Editorial.

Since our last issue we have received with regret the resignation of our Medical Editor, Dr. B. T. Parsons-Smith, to whom the thanks of the Executive Committee and of all our readers are due. For a while we have had to continue as best we could, but we are now fortunate in having secured the services of Dr. Leopold Mandel, who has kindly consented to become the new Medical Editor, and to whom we must offer our congratulations and extend a hand of welcome.

The various Courses arranged by the Fellowship of Medicine are continuing with success and there seems every reason to think that the demand for this type of instruction is in no way diminishing. In respect of certain new Courses which have been arranged since the last issue of the Journal, we should like here to call attention to three in particular. The week-end demonstrations in Clinical Surgery to be given at the Royal Albert Dock Hospital are a recrudescence of a Course which was given in February last, and for which there appears to be a certain demand. Further reference to this will be found in the usual column. The Course in Physical Medicine at the London Light and Electrical Clinic is an entirely new departure. We have for some time been in touch with Sir Leonard Hill, whose researches on the valuable effects of Ultra-Violet Radiation as a therapeutic measure are well known, and he and the honorary physicians working under his direction at the Clinic have kindly consented to give an evening series of lecture-demonstrations during May. It is to be hoped that they will meet with the success that they undoubtedly deserve and that the Staff will be encouraged to continue them in the future. The third of the new arrangements to which we desire to call attention is Dr. Knyvett Gordon’s series of epidiascope and laboratory demonstrations in Clinical Pathology. Dr. Knyvett Gordon is an old friend of the Fellowship of Medicine and needs no introduction. It will be remembered that formerly his demonstrations were given as part of the M.R.C.P. Courses. The Committee felt that the syllabus of the latter was perhaps unduly crowded and that it would be better to separate Dr. Gordon’s teaching from the general routine and to present it as a separate item. We are always indebted to him for his willing co-operation and his readiness to fall in with any details that we have to suggest; it is with his approval that we have made the above-mentioned alteration and we are, as ever, grateful to him for his assistance.

We would particularly call the attention of our readers to the alteration in the date of the Course to be held at the Miller General Hospital, which had been provisionally arranged for July. In view of the Centenary celebrations of the British Medical Association it was decided to postpone it until later in the year and arrangements have been made for the Course to be held during the latter part of October. It will be remembered that the last Course at the Hospital was the first regular one given there, and like many of our “experiments” it proved a success and was well attended.
There is one point upon which we desire particularly to enlist the sympathy and help of our readers. A great deal of entirely unnecessary and preventable trouble and extra work has frequently been occasioned by the unwillingness or inability of certain post-graduates to send in their names for Courses on or before the date specified on the schedule. We have no wish to grumble at our readers, but we do hope that they will take the hint to pay more attention in future to this request. It is difficult for those outside the executive machinery to realize what a vast amount of trouble, expense and general disorganization inevitably results from failure to observe this perfectly simple rule. Everyone knows how detrimental it is to the hospital concerned, to the Fellowship of Medicine, and to post-graduate work generally, to have an advertised Course cancelled at the last moment. That it has been necessary to take this step has been very frequently if not entirely due to the cause above mentioned, and the Executive Committee have felt that it is, to say the least, discouraging that they should be blamed for cancellation of Courses in circumstances such as those just alluded to, when in reality the fault is not theirs. We do not wish to labour this point unduly, but we do beg our readers to bear in mind what we have said on this matter and to take our grumble in good part.

The Centenary of the British Medical Association is to be held in London this year at the end of July. Doubtless we shall have more to say on this subject in a later issue, but it is as well perhaps to remind our readers that this gathering will be one of the most historical and impressive collections of members of the medical profession which London will have seen for many years. As yet the published details in regard to the programme are but provisional, but there is no doubt that the spectacle of a large gathering of medical celebrities from all parts of the world within the capital of the Empire will be one which will not readily be forgotten.

The Fellowship of Medicine is extremely fortunate in having had an offer from Professor Arthur J. Hall (Emeritus Professor of Medicine of the University of Sheffield) to give three lectures on Epidemic Encephalitis during the month of June. It will be remembered that Professor Hall was the first physician in the country to publish descriptions of this disease towards the end of the War, when it first descended upon us as a new and unrecognized malady with such disastrous results. Since the onset of the original epidemic in 1918, we have had time to study a large number of cases not only in the early or acute stage, but also in the later or post-encephalitic stage which is characterized by such protean and distressing manifestations. Professor Hall's recent observations on the oculo-gyric crises in association with lethargic encephalitis and the important bearing which this has upon the whole question of the movements of the eyes under different conditions are of the utmost interest and importance, and constitute one of the most striking pieces of clinical observation that have been made in the neurological field. The full details of this series are now ready and will be published both in the Journal and elsewhere, and we very much hope that Professor Hall will have an audience worthy of his efforts.

We have had a good deal to say on the subject of post-graduate teaching in connection with our own efforts as an educational body. This leads us naturally on to the consideration of medical education in general, whether post-graduate or undergraduate. A few weeks ago there appeared in the British Medical Journal a remarkable and admirably expressed article by Dr. McMoran Wilson, Dean of St. Mary's Hospital
Medical School, entitled "The Student in Irons." To any of our readers who have not seen this we commend it without hesitation as a dissertation which should be received with attention and serious consideration by all medical men. Dr. Wilson points out, what has for some years been in the minds of all those interested in the education of the future practitioner, the failure of our present system to achieve that which of all things we should regard as most essential, namely the teaching of our students to think for themselves. It is interesting to review the developments of medicine and surgery in the last half-century, especially from the point of view of their bearing upon educational questions. There is hardly a teacher in any medical school who does not realize the justice of the complaint that the students' curriculum at the present day is overcrowded. This is, to say the least of it, no exaggeration; indeed, it is difficult to see how our students can get through their allotted span to-day without suffering from a good deal of mental indigestion. It is, of course, much easier to criticize than to find remedies for what is wrong. There is admittedly much that can be eliminated from the curriculum. In all probability the arrangement of the preliminary subjects could be simplified, and the time devoted to anatomy might be considerably curtailed with no great disadvantage.

We note with considerable interest the leading article in the Lancet of April 23, dealing with the subject of "Tuberculosis and Medical Education." Herein it is pointed out that although consumption still demands its annual toll of at least 40,000 victims in this country alone, it is still possible for a medical student to go through his hospital course to his final qualifying examinations without ever having seen and handled a case of phthisis. We look forward with interest to the correspondence which will undoubtedly follow the publication of such a leader. This is a matter of national importance upon which all of the medical profession, whether undergraduate or post-graduate, and the great body of lay people alike, must take to heart. We have referred to this more particularly in connection with under-graduates, but our post-graduate readers will realize that it concerns them equally. It is to be hoped for the sake of all concerned that the alterations in the general scheme of medical teaching may in the near future undergo that constructive change which is so sorely needed.