

## CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editors of the JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE.

THE REVIEW OF *Sex Hygiene*.

DEAR SIRS,—My attention has been directed to the review of my little book *Sex Hygiene* which appeared in the October issue of your JOURNAL. As I consider the review to be inaccurate, unjust and misleading, I hope you will kindly grant me a little space so that I may defend the book against the statements made.

In the first place, no claim is made that the book is a scientific treatise—it is meant to serve a far more useful purpose than many scientific books. It is intended for those men and women who, while they may lack something in the nature of education, are still fortunate enough to possess the average amount of commonsense.

Your reviewer writes of the book as though it were written for the express purpose of frightening boys and girls, and makes no mention whatever of the fact that in the Preface by a well-known clergyman, and in the author's Foreword, the statement is made three times that *Sex Hygiene* is not a children's book, but one to be read by parents, upon whom rightly falls the duty of warning their offspring against sexual pitfalls. But if the book did frighten children to the extent of preventing them breaking the laws of health and indulging in health-impairing habits, surely no harm would be done. Fear of the Police and the Police Court, and the penalties connected therewith, has prevented many a child from breaking the laws of the country.

When your reviewer states that every practising psychiatrist knows only too well the harm that such books as mine do, he makes a statement which it is impossible to take seriously. Well, Sirs, in regard to this, one of the most distinguished physicians and psychiatrists living was the first person to read the MSS., and he praised my book most highly, and has since also done his best to make it well known. Another very distinguished physician and psychiatrist and university lecturer has also promised to do all he can to increase the sale of the book.

Has your reviewer any facts to support the statement that masturbation is more extensively practised by females than by males? A number of neurologists gave me their opinions on this matter, and only one went so far as to say that it was practised to as great an extent (not to a greater) by females as by males.

Nor do I state that the rather serious deterioration of the British race is chiefly due to masturbation—although had such a statement been made it would have contained a large measure of truth: the statements made in the book are to the effect that masturbation is the root cause of many of the nervous troubles and disorders of a most distressing nature, causing men and women to be robbed of much happiness, health and efficiency.

Many mothers, who are quite incapable of giving instruction in sexual matters to their children, are also opposed to such being given in schools, or elsewhere. If all mothers possessed the desired standard of wisdom and intelligence all would be well, but unfortunately such is not the case; and we have also to face the hard fact that some mothers will talk loosely about a lecture on sexual matters which they did not hear delivered; to guard "a lady medical practitioner" against such persons, it would be wise to also have present a "suitable lady of high character" when talking to girls about matters connected with sex.

The terms "male" and "female" are used in connection with botany in the main portion of the book. The idea of making use of the terms "gentleman flower" and "lady flower" instead of male and female came from yet another distinguished physician and psychiatrist, who, during the war, rendered valuable service in the treatment of disabled soldiers, and who was one of the number who read the printer's proofs. After doing so he wrote stating that when talking to young children on sex matters he thought it would be wise to avoid using the terms "male" and "female"; but as the suggestion was made too late to permit of it being inserted in the main portion of the book, it appears only in the appendix. Your reviewer makes no mention of this latter fact.

Since the book has been published two of our best known Bishops have written in praise of it.

Now, Sirs, when such highly qualified men as those mentioned give the book the highest praise, there appear to be good grounds for considering your reviewer's criticism as fallacious, and unworthy of serious consideration by the general public.

That some psychiatrists should look upon masturbation as being a symptom, rather than a cause of mental and physical ill-health is alarming to social reformers. I have had many opportunities for getting at the truth in this matter in this country, and in addition I was able to pursue my investigations from 1907 to 1914 in France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Belgium and Switzerland. Far from being a symptom, in my opinion masturbation is a very potent cause of ill-health. As I have already stated, the book is intended for parents generally, and if it is instrumental in bringing home to such parents the necessity of so training their offspring that entire avoidance of masturbation is the result, it will have served a very useful purpose, and have accomplished much good.

Expressing my regret for having trespassed to such an extent upon your valuable space,

I am, etc.,

(Sgd.) OLIVER W. LINCOLN.

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#### OBITUARY.

ALFRED BOWLES, M.R.C.S.Eng., L.R.C.P.Lond.,  
Ordinary Member of the Association since 1900.

THE death of Dr. Alfred Bowles occurred on December 21, 1925, at Eastbourne, where he had resided for the past twenty-five years. He undertook the care of both certified and voluntary patients in his house, and his results were highly successful. Possessed of dogged perseverance and of a cheerful disposition, his influence over patients was of a high order. Before settling at Eastbourne he had been a medical assistant at Moorcroft House for twenty-two years, and his practical experience of mental disorders was considerable. His work was characterized by conscientious thoroughness, and he gained the respect of everyone connected with him. He had been a member of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association for many years, and he was also a member of the British Medical Association and of the Eastbourne Medical Society. Of a retiring nature, he did not, however, frequent medical meetings, but nevertheless by diligent reading kept himself abreast of all modern medical developments. Dr. Bowles was educated at University College and St. Mary's Hospital. In earlier years he possessed a good baritone voice. He also cultivated hobbies, and was fond of mechanical inventions. His health, both physical and mental, continued good until he developed a cold a day or two before he died. Though he had reached the ripe old age of 84 he was active in his professional work to the day of his death, which took place suddenly from heart failure. Besides his widow, he leaves a son who is married, and a wide circle of friends to mourn his death.

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J. F. S. HAY, M.B., C.M.Aberd., *J.P.*, Inspector-General of Mental Hospitals for New Zealand.

We regret to announce the death of Dr. Frank Hay, who had been a member of the Association since 1890, which occurred on board S.S. "Rauhine" on September 5, 1925, during the voyage from Southampton to Wellington.

He had been seriously ill for the last two years, but stuck to his duties as long as possible, and left for home to recuperate early in July of last year. He was, however, not benefited in health by the trip, and his strength gradually faded on the voyage home, and he passed away as stated above.

Born at Lucknow, India, in 1867, the late Dr. Hay was educated privately at Blenheim House, Wimbledon, and Aberdeen University. He obtained his M.B. and C.M. degrees in 1890, and was appointed Assistant Medical Officer at the Murray Royal Asylum, Perth, in 1890, a position which he held until 1896. He came to New Zealand in 1897, and occupied the position of Physician Superintendent of the Ashburn Hall (Private) Mental Hospital from 1897 until 1904. He was appointed Deputy-Inspector-General of Mental Hospitals in 1904, and held the