

LODGE PRACTICE.

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To the Editor of THE CANADIAN PRACTITIONER :

DEAR SIR,—Although the “lodge” question has already received a considerable share of adverse criticism, at the risk of being tiresome, I desire to add a few more words in defence of a practice which, in itself, I have not yet found inconsistent with professional honor or dignity.

I believe it is the right of every citizen—physician included—to arrange his business engagements, to make and fulfil contracts, whether profitable or otherwise, without the necessity of consulting his business opponents, or of explaining his motives ; and I further believe it is the province of jealousy, and of jealousy alone, to question either the one or the other.

So long as contracting parties confine themselves strictly within the limits of their obligations, which are of mutual interests alone, no third party can have any moral right to interfere, especially if that interference be prompted by interests of a mercenary nature. But interference with the lodge contract on the ground that “they (lodge physicians) lessen the incomes of the members of the profession” is a scandalous confession of selfishness, unsuspected in the majority of our medical confrères. The above quotation, however true it may be in practice, will probably afford a startling theme for the reflection of the general reader ; but as a premiss in the contention against lodge practice, it is neither flattering nor over-creditable to the author whom I quote from the June PRACTITIONER.

My own contention is entirely for the principle embodied in the right to engage in business, whether under contract direct or implied, without the necessity of concurrence by a trades union, or a professional corporation, which is of itself a limitation of the rights of the individual, and any insinuation that I am engaged in the defence of unworthy conduct is as gratuitous as it is wide of the question involved. The multiplication of cases in point either real or fancied, when applied to lodge practice, has no greater weight against the principle than the same cases would have against the fundamental principles underlying the practice of medicine in general, and it is absurd to single out the “lodge” contract as if it were distinct from other contracts. Moreover, it is begging the whole question to assume that the “lodge” system constitutes a special field of practice outside the limits and uncontrolled by the ethics of general medicine.

For more than a year it has been the habit of certain peevish writers to assail lodge practice as “pernicious,” “unprofessional,” and the like, on the sole ground that this particular system, when put to the test of a trial, has proved to be a financial failure, antagonistic to the general profession, and open to the grossest abuses. Because the “lodge” has become the