

different colours, and two days after the coloured papers had been shown to her, on coming into a room, the colour of which was crimson, she observed that it was red. She also observed some pictures hanging on the red wall of the room in which she was sitting, distinguishing several small figures in them, but not knowing what they represented, and admiring the gilt frames. On the same day, she walked round the pond in the centre of St. James's-square, and was pleased with the glistening of the sun's rays on the water, as well as with the blue sky and green shrubs, the colours of which she named correctly.

It may be here observed, that she had yet acquired by the use of her sight but very little knowledge of any forms, and was unable to apply the information gained by this new sense, and to compare it with what she had been accustomed to acquire by her sense of touch. When, therefore, the experiment was made of giving her a silver pencil case and a large key to examine with her hands, she discriminated and knew each distinctly; but when they were placed on the table, side by side, though she distinguished each with her eye, yet she could not tell which was the pencil case and which was the key.

Nothing farther occurred in the history of this lady's case worthy of notice, till the twenty-fifth day after the operation. On that day she drove in a carriage for an hour in the Regent's Park, and, on her way there, seemed more amused than usual, and asked more questions about the objects surrounding her, such as, "What is that?" it is a soldier, she was answered; "and that, see! see!" these were candles of various colours, at a tallow chandler's window. "Who is that, that has passed us just now?" it was a person on horseback: "but what is that on the pavement, red?" it was some ladies who wore red shawls. On going into the Park, she was asked what she saw particularly, or if she could guess what any of the objects were. "Oh yes," she replied, "there is the sky, that is the grass; yonder is water, and two white things;" which were two swans. On coming home along Piccadilly, the jewellers' shops seemed to surprise her much, and her expressions made those around her laugh heartily.

From this period, till the time of her leaving London on the 31st of March, being forty-two days after the operation, she continued almost daily to gain more information of the visible world, but she had yet much to learn. She had acquired a pretty accurate notion of colours, and their different shades and names; and when she came to pay me a farewell visit, she then wore a gown, the first of her own choice, with the

light purple colour of which she seemed highly gratified, as well as with her cap, which was ornamented with red ribbons. She had not yet acquired anything like an accurate knowledge of distance or of forms, and up to this period she continued to be very much confused with every object at which she looked. Neither was she yet able, without considerable difficulty and numerous fruitless trials, to direct her eye to an object; so that when she attempted to look at anything, she turned her head in various directions, until her eye caught the object of which it was in search. She still entertained, however, the same hope which she expressed soon after the operation, that when she got home her knowledge of external things would be more accurate and intelligible, and that when she came to look at those objects which had been so long familiar to her touch, the confusion which the multiplicity of external objects now caused, would, in a great measure, subside.

May 1826.

GUY'S DINNER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—THE LANCET of the 17th ult. contains some remarks on the proceedings which took place at the late Anniversary Dinner of the gentlemen educated at Guy's Hospital, and the conduct which I thought proper to pursue on that occasion is therein strongly censured. But as it is stated that your account of the circumstances was only obtained "through indirect channels," the whole affair was, I believe, entirely misrepresented, and therefore I trust you will give insertion to the following brief statement of facts:—

Several toasts had been drunk, when the Chairman (Dr. Bright) announced the "Royal College of Surgeons." Upon this I rose from my seat and respectfully inquired—I repeat, *respectfully* inquired, whether it was intended to toast the Council of the College of Surgeons *exclusively*; or whether it was to be understood as drinking the healths of the members at large? The phrase "Royal College of Surgeons" was, to me, so equivocal, that I really did not comprehend its meaning. I could scarcely conceive that the Council of the College of Surgeons, *exclusively*, would be toasted in an assembly consisting, for the most part, of its degraded and insulted members, and therefore it was with a desire of obtaining information that I proposed the question. I have yet to learn that I was out of order in putting the question, as it was uttered without a single offensive remark. But no

