

SOUTH-EASTERN BRANCH: EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT.—The first meeting of the above district for the present season will be held on Friday, the 30th inst., at the Station Hotel, Hayward's Heath; Dr. Byass of Cuckfield in the chair. The meeting will be at 3.30 P.M. Dinner at 5.30 P.M. Communications are invited; and it is requested that notice thereof may be sent at once to the Secretary.—T. JENNER VERRALL, Honorary Secretary, 20, Bedford Place, Brighton.—September 5th, 1881.

SOUTH MIDLAND BRANCH.—The autumnal meeting of the above Branch will be held at the residence of Dr. Edward Lawford, Oriol House, Leighton Buzzard, Beds, on Tuesday, September 27th, at 2 o'clock; the President, H. C. Rogers, Esq., in the chair. Dr. Lawford kindly invites the members to luncheon at his house, at a quarter past one o'clock. Amongst others, the following cases and papers will be read. Dr. Bryan: Notes on New Medicines. Dr. Buzzard: Illustrations of Diseases of the Spinal Cord. Dr. Lawford: Notes of a Gunshot-wound in which the Bullet passed through the Ethmoid Bone, struck the Occipital Bone, and then passed into the (Esophagus). H. C. Rogers, Esq., will read a communication. Dr. Thompson will read a paper. C. J. Evans, Esq.: A few Remarks on the Treatment of some Common but Obstinate Affections. J. A. Hedges, Esq.: Case of Contracted Knee-joint treated successfully by Subcutaneous Tenotomy.—G. F. KIRBY SMITH, Honorary Secretary, Northampton.

EAST ANGLIAN BRANCH.—The autumnal meeting of this Branch will be held at the Swan Inn, Southwold, on Friday, September 30th, at 2 P.M.; Charles Palmer, Esq., Senior Surgeon Great Yarmouth Hospital, President. It is requested that members desirous of reading papers or exhibiting specimens will give immediate notice to one of the Honorary Secretaries.—W. A. ELLISTON, M.D., Ipswich; M. BEVERLEY, M.D., Norwich, Honorary Secretaries

CORRESPONDENCE.

CONSULTATIONS WITH HOMŒOPATHS.

SIR,—Mr. Hutchinson, in his address delivered to the British Medical Association at Ryde, has given his views touching consultations with homœopaths. He tells us that it is our duty to meet in consultation every man whose name is on the *Medical Register*, including, of course, every practitioner of homœopathy. And in his sketch of homœopathy, he tells what sort of *confrères* homœopathic practitioners were: "No wonder that some of our ranks should have thought they saw their interests in adopting the new method, and equally little that most of those who observed their conduct held the motives of the man who put 'Homœopath' on his door to be low and self-seeking. In nineteen cases out of twenty, probably the verdict was right". (The italics are put by me.) Now, I would ask Mr. Hutchinson his reasons for asking the profession to meet in consultation men "whose motives were, in nineteen out of twenty cases, low and self-seeking". His remark, it is true, is written in the past tense; but he makes no distinction between the past and the present, as he manifestly should have done, if he meant his stigma to attach only to those of a past generation. Any way, his views clearly enforce the propriety of such consultations in the past equally as they do now. And as to "motives", it is certain that the adoption of the "new method" may serve men's interests now, as well as, or even better, than they did in the past. Again, Mr. Hutchinson says: "To Boycott a quack on principle is one thing, to attend to the interest of the quack's patient may be another. Hence the duties of surgeons in this matter, and especially of those engaged in consultation practice, have always been very difficult." Mr. Hutchinson's manner of putting this may be somewhat obscure; but it seems to me that there can be only one person here to whom he applies the term quack.

The inevitable conclusion which follows from these statements, unless I have wholly misread Mr. Hutchinson (which I hope I have) is this: That it is the duty of the profession to meet in consultation quacks and men whose motives "in nineteen out of twenty cases, are probably low and self-seeking", provided only their names be on the *Register*. I wish to say, that I do not endorse this verdict. In a country which boasts, above all, of freedom of opinion, it would be disgraceful indeed if homœopathy were not allowed to have its full swing. I certainly think that those men act unfairly who call themselves homœopaths, and yet practise like all the rest of the world. But I fully agree with Dr. Bristowe that there are homœopaths as high-minded and as honourable as the best of the profession. All that we demand, and have a right to demand, is that they shall not force their professional intercourse upon us. If they would only leave us alone, and quietly pursue their avocations in their own way, I am satisfied that the profession would never interfere with them. It would simply *guarda e passa*.

