to be useful, and, as I trust I have proved in various public positions, the necessary energy and discretion. But I desire it also, as a medical man, as a triumph of the professional principles which the British Medical Association does so much to foster.

One word with reference to my relations to Dr. Hardwicke. If I were to retire to-morrow in his favour, in order to prevent the medical interest from being divided, as has been suggested, the only result would be to give an easy triumph to the legal candidate. County elections cannot be won, unfortunately, without a careful and extensive organisation. Easy victories are not to be snatched. I have before me the evidence that it is only by much persistence as a candidate that a medical coroner can be returned. The number of promises of support which I have on all sides, and their constant and rapid increase, justify me in anticipating a certain triumph. Only one thing can endanger it; it is if any other medical candidate, finding his case practically hopeless, should still persist in going to the poll. I am, etc.,

35, Oakley Square, S.W., Jan. 23rd, 1868. THOS. B. DIPLOCK.

"BABY-FARMING."

SIR,—My attention having been directed to an article in your JOURNAL of the 11th instant, under the heading "Baby-Gangers," and the statements therein being entirely untrue, except that the child alluded to did unfortunately meet with an accident by which it was seriously injured, I trust that you will see the necessity and advisability of inserting in your next publication this contradiction.

When a woman named Graham brought the child alluded to in your article to me in September 1866, she told me that it was her brother's, and that it was fourteen months old. That being so, the child is now about two years and six months old, and not three years as stated. The child was not tied in a chair when the accident occurred to it; it never was employed by me in the manner stated in your article; nor was it (in consequence of its age) capable of being so employed. Mr. Benson Baker must have a very curious notion of the ability of a child of two years and six months old, if he really thinks that it could perform the acts which are most untruly alleged, in your said article, to have been performed by this child; and moreover, as the accident occurred about the month of April last, the child would then be only *one year and nine months old*. How any one, especially a medical man, could think of alleging that a child so young could be "officially employed" in the manner stated, is wonderful.

That the child did meet with a serious accident is quite true, which I did then, and do now much deplore; but that it was caused in the way stated in your article I positively deny. Fortunately for me, at the time when the accident happened, a friend was at my house, who (should it become necessary) will prove, at the proper time, that the accident was not caused by any neglect of mine, or from me having "had a drop of gin," and that I was not powerless to help him, as untruly stated in your said article. I am, etc., CAROLINE JAGGAR.

Tottenham, January 16, 1868.

*** The paragraph in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL was simply an extract without comment from a letter of Mr. Benson Baker, printed and published in the *Journal of Public Health*. We have submitted the above letter to Mr. Benson Baker, who has shown himself on other occasions a public officer of the highest character and the most excellent public spirit, and he has forwarded the following reply.

SIR,—I beg to forward to you the following facts relative to this case, which I have obtained from the person who has the present care of the child.

She states that, after the inquest at Tottenham, the aunt brought the child Harold McDonald to her three months ago. She told her the child had been seriously burnt; that the child had been tied in a chair, and fell in the fire; and that the chair was burnt under the child. The aunt pays four shillings per week for its maintenance. I put the following questions to the child. "What did you do when the babies cried?" *Answer*. "I put de tittie in der mout." "What did Mother Jaggar have?" *Answer*. "A dop of din in a dottle." "Did she give you any?" *Answer*. "Yeth." "Do you like it?" *Answer*. "Yeth." "Do you get any now?" *Answer*. "No.". I asked him to show me what the babies did; and he threw himself back, and mimicked an infant's whining cry exactly. The nurse tells me that when she first had the child he could not sleep for an hour together, because at any little noise he would start up any say "De babie is drying."

The child has greatly improved in every respect since it has been under its present nurse's care; but there is abundant evidence of previous bad nursing and neglect. The child, I am informed, could walk at fourteen months old (*i.e.*, before Mrs. Jaggar had it), but now it cannot stand; its legs are thin and weak; it has knock-kneed bow legs—in a word, its legs are like drum-sticks, and its belly like a drum. The ends of four fingers are burnt off; the muscles on the inner side of the right arm are partially destroyed, resulting in more or less contraction of the arm and forearm. There is also a burnt scar on the cheek.

