

## SOME CORRESPONDENCE WITH DR. MUNDÉ.

In the June issue of this JOURNAL we called our readers' attention to an abuse becoming daily more prevalent, viz., the attempt to cloak voluntary ignorance or incapacity by oracular statements, concerning various gynæcological operations, in which the meritorious, successful and well-known work of other men was wilfully ignored or misrepresented. Although our editorial, as we explicitly stated, had its chief end in an application to the abuse in general, we took for our text some recent utterances of Dr. Paul F. Mundé of this city, who had already been taken to task before for a similar and particularly flagrant misuse of his opportunities.

On the day of publication of the editorial in question we ordered a marked copy containing it to be sent Dr. Mundé that he might see what we had written, at once and at first hand, and that he might have an immediate opportunity to reply to our specific charge, by way of defence or repudiation, either in our columns (which were open to him) or elsewhere. Dr. Mundé has not attempted, perhaps wisely, to make any reply—and we recall the fact that he finally evaded Dr. McLaren's specific and severe charges, to which we referred in our last editorial, after an attempted reply—but in lieu of this the following personal correspondence has taken place. We thank Dr. Mundé for giving us permission as he does in the last line of his last communication, to publish this private correspondence, because we feel that this growing habit among us, in its general application, is so shameful and so prejudicial to the advance of scientific knowledge, that it cannot be too strongly impressed upon the attention of the profession.

We do not think it necessary to make any comment upon this

correspondence; Dr. Mundé has unwittingly furnished it himself in abundance. We append it *verbatim* and *seriatim*.

Our first communication from Dr. Mundé consisted of the following, without name or address and written upon both sides of his visiting card:

"Many thanks for the gentlemanly, polite and able editorial in June No. of the AM. OB. & GYN. JOUR., so kindly mailed me. The attack is quite uncalled for and is an evidence of stupidity & malignity, or of senility, and will be so accepted by all fair-minded persons. As such it fails in its object and excites only pity and contempt. For Dr. Thos. Addis Emmet I have always had the highest respect & veneration; for the writer of the editorial I have only contempt."

In reply to the above we sent the following letter, type-written:

THE AMERICAN GYNECOLOGICAL AND OBSTETRICAL JOURNAL,

1 Madison Avenue, New York, June 28th, 1899.

MY DEAR DOCTOR MUNDE,

I have been absent from town for the past four or five days but take this delayed opportunity to answer your foolish and rather undignified note. I say foolish, because calm reflection must have shown you that both your contempt and your love are equally valueless to me.

Speaking of contempt, I know nothing more contemptible than the trick of hiding one's voluntary ignorance and incapacity by ignoring or deliberately misrepresenting the splendid work of great men.

I take too serious a view of the value of scientific truth to be patient with those who pervert it or treat it lightly, even when this is done more in an indifferent and frivolous than in an intentional spirit.

Your self-love has evidently induced you to believe that you played a more important part in my Editorial than is really the case. Had your remarks been made under other circumstances and in other surroundings I agree with you that my "attack" upon you would have been "uncalled for"—nay more, it would have been an extravagant waste of good material. But unfortunately your offense—an outrageous one—has become so common an effect of small-minded ambition especially among the younger growth of gynecologists—and your indiscretion in choosing for your audience The Woman's Hospital Society, which has a certain authority owing to its connection with Dr. Emmet and others, was so great—that the matter assumed an importance essentially extraneous to your personal connection therewith.

Really, your personality affected me very little, though you served as my text as your offense merited. Nor was my Editorial merely in defence of Dr. Emmet's work. It was a much broader exposure of an unworthy practice and fitted and was intended to fit, in its application, the great and meritorious work of all gynecologists as well as the offenses of others similar to that for which I took you to task.

I hope this addendum will give you a clearer comprehension of the full spirit of my Editorial.

Very truly yours,

J. D. EMMET.

On the blank leaf of this letter Dr. Mundé wrote, without date or address, the following:

"Letter returned. No use for such trash. No further communications from this source desired; will be returned unopened. For some years J. Duncan Emmet has been known by those who enjoyed (sic) the privilege of his acquaintance to be a silly, conceited boy, whose only stock in trade was blowing his illustrious father's horn, who surely did not need it. It was fondly assumed that he might have inherited the instincts of a gentleman; but his editorial and this letter, which rival each other in asininity and impudence, show this to be a mistake. Hence nothing said or done by J. D. must be taken seriously, and has no value whatever in the eyes of sensible people. J. D. is a non-entity, whose honored name unfortunately may lead people who do not know him to attach weight to his utterances. J. D. is not worth the consideration or the contempt of a gentleman and a sensible man.

Any body can throw dirt, but it is easily brushed away, and the act of throwing casts odium only on the thrower.

Sap. sat.

P. F. M.

P. S. It is to be regretted that the friendship of a lifetime be broken for *no cause whatever* by a silly boy, who fancies he must defend his father's reputation, which no one dreams of assailing.

There is no objection to the publication of this *letter with my addendum*.

P. F. M."