his reasonings loose and his conclusions illogical, I readily give him credit for conscientious feeling in discharging what he conceives an obligation due to himself and to the department to which he belongs.

With my best thanks, Sir, for your indulgence, I remain, &c., &c.

AN ASSOCIATE OF THE FACULTY
OF PHYSIC.

August 24th, 1827.

ON THE MEDICAL AND PRACTICAL EXAMINATION OF VETERINARY PUPILS.

THE question regarding the examination of pupils as to their fitness to practise the veterinary art, was first taken up by Mr. Goodwin some years ago, and letters on this subject were addressed by him to the Medical Examining Committee, and also to the Governors of the Veterinary College. The result was by no means satisfactory, and the matter remained dormant until the beginning of December last, when the following paper was written, The cause of its publication being delayed may be stated hereafter.

F. C. CHERRY.

August, 1827.

The Medical Examining Committee, as now formed, was first constituted from necessity; there were no persons but those in the regular profession of medicine and surgery who had a competent knowledge of anatomy, or the general principles of physiology and pathology, to whom recourse could be had, and the public, as well as the early members of the veterinary profession ought to, and I have no doubt do, feel grateful for the assistance thus afforded.

But does that necessity for employing gentlemen out of the veterinary profession, to the exclusion of those who are in the practice of that art, as examiners of persons about to be admitted into that profession, still exist? If an answer is given in the affirmative, it is a severe reproach on the gentleman who has occupied the professor's chair for the third part of a century; but if an answer is given in the negative, I must then ask, why are not a certain portion of the vacancies that from time to time occur in the Medical Examining Committee of the Veterinary College, filled by the older and abler practitioners of the veterinary profession? If any one will assert that individuals duly qualified for an efficient discharge of this duty cannot now be selected, the sooner a course of instruction is established that will produce veterinary surgeons capable of deciding on the fitness of candidates for the exercising of their own profession, so much the better for that profession and for the public whose property is to be intrusted to their management.

From among the many reasons that may be adduced to show that the present system of medical examination of veterinary pupils is wrong, I shall give those of Mr. Coleman himself, and they cannot fail in carrying conviction to every one who hears them. He says, "I object to the term comparative anatomy, it is a term which has done much mischief; there is, in fact no such thing; reasoning as to comparative anatomy leads the mind to comparative physiology and to comparative pathology, and that leads to error;" and yet we have a committee of physicians and surgeons exclusively for the examination of veterinary pupils.

Again, Mr. Coleman says, "Every distinct species of animal has, probably, its specific susceptibilities and diseases; the same remark applies to the remedies for those diseases;" and he goes on to illustrate this position by naming substances that are harmless, or inert, on the most delicate of the human species, while on the horse the same substances act most powerfully, and the *vice versa* of this most unanswerable proposition. Hence it appears that this difference really exists so far as his investigations have extended. Yet we have a committee of physicians and surgeons exclusively for the examination of pupils as to their fitness to practise the veterinary art.

Mr. Coleman further says, "The cutting of veins, of nerves, of arteries, have different effects in different animals; that it is erroneous to conclude from the effects resulting from these operations, that similar effects would be produced in another species of animal;" and he again remarks on the varied effects of medicines on different species of animals, and yet we have a committee of gentlemen who exclusively practise the professions of human medicine and surgery, who are called upon to sign a declaration, that having examined Mr. So-and-So, a veterinary pupil, "they consider him competent to practise the veterinary art." Now this certainly is an act of injustice, towards those gentlemen that they ought not to be exposed to.

The reasons why this Committee should be reorganised, may be multiplied *ad infinitum*; but it is needless to follow this part of the subject any further. But in making these remarks, I trust no observation has escaped me which can be construed to mean disrespect individually; it is to the system that my remarks are intended to apply. For such of the members of the Medical Examining Committee that I have the honour to know, I have feelings of great respect; to some, personal obligation, which I am ever ready to acknowledge.

I purpose to advert, at some future period,

to the subject of veterinary education, and some of the causes that are operating against the advancement of this art.

