

public by the statement of them, we have a right to ask that they produce the proofs. Where and who are these fifteen patients? If cured they can be produced and will doubtless give evidence of the fact, and in doing so help to give Drs. Walker and Cotton a better professional standing than they at present enjoy.

The introduction of commercialism into our profession is rather a new departure in Canada, and for this reason we have referred to the present instance at such length. We have yet to learn of any discovery in medicine of real or permanent value which has been withheld by its discoverer for the purpose of private gain. There are some things too sacred in which to traffic, and one of these is human life.

FEES FOR ATTENDANCE ON HOSPITAL PATIENTS.

Several surgeons have recently brought suit in the Toronto Division Court against patients whom they have attended in hospitals, demanding fees for the services rendered. Most of these suits have failed; but they have served a useful purpose in pointing out the legal relations between physicians and surgeons and patients treated by them in the public wards of an hospital. It is surprising that such an important point should so long have remained unsettled. The general impression held by the profession was that patients whose circumstances allowed the payment of a fee should not expect treatment for nothing in an hospital any more than in a private house; but the fact that an hospital is a public institution, supported to some extent by public funds, seems to make a difference in the eye of the law, and it has been held that without evidence of a specific contract or understanding between physician and patient that a fee would be expected, that the patient cannot be held liable for any account subsequently presented to him. In this connection we can not but regret that criticism has been directed, not towards the law, but towards the Judge's interpretation of it. The gentleman before whom these cases were tried is himself the son of a physician, and, needless to say, animated by the kindest feelings for our profession. We believe that he fully appreciates the conditions, and realizes that hospital physicians and surgeons have to earn a livelihood the same as other people in the community. But the Judge cannot be guided by sentiment; he must interpret the law as he finds it, and we have not the slightest reason to doubt but that his interpretation is correct.

Year by year a large proportion of the sick, not only the sick poor, but all classes, seek hospital treatment. Many in possession of more of this world's goods than the physician or surgeon who attends them may ever accumulate, go into the public wards,