Parker). Not so long ago the societies affiliated to the dispensary paid but 3s., and then a rise to 3s. 6d. took place. Now the request was for 4s., and there was the threat that "the trade union doctors" would boycott any professional man who took club members at less than 4s. The hard thing about the present demand was that it was intended to charge 4s. for juveniles as well as for adults; and, as the former paid but 4s. 4d. in subscriptions, it was clear that a mere 4d. would be left after payment of the medical fee for other benefits. The Chairman suggested that this present movement on the part of the medical men had a national character, and was not local only.

The SECRETARY (Mr. H. Smith) read letters he had received from various places where medical services have been organized. Walsall Friendly Societies' Medical Association wrote that there 3s. 6d. for adults and 2s. for juveniles were charged, but he thought 4s. and 2s. 6d. fair. York could not recommend any contribution under 4s. and 2s. for the classes already mentioned, and suggested an entrance fee of 1s. Leamington was "delighted to think Coventry is at last waking up to consider the advisability of having an Association of your own. Of course you will have difficulties, but don't be alarmed; no good work is without them. After a quarter of a century's experience, I unhesitatingly say it (the Medical Association) was the best thing we ever started in Leamington."

A general discussion followed the reading of these communications, and a variety of opinions was expressed by the delegates. One expressed the opinion that the move of the Coventry medical men was the outcome of a general movement in the medical associations of the country.

Mr. Wood said if it were merely a local movement the difficulties would be less.

The SECRETARY stated that an interview had taken place between Drs. Pickup and Hind and certain representative delegates, and the former warned the latter that if they attempted to set up a medical association they would not get their advertisements for doctors inserted in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, or secure other than inferior men (cries of "Oh!" and "Bosh!")

Several other speakers thought this was "only the thin end of the wedge," that the dispensers were not standing by the Friendly Societies, and that the medical movement should be met by the establishment of a medical institute for the city. Others considered the aim of the British Medical Association was to crush Friendly Societies, and one member thought the special object was to crush juvenile organizations. Mr. W. J. DALTON, a member of the Board of Guardians, said that was unthinkable, but he advocated paying "a living wage." At the same time he thought the dispensary doctors, the chief doctors in this local movement, were in receipt of salaries from that institution which made the mouths of struggling medical men water. He moved that a deputation wait on the local medical council especially to urge a modification of the proposed juvenile fee and to obtain a pledge that 4s. was final.

Other members thought it would be useless to send such another deputation, and an amendment was proposed to form a medical association.

Thereupon the CHAIRMAN warned the brethren to be careful.

Mr. GOONEY said it would seem that Coventry had been taken early in the medical men's attack on Friendly Societies, and he contended that 3s. 6d. paid by a member was of better value than 4s. 4d. paid by dispensary members at 1d. per week.

The conference ultimately decided that a deputation, representing the various Lodges and Courts, be appointed to wait on the local medical men, asking (1) if 4s. is a final demand, and (2) if modification cannot be made of the proposal to charge 4s. per member per annum for the juvenile societies. The conference will reassemble some weeks hence, after the deputation has conferred (should it have the opportunity of doing so) and is able to make a report on the result.

From a letter from the Chairman of the Executive of the King's Hospital Fund, we gather that the Fund is now conditionally only £7,686 short of the amount required to give the fund a permanent income of fifty thousand a year from investments. Unless, however, this comparatively small balance is made up by the end of this month, the fund will be short of the desired total, for included in the calculation is a sum of £12,000, actual payment of which is dependant upon the balance being subscribed by the date mentioned.

THE DIET OF THE PRECIBICULTURISTS.

By HARRY CAMPBELL, M.D., F.R.C.P.,

Physician, North-West London Hospital and to the Hospital for Diseases of the Nervous System, Welbeck Street.

II.

DIET OF THE AUSTRALIANS.

THE Australian aborigines are dolicocephalic, with a cephalic index of 70, a low, receding forehead and a cranial capacity which among Europeans would be regarded as microcephalic. So thick are their skulls, that they are in the habit of breaking sticks over them as we do across our knees. The skin is dark, with a dash of copper tint. They are for the most part naked savages, though some of them use skin garments or rugs made of kangaroo skins or of opossum skins sewed together, or primitively-woven cloth. The tribes of the North, which are inferior to those of the South, use no clothing whatever; "in the cold or rain they shiver and keep close to the fire." They grease their bodies to keep off mosquitos and other insects, occasionally mixing with the grease red ochre and pipeclay.

They employ large wooden bowls for holding their food. Their flint instruments are for the most part chipped, but quite a number of them are ground smooth.

Fire they produce by rubbing flints together, and also by means of the wooden fire-drill.

Animal Food.

Though some of the Australian tribes, such as those inhabiting the tropical north, subsist mainly on vegetable food, others, such as the south-eastern tribes, are obliged to depend on animal food chiefly, for, owing to the scarcity of water over the greater part of Australia, vegetable food is apt to be scanty. Carr maintains that there is no tribe which does not partake largely of vegetables; nevertheless, their vegetable food has always to be supplemented from the animal kingdom. Hence the primitive Australian is essentially a hunter or fisherman.

