

tion from some uncivilized region had afforded officers for the guardianship of this district; and if the poor are fed and relieved on a principle similar to that on which their medical men are remunerated, there is much to be lamented.

As a matter of £ s. d., of course the six shillings filched from my fee cannot be of much import; but this attempt to deprive a labourer of a portion of his hire savours too much of meanness, of cunning, and dishonesty, to remain unnoticed.

Sir, I am proud of my profession as a science, and no less jealous of its honour, though, as a means of livelihood, my feelings would not be so warm in its favour; and it is with extreme regret that I read constantly in your pages of medical men being exposed to the insults and caprice of others, often too uneducated to appreciate the value of their services, or deport themselves with common politeness towards them; and I feel ashamed to witness my professional brethren submitting to these indignities. Settled in a neighbourhood remarkable for the unanimity and peaceful disposition of those medical men who have for many years past performed their arduous duties in it, I have happily escaped the many disagreeables to which most of us are exposed—even those who have attained a high grade of professional distinction. I revert to my late and much-lamented friend, Mr. Morton, who not a week before his death expressed to me his intention of retiring, in disgust, not only from the hospital, but from the profession altogether; so that I may perhaps congratulate myself on having swallowed fewer bitter pills than my share; but I tremble at the want of decision and independence shown by many of those whose duty it is to support the honour and dignity of their calling.—I am, Sir, your obliged and obedient servant,

BENJAMIN T. HODGE.

Sidmouth, Nov. 26, 1849.

TREATMENT OF UNHEALTHY INFLAMMATIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Not happening to have seen your number for Saturday, the 10th inst., until the present moment, I shall be excused, I hope, for my silence under the notice with which Mr. Langley has honoured my poor attempts in the cause of legitimate medicine. I shall endeavour, therefore, at this late day, to offer some account of my stewardship in the interests of the inflammations, and thereby to respond to the citation of Mr. Langley.

Mr. Langley calls upon me to satisfy him as to the sense in which I would be understood to employ the term “unhealthy” in connexion with inflammation. I hoped I had made myself intelligible, at the outset of my essay, upon the signification which I desired to associate with that expression. By an “unhealthy inflammation” I have sought to characterize an *asthenic* form of inflammation, developed either in the system at large, or in individual organs, which results directly from the presence of a morbid poison in the blood. The subjects of this unhealthy inflammation may be classed in two categories.

Firstly, in relation to the play of *constitutional* morbid poisons upon the frame, whether of hereditary or acquired introduction—such are the *various cachexiæ*, the strumous, syphilitic, cancerous, and the like.

Secondly, in relation to that of *accidental* morbid poisons upon the frame—as, for instance, the poisons of fever, exanthemata, &c.

I need scarcely inform Mr. Langley that the poisons giving rise to these several conditions have their appointed time to remain latent, and the same wherein to break forth. That the strumous and cancerous constitutions may, under favourable circumstances, subsist for years without developing their respective and specific inflammations, yet are the germs of those inflammations (if inflammations they must be called) in silent existence in the blood the while.* Or, on the other hand, under unfavourable circumstances, they may discover some weak and vulnerable point, of which the one or the other of those relentless diseases may take local possession. I am speaking now of the *cachexiæ*. The poisons of fever and of the exanthemata are governed by less fickle laws, and after stated periods of incubation, burst forth into open rebellion—in other words, into their respective inflammations.

Such is an imperfect sketch of the two distinctive classes of inflammation which I have ventured to denominate *unhealthy*. And I beg to say, in reply to Mr. Langley's query, that I do

* Mr. Langley will, perhaps, cite me to *prove* this position, which I may as well, therefore, at once confess does not admit of demonstration in the present state of science; but neither do many other doctrines which we are content to accept upon trust. That *scrofula* is indebted for its existence to the presence of a poison in the blood has been lately very ably advanced by Dr. Madden, of Torquay—vide the excellent review of his work in the last two numbers of the British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review.

“use the term” *unhealthy* “in contradistinction to *healthy* inflammation,” and that this distinction is authorized by all that we encounter in pathology; that it has a substantive existence in nature, and, what I hope will be still more satisfactory to Mr. Langley, that it is not indebted for its creation to so obscure an author of its existence as myself.

Mr. Langley diverts himself (and at my expense, as he supposes) with the novelty and inconsistency of the idea of an “unhealthy inflammation;” upon the grounds, forsooth, that no inflammation can be healthy, inflammation being in itself a departure from the rules of health. Now, let me ask Mr. Langley if he has not himself been accustomed to descant, in his intercourse with his patients, upon the *healthiness* and the *unhealthiness* of their sores? Was he never caught himself in the act of saying—This is a *healthy-looking* sore?—that ulcer has an *unhealthy* character? And if an ulcer (itself an expression of disease) can admit of the epithets *healthy* and *unhealthy*, why not, if you please, Mr. Langley, on the same principle, an inflammation?