Equally hard is it to understand how Dr. Bristowe could have persuaded himself to tell us that it is the duty of the profession to meet in consultation men who "practise", as he calls it, "such a palpable imposture as homœopathy". Does he really maintain that a medical man can assist in such consultations without aiding and abetting in the spread of "the imposture"?

Both Dr. Bristowe and Mr. Hutchinson ignore all reference to what

seems to me to be the very pith of the matter—the morality of homœopathic consultations. They ask the profession to meet homœopaths, that is to meet: 1. The pure homœopath, whose theory and practice Dr. Bristowe eloquently denounces as an outrage on medical science; and 2. The *soi-disant* homœopath, who, it appears, practises his profession as ordinary medical men do, and but labels himself homœopath, whereby he gets all that advantage which, as Mr. Hutchinson says, is derived from writing homœopath on his door. Now to meet a pure homœopath—a man whose theory and practice of medicine is set down by Dr. Bristowe as an outrage on our medical science—is surely to deceive the patient, to degrade ourselves, or to insult the homœopath. Then, to meet a *soi-disant* homœopath—to consult with a man who pretends to the public that he possesses some special hocus-pocus method of cure, some powers which we others have not, and yet practises medicine as ordinary doctors do—seems to me simply entering into a partnership with, or encouraging, those who, whether they mean it or not, are in our eyes humbugging the public.

Mr. Hutchinson's saving clause in favour of the surgeon, that he, at all events, cannot go wrong in meeting homœopaths, can surely bear no arguing. Do surgical patients never require medical treatment? Syphilitic diseases fall mainly to the surgeon; do they require no medical treatment? Of course, *semper et ubique*, surgeons tie bleeding arteries and relieve strangulated hernias; but what have such operations to do with homœopathic consultations? If (as Mr. Hutchinson says) the public had really suffered through our exclusiveness in this matter, we should surely have heard something of it during the past twenty years.

Dr. Bristowe's eloquence has carried him away into what—he must pardon me for saying—seem to me errors in arguing, and consequent injustice to the profession. "It would be deplorable", says he, "if those of us who look on spiritualism as one of the greatest follies of the times in which we live, were to scout the distinguished chemists and the great writers who devoutly believe in it; or were to", etc. The inference is that we, who scout homœopathy, do act thus deplorably. The error here is patent. Dr. Bristowe confuses the abstract with the concrete. We do not scout the man, we scout the thing he practises. We act towards the homœopath as such, exactly as Dr. Bristowe would act towards the spiritualist as such. Dr. Bristowe would scout a consultation on spiritualistic business with a practitioner of spiritualism, exactly as we would scout a medical consultation with a practitioner of homœopathy. Does Dr. Bristowe really mean to assert that we, who refuse to meet a homœopathic practitioner in consultation, would refuse to do him just homage as a great chemist, as an astronomer, or as a man of science in any department? Here he assuredly does us injustice. Let him produce, if he can, a homœopath distinguished as a man of science, and show that he has been scouted because he practised homœopathy; and then his argument would have some base to stand upon. Is Mr. Crookes scouted because he patronises spiritualism? It is not our fault if homœopaths are not distinguished as men of science, and do not figure among our F.R.S.'s. Again, the wanderings of Dr. Bristowe's pleadings are shown, when he refers to matters "incapable of scientific proof", to support his thesis—to religion, politics, and such like. Now, if his reasonings here have any point, they come to this: that he blames the Catholic who refuses to go to church with the heretic, or the Conservative who refuses to sit down at a Radical festival. The truth is, his illustrations, as I see them, tell exactly the opposite to that which he adduces them to prove. He would not, I suppose, blame me if I were to refuse to confer on spiritualism with a spiritualist, even though he were an Astronomer Royal or a Sir Humphry Davy. Why, then, should he blame me if I refuse to confer professionally with a homœopath, who, as Dr. Bristowe has shown, believes in doctrines equally outrageous to science? It is not the man, or the man of science, whom I repudiate, but that false doctrine—homœopathy—which he holds, or pretends to hold, and which bears immediately upon the business in hand, the treatment of the patient.

