

the superior abilities of the Conjoint man as compared with the university man. This can only be considered unfortunate. Hitherto the whole crux of the question has been taken to be not a matter of personal ability but of opportunity in the case of the two classes of men. The larger number of students first enter at a hospital and then consider what qualification they will aim at; these form the Conjoint men, for having paid their fees, &c., they do not feel disposed to retrace their steps and undergo the ordeal of a matriculation and preliminary scientific examination. A few men give anxious consideration to the question of a qualification before they enter a hospital; most of such shape their course for the university. When I joined a London hospital I was one of four who had decided to go in for the university; the remaining 56 students were Conjoint men. It might be reasonably expected that out of 56 men there would be a greater probability of a display of brilliant work than out of a forlorn number of four men. But even apart from any such probability there was no question about the capabilities of the Conjoint men as a whole and of two of them in particular, one of whom took all the hospital scholarships, and the other exhibited consummate ability in the numerous resident posts he held. We university men were a scratch lot. Opportunity and an indulgent Providence rather than personal merit made us what we are.

Mr. Langford gives instances of examinational croppers suffered by the intellectually great. We all know of such—the explanation of them belongs to that hazy land of speculation where the voice of the fool alone is heard pondering on the imponderable—a striving and a striving and an ending in nothing. To Mr. Langford and all other Britishers who are consumed by a wearing anxiety about the quality of a man's qualifications let me say that throughout South Africa we pay no regard to such matters; with us a "doctor" is a properly qualified practitioner. By his merits do we judge a man; he may be an M.D. of any university, but should he make an ass of himself and a mess of his cases we forthwith catalogue him among the fools. Throughout this letter I have spoken of "Mr." Langford—may Providence once more be indulgent to me for thus bending the knee in the house of Baal. Let all Conjoint men take heart from the opinion of a Rhodesian wayside store-keeper on university graduates, many of whom float round South Africa like dentists. In a burst of confidence he said to me, "You know, doctor, 'Varsity men are no good as waiters"!"

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Transvaal, Dec. 30th, 1902.

AFRICANDER.

NOTES FROM INDIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

The Walker Hospital at Simla.—Improvements at the Medical College, Calcutta.—The Export of Goats' Skins and the Practice of flaying Goats alive.—A Successful Crusade against Mosquitoes.—The Epidemic of Plague.

AMONG the recent improvements at Simla is the new hospital where Europeans can find improved accommodation during their hours of illness. The old and unsuitable wards formerly used have by the gift of the generous donor been replaced by a properly equipped building erected on the lines of the Eden Sanatorium at Darjeeling. Mr. Walker's handsome gift was of the well-known Gordon Castle Estate, but Government acquired this for administrative buildings, and the present site of the new hospital has more suitably been found on a spur situated at the back of Snowdon. The main building, consisting of a central portion with cross arms or wings at the end, is two-storeyed. It is very largely composed of timber, but ample provision has been made against the risk of fire.

The new pathological and physiological building to be added to the Medical College, Calcutta, also requires notice. It forms one more step in the reconstruction of the college upon modern lines. The first improvement undertaken was the anatomical block and then came the chemical block, both of which are in full occupation. The present addition is three-storeyed and is designed to harmonise with the two others. The entire fitting up has been carefully thought out and will render this building when completed the best institution of its class in Asia. It is anticipated, however,

that the beginning of 1904 will be the earliest date by which it will be ready for use. On the ground floor will be rooms for normal histology and physiological chemistry and an experimental class-room, besides small rooms for the professors, diagrams, photography, &c. On the first floor will be rooms for morbid histology and bacteriology besides the large theatre. The second floor will be chiefly taken up with the museum.

The common practice of flaying goats alive in different parts of India has been nurtured by the demands for long necks in the skins. The export of goats' skins is enormous and a certain percentage—said to be only small—have long necks. The religious method of killing is to decapitate by a cut through the neck, but for long necks an incision is made round and under the jaws and over the top of the head, the skin being turned back, and then the head severed from the body. This, of course, is horrible cruelty and one could wish that only 1 per cent. of exported skins as stated was at least not exceeded, but this is doubtful. The practice is being actively investigated by the honorary secretary of the Calcutta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and in a note he urges on consumers or users to reject long necks and to alter the bases of measurements, fixing it from the base of the neck instead of from the apex. If the trade would coöperate in this direction there would be no inducement for the continuation of this atrocious form of cruelty. This question deserves to be ventilated throughout the whole of Europe and especially in the countries to which these skins are exported.

An effective crusade against the anopheles mosquito has been carried on during the past year at Jaidulpur in the Central Provinces. The local conditions were particularly unfavourable in consequence of numerous tanks and open drains, but mosquito brigades have set to work actively. Formerly 28 per cent. of the patients in the hospitals were cases of malaria fever, but during the last five months the percentage has dropped to 11.55 per cent.

Upwards of 16,000 deaths from plague were recorded throughout India for the week ending Jan. 10th. This is an increase of 511 on the previous week and 5829 more than in the corresponding week of last year. The Bombay Presidency reported 8340 deaths, an increase of 1045; the Bengal Presidency reported 1854, an increase of 92; the United Provinces 1712, an increase of 52; and the Madras Presidency 596, an increase of 151. The Punjab alone reported any decrease—viz., from 2238 to 1736. Other returns of importance are: Calcutta, 29 deaths; Bombay city, 352 deaths; and Karachi, 25 deaths. In all three of these cities plague is increasing, especially in Bombay, where 169 additional deaths occurred during the past week. The Hyderabad and Mysore States, the Chitral Provinces and Berar, continue to be infected. A commission has been appointed to inquire into the lamentable accident which occurred in the Punjab in connexion with inoculation. Without any disparagement to the members appointed I think that officers should have been selected who are well acquainted with the methods of manufacture of the prophylactic serum and of the practice of plague inoculation. The President of the Commission is a judge, not a scientific expert, and in an investigation of this kind it is difficult to see where his abilities can be utilised.

Jan. 15th.

BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Health of the City.

THE returns of the medical officer of health, Dr. A. Hill, for the week ending Jan. 31st, show improvement in some directions and some cause for anxiety in others. The death-rate was 17.1 per 1000 against 21.4 the previous week, but, on the other hand, there are an outbreak of small-pox and a large number of cases of scarlet fever. There are now 18 cases of small-pox in the isolation hospital, one patient having died during the week. 66 fresh cases of scarlet fever were notified during the week, the total number in the hospital being 475. The type is not a virulent one, fortunately. There is no doubt that the dissemination of small-pox is caused mainly by tramps who occupy the tramp wards at workhouses and by the common lodging-houses of the city. The difficulty of dealing with these carriers of contagion is almost insurmountable. Of course they are isolated and