

Midwives Board. The only alternative proposal before the medical public is the formation of the Board entirely—virtually—from medical practitioners in general practice, with whom, it is said, midwives should be in direct competition. Surely this would not be a fair Board. Perhaps Mr. Horder can suggest some alternative.

4. Mr. Horder's last reason is based on a misreading of the Bill. The clause referring to supervision allows the local sanitary authority to "appoint its medical officer of health or other medical practitioner or practitioners as the local supervising authority." This allows of the appointment of a sufficient number of medical practitioners to cope with any number of midwives in the area affected. It was also intended to permit of the medical of health declining the task if he did not feel competent to its proper performance, or for any other reason.

I can assure Mr. Horder that, since he grants the necessity for registration, the Bill follows Parliamentary tradition, and is based on sound precedents.—I am, etc.,

F. R. HUMPHREYS, L.R.C.P.Lond.

Honorary Secretary, Midwives Bill Committee.  
Buckingham Street, W.C., March 8th.

#### PROPOSED CENTRAL HOSPITAL BOARD FOR LONDON.

SIR,—I am desired to forward you the enclosed paragraph, which this Committee would be glad if you could insert in your columns.—I am, etc.,

C. S. LOCH.

General Committee for the Promotion of a Central Hospital Board for London, 15, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C., March 3rd.

#### Proposed Central Hospital Board.

At a recent meeting of the Executive Committee for the Promotion of a Central Hospital Board for London, the following resolution was adopted:

That the Secretaries be asked to prepare, for the consideration of the General Committee, and for discussion at a public meeting of persons interested, a memorandum regarding the hospitals of London, similar to that submitted in 1889 to the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the medical charities of the metropolis, and bearing upon the question of hospital reform and the constitution of a Central Hospital Board.

#### CONSULTATIONS WITH HOMŒOPATHS.

SIR,—Some weeks ago a letter appeared in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL under the above heading from a distinguished surgeon in our neighbouring city of Leeds. In that letter he stated, *inter alia*, that he knew that "an eminent Bradford practitioner" met homœopaths in consultation. Subsequently, on January 22nd, Dr. Hime, President of this Society, wrote to you stating in general that he was convinced the members of the profession here were opposed to consultations with homœopaths. He further stated that few persons who could be classed as "eminent Bradford practitioners" were not members of this Society, and that members could not under our rules consult with homœopaths or any "irregular practitioner." Since then we have ascertained from Mr. Jessop the particulars of the consultation between an "eminent Bradford practitioner" and a homœopath referred to by him. We have the greatest possible satisfaction in being able to inform you that the gentleman in question has written in answer to our inquiries, and states that he met the homœopath in consultation inadvertently, and not knowing that he was such.

We trust you will give the fullest possible publicity to this explanation. The statement as to want of orthodoxy among the profession here in reference to homœopaths made by so eminent a man as Mr. Jessop has been regarded here as a serious reproach by the profession, and we have lost no time in dealing with it, and request you at the earliest moment to publish this letter.—We are, etc.,

JOHN DUNLOP,

L. S. MACKENZIE,

Joint Honorary Secretaries Bradford and District  
Medico-Ethical Society.

Bradford, March 7th.

SIR,—Dr. Brazil's criticisms of my remarks on infinitesimal action would perhaps have been more to the point had he made himself acquainted at first hand with the authorities I quoted. Darwin does not say that  $\frac{1}{20000000}$  of a grain of ammonium phosphate is required to stimulate each separate

leaf gland of *Drosera*, but that half a teaspoonful of water containing that amount of the salt, when poured over a leaf of the plant, caused "the inflection of almost every tentacle, and often of the blade of the leaf." The amount of the salt brought into action on any one gland by this process must obviously have been very much less than the  $\frac{1}{20000000}$  of a grain. Dr. Brazil will have to restate his rule-of-three sum—that is to say, if he does not see that his argument is faulty in itself, even if his numerical data were correct.

The striking picture of an "organism bathed in unlimited supplies of a toxic solution" seems to be a product of Dr. Brazil's inner consciousness—at any rate, it has no relation to any of Naegeli's experiments. Naegeli's work is of great interest. Among other things, he found that 1 part of hydrated oxide of copper was sufficient to render 1,000,000,000 parts of water toxic to *spirogyra*. The amount of copper oxide, therefore, required to render 1 litre of water fatal to the organism growing in it was  $\frac{1}{10000000}$  of a gramme.—I am, etc.,

Manchester, March 8th. F. S. ARNOLD, M.B.

#### THE MEDICAL DEFENCE UNION.

SIR,—Kindly allow me to state that the question as to amalgamation raised at the annual meeting of the Medical Defence Union was not asked by me. The only reference I made to the subject was the statement that the project was erroneously referred to in the report as a reason for the revision of the Articles of Association, with which, as a matter of fact, it had nothing to do, except that the report of the Revision Committee was held over whilst amalgamation was possible, in view of further action in the same direction. The Revision Committee having been appointed at a special general meeting of the Union, it appeared to me that its report should be presented at a similar meeting.—I am, etc.,

Old Kent Road, S.E., March 8th.

EDWD. C. BOUSFIELD.

#### BUSINESS OF THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL.

SIR,—Mr. Horsley's letter in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of the 5th inst. gives further evidence of the obstructionist tactics with which his attempts at reform are systematically met.

As Mr. Horsley was elected to the Council precisely that he might advocate a less apathetic policy and a less autocratic government, the electorate should take steps to show the Council that Mr. Horsley has the full approval and absolute confidence of his constituents in the fearless and straightforward policy which he has adopted.

This end can perhaps best be attained by a public meeting of the profession before the May session of the Council. There is not the least doubt that such a meeting would cordially endorse Mr. Horsley's action, and effectually prevent any affectation that he lacked the "mandate" of the electors.

The ground would thus be cleared and a plain issue raised. Those who support the present unconstitutional methods of procedure, or non-procedure, and those who are determined to suppress every attempt at reform will have the advantage of knowing that their action is opposed to the wishes of the profession whose interests they are supposed incidentally to protect. Those, also, if any, who doubt if Mr. Horsley has the support of the general practitioners will have their doubts resolved.—I am, etc.,

Frant, March 5th.

HAMILTON HALL.

#### THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

SIR,—I should be better able to answer Dr. Coates were I capable of comprehending him. Apparently he thinks that a change in manners and habits, enforced by an Act of Legislature, ranks as a process of evolution. To be logical it seems to me that he should suggest some of the "artificial" means of getting drunk when alcohol is not available. Or would he propose to suppress the craving for warmth by an Act of Legislature, and so cause a notable piece of evolution to be "splendidly attained"?

Two things, I think, are not now seriously disputed by those who know the facts: (1) That alcohol, having been a great eliminating agency for thousands of years, has been the cause of an evolution against itself, which has rendered

<sup>1</sup> Ueber oligodynamische Erscheinungen in lebenden Zellen. Von Carl von Naegeli. H. Georg, Basel, Geneva, and Lyons. 1893.