It is well, I think, that Dr. Bristowe and Mr. Hutchinson have published their views on consultations with homœopaths. When men so high in the profession, and so skilled as writers, have spoken, we may be sure that everything has been said, that can be, to support their opinions. Yet I cannot but believe that many of their readers will conclude, as I have done, that the arguments, on the whole, tell dead against homœopathic consultations. Whether our *confrères* acted well in expressing their sentiments on such a topic in the Addresses in Medicine and Surgery of the British Medical Association may be a matter of doubt.* I do not think they did; and chiefly for this reason, that,

* It is right to say that Mr. Hutchinson did not deliver his remarks on homœopathy to the meeting. They were ready in his manuscript, but he passed them over, having learnt that Dr. Bristowe had attacked the same subject.

as they were the appointed orators of the Association, many persons, in and out of the profession, may not unreasonably infer that their opinions are in some sense sanctioned by the Association. They seem to me to have inopportunately and needlessly introduced the red flag of quasi-polemics into what should have been calm and scientific discourses. When this subject was last brought before the Association, about twenty years ago, it was so on a special motion, and in full assembly where every member could have his say. It is to be regretted that the matter was not again brought forward in a similar way; for then, at all events, it could have been duly discussed, and we should have had the satisfaction of learning the opinion of the Association, whether or no it is ready, at this day, to revoke the unanimous veto which, twenty years ago, it put upon homœopathic consultations.—

Yours obediently,

W. O. MARKHAM.

London, September 10th, 1881.

OBITUARY.

FREDERICK SYMONDS, M.A., F.R.C.S.

WE regret to have to announce the death of Mr. Frederick Symonds of Oxford, which took place on the 11th instant, after a long and painful illness. Mr. Symonds, who was the son of Mr. John Symonds, a well-known practitioner at Oxford, was born in 1813, and was educated at Christ's Hospital and at University College, London. He commenced practice at Oxford in 1833, and was elected to the university coronership in 1869. In the following year, the university conferred upon him the honorary degree of M.A., when he became a member of Magdalen College. He was surgeon to the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, for more than twenty-five years, retiring from the office in 1878, when he was elected honorary surgeon. He was also for several years surgeon to the University Volunteer Rifle Corps, but resigned a few years since. In recognition of the valuable assistance rendered by him to the sufferers from the Shipton railway accident in 1877, most of whom were brought to the Radcliffe Infirmary, he was presented with a handsome piece of plate by the Great Western Railway directors. He was a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, and a member of the Geographical, Microscopical, and other scientific societies. Mr. Symonds was highly esteemed, both in his private and professional capacity; and his many popular qualities endeared him to a large circle of friends, by whom he will be much missed. He had a high reputation as a surgical operator; and his practice in the university and county especially was a very extensive one until ill-health compelled his retirement from it some time ago. He leaves a widow and several children.

ROBERT SMITH, M.D.

WE have to record the death, at the early age of thirty-two, of one of the most accomplished and amiable assistant-physicians of this metropolis. We allude to the death of Robert Smith, M.A., M.D., which took place at Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire, on September 9th, from acute phthisis. Dr. Smith was an example of that patient and persevering industry of which the northern universities afford so many examples amongst their graduates. He may be said really to have made himself; for, during his undergraduateship, he had to work hard to obtain the funds necessary to carry him through his college career. He was a graduate in arts of the University of Aberdeen, where he also took the degrees of M.B. and C.M., with highest academical honours; and soon afterwards he was promoted to the degree of M.D. He acted as assistant to Professors Brazier and Struthers; and, after leaving Aberdeen, he joined the staff of Charing Cross Hospital, where his marked ability for imparting instruction, and his amiability of disposition, justly gave him a degree of popularity, both with student and colleague, such as few men of his age attain. He was ever ready to lend a helping hand in every good work; ready to oblige a colleague or friend by doing duty for him—painstaking to a degree in imparting knowledge to the tyro in medicine; and he never tired in insisting upon a good preliminary education as an absolutely necessary qualification for the intending student of medicine. Dr. Smith acted for two years as Examiner in Chemistry and Physiology in his Alma Mater, where he was deservedly one of the most popular examiners, because he was a fair, yet a precise and a conscientious, examiner. He always insisted that students should have a knowledge of the great principles of the subjects on which he examined; and no one "stuffed or crammed" had any chance of passing unscathed through the well selected series of questions which he put to the candidates. He was a *beau idéal* of an examiner; and his kindly smile and encouraging words of comfort will be greatly missed. Dr. Smith was an accom-

plished physician of the best type; well grounded in chemistry, anatomy, and physiology, he had laid a foundation for future eminence, and had just begun to reap the reward of his steady devotion to duty and the fruits of his high mental attainments when he was cut off. Of his amiability and gentleness, of his courtesy, and kindness, and considerateness, we cannot speak too highly. Charing Cross Hospital has to mourn the loss of one of her most useful and accomplished, and one of her most prominent, assistant-physicians.

