

new charter, which was understood to have been forced upon the college against the wishes of the majority of the council, and certainly without any solicitation on the part of the bulk of the members, by the then Home Secretary. By this charter the election of the members of council (which was enlarged to twenty-four) was transferred to certain members of the college, then for the first time distinguished by the name of fellows, and whose separation into a distinct class, with privileges denied to the ordinary members, created much dissatisfaction in the profession.

Under the new system, five elections have, I think, taken place, and eleven new members have been added to the council, and I believe I express the opinions of the best men in the profession when I say that several of the new members of council ought not, and, if the old system had continued, would not, have been elected upon that board. Those members occupy a place to which their qualifications do not entitle them, and their presence in the council has already given occasion for scandal, and has shaken that respect which the high professional character of the members of former councils so generally inspired.

There is obviously something wrong in a system which has produced such injurious results in so short a time, and for that wrong we should surely lose no time in seeking to provide a remedy. The college depends for its influence and position upon the reputation of the members of council, and that influence and that position must be impaired, and may be ultimately destroyed, if the present system of election be continued with similar results.

No one is compelled to become a member of the college—every man may practise without their diploma. Most of the persons who present themselves for admission, do so because to be a member of that body has been regarded as a distinction, and because their qualifications are vouched for, and their diplomas are signed by men of widely-spread reputation; and unless a succession of such men be provided, the decline of the college is inevitable. That decline has, in the opinion of many, already commenced, and the writer of this letter would earnestly urge upon the fellows the duty of considering without delay the position in which they stand, and the necessity which exists for arresting the further progress of a serious evil.

Under the old system, the electors were intimately acquainted with the qualifications of every one who was a candidate for a place at the council board, and sincerely desirous of maintaining the high character of the body to which they belonged; and there was in this much security for the good working of the system.

Under the new system, there may be, and probably is, an equal desire to uphold the character of the council; but the bulk of the fellows are not well acquainted with the qualifications of the men from whom they are required to make a selection; and unless some decided course be taken, the chances are, that ill-qualified men will continue to find admission into the council. Every fellow, when his name is called over—and this is done according to seniority—may be nominated by three fellows, and he is then balloted for; and there are few men so friendless as not to find three members of a numerous body willing to vouch for their competency. When the ballot is taken, the fellows may be, and so far have been, very imperfectly acquainted with the professional acquirements and merits of the person named, and an objectionable person may thus have as good a chance of election as the most highly qualified.

If the present plan, then, be followed out for a few years, there is reason to fear that a large portion of ill-qualified persons will be infused into the council, and that it will then no longer possess the respect of the profession. Should this result be brought about, it will be mainly owing to the fact, that the bulk of the electors have not such a knowledge of the candidates as is necessary to enable them to make a proper selection; and unless some plan can be devised for diffusing among the fellows a proper knowledge of candidates, the character of the council will, at the next election, be probably still further lowered.

I assume and believe that the council and fellows at large, whether living in town or in the provinces, are all equally desirous of upholding the dignity of their college, and are all equally anxious to support any plan by which that object may be secured. I believe that there is only one way by which this can be accomplished, and that is, by electing into the council men whose character and position will be a guarantee that they will maintain that dignity; and this cannot be done unless the fellows are made acquainted with the merits of candidates in some suitable manner; and I maintain that this

can be properly done by the council only, and may be very simply accomplished. If there be three vacancies, by resignation or by death, to be filled up, let the council go through the list as they would have done under the old régime; and let them have a house-list of three, or six, or any other number of names of eligible persons; and let the fellows adopt that list, or, if it please them better, reject it. In this way there need be no interference with the provisions of the charter, which will be complied with.

When I look at previous proceedings of the council, I almost despair of their taking a decided course—they have generally been timid when energetic action was necessary. Still I hope that they are now so sensible of the mischief with which the present system is fraught that they will do what is best boldly, regardless of present obloquy; and they may rely upon it, that if they once show that they are earnest and honest, they will obtain the support of every well-wisher of the college.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A FELLOW.

EXCLUSION OF OBSCENE ADVERTISEMENTS FROM NEWSPAPERS.—A GOOD EXAMPLE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have taken the liberty of directing to you the last publication of the *Cambridge Chronicle*, requesting your attention to the concluding paragraph of its leading article.

Whether the worthy editor, influenced by your previous strictures upon quack advertisements, or conscious of the mischief done by such advertisements to the over-credulous members of society, or simply anxious that his pages should contain nothing but what the really virtuous may peruse without offence to their feelings, is a matter of little consequence. I would, however, hope he may have sufficient disinterestedness and editorial virtue to adhere to the resolution he has therein publicly made, and refuse admission into his columns of advertisements most offensive to every discerning and rightly constituted mind.

