sufficiently to assist his father in his business, and later returned to London to work with an uncle. He suddenly left this relation and travelled to several towns in the north of England; he retained a faint recollection of his wandering, and was at length found lying by the roadside in an exhausted state. He was sent back to his relative, but shortly after left and walked into the country, and was found sitting by a straw rick he had set on fire. He was reported to have gone through the stereotyped motion of striking matches for some hours after arrest. A further inquiry into his history showed that he had attempted suicide by drowning when 11 years old, later by jumping out of a train, and still later by taking poison and cutting his wrist. He had been depressed for a considerable period before the incendiarism; he admitted excessive masturbation. He felt he was unworthy to live and had withdrawn himself from relations and friends in consequence. He appeared to have lost all family affection, he lacked any capacity for sustained effort, was preoccupied, hallucinated, suffered from sleeplessness, and *flexibilitas cerea* was present. He stated that he had been thinking of doing something wrong since his last attempt at suicide, as he considered he deserved punishment for his bad sex habits, and selected arson as he thought the penalty would be severe and probably a life sentence. He was dealt with at court as insane.

A concluding observation. The remissions which occur in this disorder are of medico-legal importance, and if an accused person has made an apparent recovery from an attack, the subsequent commission of a crime may be the first indication of a relapse. The condition of the accused may not justify evidence of insanity then, but the medical witness may properly testify that the crime may be due to undeveloped mental disorder.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT FUND CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—It has been the practice of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund for many years to give a Christmas gift to each annuitant and some of the most necessitous of the grantees.

Both the annuitants, who are over 60 years of age, and the grantees are deprived of those little amenities of life which the more fortunate of us enjoy.

Many of our beneficiaries are alone in the world as their friends and relations have passed over and consequently they will not receive any gift or extra comfort this Christmas.

Last year the Fund gave to each 30s., this meant an expenditure of £500. Many readers will wish that the recipients of this gift in former years should not be deprived of it this year.

But unless I am favoured by a generous response to this appeal our funds will not allow of this gracious and friendly act.

Will every reader of this letter please consider if he or she cannot send to the Honorary Treasurer, Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, 11, Chandos Street, London, W.1, a Christmas donation?

I shall be grateful whether the donation be large or small.

Yours faithfully,
(signed) THOMAS BARLOW,
President.

POST-GRADUATE NEWS.

It is not possible to arrange for more than three Special Courses in December by reason of the Christmas vacation, and these have been fixed to take place December 2 to December 14. Under the direction of Dr. Eric Pritchard a course will be held at the Infants Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W.