

CAFFEINE.

An instance of how the minds of great men often run in the same channels has recently occurred. It will be remembered that in the December number of this journal, Dr. Reeve, in his article on cocaine, mentioned the fact that he had made experiments with caffeine, as an anæsthetic, with negative results. In the *British Medical Journal* of Jan. 3, 1885, Dr. Argyll Robertson, the celebrated ophthalmologist, of Edinburgh, also published an account of experiments he had made with caffeine. The results were similar to those given by Dr. Reeve. He concludes the article with the following sentence:—

"To prevent needless repetitions of experiments, I have thought it desirable to publish these negative results, so far as the anæsthetic effects of caffeine are concerned."

 PROPOSED HOSPITAL FOR CONSUMPTIVES.

We have received from Southern California the Los Angeles *Daily Herald* of Jan. 4, 1885, containing a letter written by Mr. C. White-Mortimer, formerly of Toronto, but at present British Vice-Consul at Los Angeles.

Mr. Mortimer advocates the establishment of a Hospital for Consumptives at Los Angeles, similar in character to one which has been for some years in existence at Mentone. The principal object of the institution would be to enable people of limited means who are suffering from lung disease to take advantage of the favourable climate of California. Many persons are now deterred from going to the Southern States, not so much by the expense of getting there as by the high prices charged for board, lodging, and medical attendance. It would also be a great boon for those who are going alone to have some definite place to go to. Many are made worse by exposure and fatigue in looking for suitable lodgings.

Clement Godson, in the *British Medical Journal*, reports a case where, with cocaine locally applied, he was able to snip off vascular growths from the meatus urinarius. He used an eighteen per cent. solution, but thinks a weaker one would suffice.

BENEFIT SOCIETIES.

The relation of the medical profession to benefit societies has been a matter of much discussion during the last few years. We have in Ontario a very large number of labourers, skilled mechanics, and even employers of labour, who belong to these various organizations. There is also a constantly increasing membership, as shown by the opening of new lodges and the establishment of new orders.

The method by which these societies obtain the services of a physician is usually as follows: When a new lodge is opened, or a vacancy occurs in one already in existence, the names of a number of physicians are proposed by members, an election takes place, and the medical man who obtains the largest number of votes becomes the lodge physician. He holds office for one year only, and may be superseded at the end of that time. As a general rule, however, the lodge retains the same physician for a number of years.

The fees paid are usually one dollar a year from each member, and when medicines are provided the amount is a dollar and a quarter. In many instances, however, very much smaller fees have been accepted. When a medical man thus becomes a lodge physician, he in many respects places himself in an awkward position. He has, in the first place, to attend a number of members who voted against him in the lodge, and we all know how disagreeable it is to attend those who are not anxious to employ us. He is also bound to attend patients at unreasonable hours, for fees quite inadequate for the services rendered.

With all its drawbacks, however, the system has been tolerated as it was considered to be for the benefit of the poor; and there is no doubt that many in this way obtain medical attendance who could not pay the ordinary fees. In this Province, however, it would be safe to say that half of all the members of such organizations are quite able to pay the ordinary fees, and the profession are thus giving their services for little or nothing to men in good circumstances, and in that way losing thousands of dollars a year.

Matters have come to such a pass in some of