

end of 1890 were journalistic polemics, 1,001 times; quarrels, 772 times; politics, 392 times; and insults, 242 times. The professions or occupations of the duellists are not mentioned in the statistics before 1888. From that year until 1894 the occupations which gave the greatest contingent in a total of 1,921 duels were: Officers and under-officers, 614; publicists, 383; advocates and notaries, 224; deputies, and provincial and communal councillors, 89. Amongst those who have given the least contingent are: Doctors, 22; magistrates, 7; and actors and singers, 4.

During the first six months of 1896, 345 persons bitten by rabid dogs, or suspected of being so, presented themselves for treatment at the Municipal Antirabic Institute, Turin. Of this number only 229 were placed under the Pasteur treatment, because the remaining 116 were not bitten by rabid animals. Since the Institute was opened in September, 1886, 2,895 persons have been treated there for hydrophobia. The mortality of the 229 patients treated during the first six months of the current year was *nil*. The general mortality of the 2,895 cases treated since 1886 is 0.76 per cent.

By a recent decree of the Minister of the Interior the separation of the administrative part of the Direction of Health and its co-ordination with that of the General Direction of Civil Administration have been promulgated on the grounds that they cannot remain separate without disturbing the Administration of the State. Through the immediate publication of another decree the technical part of the Direction of Health will be reorganised by the formation of a State Technical Sanitary Office. This office, following that of Berlin, is intended to be a Consultative Technical Institution of Health, not only for the benefit of the Sanitary Administration proper under the Ministry of the Interior, but also for the benefit of the Minister of Public Instruction in respect to the hygiene of schools and the physical education of the young, the Minister of Public Works for the sanitation of towns and rural districts, the Ministers of War and Marine for the health of the soldiers and sailors, the Minister of Agriculture for diseases of animals, etc. The office will consist of three sections: 1. Microscopy and bacteriology. 2. Hygienic chemistry; and 3. Sanitary engineering. The relative posts will be competed for, excepting that of Chief Director, which has been conferred by Royal Decree on Professor Santoliquido, and that of Director on Professor Giaxa of the University of Naples.

CORRESPONDENCE.

VACCINATION IN AUSTRIAN STATE RAILWAYS: THE UNTRUSTWORTHINESS OF DR. KELLER'S STATISTICS.

SIR,—In consequence of the remarks made to the Royal Vaccination Committee, made especially by Mr. Wallace on my incompetence to contradict the official statistics of the Austrian State Railway, and the objection that if Dr. Keller's statistics are false, it were the duty of the railway itself to correct them, I made a new attempt to set these statistics in their right light, addressing myself directly to the President of this railway (Mr. Taussig). Submitting to him the great importance of these railways vaccination statistics, and the great effects caused by them abroad, I asked if he would not be disposed to revise them in an official way. I added the request to publish the results at all events, even in the case that he should be obliged to withdraw his own previous official statements. The President was so extremely kind as to enter into this proposition, and ordered the successor of Dr. Keller, Chief Physician Dr. Stöhr, to make up these statistics for a second time. As soon as this work was finished, Mr. Taussig sent me the papers with the following most important declarations:

1. That the statistics of Dr. Keller cannot be regarded as official, but only as private ones, the directors of the railway having never known anything about these statistics, and having never used or mentioned them in any one of their official publications.

2. That the real results are quite different from Dr. Keller's statistics (the official statistics of the State Railway as now stated by Dr. Stöhr are eminently in favour of vaccination, whilst those of Dr. Keller proved the contrary).

3. That the State Railway declines all responsibility for the private work of Dr. Keller.

I presented all the documents to the Association of the German Scientists and Physicians held at Vienna. There, on the proposition of Professor Nothnagel, a special committee, which worked under the presidency of Professor Ziemssen, was charged to look into these documents. The Committee compared even man by man, name by name, the original data of the railway physicians with those prepared by Dr. Keller, and found thus: that the latter arrived in that way to his antivaccination results, as he introduced essential changes into the authentic reports of his physicians.

Under such circumstances the statistics of Dr. Keller have been denied by the State Railway itself, and this railway has established now for the first time the official statistics, which, as mentioned above, furnish new proofs for the protection of vaccination, whilst the contradictory statistics of Dr. Keller have been found to be untrustworthy.