DAVID LOW, M.B., C.M.

Dr. Low died at Skene, Aberdeenshire, on the 19th ultimo, at the early age of 32. Dr. Low was a native of Skene, and was educated at the Grammar School and University of Aberdeen, where he graduated in 1872 as M.B., C.M., with highest academical honours. Immediately afterwards he was chosen house-surgeon to the Perth District Asylum, at Murthly, which appointment he filled with great efficiency for nine months. He then went to Cairo in Egypt as assistant to Dr. Grant-Bey with whom he remained till he entered the service of His Highness the Khedive, and became attached to all the expeditions sent out by the Egyptian Government to obtain information respecting the slave traffic. He served on board Egyptian cruisers employed against the slavers on the Red Sea, and was forthwith nominated Assistant-Judge in the Slave Court at Massowa, in Abyssinia. When this service was completed, Dr. Low was appointed, under Gordon Pacha, Inspector-General of Hospitals in the Soudan, where he organised classes for training the natives as medical helpers—an organisation of the highest possible importance in these unhealthy regions. On account, however, of prolonged service in the Soudan, his health broke down, and he was reluctantly obliged to resign his appointment, and come home to recruit his strength. After a stay of six months, he returned to Egypt last October, and soon after was appointed Medical Inspector to the Sanitary Board in Alexandria, but his health again giving way, he was compelled to come home, where, after lingering for three months, he quietly passed away. Besides being a great traveller, Dr. Low was an accomplished Arabic scholar. His amiability of character, cheerful and kindly disposition, which endeared him so much to his class-fellows when a student at the University, made him greatly beloved and esteemed by all who came into contact with him in his official and private life abroad.

RICHARD CLEWIN GRIFFITH, M.R.C.S.E., L.S.A.

ON the 5th instant, Mr. Richard Clewin Griffith died at his residence, 20, Gower Street, where he lived fifty-three years. He had attained the great age of ninety years (less three days). He passed his examinations in 1812 and 1813, and was among the first batch of general practitioners. He took his father's practice, which had been established twenty years in Tottenham Court Road, then a country suburb of London. After a few years, he removed to Gower Street, where he carried on one of the largest general practices in the neighbourhood. Like many other able men of his time, he bravely and successfully did his work. He was Mr. Cline's last dresser at St. Thomas's Hospital, and was the father of the Apothecaries' Society, of which Company he was the Master twenty-six years ago. For several years the late Mr. Charles Brooke of the Westminster Hospital was his partner; and when they dissolved partnership, about 1845, Mr. Griffith began to resign the practice of medicine, having realised a good competence. It is both interesting and instructive to meditate on the past of men who were a link between the past (Act of 1815) and the present, and who were a credit to our profession at a critical epoch of our history.

DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS.—The Lady Harriet M. Scott Bentinck has given £1,500 to the Great Northern Hospital.—The Very Rev. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, D.D., Dean of Westminster, has bequeathed £500 to the Nurses' Home, Westminster.—Colonel William H. Digweed of Echchenswell has bequeathed £400 to the Hants County Hospital, on condition that they admit at all times two invalid poor persons from the parish of Echchenswell, to be nominated by the guardians of the poor.—Mr. David McIntosh of Havering Park, Romford, has bequeathed £200 to the London Hospital, and £100 each to the City of London Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, and the Eastern Counties Asylum for Imbeciles and Idiots.—Mr. Stephen Cooper of Leytonstone has bequeathed (after the death of his wife) £100 each to the London Hospital and the City of London Hospital for Diseases of the Chest.—Mrs. Hodgson, wife of the High Sheriff of Warwickshire, has given £100 to the Stratford-on-Avon Infirmary.—A donation of £1,000 to the funds of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary has been made by the late Mr. Robert Nicol, merchant, Manchester.