

seized with it at that period ever recovers. By degrees, however, after a duration of greater or less extent, the virulence of the disease gradually becomes mitigated of its own accord; and at that period individual's so attacked recover, although in a small proportion. At length the disorder wears itself out, ceasing to exist altogether. And the above changes take place independently of medicine and of medical men.

Your obedient servant,

W. HOWISON, M.D

Edinburgh, 9, Nicholson-square,

#### CRANIOLOGY—ARMY MEDICAL ABUSES, &c.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—For a considerable length of time I have been in the habit of taking your valuable publication; and in the Number for January 19, 1833, under the head of the *Westminster Medical Society*, when discussing the science of phrenology, I find the chairman, Dr. Copland, alluding to the ancientness of craniology, and mentioning having seen a book published more than two hundred years back upon that subject, of which he has not been able to see another copy. I have a copy of a work published upon the same subject, and much about the same time, and should feel obliged by your informing me whether it be the one the chairman alludes to. The title-page I have copied here.

"De Humana Physiognomonia, Joannis Baptistæ, Portæ Neapolitani. Libri IV.

"Qui ab extimis, quæ in hominum corporibus conspicuntur signis, ita eorum naturas, mores et consilia (egregis ad vivum expressis leonibus) demonstrant, ut intimos animi recessus penetrare videantur.

"Omnibus omnium ordinum studiosis lectu utilem maxime jucundum.

"Editio postrema, priori correctior Cum duplici Rerum et Verborum Indice longe locupletissimo.

"Francofurti, Apud Nicolai Hoffmannum, impensis Laredum Jacobi Fischeri.

"Anno MDCXVIII."

Knowing how open your Journal is to the correction of abuses, I think a few pages might be beneficially dedicated to the abuses in the army medical department, showing how the best appointments are distributed to Scotchmen, and by favour, and also how little merit and long service are rewarded.

I have lately witnessed some cases of cholera spasmodica, in which all the different modes of treatment were tried, and unsuccessfully, with a single exception, that of croton oil, which was administered to a most enormous extent. In the post-mortem examinations, I found one case where the bladder contained urine. I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

W. W. B. DAVEY, Surg.

Beccles, Suffolk, Feb. 12, 1833.

#### MR. SMITH'S DISPENSARIES.

PETITION OF MR. SMITH, OF SOUTHAM, TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"Sheweth,

"That it is the practice of overseers of the poor in many parishes, to contract by the year for attendance on their poor, when sick or hurt, and that this practice is productive of the following evils:—

"It induces many to apply to a parish for their surgeon, who otherwise would not seek gratuitous relief; and who are thus taught more readily to make application for food and clothing.

"It causes those, who are paupers, to be inadequately attended, as the surgeon finds an assiduous discharge of duty is followed by an increase of trouble without any increase of remuneration.

"It causes many to continue chargeable to a parish during convalescence, in consequence of not coming under the notice of the surgeon.

"It may produce a disposition (or the suspicion of such a disposition) to use medicine of a superior quality, often causing the poor to sell their necessities for supplies of quack medicine, by which relief appears so cheaply offered, and is so temptingly recommended.

"Where midwifery is included in the contract, it is subversive of proper feeling, by obliging the poor women to change, with each change of parochial arrangement, their accoucheur.

"It is a great impediment to the extension of vaccination, for as vaccination is not usually included in the contract, the cases accumulate till the parish is alarmed by the introduction of the small-pox,—when, if vaccination is resorted to, it is hurried and partial, and has given rise to many of the doubtful and mixed cases, that have so much divided and perplexed the public mind.

"It is unkind to the poor, who are by this practice confined to a particular practitioner, who, experience has convinced them, is unacquainted with their disorder; who may not have seen its commencement or progress; which must necessarily be the case so long as they are turned over at Easter, or perhaps quarterly, in the midst of their afflictions, to a new contractor, chosen by individuals whose object it is to get the work done at the lowest price, and who cannot make any estimate of the skill or education of the candidates.

"It is a continual source of dissention amongst the worthiest men of the profession. Their confidence in their art is weakened by it, as they receive no support in difficult cases from each other, and their