Should such a resolution cost him some four or five pounds weekly receipts, I feel sure that the public will rightly appreciate his motives and give him more than equivalent support.

Your obedient servant,

January, 1849.

M. D., Cambridge.

* * The following is the paragraph to which our correspondent refers, and it reflects equal credit on the head and heart of the editor of the *Cambridge Chronicle*. At the sacrifice perhaps of thousands of pounds, THE LANCET has always excluded quack advertisements from its columns. The insertion of such advertisements, many of them characterized by references grossly obscene, in a multitude of otherwise reputable journals, is calculated to excite feelings of intense disgust in the respectable portion of the community.—ED. L.

(From the *Cambridge Chronicle* of Jan. 6, 1849.)

"We have one word to address to the heads of families, and that is, that we have resolved to incur the loss which will be entailed upon us by the rejection of all advertisements of a certain objectionable class."

MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—An inquest was held at Grays, Essex, on Thursday, the 11th inst., on the body of a boy, five years and a half of age, who had died on the previous Monday, after a few hours' illness. The child, according to the parents' statement, was apparently in perfect health until half-past two p.m. on Sunday, the 7th, when he was seized with vomiting, succeeded by retching, which continued at intervals till his death, which occurred at five o'clock on the following morning. His bowels had acted twice during the afternoon, and he had complained of no pain.

No medical practitioner had been called in before his death, nor had any remedy been administered. He had eaten sprats for his breakfast, "not over fresh, but not stinking," and suet-dumpling for dinner.

No medical evidence was adduced at the inquest. The coroner, in reply to a juror, stated that the symptoms could not have been produced by arsenic, and the jury, in compliance with his opinion, decided that the sprats were the cause of death, and returned a verdict accordingly.

Does not this case require comment? Can sprats, "not over fresh," cause sudden death? If so, the fact cannot be too

generally known. Supposing them capable of producing such formidable symptoms, would six hours have elapsed before they manifested themselves, the child playing and eating his dinner as usual in the interim? Might not arsenic produce such symptoms? And, lastly, is a lawyer-coroner competent to decide upon all these points without medical evidence; and, if not, what purpose is answered by an inquest so conducted?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Grays, January 17, 1849.

J. STEDMAN.

* * It is clearly evident, from the statement of Mr. Stedman, that there not only ought to have been medical testimony at the inquest, but also a post-mortem examination of the body of the child. Arsenic could produce the symptoms witnessed in this case—ED. L.

"THE STYLE MEDICAL."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

"— Auditor tantum, nunquam ne reponam,
Vexatus toties rauci Theseide Codri?"—JUVENAL.

DEAR EDITOR,—Since you are doing your best to improve the position of the members of the medical profession, would it not also be as well if you could prevail upon nineteenth-twentieths of them to abjure, both in their reports and conversations, the everlasting and undeviating slang in which their statements are couched? One might put up here and there with a surgeon who invariably made use of the same expressions to denote certain particulars; but really, when one finds the great mass of the members of the healing art—"sicut grues, unum alterum sequentes"—unable to relate the different particulars of any case, without having recourse to the wearisome round of "the patient laboured under phthisis," (rather a depressing complaint,) or "laboured under ferocious delirium," (rather an exciting one,) as though their patients were working on a treadmill; when we constantly find the pulse to be so-and-so, "on assuming the recumbent position," and accelerated by so many beats "on assuming the upright position," as though to stand or lie down were acts below the dignity of a surgeon to recognise in any other than the above conventional terms; when no patient can shiver without "experiencing a slight rigor;" eat or drink without manifesting such and such symptoms "while performing the act of deglutition," and so on *usque ad nauseam*, (to stick to conventionalities,)—one is led to ask whether these and hundreds of other equally absurd roundabout and sonorous phrases are taught in our schools of surgery in the same manner as anatomy, and are to be adhered to on every occasion, and with as much precision as the description of the usual course of a nerve or an artery.

Until you have effected some change, if only for the sake of novelty, in the usual tenour of the descriptions of your various correspondents, I suppose I must adhere to "the style medical," as I have a fancy to follow the prevailing fashion, and shall therefore "labour under" a great favour if you will allow my communication to assume the "recumbent position" in one of your forthcoming numbers.—Yours truly,
A SURGEON.

* Our printer says that this expression is incorrect: the letter assuming the "erect posture," since it has been *set up* in our pages. The pedantic phraseology of "the style medical" has bewildered our correspondent.—ED. L.

Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The following gentlemen having undergone the necessary examinations for the diploma, were admitted members of the college at the meeting of the Court of Examiners on the 12th inst.:—

BELL, WILLIAM, Garstang, Lancashire.
BOLTON, JOHN ADAMS, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
BRISQOE, WILLIAM, Bathford, Somerset.
BUCKBY, ARTHUR GREY H., Tamworth, Staffordshire.
BULL, JOSEPH, Norwood, Surrey.
JEFFERYS, WILLIAM EDWARD, Guernsey.
LOVE, WILLIAM SPROULE, Dublin.
WADE, THOMAS, Dublin.

APOTHECARIES' HALL.—Names of gentlemen who passed their examination in the science and practice of medicine, and received certificates to practise, on Thursday,

January 11th, 1848.

FOOTE, CHARLES NEWTH, Sheffield.

MITCHELL, JAMES, Nottingham.

NICHOLSON, GEORGE TOOTAL, Sheffield.

TOURNOUR, HENRY EDWARD.

THE CHOLERA IN NEW YORK.—The disease broke out on board a packet-ship which left Havre for New York on the 9th of November, 1848. There were 21 cabin passengers, 331 steerage, and 33 men composing the crew, altogether 385 persons in good health. On the sixteenth day after the ship had set sail, lat. 42° N. long. 61° W., a man among the steerage passengers was seized by cholera; he died on the 29th of November. A man sixty-two years of age, a little girl of eight years, a boy of the same age, a man of forty, and two little boys of five, were successively attacked, and all died between the 25th and 30th of November. When the vessel arrived at New York, there were twelve persons sick in the steerage, and the ship was put under quarantine. Up to the 6th of December nineteen cases had occurred in the quarantine hospital, of whom ten died. Forty-four cases were reported up to the 19th of December; of these, twenty-one were fatal. It should be noticed that on the 7th four men were attacked who had not come over with this vessel; two men were likewise seized on the 13th who were lying in the hospital suffering from typhus. The quarantine hospital is situated in an island five or six miles from New York, and the communications with the city remained free. A case of cholera occurred in an inn at New York where emigrants congregate; the patient had belonged to the steerage of the above-mentioned vessel, and had left the hospital. He was taken back and died there. A few days after another case occurred in the same inn, the same room, and, it is said, even the same bed. This patient died in twenty-four hours. The epidemic, with these exceptions, seems to be centered in the quarantine hospital. The cholera is said to have broken out in another emigrant vessel which reached New Orleans, and likewise in a ship which arrived at Baltimore.—*New York Correspondent of L'Union Médicale.*

CONTEMPLATED REFORM IN MEDICAL EDUCATION.—The Secretary for the Home Department in the kingdom of Sardinia, has just appointed a committee composed of Professors Riberi, Berruti, Pasero, Sachero, and of two members of the Medico-Chirurgical Academy, MM. Bertini and Pertusio, whose duty it will be to report upon the improvements which might be introduced in the present mode of teaching medical and surgical science. Dr. Bertini has been chosen president, and Dr. Pertusio secretary to the committee.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST POISONOUS MUSHROOMS.—The Rev. Baruffi, member of the Agricultural Congress of Brussels, has stated to the fourth section of this society, that wax models are used in Italy in order to prevent fatal mistakes regarding the sale of poisonous articles. Pius IX. and Charles Albert have caused noxious mushrooms to be imitated in wax, in the different forms and aspects which they usually present. These collections are open for inspection in the town-halls of various places, and the inspectors of markets must, before they allow the sale of any mushrooms, compare them with the wax models, and have thereby no difficulty in ascertaining their real nature.

MEDICAL PORTRAITS.—We have received two more of the series of medical portraits, now being published by Mr. Stone. Those just issued are striking likenesses of Dr. George Budd and Dr. Forbes. The latter we particularly admire; the features and expression of the Doctor are particularly well marked.

MEDICAL FACULTY OF MONTPELLIER.—Dr. Fuster, after a very animated *concours*, has been appointed professor of clinical medicine at the above faculty.

OBITUARY.—Dr. Deyber of Strasburg, known as the inventor of a speculum which bears his name, has just died, in his 45th year.

THE SERPENTINE.—A meeting of numerous respectable inhabitants of Chelsea and the vicinity of Hyde Park took place at the Literary Institution, Cadogan Gardens, on Tuesday evening last, the 16th instant. Dr. Copland in the chair. A deputation, consisting of the chairman, Mr. Lilwall, the honorary secretary, Dr. J. A. Wilson, senior physician to St. George's Hospital, Drs. Goolden, Hodgkin, Pettigrew, Lankester, Tilt, Messrs. Woolley and Embling, &c., (nearly all of whom were present, and addressed the meeting on the above occasion,) were appointed to form a deputation to wait upon the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, on an early day, to represent to that Board the noisome and injurious condition of the Serpentine, and to learn what plans the Commissioners