sooner had I put the question, and indeed I had not concluded it, when "a most disgraceful scene of riot and confusion" was created by some two or three, who, I should almost be inclined to suppose, were "hired to bawl" on the occasion. So exceedingly obstreperous were these *gentlemen* in their vociferations, that a considerable time elapsed before the Chairman could command silence; this being at length obtained, he observed, that the toast certainly did refer to the College of Surgeons, as a *corporate* body, and he then proceeded to argue on the propriety of giving the toast. This was perfectly unnecessary, because I had offered no objections, and, as I before remarked, had merely put a plain question, without indulging in any comment. Neither was it my intention to make any further observations, for I had purposed, on receiving a reply from the Chairman as to the Council being the subject of the toast, that I would sit down and invert my glass, or that I would otherwise leave the room, because I would not, nor will not, join in any mark of respect towards a body of men for whom, in their corporate capacity, I entertain the *strongest possible feeling of contempt*. The Chairman had concluded his remarks (to which, as I was bound in common politeness, I stood up for the purpose of listening) and I was about to resume my seat, when I was assailed with the same discordant yells that had been made on my proposing the question. It was at this period that a somewhat angry observation escaped me; I said that I had listened with submission to the Chair, but that "I was not to be put down by the bawlings of some two or three toad-eaters." I am free to confess that I was annoyed, and uttered this expression in anger, but it is one for which I am by no means sorry at having used, for I knew my men, and it was an epithet well deserved and well applied.

At this period I left the room *of my own accord*; what occurred subsequently I know not. I may remark, Sir, in conclusion, that in attending this dinner and proposing the question to the Chairman, I was actuated by no other feeling than that arising from a sense of duty. I have ever received from the Surgeons of Guy's Hospital the most marked attention, and I feel indebted to them for the many opportunities which they have afforded me of effectually pursuing my clinical studies, and I should gladly have seen them enlisted in that cause which, being founded on truth and justice, must ultimately prevail, when each man will stand or fall on his own merits or demerits.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

JAMES LAMBERT.

Walworth, March 4th.

HYDROCYANIC ACID IN DYSPEPSIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If it be true that "it is the duty of every man to endeavour that something may be added by his own industry to the hereditary aggregate of knowledge and happiness;" it is equally so, "that no man, who is conscious of having performed this duty, however small the labour, willingly quits opinions favourable to himself." It is this natural feeling which induces me to trouble you with a few remarks on some expressions contained in a letter from Dr. Elliotson, published in Number 182 of THE LANCET. On the general matter of that letter, I should have been silent; for I have no desire to break a lance in the field of controversy with Dr. Elliotson, or with any other of my professional brethren; but it is not easy for an individual, however peaceable, to remain passive on reading in a journal of such extensive circulation as THE LANCET, such a sentence as the following: "I did not notice Dr. Thomson's call, because his claim was *perfectly ludicrous*." In reply to this aspersion, I mean merely to present a plain statement of the facts upon which my claim is founded. At the time that claim was set up, I was as ignorant as Dr. Elliotson that Sprengel, Hufeland, Haller, and others, had prescribed hydrocyanic acid as a remedy in dyspepsia.

In Dr. Elliotson's work on the Efficacy of the Hydrocyanic (or Prussic) Acid in Affections of the Stomach, which appeared in 1820, the author acknowledges that he did not employ the Prussic acid, until after he had read Dr. Granville's Treatise on the internal use of the Hydrocyanic Acid; and he quotes from that work, a case which had suggested to me the idea of prescribing the hydrocyanic acid in affections of the stomach. Although I might have conceived that Dr. Elliotson had not given the importance to my observation on the effect of the acid in that case, which it merits, yet I should not have blamed him on this account; but, in noticing the case, to use his own language, as an instance of "a heat of the tongue cured by the acid," he suppressed the following reasoning upon the *modus operandi* of the remedy, which accompanied the case: "As the state of the stomach affects the tongue by sympathy, perhaps the unexpected effect of the acid in this instance, may be ascribed to its relieving the morbid irritability of the surface of the stomach, thereby enabling the juices of the organ to be more slowly secreted, and of a more healthy character. We know that opium, and some other narcotics, produce temporary re-