If Mr. Langley will do me the favour to turn to his *books*, (for which, from his citations of Latin, and abuse of Dr. Cullen, he has evidently a sneaking regard,) and quit, for a moment, the stronghold of his “thirty years' practice and experience,” he will discover that an “healthy inflammation” is an idea which has been sanctified by many practical and learned writers. Indeed, Mr. Langley himself recognises one form of such condition, and, by this very admission, invites me to charge him home with the maxim, *verum in uno, verum in omni*.

Mr. Langley has illustrated the absurdity of my conceptions by a remarkable effort of the imagination, which, however, would have excited still deeper admiration had it but been clothed in *better English*. “I must first bring my mind,” says he, “to the absurd conclusion, that an engine of inferior power, and hose of smaller calibre, and fluid of a less extinguishing character than water, should be used, applied to subdue the flame of a burning edifice in Little France or Smithfield, to that used for the same purpose to a mansion in St. James's-square.” But Mr. Langley, whilst constructing this striking metaphor, has lost sight of the fundamental fact in my argument, that the flame burns *very differently* in the edifice of Little France and Smithfield, on the one hand, and in the mansion in St. James's-square, on the other. The fire is compounded of totally opposite elements in the two localities. In the one, if unstayed, it tends to the destruction of all the materials with which it comes in contact; in the other, it is in operation as a consuming agent—at least, to speak of it by *comparison*. The engine, and the hose, and the extinguishing material which are called for to arrest the fire in the one case, would batter down the feeble workmanship in the other, and afford to the looker-on the spectacle of edifice and fire disappearing together. In conclusion, although I can scarcely plume myself upon more than a third of your correspondent's thirty years' “practice and experience,” yet do I not forget what one of Mr. Langley's Latin friends has put on record, that “*Ars medica tota est in observationibus*.”

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

W. BROKE GALLWEY.

Brompton Barracks, Kent, Nov. 21, 1849.

CHELTENHAM BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Whatever is done by men in their public capacity is of course fair mark for public opinion, and I never complain of any expression of that opinion upon that portion of my conduct which is legitimately subject to such canvass; but I must admit a preference for a fair and impartial criticism to one conveyed in a language and a style betokening manifest prejudiced hostility. In no other light than the latter can I regard the remarks, in your journal of Saturday last, on a resolution which I had the honour to propose at the meeting of the board of guardians of this union on the 8th inst.

It is not to attempt to mollify your anger, or deprecate your abuse, that I now write. These hurt not nor annoy me. Other parties have been equally lavish; and all to no purpose. To these, in a cause which has right, justice, and principle on its side, I am indifferent; but I am anxious to correct error, and to provide that your strictures should be directed to the real merits of the case. That they have not been so is evident. My resolution ran as follows:—

“That this board is of opinion that the system of medical relief at present in operation is susceptible of considerable amendment; and this board resolves, on account of circumstances recently brought to its notice, that at the general

election of medical officers in March next, no gentleman holding any hospital appointment shall be eligible as a union medical officer."

What are the "circumstances" alluded to? Why, in taking a resolution as a thesis on which to found a violent and abusive attack upon its proposer, seconder, and supporters, did you omit that part of it which referred to the groundwork on which it was based? To reply to the first question would occupy more space than you would like to spare, and more time than I have at disposal just now. Suffice it to say, they are fully before the public here; and that the opinions of the majority of those best able to judge are with me. To the second question, I leave you to reply, merely stating, *en passant*, that I have my opinion on the matter.

With the terms you apply to the three parties to the resolution above referred to, I am not disposed to quarrel. It is perhaps that I have yet to learn that English farmers are a set of "jolterheads;" that English tradesmen are an "ignorant" body of men, with "brains as thick as their own wares;" and that everything emanating from any man not crowned with grey hairs must necessarily partake of folly, or it may be, something worse; and that the "intelligent town guardians" number amongst them those only who favour *THE LANCET* and its *protégés*. At all events we will not discuss this question now. All I wish to lay claim to for myself is a fair modicum of common sense; and while I claim no more than this for those who act with me, I cannot rest satisfied with a concession of less.

Before fulminating your editorial wrath, I think it would have been as well if you had deigned to have read the remarks by which the objectionable resolution was introduced. Had you done so, you may have expressed yourself somewhat differently.

But now we come to neutral ground. On the first part of the resolution we are agreed. I am not a whit less anxious than yourself that those members of the medical profession who hold union appointments may be properly remunerated, so that due care and attention to the poor may be guaranteed. But I maintain that the abuse of a trust reposed in their hands—the grinding down a druggist, by a contract for the supply of medicines, "irrespective of the numbers of prescriptions sent," at a sum so low as to render it impossible for medicines of genuine or proper quality to be supplied—are not the proper means by which to secure such adequate remuneration; but that the end would be better answered by a straightforward statement that the remuneration is insufficient; and that unless it is increased, they cannot conscientiously discharge the duties required of them.

I trust to your sense of fairness and candour for the insertion of this reply to an attack, founded, I cannot but think, on an ignorance of the real circumstances of the case, or on a perversion, perhaps, of the facts, by your "Cheltenham Correspondent."—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Cheltenham, Nov. 22, 1849.