Hardly any animal food, "from a human being to a giant-fly," is considered unwholesome by the Australian, though from religious or superstitious motives certain animal foods are tabooed. Thus the animal food of one tribe is confined to opossum, kangaroo, dog, etc.; of another to porcupine and turkey; among others, again, only the old people are allowed to eat the flesh of the emu. These restrictions are not enforced upon the individual until he has attained the age of nine or ten years.

Among the animal foods of the Australians are the following: kangaroo, opossum, wallaby (smaller species of kangaroo), the emu (greatly prized); the dingo, or native dog; small marsupials, such as the wombat, bandicoot and iguana; rats, mice, bats, ferrets, and rabbits; turkeys, duck, crows, kites, hawks, owls, pigeons, quails, larks, swallows, sparrows, snipe and many other birds; whales, seals and fish of various kinds; all salt water shellfish, except (among many tribes at least) oysters; fresh-water shellfish; birds' eggs, ants' eggs, frogs, toads, lizards, snakes, turtles; scorpions, locusts, grasshoppers, moths, spiders, sandflies, ants, caterpillars, centipedes and grubs. These latter are often of large size, that from a certain gum tree being six inches long and half-an-inch thick.

Cannibalism, though rarely rampant among the Australians, seems to have been practised by most tribes, though apparently not to the same horrible extent as among certain early agricultural peoples. Some tribes are said occasionally to eat their children when food is scarce. Victims slain in war are eaten. The author of *The Never Never Land* declares that the natives consume human flesh as readily as a duck takes to water; and, according to Carl Lumholtz, the Northern Queenslander thinks as little of taking human life as we do of breaking a piece of glass, though within their own tribes murder and theft are accounted crimes; one man was greatly esteemed on account of his success in procuring human flesh, and there is nothing, Lumholtz adds, which so readily earns respect as this kind of prowess. There is no doubt that these Northern Queenslanders are much more primitive than the more Southern Australians, who do not appear even to have domesticated the dog.

Human flesh is consumed during the burial ceremony by some of the tribes. Thus we are told that when at a funeral an old man has finished beating his conys, which consists of two light rods about 3 ft. long, the men and women commence crying, and the body is lowered into the grave, into which a native not related to the deceased then steps, and proceeds to cut off from the face, thighs, arms, and stomach

of the corpse pieces of fat; these are then passed round for the mourners to partake of, with the object, it is alleged, of deadening their grief, for surely it is not easy for anybody to feel poignant grief for one whose flesh he has tasted! Infanticide is practised.

Domestic Animals.—The only animal domesticated by the primitive Australian is the dog, and not all tribes are in possession of even this animal. Seeing that the dog does not belong to the fauna of Australia, and that the Australians had before the arrival of the white man been from very remote times cut off from the rest of the world, we must assume that they brought these faithful animals with them when they first peopled the continent, which shows that it has been man's companion for many thousands of years. Some of the Australian dogs appear to be in a wild or semi-wild state, and such occasionally serve as food for the natives. Those that are domesticated help in finding snakes, rats, and the like, and the natives are said to be very fond of them. An Australian woman was seen crying over a dog that had been stung by a snake.

Methods of Securing Animal Food.—Land animals, birds, and fish are procured in an endless variety of ways, many of which are highly ingenious and original. They differ considerably among different tribes. The most interesting fact in connexion with the weapons of the Australian aborigines (as also of their close allies the now extinct Tasmanians) is the absence of the bow-and-arrow. They use instead the spear-thrower and the boomerang, in the throwing of which they display great skill. They also employ a flint fixed, chisel fashion, to a wooden handle, the sides of the flint being roughly chipped and the edges ground smooth; in Eastern Australia the tomahawk is made of green stone as large as an American axe. Knives are made by cementing bits of flint on to wooden handles; shell knives are also used; sometimes the edge of a split reed is used to cut flesh. They have many different kinds of clubs. Since the advent of the white man metal has with many tribes replaced stone for making implements.

Land mammals are trapped and stalked with marvellous skill, the Australians being, indeed, the most expert hunters in the world.

Birds are netted: for catching wild duck two men hold a wide net across a river, while a third drives the duck upstream into the net. The natives make these bird-nets of grass, which they prepare by chewing. Fish are speared and caught by lines and nets, the lines being manufactured from rushes or the roots of a certain flag, which are first chewed and then twisted by the hand. The chewing is done by the women, for which reason their teeth are often more worn than are those of men—so much so, indeed, as often to cause toothache.

Preparation of Animal Food.—Animal food is sometimes eaten raw, and in any case its cooking is performed in a perfunctory manner. Thus, of certain tribes who do not appear to have used underground ovens, we are told that raw flesh is not objected to, but that if there is time it is cooked in embers, and handed round for consumption when the heat has barely penetrated the surface, and when this outer portion has been eaten the remainder is exposed to the fire for a few minutes and then again handed round. Of another tribe we read that they eat some of the smaller animals in the raw state, and that in cooking their "meat" they little more than singe it, preferring it "thoroughly underdone." Formerly this tribe employed underground ovens for cooking the larger game, but it has now for many years abandoned the practice.