I published the whole matter, as presented to the above-mentioned Association, in a special pamphlet, which I have the honour to send you. You find at pages 24 and 30 the results of the only official railway statistics, proving that of the vaccinated people (aged above 2 years) there died 6.35 per cent., of the not vaccinated 16.13 per cent. The special proofs how Keller proceeded in the alteration of these favourable results into contradictory ones are given at pages 20 to 23 and 31 to 34.—I am, etc.,

DR. JOSEF KÜRÖSI,

Member of the Hungarian Academy of Science; Director
of Municipal Statistics; Honorary Fellow of the
London Royal Statistical Society.

Buda-Pesth, Sept. 25th.

REPRESENTATION OF MEMBERS ON THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

SIR,—The "elucidatory statement" accompanying the questions which the Council of the College of Surgeons has addressed to each of its Fellows on the subject of the direct representation of Members on the Council is a document of much interest, especially to such Fellows as have (like myself) been engaged for a long period in the endeavour to obtain for the body corporate, both Fellows and Members, a share in the direct management of the College. And I am very glad to bear my testimony to the fairness with which this statement has been drawn up. Its authors, while not concealing their own opinion, which is obviously against the proposed change, seem to have been actuated by a genuine desire to state the opposite case fully and fairly. There are just two points on which, if it is not too late, I should be glad to make a short comment.

In summarising the statement made to the Council by the Society of Members, that Society is represented as saying that the Members constituting the bulk of the corporation "have an inherent right" to a share in its government. I have no copy of the document thus summarised, and have no right to say that it is incorrectly quoted, but if the claim of inherent right was urged, it seems to me an infelicitous expression. The College Council answer it by a reference to Mr. Justice Romer's judgment in 1892, which shows that the Members have no legal right, and they thence conclude that there is no inherent right either, surely a hazardous conclusion. But, without confusing ourselves with such verbal puzzles, what we who advocate the claims of the Members to direct representation say is that it would conduce to the good government of the College; that the presence on the Council of a certain proportion of general practitioners of the quality of those who sit on the General Medical Council would render the Council of the College of Surgeons much more able to handle the numerous questions which concern the general practitioner more directly than the consulting surgeon, would bring the College more in connection with the great body of the profession, and would thus strengthen the institution and benefit the medical public. It is somewhat disappointing to find this argument entirely passed over. I hope it has not fallen out of the minds of those who have already answered the questions, and I earnestly commend it to those whose answers have yet to be written.

The only other point which I wish to notice is that of the contributions of the Members to the income of

the College. The Society of Members seem to have said that the College "is dependent on its Members for the greater part of its annual income," to which the Council reply that after defraying the necessary costs of examining, including the cost of the Examination Hall (which, however, be it remarked parenthetically, is itself a source of income otherwise) the profits derived from the Membership Examination do not constitute one-half the income of the College, and barely suffice to pay one-half the expenditure. One is puzzled to see how the reply bears on the allegation. However the College chooses to spend the money which it gets from the Members' fees, those fees remain its chief source of income; it is those fees which have made the College the noble institution which it is; it is their amount which has justified the wise and liberal expenditure on the grand museum, and made it a national glory; and if the contribution of those fees does not confer an "inherent right" on the Members to a voice in their expenditure, a question too metaphysical for me, I submit, at any rate, that it gives them an equitable claim to such a voice.

But the chief reason for the proposed change seems to me that it would conduce to the good government of the College. This is, of course, a matter of opinion on which every Fellow must judge for himself. Meanwhile it is gratifying to an old "reformer" to see that the question can be fairly stated by the Council and discussed without acrimony by the Fellows.—I am, etc.,

Sussex Place, W., Oct. 8th.

T. HOLMES.

ELECTION OF DIRECT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL.

SIR,—Dr. Henry, in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of September 12th, very kindly recommends me as a suitable candidate for the General Medical Council. I was one of those to whom the Incorporated Medical Practitioners' Association forwarded a series of questions a little time ago as a possible candidate. These questions I answered, but stated that I did not intend standing on this occasion. Considering the number of candidates already in the field, and the suitability of at least three of them, I think I shall be wise in deferring my candidature, at least for the present.

I think the electors will "deceive themselves" if the election is influenced by considerations of nationality, as all the candidates are quite as well acquainted with English practice as Mr. Hughes Hemming. I trust that men like Mr. Hughes Hemming, who are respected in the profession, will not set the example of introducing such an element into the contest, even though they may "strike home."

Mr. Hughes Hemming may be sure that the election will turn on more serious topics than the question of the right to use the title "Dr."; correspondence on which is to the medical press even as the sea-serpent to the lay press. Mr. Hughes Hemming thinks that methods applicable to the kingdom of Heaven would fail with the General Medical Council. That is not unlikely. As to unconstitutional methods, it is high time for us to rebel against the government of a body elected by the votes of persons chiefly laymen, and very many of them clergymen living in the cultured precincts of our universities, and utterly ignorant of the conditions under which the majority of mankind live.

