

or it can do them unwisely and unrighteously with a view to filling its own pocket or conciliating people who are in a position to indirectly influence the pocket filling.

Now, as influences deterring from the bad use of these powers and stimulating to their good use, we have only three, the private and corporate professional conscience, the discipline of a medical *forum domesticum*, the discipline of the judge and jury under the criminal or civil law.

Of those three, the first in the vast majority of cases is happily sufficient. If it were not so, we may be certain that all our special privileges would have gone by the board years ago. But to assert, as some have done, that either the private or corporate professional conscience suffices for all things and all men, is to make a claim which could not be substantiated even if made on behalf of a bench of bishops. Students on their entry into the profession are probably neither better nor worse on the average, than any other class of educated young men. When they emerge from the student stage they are a good deal better, by virtue of having been brought somewhat under the influence of the corporate professional conscience, and with every year of practice they ought to be and generally are, more and more educated under that conscience's continued elevating influence. But he would be a bold man who would say that the possession of a registrable diploma is a guarantee of that moral rectitude which is as essential as professional knowledge to a medical practitioner. It does not purport to be anything of the kind. It would not have been granted if the student had been guilty of some well known and flagrant misdemeanour, but further than that it does not attempt to go. It establishes a reasonable proficiency in medical and surgical knowledge and that is all. Fortunately, so powerful are the moral influences of our daily work and of the corporate professional code, that the majority of even the men of weak moral fibre are led to steer an honourable course. But there must always remain a residuum of men whose morality is not merely weak but utterly bad, and for such men, as they are utterly impervious to any merely moral pressure, something compulsory becomes a necessity. And the necessity is almost equal for their brethren as well. The voluntary obedience of the more or less worthy members of the profession to the professional and moral codes, will not long stand the strain of seeing the unworthy men crowding them out of the race by the use, with impunity, of methods which those codes forbid, and general deterioration must be the inevitable result.

The strong arm of some form of law is then necessary, for the protection alike of the public and of

those practitioners who do their duty by the public. The power of removing a man from the privileged position of a place on the Medical Register is a necessary corollary to the power of originally placing him there. It comes therefore to a choice between adjudication by magistrate, judge or jury, and adjudication by a professional Court of professional brethren. Can any one doubt which is the more likely to elicit the truth, or to fairly appraise the circumstances? In the first, the proceeding must be enormously expensive, the medical man must laboriously plead his justification before laymen utterly unable to grasp the points thereof, must call to his aid a cloud of professional witnesses and perhaps see them opposed by another cloud, and finally submit his case, perhaps bristling with medical technicalities, to the decision of the tinker, the tailor and the shoemaker, more or less guided by the lawyer on the Bench. In the second, the proceeding is simple and inexpensive. He needs, if he is telling the truth, neither attorney nor counsel, in most cases he needs no witnesses, in many he need not even personally attend, in none does he need any expert testimony, and finally his case is decided upon by a body of experts who have gone through exactly the same experiences as himself, and who can perfectly size up, in five minutes, circumstances upon which a judge would be still hopelessly befogged after five hours' hearing of expert evidence. Finally, if the verdict is adverse to him, he has, in South Africa at least, the additional safeguard of a review by a lawyer who may cancel his sentence, but can never make it heavier. Surely there can be no room for doubt as to the choice, if the honourable men in the profession have to make it. As for the others, we can understand the position. *Messieurs les voteurs* have a natural antipathy to *messieurs les gendarmes*, if the latter are efficient, know their duty, and can see through things. It was a good soldier and not a waster who said that he preferred military justice to civil law. We fancy all our brethren cannot have followed the terrible persecutions to which the signing of a lunacy certificate has exposed many medical men, or they would not agitate for extending the sphere of legal adjudication on medical matters.

Obituary.

D. ZUURDEEG, M.D. (Bonn).

We regret to record the death of this practitioner, who had been in practice at Frankfort, O.R.C., many years. He was registered in the old Free State in 1886. Dr. Zuurdeeg took a keen interest in local matters, and had done considerable service as a Town Councillor.