Grubs are eaten both raw and cooked. The large grub which the natives cut out of the gum tree is said to be watery and insipid when raw, but excellent eating when roasted. Insects are frequently eaten raw. One writer observes that it was not a pleasant sight "to see a black woman divest of wings and legs the gigantic fly (cicula) and then gobble it up alive."

The art of boiling was unknown to the vast majority of the Australians before the arrival of the white man.

REQUESTS TO MEDICAL CHARITIES.—Mr. John Gilmour of Helensburgh, Dumbarton, and formerly of Virginia, U.S.A., who died on April 15th, bequeathed £1,000 to the Helensburgh Infirmary, and £300 to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

VISITORS to the Liège Exhibition may be glad to be reminded that Spa, in Belgium, said to be the oldest chalybeate spring in the world, is within easy reach. The municipality are taking great pains to revive the ancient glories of Spa.

LITERARY NOTES.

THE Oxford University Press announces that the second part of the second supplement to the *Index Kewensis* will be ready immediately. This supplement covers the period 1896 to 1900. In the original work the genera and species of flowering plants from the time of Linnaeus to 1885 were enumerated; and the first supplement carries on the list to 1895.

Professor Walter Simon, of Königsberg, has presented to the library of that University a book printed by Cotta, which contains the medical theses on which public disputations were held by nine students of Duke Charles of Wurtemberg's Military Academy at Stuttgart in 1778. Among these students was the famous poet Friedrich Schiller. The theses are in Latin, and deal with pathology, symptomatology, and therapeutics. Among them are such subjects as *Eeculenta conservant, medicamenta restitunt sanitatem* (food maintains, medicines restore health); *Ut medicamentum non semper aegris prodest, sic nocet semper sanis* (drugs not always do good to the sick, and always do harm to the healthy); *Qui potest mederi simplicibus, male quaerit composita* (who can be healed by simple means wrongly seeks for complex remedies).

The following lines from *The Birth and Death of Pain*, a poem read by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of anaesthesia, which took place at Boston on October 16th, 1896, are quoted in a recent pamphlet by W. T. G. Morton's son:

How did we thank him? Ah! no joy-bells rang,
No pacans greeted and no poet sang,
No cannon thundered from a guarded strand
This mighty victory to a grateful land!
We took the gift, so humbly, simply given,
And coldly selfish—left our debt to Heaven.
How shall we thank him? Hush! a gladder hour
Has struck for him; a wiser, juster power
Shall know full well how fitly to reward
The generous soul, that found the world so hard.

In a thesis lately presented to the Medical Faculty of Bordeaux, Dr. C. Clotoge treats of the gynaecological knowledge of the old Greek physicians. The uterus, as is well known, was regarded as an animal. As late as the fourth century Aretaeus the Cappadocian writes that the womb is situated between the flanks, and moves not only from side to side, but upwards towards the liver and the spleen; it can also go downwards; in short, it is like an animal inside an animal. In the *Treatise of Diseases of Women*, which is included among the Hippocratic writings, hysteria is described. It is especially elderly women or those who have not yet had sexual relations that are subject to the disease, the reason being that in such persons the uterus is not made heavy by lochial discharge, and does not swell or become supple. Fatigue is an important factor in inducing an attack, because the vessels being then emptier than usual, the dried-up womb becomes lighter and shifts its place. The organ then sets out in pursuit of the moisture which it needs. It first flies to the liver "as the liver is full of fluid"; sometimes the head comes to the relief of the liver by sending down phlegm, with which the womb is satisfied and goes back to its place. But if it sticks to the liver, "the white of the eyes is rolled up, the woman becomes cold, and sometimes even livid. She gnashes her teeth; saliva flows from the mouth, and she is like epileptics." In other cases "the woman at once loses her voice; the hypochondria are hard; she has a feeling of suffocation; she clenches her teeth, and she does not hear when she is called." If the womb remains long in the neighbourhood of the liver, the woman may die of suffocation. Occasionally the uterus goes to the head, which forthwith becomes heavy, the veins of the nostrils and the parts under the eyes become painful, and the woman falls into a state of torpor and drowsiness; sometimes it goes to the heart, causing distress and giddiness; sometimes to the hypochondria, when vomiting of burning and acrid matters sets in, while the head and neck are the seat of violent pain. There is a suffocative feeling, with severe orthopnoea and intense cardialgia; if the errant womb does not speedily return to its proper place, the patient loses the power of speech. The indications naturally were to dislodge the womb from its wrong situation; to induce it to return to its own place injections and strong-smelling fumigations were used, while the patient was given stinking substances to smell.

In the annual address recently delivered at the Commencement Exercises of the Medical Department of the Tulane University, and published in the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* for July, Professor Alcee Fortier spoke of the