From the above facts as stated to me and observed by me, I cannot but feel that a simple denial of them by Mrs. Jaggar is utterly beyond the question. I will only remark that Mrs. Jaggar admits the serious nature of the injuries sustained by the child, and that at the time when the accident happened she had a friend with her in the house. Does it not look like motherly care to let a child be burnt in the manner described when both Mrs. Jaggar and friend were there to prevent it?

With respect to the age of the child, to which Mrs. Jaggar attaches so much importance, I have merely to say that I was informed it was three years old, and it certainly looks older. The only way to settle the question age is to produce the registration certificate; even if three years old, it is an unusually intelligent and precocious child.

I am, etc., BENSON BAKER.

MEDICAL EVIDENCE IN RAILWAY CASES.

SIR,—I trust that, in the cause of justice and common sense, Government may, in course of time, think fit to put a check upon the present kind of medical evidence given in cases of real or supposed railway injuries. The remedy is easy. A properly constituted board of three medical men of position should investigate each case, and report to the judge officially for his guidance. In doubtful cases, time should be allowed for the thorough investigation of alleged symptoms, money being allowed to the patient in the interim for support.

The practice of "going in for damages" has degenerated into a system alike demoralising to lawyer, doctor, and patient; and juries seem to have forgotten that, in awarding damages, they take money, not from the directors, but from the shareholders, often persons of very limited means. As a rule, when the injury is slight or supposititious, the plaintiff obtains half the amount of damages claimed, with costs; but, at the same time, the uncertainty is proverbial, and the award may in a few instances be small. Mr. J. R., gas-engineer, of Edinburgh, brought an action against the North British Railway for damages received, laying the amount at £5,000. The jury awarded £1,250. Two days later, Mr. B., surgeon, of Chillenham, brought a similar action, also for £5,000. The jury awarded £50, and £38 for hotel expenses. A boy had his thigh broken while playing with luggage in a carrier's cart. The jury awarded £30 damages and costs. Another boy had his leg broken by a railway cart. The jury awarded him £130 damages and costs.

A new system of pathology has sprung up. A young lady was shaken in a railway concussion, for which she received a sum of money as damages. Eighteen months afterwards, she became the subject of internal malignant disease. It was maintained that "the shock of a railway accident predisposed to cancer".

Of the pathology of concussion of the spine, so common among railway passengers, and so rare among engine-drivers and railway guards, I have no space to offer observations. I am, etc.,

Princes Street, January 1868. HOLMES COOTE.

ROMAN SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS.

SIR,—In your last number I have read with great interest a paper by Dr. Newman of Stamford, on the Surgery of the Romans. It may possibly interest those of your readers who have not visited Rome to know that in the Lateran Palace in that city is a slab of stone on which is rudely carved a representation of various surgical instruments; and that, amongst others, is a pair of forceps which are almost a *fac simile* of those named by Sir W. Fergusson lion-forceps, used frequently by him in excision of the knee. There are also a catheter with a double curve; a pair of scissors, in shape much like a gardener's shears, the separation of the blades being effected by the same spring-action; also a curious three-bladed dilator, probably for the anus. The action of this is obtained by a screw on the centre blade. I am, etc.

Bridgwater, January 1868. W. H. AXFORD, M.B.LOND.

A ZOOLOGIST FOR THE ABYSSINIAN EXPEDITION.—The *Essex Herald* states that Mr. W. Jesse, eldest son of Captain Jesse, of Maisonette, Ingatestone, has been elected, by the Council of the Zoological Society, their zoologist to accompany the Abyssinian expedition, which appointment has been approved by the Government. Mr. Jesse will join the head-quarters of the force and report himself to Sir Robert Napier.