

CURRENT COMMENT.

A Professional Burden.

The London Hospital vents its editorial wrath on the existence of an unnecessary tax on time, energy and brain vitality, which the hardworking modern physician has to meet. There is no profession which calls for such constant study in legitimate ways. The immense speculative progress of the curative science and the new lines along which it is expanding exact more time in research than the hard worked physician has to give. In addition to this it is claimed that no professional literature is so choked up with worthless contributions, which must be examined to sift out the wheat from the chaff. So the man of progressive ambition is placed in a dilemma. The writer says

Medicine, in short, is swamped, drowned, stifled and paralyzed by innumerable exploiters within and without its ranks—exploiters whose only object is the shortest possible cut, not to fame and fortune, but to notoriety and pelf. Now, all this has an exaggerated sound about it. But indeed and indeed, however exaggeratedly it sounds, it does not express one tenth part of the miserable truth. The steady practitioner, whose aim is to supply his patients with the very best resources which the science of the times can afford, finds that about half his busy hours are spent in the brain wearing and what should be quite unnecessary operation of separating the precious from the vile. And the vile is so very vile and so overwhelmingly preponderant that he almost wishes himself in the nether world and permanently joined to the ranks of Sisyphus and Tantalus.

America, it seems, is not one whit less cursed with this prolific crew of writing egotists than England and Germany. It may be said that the difficulty is in general harmony with the evident fact that book writing and publishing of every sort are prodigiously overdone. The man who is not successful as practicing physician feels himself inspired to write about the things which he knows to so little practical advantage.

The disgusted critic assigns a reason for this plethora of medical books: "The profession is swamped with pedants, with persons in the consulting and special ranks who have a little money, no practice and unlimited leisure, and these persons find their only consolation, the only salve of their disappointed self love, in writing and reading all the rubbish which is annually poured out upon the profession, and so in persuading themselves that they are more learned and scientific than their better employed rivals." Doubtless all this is very true. It is one of the necessary evils of the age, though it may be specially so in medicine. The lawyer has stacks of legal books, and feels, too, that he must have them, which he never uses. The theologian is impelled by a hungry instinct to lay hands on every professional book he can acquire, and feels that they are rubbish afterward. Every man who uses books is obliged to wade through a vast deal of wretched

stuff. But the compensation may be suggested in a word. Out of great multiplicity emerges a corresponding quantity of excellence. The worthless books die, but the good ones live on to bless the world.

The Bones of Columbus.

Santo Domingo has always disputed with Cuba the possession of the mortuary relics of the great discoverer. But those lying in the mausoleum in the Havana cathedral are generally supposed to be all that remains of Columbus except his imperishable fame. These are now to be conveyed back to Spain, the great man's ungrateful stepmother. Nothing would be done by the United States of course to prevent the transfer, but the question arises, Do these relics belong properly to Spain as a historical right? This is a query open to grave debate.

Columbus was not a Spaniard. It was Isabella's womanly sympathy, not her intellectual conviction, which gave the daring voyager his chances. Even at that moment Bartholomew Columbus was negotiating similar help from Henry VII of England, close to the point of success. A slight question of time perhaps determined the precedence of Spain. Spanish ingratitude to the immortal trustee of her future greatness needs no rehearsal. It was not till nearly a half century later that a collateral descendant of the Colons secured the family honors, now perpetuated in the Duke of Veragua. The claim of Spain to hold the few handfuls of crumbling bones remaining of the greatest man of his age seems to be only valid because none cares to contest it. The western hemisphere was the monument of Columbus. His fame was the world's, not that of his niggardly employer.

The influence of his deeds for good was on the whole of civilization, Spain excepted, for the gift of Columbus became to her an abiding curse, even at the pinnacle of her power and glory from which she fell into such an inexorable decline. Had it not been for Columbus Spain might today have been a much more powerful nation. Certainly, could the great Christopher have known what an ocean of blood and tears Spain would cause to flow from her successful patronage of him, he might well have hesitated before sailing.

The bones of Columbus belong logically to the regions which he made known to the world. Next to the spot where they have recently lain they should properly rest in the United States, which illustrates most brilliantly the true beneficence of the discovery of a new world. If the western hemisphere is his monument, the history of the United States is the crowning inscription on that monument.

At last a gleam of justice has come to the French conscience. At the instance of M. Brisson, the new premier, vehemently urged on his unwilling col-

leagues, the cabinet voted that the appeal for revision of the Dreyfus injustice should be sent to the court of cassation. If their examination of the papers results in an affirmative decree, there will be another trial before a court martial, but this time with open doors and not in the guilty secrecy of a locked chamber. After all the revelations of forgery and other villainies by which the prosecution of the case secured a verdict of guilty, there is but one opinion among all candid minds throughout the civilized world as to the second result. One thing, however, has assured itself as a growing root in the conviction of Frenchmen whose vanity and national pride kept them so long purblind. This is that the French army administration and its military honor are rotten and worthless from core to surface. The close touch which this feature of governing life in France has had with every phase of political and social movement makes the shock of a lost illusion the more stunning. The possibilities which may arise from this chasm separating an awakened public conscience from a great military clan, savage under the consciousness of its own inept defense, are pregnant with perils.

Mr. Shizuo Kondo, representative of one of the largest trading associations of Japan, recently addressed the Manufacturers' association of New York in a speech full of glowing anticipation of the burden of the future for the United States. The power of this country in oriental commerce he instanced by citing the fact that "while United States exports increased 65 per cent in 1897 over 1896, the total increase of export to Japan from all other countries is only 28 per cent during the same year." He attributed this increase not to any judicious and skillfully applied zeal on the part of our merchants (that had been lacking), but to the excellent qualities of the goods which had won their way unassisted. The Japanese government and the association to which Mr. Kondo belonged had opened a museum for the express display of American products with remarkable success and it was continually thronged with buyers. This energetic co-operation of Japan in helping us to sell our own goods is an interesting phenomenon. It will be a long time before any American city or government would put itself one step out of its daily treadmill tramp to help sell Japanese goods. The thoughtful courtesy of our Japanese friends and neighbors, as they may now be called in view of the new half way house of Hawaii, is much to be commended.

The philosopher is full of fine words over the misfortunes of others. They are very easy troubles to bear. But when they come to himself they are always the very biggest burdens which ever bowed the shoulders of man.