December, 1826.

F. C. CHERRY.

CLINICAL MEDICINE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I see by *The Times* of Saturday last, that an attempt is being made by the Physicians of the Westminster Hospital to erect a Clinical School on the model of the best Continental institutions of that nature; and I rejoice to witness the commencement of the process of rejuvenescence in that ancient charity. I have long, with surprise and regret, observed the apathy that prevails in England with respect to clinical instruction. Such neglect of that most important branch of medical education, indicates an inactivity in the mass of the profession, a want of taste for pathological research, or of talent for scientific enterprise, and a torpid and sterile indifference to the interests of practical medicine, which are, in a high degree, discreditable to the Hospital Physicians, more particularly of London, and these defects are the more unaccountable owing to the circumstance that most of the offices in the medical department of our Hospitals have had the advantage of the most liberal education, provided by the national institutions of Britain. From gentlemen, in fact, who have devoted their undergraduate years to mathematical, moral, and theological studies, and to the critical perusal of Greek and Latin poets, orators, and historians, great zeal in the pursuit and communication of anatomical, pathological, and therapeutical science might reasonably be expected; and it is with painful surprise that we learn, from observation, that a method of training up physicians in this city, so much and so deservedly applauded, has hitherto proved so unproductive of able and zealous clinical teachers. But a very few observations on the nature of clinical instruction are required, to set in its full light the mischief of the exclusion of clinical lectures from the syllabus of a medical school. Practical medicine is, every body knows, a liberal art, and like other liberal arts, requires in its professor a combination of speculative knowledge with practical skill. The medical artist must not only be acquainted with those scientific functions called laws of nature by the anatomist, physiologist, chemist, &c., but he must likewise be possessed of considerable dexterity in the application of that knowledge in practice. When a patient implores the assistance of medical art, the physician must not only know that such or such a symptom indicates such

or such an organ affected, and such or such a vital function vitiated; and that such or such a remedy produces generally such or such a sanative effect, but he must also be aware of the exact quantities and peculiar qualities of those effects and agents, and of all opposing, favouring, or in any way modifying, causes and circumstances. Now such minuteness of practical information can be acquired from the book of nature only; libraries contain but a small portion of those desideranda, and that portion consists of molecules of information scattered through a thousand volumes. Even supposing the resources of the student in point of time, industry, &c. unlimited, shall we further assume for him an omnipotent recollection and infallible memory. It is obvious, in short, that from assiduous attendance at the sick bed-side, assisted by suitable explanations, illustrations, &c., on the part of a professor already well versed in clinical practice, and from such means only, can a competent acquaintance with the art of healing be attained. It is quite idle to hope to acquire an adequate knowledge of the physician's art, merely by dissecting human bodies, listening to medical and chemical discourses, reading medical writings, and looking at sick persons in hospitals. In addition to lectures on anatomy, physiology, therapeutics, &c., the student must of necessity, therefore, attend one or more clinical courses, and it would be fully as unreasonable to expect, that he who is not familiar with the principles and practice of the clinical ward, should be competent to prescribe, or be worthy of the sick man's confidence, as it would to suppose, that a closet-chemist could analyse an unknown mineral, or a Lady Bountiful be capable of doing duty for a physician to the forces.

Under the preceding impressions I take up my pen to express my satisfaction at the promise held out by the advertisement of Saturday. With much pleasure I learn from it, that the influence of the example of the learned and ingenious Doctor Elliotson has at length began to produce the effect I so long wished for; and that a city, whose population equals that of several sovereign states, will not hereafter be wholly depending for clinical instruction on the unseconded exertions of that able and distinguished individual. I cannot conclude without an acknowledgment, which indeed you might with justice claim, viz., that in the origination of those and of other improvements in the Westminster and other Hospitals, the reforming and beneficent influence of THE LANCET has had, although an indirect, yet unquestionably a very ample share.

Your faithful servant,

M. MAGRATH.

Camden-town, August 30, 1827.