

OFF DUTY

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The state medical meeting in Savannah early in May was a pleasant one and well attended by Columbus doctors and their wives. One of the memorable stories that we brought home with us has to do, again, with medicine in general and the frustrations attendant on its existence in the present-day social scheme of things. Dr. Lea Wilds of the Medical College at Augusta had a carefully and painstakingly prepared scientific exhibit ready to show at the meeting. He made arrangements with a trucking company to pick this up in Augusta on Thursday to be delivered at least by Saturday in Savannah, so that it could be set up in time for the opening meetings on Sunday.

The truck did not appear to pick up the exhibit boxes until Friday morning, but Dr. Wilds was assured that, since the distance was so small, his exhibit would be in Savannah by Saturday.

On Sunday the boxes were still not to be found. After much long-distance phone calling, Dr. Wilds was able to locate the president of the trucking company in another state, who expressed his profound regrets and stated that the truck must have gotten to Savannah after 5:00 p.m. on Friday. He was very sorry, he said, but his hands were tied; even if Dr. Wilds could locate the truck and take his own crew of doctors to help unload it, this could not be allowed because of the union rule that nothing can be unloaded between 5:00 p.m. Friday and 9:00 a.m. Monday.

This upset Dr. Wilds, and he proceeded to tell the truck company president what he could do with his truck and the union. As it turned out, however, at least some of his frustration was unnecessary, because the truck actually wasn't in Savannah, but had gone to Atlanta by mistake, and was waiting there for Monday's unloading.

Little episodes like these somehow cheer us up and give us courage to face the future in a socialized medical practice. It might be most soul-satisfying, when disturbed on some future Saturday of rest by an irate and suffering trucking official, to be able to answer regretfully that our union will not permit us to practice again until 9:00 a.m. Monday.