FRED. BINCKES.

* * We can answer the question of Mr. Binckes in a moment. That portion of the resolution that he has quoted was not forwarded to us in the letter which we received on the subject.—Ed. L.

THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND DR. RAMADGE.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—It is perfectly true that Dr. Ramadge did not receive any of the cholera circulars issued by the College of Physicians. The real cause of this treatment is the fact of his having written a letter, which appeared in your journal more than twenty years ago, descriptive of the incompetency of the examiners of apothecaries' shops, as at that time conducted by the censors of the College of Physicians and wardens of the Society of Apothecaries. In proof of what I state, I send you a copy of a letter sent to Dr. Ramadge, and signed by the registrar of the College. I may state, that to the purport of the letter he paid no attention.

College of Physicians, April 3rd, 1829.

SIR,—The report of the committee of the censors of the last three years having been this day read at the board of censors, by which it appears that every member of that committee, which was appointed to take into consideration "a letter received from the Apothecaries' Company," has disavowed the authorship of a paper published in *THE LANCET*, January 31, 1829, with the exception of yourself. I am desired by the censors to request that you will attend in your place at the next comitia majora, to be held on the 13th of this month, in

order that you may have an opportunity of hearing that report, lest any inference may be unfairly drawn from your silence.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

To Dr. Ramadge.

WM. MACMICHAEL, Registrar.

Another letter, which appeared in *THE LANCET* of August 28, 1847, ought sufficiently to have satisfied your correspondent that Dr. Ramadge was no advocate of an unqualified practitioner. As "A Licentiate" has perhaps never seen that letter, a perusal of it would probably set his mind at rest upon this point.

In 1820, when Dr. Ramadge first became a member of the College of Physicians, the standard of medical education was very low. Desirous to obtain better information than this country afforded, he attended the lectures of the most eminent men on the Continent. Finding that there were greater facilities in the sister kingdom for the prosecution of anatomical studies, he graduated there in arts as well as in medicine. By pursuing this course he was entitled to a degree, *ad eundem*, at Oxford, and after the usual examination at the College of Physicians in London, he became a fellow of that body. It was the manifest incompleteness of that system of medical education, which, until the last few years, existed both at Oxford and Cambridge, combined with the superficial examination at the College of Physicians, that led Dr. Ramadge to hold in no high estimation those to whom these matters were confided. In what favourable light could he view an English university conferring degrees which privileged the possessors to a monopoly of medical appointments? Could he think highly of the course of anatomical instruction at Oxford, when the whole course of lectures was not sufficient to teach any one, properly, the bones of the human body? Did he hear that dissections were carried on there? No. Did he see any museum of morbid anatomy there, save in a little attic, a small collection, unworthy to be dignified by the name of museum? No. The truth is, there were no professors for half the useful branches of medical knowledge. What an absurd preliminary to the taking of a degree of medicine is it, to be told, as Dr. Ramadge was, by the Vice-Principal of the Hall in which his name was entered, to call on his (the Vice-Principal's) wife, and get a novel, or some pleasant book, in order that he might while away the hour which should have been allotted to disputation! Having been accompanied by the beadle and the above-named reverend gentleman to the place of his confinement, he was then shut up alone without any theme to dispute upon. The sun shining strongly, and not relishing this restraint, he succeeded in opening the door of the Disputation Hall, and sauntered leisurely in front of the building, until he heard, as he supposed, the approaching footsteps of the beadle. Who could go through this ordeal without holding it in contempt? However, this qualified Dr. Ramadge to practise as a physician over the whole of England, with the exception of London and its environs.

To exercise his profession in this great metropolis, it was necessary that Dr. Ramadge should present himself before the College of Physicians for examination; this he did in the year already mentioned. I may just observe, *en passant*, that the College, which was then situated in the vicinity of Newgate-market, is now converted into butchers' shambles.

At the time alluded to there were no clinical lectures at any of our hospitals; no lectures on medical jurisprudence, nor on morbid anatomy.

In order to enable those interested in the matter to form a just idea of the London College of Physicians, and to show how admirably fitted they were, in times gone by, as a governing body, to direct the medical profession, and to superintend the several departments, where medicine was in any way involved, I shall present a few of their misdeeds—*Ex uno disce omnes*.

We now come to what may be fairly considered the main-spring of the dreadful wrath of the College (Achilles's wrath was nothing to it) against Dr. Ramadge.

The two wardens of the Society of Apothecaries, with whom he was associated in office as inspector, were aged and infirm, and seemed almost unable to support themselves without leaning against something, whilst standing in the Apothecaries' shops during the inspection. One of them, whose legs were much swollen, was at last unable to descend from the coach, and, indeed, at the latter part of this burlesque, they both remained in the coaches outside, whilst the censors went into the shop. In fact, the wardens took no active part whatever in the matter. One, indeed, owned afterwards, at the College dinner, that he had neither taste nor smell.

It was a source of no inconsiderable annoyance to respectable practitioners, to see no less than seven or eight persons enter their shops *en masse*, leaving their neighbours to put