

The Right Hon. Earl Fortescue (Lord Lieutenant of the County of Devonshire) has consented to accept the office of President of the Twenty-eighth Congress of the Royal Sanitary Institute, to be held at Exeter from July 7th to 12th, 1913.

An additional wing has been erected at the Huntingdon Hospital as a memorial to the late King. The Earl of Sandwich, who opened the new building recently, said that his late Majesty would have been pleased with this way of perpetuating his work, as no one devoted more time, care and attention to the sick poor than King Edward.

The new dispensary of the Royal Victoria Hospital for Consumption in Lady Lawson Street, Edinburgh, was opened last Saturday by Lord Dunedin. Sir Alexander Christison presided. Lord Dunedin said that one of the first men who really woke up to the fact that tuberculosis could be combated by an organised campaign was Dr. Philip, of Edinburgh. A demonstration of the methods of the Edinburgh system for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis was given in the United Free Assembly Hall in the evening. Sir Malcolm Morris, who presided, referred to persons in the late stage of consumption, and said that it would be far safer if they would allow themselves to be separated from their friends and go to a home. If they did that, it would do more to check the spread of the disease than almost any other thing.

The work of extension of the nurses' home at the Holborn Union Infirmary, Highgate, has cost £4,802. It will be a very great boon.

The "Mary" Fund, in support of the rebuilding of the Children's Hospital, at Aberdeen, is arousing the interest of many Marys. One little girl has gathered together £21 7s. 4d., who has herself been a patient.

Mr. Henry Johnston has retired from the office of Secretary and Treasurer of the Western Infirmary, Glasgow, which he has held since the institution was opened thirty-eight years ago, and his son, Mr. John Matheson Johnston, C.A., has been appointed his successor. Mr. Johnston is naturally highly gratified that the directors have seen fit to appoint his son as his successor.

The committee of the Lister Memorial fund desire to draw attention to a suggestion which has been made in Glasgow that one of the wards of the Royal Infirmary in that city, where Lord Lister's antiseptic methods were first put into practice, should be preserved as a museum in which objects of interest associated with him and his discoveries might be exhibited. The committee have been informed that the directors of the infirmary have given their sanction to this scheme. Objects, personal or other, associated with Lister's life and work are earnestly desired, and will be gladly received by the Superintendent, Royal Infirmary, Glasgow.

LEGAL MATTERS.

MATRON'S LIBEL ACTION.

We recently reported that the libel action brought by Miss Elizabeth Birnie Couper, Matron of the Clackmannan Combination Infectious Diseases Hospital, Alloa, against Lord Balfour of Burleigh, had been adjourned for the decision of the Court, as to whether there was a case to go to the jury. The plaintiff complained that letters written by Lord Balfour to the County Clerk and the Local Government Board, reflected on her professional capacity. The defender pleaded privilege, and denied that the letters were susceptible of the meaning attached to them by the plaintiff; and that, there being no relevant case, the action should be dismissed.

Lord Dewar has now decided that the case must go to trial by jury. In giving judgment, in the Court of Sessions, Edinburgh, his lordship stated his opinion that the occasions upon which the letters were written were privileged; but the plaintiff had set forth on record facts and circumstances from which, if proved, a jury might reasonably infer malice, and she was entitled to have her case submitted to a jury. Although the defendant was privileged in placing facts as to mismanagement before the hospital authorities, he appeared to have gone beyond what was necessary for that purpose, in suggesting that the plaintiff was guilty of "criminal conduct," and of "fabricating" documents.

His lordship thought it possible that the jury might, if they thought proper, reasonably reach the conclusion that the statements made were so extravagant and reckless as to be inconsistent with the bonâ-fide discharge of public duty, and to infer malice. If it were true that the defendant knew after the first inquiry that there were no grounds in fact for imputing criminal conduct to the plaintiff, it was difficult to see what legitimate purpose could be served in repeating the charge and continuing to press it against her. Of course, the defendant might have quite a good explanation to offer, and the plaintiff might be entirely wrong in thinking that he was actuated by any malicious motive. His lordship expressed no opinion upon that—all he decided was that the pursuer in the circumstances was entitled to have her case laid before a jury.

It is expected that the case will be tried before the end of the year.

ACTION FOR DAMAGES.

In the King's Bench Division of the High Court, recently, before the Lord Chief Justice and a special jury, Miss Grace Mary Lloyd, formerly Assistant Matron at the Ladywell Workhouse, brought an action against the Bermondsey Guardians, in whose jurisdiction the workhouse is, to recover damages for alleged wrongful dismissal. The defence was (1) That, as the contract of the Guardians with the plaintiff was not under seal, the defendants, being a corporation, were not bound by it; (2) that they were entitled, under

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