

the leading heroes and heroines of *fin de siècle* literature has any effect.

LODGE PRACTICE.

We extremely regret that an important and interesting communication from Dr. R. Ferguson, of London, which should have appeared in our last issue, was delayed at the publication office, and did not see the light at our editorial office until after we had gone to press. Fortunately, however, we had knowledge of what our professional brethren of London were doing, and an editorial appeared in line with their views, with which we are heartily in accord. Though it is from an editorial standpoint, somewhat a matter of ancient history, with which the CANADA LANCET does not deal, we give the text of the agreement, signed by all but two or three of the doctors.

"We, the undersigned medical practitioners of the City of London, hereby severally covenant and agree, each with the other, that on and after the 1st day of January, 1896, we will not engage in, or contract our services for, lodges or club practice.

"And we do hereby further severally covenant and agree, each with the other, that any party to this agreement who violates the same will subject himself to the payment of the sum of sixty dollars, as liquidated and ascertained damages for each breach, and that the said sum may be sued for in the name or names of any one or more of the other parties to this agreement, in the First Division Court of the County of Middlesex, the jurisdiction of which Court we hereby admit and consent to; and that upon any sum being recovered in such action, the same shall be applied to whatever object a majority of the parties to this agreement may decide upon.

"It is further agreed and understood that this agreement shall not be binding until it is signed by all the medical practitioners in the City of London.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and seals, this 23rd day of September, 1895.

"Signed, sealed and delivered, in presence of."

This has now been signed by 41 out of 46 doctors in the city.

THE LIMITS OF THE PHYSICIAN'S DUTY TO THE DEPENDENT CLASSES.—James W. Walk, M.D., says, *Am. Med. Surg. Bull.* The physician, a man and a citizen, owes a great duty to civilized society, a duty which is conditioned upon his special knowledge. Acquainted as he is with the important laws of heredity and the reciprocal influence of mental and physical states, the responsibility rests upon him to lead the community in which he lives to a higher civilization and to better modes of life. He should be a teacher of the people, and not only by training men to cure disease but, pre-eminently, a teacher of preventive medicine, that department of our science now almost new, but destined to become its pride and glory.

The question of his duty in regard to medical charities is much less simple. Here also an obligation rests upon him, as, for instance, in cases of sudden accident, etc. But this is a very small part of the so-called "charitable" work now thrust upon the profession. It is the common notion that the doctor should treat, free of charge, all the dependents in his neighborhood, and should also give his services to both public and private institutions. Institutions supported out of the tax-rate are, in no proper sense, charities. Their cost is levied upon all the citizens, in proportion to their taxable wealth, and there is no call for any one to serve them gratuitously. All others are paid for their services, but the physician is supposed to act from some principle not applicable to other sensible men.

Outside of the institutions supported by public taxes comes the yet wider field of the private charities. In these institutions it is right and fair that physicians should make contributions to them in service, if they see fit, but this right has its limitations. Free medical service to come within the definition of a wise and judicious charity should be rendered to those only who are unable to pay for it. To give it to others involves two wrongs: the first, to the younger men of the medical profession who ought to have turned over to them those patients who are able to pay only small fees; the second, to the community, by the encouragement of pauperism and the undermining of independence.

Twelve years ago a somewhat thorough investigation of the dispensary system of the city of