

## AN UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION.

SIR,—The BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of June 16th contained a letter from Mr. Duggan of Castle Eden, complaining of the conduct of a neighbouring practitioner in using hand-bills among his patients. My name appears on those bills. As it is no light matter to have one's name associated with such practice, it is important that I announce publicly that my name was made use of without obtaining my permission, or even acquainting me with it. This can only be understood by stating the whole facts; and I crave your indulgence for the necessary space.

Dr. Marr and Dr. Duggan are neighbours, and reside and practise at Castle Eden, two or three miles from here, and are, it is hardly necessary to explain not on the best terms with each other. Dr. Duggan, finding Castle Eden too small a sphere for his energy, attempted to extend his practice in my direction; and, obtaining an introduction by means of the union appointment, issued handbills, addressed the workmen's trades-union meetings, and personally canvassed from door to door, soliciting the people to become his club-patients, even when they were under my treatment. I forbear, from a sense of professional propriety, to mention all the means adopted. Next, Dr. Marr views this seeming success with a jealous eye, and also makes an onslaught in the same district; and, following the example of his neighbour, issues hand-bills. Knowing that I am always willing to act for a neighbour in his absence (for hitherto I have been courteous to both), he thinks there can be no harm in mentioning this in his bill; but, from some strange form of ethical blindness, does not see the necessity of intimating to me his intention to issue hand-bills, and afford me an opportunity to object. Now, be it remembered that this is still a rivalry between Dr. Duggan and Dr. Marr; but the scene of battle is transferred from their own district to mine, to my detriment; for, although fighting with each other, they are at the same time both fighting against me.

This full explanation will, I trust, be ample proof that I have no connection with the affair; and I have no doubt you will concur with me that the careless use of a name is a serious matter indeed. I make no comment on my two neighbours; it is not for that purpose that I write.—I am, yours, etc.,

Wingate, co. Durham, July 12th, 1888. JAMES ARTHUR, L.R.C.S., etc.

MR. J. D. HAMILTON.—The particulars will be discussed at Liverpool, and answered from time to time in the JOURNAL.

## MEDICAL ETIQUETTE.

SIR,—I should feel much obliged if you would kindly give your opinion on the following points.

1. E. and F. both practise in the same town. During an illness of some months' duration, E. sends for F. to attend him, and sends his patients to F. also. F. attends cases of midwifery, visits and supplies medicine, etc. No arrangement is made about fees.

2. An old patient of E.'s, who has not been attended by him for some months before his (E.'s) illness, requests F. to attend on his own behalf.

3. Another patient (who has been seen by F. for E.) after E.'s recovery, has another illness. He requests F. to attend him. F. objects, having acted for E. when ill, but the patient declines to return to E.; and says, if F. will not attend him, he will call in another doctor. (a) Is he entitled to any of the fees paid by patients? (b) Should F. do so? (c) What is F.'s proper course?—Yours truly,

A MEMBER.

\*. In reply to query 1, we would quote the rule laid down in the *Code of Medical Ethics*, page 35: "When, during sickness, affliction, or absence from home, a practitioner entrusts the care of his practice to a professional friend, the latter should not make any charge to the former, or to the patients, for his services, but should in all things be the *locum tenens* of the absentee. If, however, the attendance be protracted, and the labour proportionate, a fitting acknowledgment should, if circumstances admit, be made." In the case of F., we consider that the prolonged professional work, cost of medicines, etc., justly entitle to a liberal remuneration.

2. Strictly speaking, F. would, in our opinion, be justified in taking charge of the case; but, ere doing so, professional courtesy and true brotherly feeling should induce him to call upon and explain to E. the attendant circumstances.

3. In declining to attend the patient, F. acted judiciously and in strict accordance with medico-ethical rules. At the same time, under the special circumstances mentioned, no blame will attach to F. in accepting the responsibility of the attendance, if, as advised in the preceding reply, he fully explains the facts to E.

## BEDS.

SIR,—Your correspondent, "Perplexed," seems to give the preference to the "spiral spring," or French bed. Allow me to say that I consider these mattresses, as made now, the most uncomfortable of all beds. Years ago, when first introduced, they were flat and accommodated themselves easily to the body. Now they are convex in the middle, and, as a rule, so hard that the body is not accommodated, but turns from side to side, vainly seeking for repose, until, at last, the sleeper wakes and finds himself on his back, in which position alone can the body find repose on these hard and cone-spring mattresses.

The old "sack" was, in my opinion, the most accommodating of all, but this has gone out of fashion, and the nearest approach to it, and, perhaps, in some respects, superior, is the "woven wire," which need not, as "Perplexed" seems to think, "present a perfectly level surface," as it can be slackened or tightened at will. From its pliable nature, it must accommodate itself kindly to the body; and while the "spiral springs" are constantly getting uneven, and are, as a rule, so in hotels, it is next to impossible for the woven-wire mattress even to get out of order.—I am, sir, your obediently,

"WOVEN WIRE."

## ASTHMA.

SIR,—Can you, or any of the members of the Association, enlighten me upon the subject of "Ling's movement cure" for asthma? I wish to know what is the nature of the movements, and whether the treatment has proved of any real and permanent value to any one; and particularly whether it is of such a character as to be beneficial, or even admissible, in a case of asthma associated with valvular disease of the heart. Any information on the subject would be esteemed a great favour by—Yours truly,

Fern Bank, Rotherham.

JNO. B. LYTCH, M.R.C.S., etc.

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## BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

The Bastilles of England; or, the Lunacy Laws at Work. By Louisa Lowe. Vol. 1. London: Crookenden and Co. 1883.

Hints to Househunters and Household. By Ernest Turner. London: B. T. Batsford. 1883.

The Mineral Waters of Aix les Bains and Marlioz; Practical Considerations on their Action and Application. By Leon Blanc, M.D., Paris. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1883.

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