

to save a patient's life, or to give him instantaneous relief, they administered to him a dose of opium which they had on their person, would such a person be liable to a penalty of £20? If not, why should Dr. Burt be? If, then, a physician had a right in a case of emergency, he had a right in all others, if he chose. The major contained the minor. An apothecary was always a man who had a shop to sell medicines. The Apothecaries' Act spoke of visiting shops. Dr. Johnson described an apothecary as a shopkeeper, and such he had been from Shakspeare's time, who, describing an apothecary, said—

"And round about his shop
A tortoise hung, an alligator stuffed,
And other skins of ill-made fishes"—

and such this Company was even to the present day, for they kept a shop, and sold even pepper and mustard! Mr. Naylor then pointed out that the powers given to the Company were to put down ignorant persons only, and not such persons as Dr. Burt, and then urged that this prosecution could not be what it was asserted to be—one for the protection of the public. The jury must bear in mind, that one-half of the penalty was to go to some informer, who dare not appear in the daylight, but who "sneaked" to the Apothecaries' Company, and would "sneak" there again, if the jury awarded this penalty, to get his share of it. Was it not more likely to be a case where some jealous rival, envying Dr. Burt's celebrity, has sought his ruin by calling in the aid of this shopkeeping Company in the city of London?

The JUDGE then pointed out the necessity for informers, and told the jury they must not be led away by strong remarks upon them. If they believed Dr. Burt had acted as an apothecary in this matter, they would find for the plaintiff.

The trial lasted for three hours and a half, and the jury retired for four, when they were discharged from inability to come to an unanimous verdict.

[It is currently reported, that of the five jurymen, four were for a verdict for the defendant, and one against it.]

The learned JUDGE, in discharging the jury, said he trusted that if the parties litigated this matter again, they would do it in a superior court. It was absurd to say only £20 were at stake.

PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT IN THE BURY POOR-LAW UNION.

COPY OF A REQUEST SENT TO THE GUARDIANS OF THE POOR OF THE BURY UNION, BY THEIR MEDICAL OFFICERS.

To the Guardians of the Bury Union.

We, the undersigned medical officers, being frequently much inconvenienced, and the labours of our duties much increased, by having orders for medical attendance upon the poor brought to us at all hours of the day, and even of the night, thereby causing us, in many instances, to traverse the same ground two or three times a day; respectfully request you to issue a printed notice, announcing to the poor your desire that all applications for orders for medical attendance (except in cases of sudden or urgent necessity) be made to the relieving officers before nine o'clock in the morning; and that such orders be taken immediately to the surgery of the medical officer for whom it is intended.

Your obedient servants,

(Signed) WILLIAM RAYNER. THOMAS BOTT.
JAMES TAYLOR. RICHARD PRESTON.
H. J. HINXMAN. J. LANCASHIRE.

Bury, June 12, 1850.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

DR. MURPHY AND DR. MARSHALL HALL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Certainly there is nothing that I desire less than "to fix a quarrel" upon Dr. Marshall Hall. It was with the utmost reluctance that I took any notice of his paper, but the passage that I quoted from it left me no alternative. The most serious charge that could be brought against a medical man was implied in the statement it contained—viz., that a poor miserable woman had been submitted for months to treatment with the speculum and caustic for a disease that did not exist, and that in consequence her mental as well as her bodily health had been seriously injured; that she became the subject of uterine hypochondriasis. The woman was an out-patient of University College Hospital, and as such had been treated for disease of the womb.

No other inference could be drawn from these facts than that she had been under the care of the physician who saw the out-patients so afflicted, and treated them for such complaints. Those who know anything of that hospital would at once point to him as the accused party. Being then in that position; seeing these out-patients three times a week; using the speculum and caustic whenever it was necessary; I inferred that the patient was mine, and felt myself called upon to protest against an accusation that I had no opportunity of disproving. I am happy, however, to find that I had nothing whatever to do with the case; that I "had no personal concern with the matter whatever;" and am therefore exonerated from the charge.

I shall not trespass on your attention further on the subject that is now under discussion, because I do not believe that controversy will assist in revealing the truth; on the contrary, it seems to me to have considerably obscured it already. Every one admits that the abuse of the speculum is a great evil, which should be prevented. No rational person denies its utility when properly employed. But the danger of the present controversy is, that the opponents of these abuses are in their zeal carried far beyond their object; the shaft they aim at the abuse, strikes also against the use, of an instrument of great value, by exciting in the public mind a prejudice not justified by facts. On the other hand, those who know the value of the speculum, both for diagnosis and treatment, naturally take alarm at an opposition which has something of the character of a crusade, and in their eagerness to shelter the speculum against unwarrantable attacks, may unconsciously throw their shield over abuses that should be exposed. Such are the consequences that I apprehend from the discussions now in progress, and therefore feel but little inclined to take part in them. It is the less necessary to do so, because the question is simply one of fact. Does inflammation and ulceration of the uterus exist or not? Any practitioner whose vision is not obscured by preconceived notions, and who will use the speculum, may determine the point for himself. If it be true that such is the case, the treatment can only be determined by experience, and as far as mine teaches me the truth, I have not the slightest doubt of the importance of local treatment applied through the speculum, and of the futility of trusting to merely constitutional remedies.

Feeling, therefore, that time alone will prove the value of the speculum, I shall not join in a controversy that seems to me not only useless, but calculated to do much unnecessary mischief.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

EDWARD WM. MURPHY.

Henrietta-street, Cavendish-square, June 17, 1850.

DR. LEE IN REPLY TO DR. PROTHEROE SMITH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In a Supplement to a paper on Filio-Calcareous Tumours and Polypi of the Uterus, read to the Medico-Chirurgical Society on the 28th of May last, I related the history of a remarkable case of fibrous tumour in the anterior wall of the uterus, in the centre of which there was an abscess, which has rarely, if ever before, been observed by any pathologist. This abscess, I observe, appeared to result from acute inflammation excited by four balls, the composition of which I could not ascertain, having been passed up to the uterus at bedtime; and to the introduction within the uterus, by another practitioner, of a bent wire, with a small wooden handle, which, from the description given of it by the patient's sister, I thought "was probably the bent metallic probe, or blunt wire, sold in the shops under the name of Simpson's sound."

The practitioner above referred to was Dr. P. Smith, one of the physicians to the Hospital for the Diseases of Women in Red Lion-square. The following correspondence will satisfy the profession, that before making this communication to the Society, I did all that lay in my power to obtain the most correct information respecting the previous history and treatment of the patient, and that I had no desire to commit any injustice whatever to Dr. P. Smith, but the very reverse. The information I sought was not given by the only person who could furnish it to me; the information I possessed was not withheld from him by me, but communicated in the most unreserved manner.

4, Savile-row, April 19, 1850.

DEAR SIR,—Will you have the kindness to inform me in what condition you found the uterus of Mrs. S—, when she came under your care at the Red Lion-square Hospital, and what treatment you adopted?

I am, dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

To Dr. Protheroe Smith.

ROBERT LEE.