Should I ever come forward as a candidate for election to the General Medical Council I should do so with the avowed intention of endeavouring by every legitimate means to destroy its present constitution and make it representative of the profession which it pretends to govern.—I am, etc.,

Archway Road, N., Sept. 20th.

HUGH WOODS.

SIR,—Permit me a small space to reply to Mr. Hemming's interpretation of my letter which appeared on September 12th, and which he has evidently misunderstood. I had no thoughts whatever of violence, and am only in favour of legitimate and constitutional methods for rousing the General Medical Council to more energetic action in furthering and protecting the legitimate interests as well as the honour and dignity of the profession in general. Mr. Hemming will admit, I am sure, that there is abundant scope for action in this direction.

As the Midwifery Nurses Bill referred to by Dr. Brierley on September 19th is diametrically opposed to the object for which the Committee of the Branch was elected, and for

which it worked so assiduously and successfully, we are free to admit that Dr. Brierley is correct in his statement that Dr. Rentoul had nothing to do with the Bill, and who, we consider, took a consistent course in doing so, as he is distinctly opposed to the legal formation of an inferior order of midwifery practitioners, whether designated "midwives" or "midwifery nurses," who would, if the Bill passed, be legally empowered to conduct cases of labour upon their own responsibility.

Dr. Brierley's recent action in proposing to give this legal power and status to women is all the more inexplicable, as on page 16 of the pamphlet containing the official report of the adjourned annual meeting of the Lancashire and Cheshire Branch, October 10th, 1894, at the Memorial Hall, Manchester, he said: "In my opinion, 'natural labour' has no meaning whatever in the ordinary acceptance of the term"; yet the Bill he supports gives legal authority for these women to attend "natural labour" as registered and independent practitioners!—I am, etc.,

Manchester, Oct. 1st.

G. H. BROADBENT.

THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL AND THE TEACHING OF BACTERIOLOGY.

SIR,—In common with the rest of the profession, I have lately received a circular from Dr. Bateman requesting our votes for Drs. Glover, Woodcock, and Drage as our direct representatives on the General Medical Council. As is natural in a circular addressed to the profession at large, the subjects dealt with by these gentlemen have relation almost exclusively to the daily work of the general practitioner. There are, however, some of us, perhaps less than a tenth part of the electors, who, while recognising the importance of the "midwives question," are still more interested in the attitude of the General Medical Council towards educational questions, and hope for a more enlightened treatment of these subjects from men who can gauge the value of the education they have received by the test of daily experience, and are free from the mental rigidity which is too apt to be induced in men by the process of becoming an authority in some branch of their profession.

We should therefore be grateful to the present candidates for an expression of opinion on two matters affecting the education of the medical student. In the first place, we would be glad to learn what they think as to the profitability of spending six months out of the all too short five years of the curriculum in getting up the names and arrangements of the earthworm's entrails and a few similar points, such smattering being dignified by the name of biology. In the second place, we would ask whether they approve of the total omission from the medical course of the science which is the basis of the etiology of disease and of preventive medicine, and the foundation of the successful practice of surgery and midwifery—I allude of course to bacteriology.

It is sincerely to be hoped that the new representatives of the profession on the General Medical Council will use their influence in the improvement of medical education, and strengthen the hands of those who are already working in the same direction.—I am, etc.,

Guy's Hospital, Oct. 3rd.

ERNEST H. STARLING.

CHEMISTS AND COUNTER PRESCRIBING.

SIR,—It would doubtless be a great relief to every general practitioner to have his medicines made up by chemists; but as long as the prescribing chemist exists, the fear of constant raids being made upon his practice by unscrupulous pharmacists debars him from taking advantage of their services. As soon as counter prescribing becomes abolished by legal enactment, all doctors who can conveniently do so will readily discontinue (although a legitimate part of the profession) the practice of pharmacy.

As for your correspondent's views that the chemist is more sinned against than sinning, one can but infer that as yet he has had but limited opportunity of forming a judgment upon a subject relating to which there can but be one opinion. This is the only excuse one can make for the expression of heterodox sentiments which tend to bolster up, instead of putting down, charlatanism, which surely is rampant enough at the present time.—I am, etc.,

AN M.R.C.P. OF THIRTY-FIVE YEARS' STANDING.
September 23rd.