Eisberg, New York; Dr. J. H. Aveling, London; G.; Mr. J. E. Ingpen, London; Mr. W. Prowse, Cambridge; Dr. Rabaghati, Bradford; Mr. W. J. Verrall, Brighton; Dr. H. L. Snow, London; Dr. John Whitlock, Luton; Mr. Charles Atken, Liverpool; F. P.; Dr. F. Dickinson, Exminster; A Member; Mr. A. Hallowes, Maidstone; An Hospital Physician; Mr. A. Creswell Rich, Liverpool; Mr. J. Neville Porter, London; Mr. Walter Whitehead, Manchester; Dr. Dowse, London; Dr. de Pietra Santa, Paris; Mr. W. Archer, Birmingham; Mr. H. E. Clark, Glasgow; Sir Henry Thompson, London; General Practitioner; Mr. Thomas Duke, Rugby; Dr Farquharson, London; A Provincial Surgeon; Mr. Alfred Baker, Birmingham; Dr. T. R. Armitage, London; Mr. G. Stillingfleet Johnson, London; Mr. W. F. Phillipps, Andover; Dr. Glascott, Manchester; Our Edinburgh Correspondent; F.R.C.S.; Mr. J. Wickham Barnes, London; Mr. A. Cooper, London; Dr. W. M. Kelly, Taunton; Mr. S. S. D. Wells, Gosport; Dr. Haddon, London; Dr. R. Bruce Low, Helmsley; Dr. Saundby, Birmingham; A Member of B. M. A.; Dr. James McNaught, Newchurch; Mr. W. Berry, Wigan; Mr. H. G. Cartwright, Narborough; Parish Medical Officer; Dr. J. Rogers, London; etc.