

the reply. "I have had considerable experience in cases of this kind. Diseases of women have always been my speciality, but I have gradually drifted into this work, and have helped out a great many people." This painful avowal, coming from the practitioner who had no conception of the use to which it was intended to be put, was made shortly before the interview terminated, and with this, together with a few more statements which were recorded, our contemporary may be said to have completed his case. Comment is needless.

The Reconstitution of the London University.

THE modified scheme drawn up and sanctioned by the Senate, and sent to the other bodies for their consideration, represents the last concessions which the Senate is prepared to make. They practically concede the main points claimed by the Royal Colleges, and provide for a large representation on the Senate of the constituent teaching bodies, together with other privileges. Except in so far as the degrees in honours are concerned, the demands of the teaching colleges in arts and sciences have been complied with, a limitation which we should imagine will not be allowed to stand in the way of a compromise. What concerns us more immediately is of course the attitude of the Senate in respect of the medical part of the scheme. The matriculation and preliminary scientific examinations are apparently to remain unchanged, but the strictly professional examinations would be conducted by a joint board of examiners appointed by the University and the colleges. The London Medical Schools would be constituted colleges in the faculty of medicine. On the whole, these proposals, so far as medical students are concerned, can hardly be deemed generous or satisfactory. The concessions in this department are more or less illusory, and are better calculated to gratify the vanity of the colleges than to meet the requirements of aspirant doctors. Seeing that the adoption of the scheme would effectually destroy any prospect of a second university, we may only hope that it may, as seems not unlikely, be rejected at Convocation. We shall in any case not have long to wait before knowing the upshot of the negotiations, but as matters stand at present the prospect of a working M.D. for London students seems as remote as ever.

The Placebo in Medicine.

AN American exchange just to hand records the result of a curious trial in New York in which a lady disputed the bill of a practitioner on account of the deception which he considered necessary to practice upon her during the treatment of her case. The lady was a victim to the morphine habit. The prescription for her other ailments was a hypodermic injection of morphine; but the doctor, unwilling to stimulate the patient's craving for the drug, substituted water for the morphine, while professing to use the drug in his injections. It was claimed that the charges for this work were made on false pretences, the patient having been purposely deceived as to the nature of the prescription. The end was that the doctor was glad to compromise the claim by accepting one-third only of his fees. It seems to us that,

under these circumstances *placebos* will be placed in quite a different light. We feel sorry for it, but apparently the law does not think well of *placebos*, and if the law does not like these gentle but useful members of the Pharmaceutical community, well, the fact must be admitted that the knell of the *placebo* has been sounded. But what great good have they not effected in their generation! Think of the mild, undemonstrative, nevertheless, soul-stirring, "pilula panis." Shall it never again come to the aid of the oppressed female hysteric—never again have an opportunity of exerting its wonderful physiological effects as faithfully as one of its more toxic congeners? Then again, there is our old friend "Aq. Menth. Pip." Of this it can only be said that the good it has done will live after it. The law is a serious affair, and apparently the law will support persons suffering under a grievance of deception, whether the deception was dependent upon inoffensive bread pills or upon matters of much weightier importance. It is sad when we come to think of it that doctors will now have to give their patients medicine whether it is good for them or whether it is not. But if some poor imaginative sufferer took it into her head to have an analysis made of her practitioner's pills, and discovered that she was getting well with the substance which forms the chief commodity of the baker's shop, she might turn round and object to pay the doctor's account. We gather that the law would support her in this refusal, and the doctor having cured his patient in the best possible manner, would have to forego his fees. This is a sad, sad world!

Sanitary Precautions Extraordinary.

THE Bill now under discussion in Parliament for the better prevention of the spread of infectious diseases has been badly knocked about, and various of its essential provisions have met with such stubborn resistance that they have had to be abandoned in order to save the remainder. The Bill, as it remains after the sanguinary *mêlée* of last week, is like a vessel the cargo of which has been thrown overboard in order to get off the rocks. The amendments and additions proposed in the course of the debate were numerous, and in some instances very original. The palm, however, in this respect must be awarded to the remarkable proposal made by a Mr. Stephens, who, possibly as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the principle of the Bill in relation to dairies and laundries, had the ingenu-ousness to suggest that "whenever it shall be certified to the local authority by the medical officer of health that it is desirable, with a view to prevent the spread of infectious disease, that they should be furnished with a list of the patients of any medical practitioner, the local authority may require such medical practitioner to furnish them a full and complete list of the names and addresses of the persons such medical practitioner is attending or has attended during the past two months, and such medical practitioner shall furnish such list accordingly, and the local authority shall pay to him for every such list the sum of 10s." This singular amendment was ostensibly for the purpose of enabling the local authority to form an opinion on the question whether infectious disease was spread by medical men in general practice. It was urged