

Query 13.—When a junior member of a family applies to you, and states that he does so in consequence of having lost confidence in the family medical attendant—what is your proper course?

Ans.—If the applicant be arrived at years of discretion, and if the complaint be such as not to confine him to the house, or to obtrude itself upon the notice of the rest of the family, you should prescribe, and do what is necessary in the circumstances. If the patient has not come to the years of discretion, or if the complaint be such that it must of necessity, or may by probability, confine him to the house, or come to the knowledge of his family, you should decline taking charge of the case till he has communicated with his parents or guardian, and obtained their sanction for your attendance. Before undertaking the case, however, you should endeavor to reconcile the patient to his ordinary attendant, by removing any prejudice or misconception he may be laboring under; although, when the objection is simply a decided want of confidence, no arguments that you can use will probably be of much avail.

Query 14.—Is a medical man to consider himself bound in honor to conceal from the demands of justice, information that has come to his knowledge through the necessary and unavoidable divulgements of professional intercourse, when such testimony might prove detrimental to his patient?

Ans.—He is bound by law to forward the ends of justice, and as an honest man and a good citizen he cannot and will not try to do otherwise. However, he should use his own discretion in cautioning his patient and the friends against imparting or exposing anything that could be turned to the party's disadvantage, and he should show no inquisitiveness beyond what is absolutely necessary towards the proper discharge of his professional duties. The Roman Catholic priest enjoys in this respect, by the established law of custom I suppose, an advantage over the medical man; and very properly, for otherwise one of the most important rites of that religion would be rendered perfectly nugatory.

Query 15.—Is it proper in a medical man to attend his own wife in her confinement?

Ans.—Perfectly proper, provided he is accustomed to this branch of the profession, and she and her friends have confidence in him; but if there be anything unnatural and difficult in the case, he should at once take assistance; or, if his feelings interfere with the proper treatment of it, he should leave it entirely in the hands of another. Such a course will, in the event of a fatal termination, prevent malicious remarks, or even judicial interference, and save the practitioner and the friends from subsequent regrets.

Query 16.—When sent for, in an emergency, to a midwifery case, in the absence of the practitioner whose attendance had been pre-engaged; and supposing him at last to arrive when the case is occupying your most serious attention, or even receiving your manual or mechanical interference—what is the proper etiquette to be followed?

Ans.—To resign the case at once into his hands—or, at all events, as soon as safely practicable, after explaining the state of matters to him, and obtaining, or taking for granted, the patient's consent to the transference. If your further assistance is wished by the practitioner who was pre-engaged, or by the patient with his consent, which it would probably be if the case were one of difficulty or danger, then you ought to remain. As to the remuneration, the answer would be as in Query 9.

Query 17.—Do the prescriptions of a medical man belong to the patient or to the prescriber?

Ans.—The prescriptions written by a medical man are the property of his patients; and I do not think that the former is justified, under any circumstances, in taking away or destroying them. If he should do so, patients will be apt to suspect some sinister motive,—most probably a wish to con-

ceal his malpraxis, or else to deprive them of the means of treating themselves in any subsequent similar attack. If you find that a patient is at a loss to distinguish between one prescription and another, and is apt to make mistakes in sending to the druggist for his medicines, you might, with perfect propriety, select from among his recipes the old and disused ones, and tell him to lay these aside, or destroy them, in order to prevent mistakes; but you have no right, even in the case of a gratuitous patient, to recal or destroy a single prescription that has once passed your hand and been used by the patient. I would much rather run the risk of having my practice criticised by my brethren (believing, as I do, that no honorable man, or one who could have much influence with a well principled patient, would take any unfair advantage), than give my client or his friends any reason to suspect that I wished to conceal or misrepresent the treatment that had been pursued. I have known instances of persons venting the most bitter, though, I believe, undeserved reflections, on a medical man's treatment of their deceased relative, simply because he had asked for and destroyed the prescriptions after his patient's death.

Query 18.—In the case of an accident involving responsibility on the part of any one, whether has the sufferer, or the person whose responsibility is compromised, the right to appoint the medical attendant?

Ans.—The patient himself or his friends, I think, have the prior right (whether they choose to exercise it in the first instance or not), as no consideration can be held to outweigh a man's interest in his own life and health; but the other likewise has a right to satisfy himself as to the competency of the attendance and skill which are bestowed on the case; and, whether he has any doubts on these points or not, may, for his own satisfaction, associate another along with the patient's own medical attendant: and of course it is the duty and policy of both the gentlemen to act in harmony for their patient's recovery, and, at the same time, to look after their respective client's interests. In the question of remuneration, there is more of law than of medical ethics involved. Of course, if the party whose responsibility is at stake appoint a medical man to attend, it falls to him to pay the latter under any circumstances. In a case where the responsibility or liability is disputed, either in whole or in part, this only affects the principals concerned in the dispute, which, if they cannot compromise it, must be settled by a legal tribunal; but, whatever be the issue, the medical man cannot be cut out of his fee if the party who employed him is able to pay it. A medical man chosen by the patient to treat this particular case, even though his own ordinary attendant, if he undertakes it without the concurrence and authority of the party supposed to be responsible, can have no direct recourse against that party, nor against any one except the patient or person who employed him. The latter is bound to pay in the first instance, having his action against the party presumed to be responsible for the amount of the medical man's charge.

Query 19.—To what extent has the medical man the right to interfere in the selection of a druggist to supply the medicines he prescribes?

Ans.—Under ordinary circumstances, he has no right to dictate to his patients as to the druggist they should employ; but in justice to them, as well as to his own reputation, he is bound to see that the quality of the medicines they get is good; and when he is not in the knowledge that they employ a druggist in whom he has reason to place confidence, and more particularly if he find that the indication he had in view has not been fulfilled by the medicine prescribed, he should ask for the bottle, &c., on which, of course, the druggist's name is labelled, the contents of which he should taste or examine, though not with any appearance of suspicion, but simply as a matter of course. If he find good reason to