the oesophagus, after which time she suddenly ejected some matter (from the larynx, I suppose), and gradually became capable of swallowing again, so that in the course of about a week she returned to her place.

In the following September she had a similar attack to those in 1837 and 1838, which soon yielded to a large bleeding, and she had the same kind of attack and the same remedy in January, 1840, and in February, 1841. I think the blood taken in 1841 only was buffy, and that was also cupped. She was at the sea-side some weeks during the last summer.

From that illness in March, 1839, to this time, she has been often troubled with the breaking of the same abscess in a trifling degree, and occasionally with offensive discharge from it, on which account she is now anxious to be admitted into some hospital, in the hope of having a cure effected. I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

W. ALLISON.

East Retford, April 12, 1841.

RESTRAINT OF LUNATICS.

“Save me from my friends.”

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Having just read in your Publication of the 20th ultimo an elaborately-written letter signed “Medical Superintendent,” on “the subject of the humane system of treatment of the insane,” in which the writer quotes a portion of a paragraph from a report of mine of the Belfast District Lunatic Asylum of March, 1840, and which, if taken *per se*, would lead to the inference that I was an advocate *ex cathedra*, for the total abolition of restraint in every case of lunacy whatever, I beg leave accordingly to crave a corner in your valuable Periodical, in order to prevent such a misapprehension, by stating that I am not a disciple of the total abolition school (as may be seen by a reference to the report in question), my deliberate opinion on this head being that instrumental restraint—by which I by no means intend “iron hobbles, chains, beatings, or bruising,” such as Mr. Hill, of Lincoln, averred to be the species of restraint in common use in English lunatic asylums—cannot, either with safety or humanity, be dispensed with altogether; but, on the contrary, that its occasional and judicious application is not only unavoidable in many instances, but is a most valuable curative means, if confided to humane and professionally-educated superintendents, who, considering the great and unceasing responsibility of their arduous office, ought assuredly to be permitted free-agency as to its use or disuse, equally so as in the prescribing of the most fitting *medical treatment* for such unhappy, but very perplexing, cases as require restraint being had recourse to. Surely it will not

be denied that such distinguished and experienced men in the management of the insane, as Dr. Corsellis (Wakefield), Dr. Kirkman (Suffolk), Dr. Blake and Surgeon Powell (Nottingham), Drs. Browne, Hutchinson, M’Kinnon, Malcolm, &c. &c., of the Scotch asylums, should not be entrusted with this free-agency? And is their humanity to be called into question by anonymous writers, forsooth, because, in the exercise of a sound discretion, they summon restraint to their aid? Away with such mock tenderness, such morbid sympathy and sensitiveness for the furious insane: through evil report and good report, I trust the above individuals will continue to pursue the even tenor of their way, and by so doing be preserved from the dangerous hallucinations of that mono-mania of the present day, non-restraintism, which, of all others, calls loudly for prompt and close restraint, so as to keep its unfortunate patients within the bounds of moderation. As the report of this asylum for March, 1841, is about being printed, in which the subject of this note is again shortly discussed (a copy of which will, with much pleasure, be forwarded to you), I shall not further trespass on your indulgence by needlessly enlarging on it, and beg to remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

ROBERT STEWART, M.D.,

Resident Superintendent.

Belfast District Asylum, April 6, 1841.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—As I doubt not that there are some of the members of our profession as unaware of the responsibility of the medical practitioner in certain cases, as I confess myself to have been, I beg your insertion in THE LANCET of the accompanying case.

On the 15th of February I was called by the landlady of a house in this neighbourhood to see one of her lodgers, Miss B—, aged 70, who was suffering from a spitting of blood. I prescribed for her some medicine containing diluted sulphuric acid, and in the evening when I called, I found that the spitting of blood had entirely ceased: the mixture was continued.

Feb. 16. The hæmorrhage has not returned; the acid in the mixture was reduced in quantity. She expresses herself as much better, and I requested the attendant to let me know if the spitting of blood recurred.

18. The symptoms were entirely relieved. My patient told me, that Mrs. L—, the friend who had supplied her with the rabbit-pie, which was then on the table, and of which she was eating, would become responsible to me for my attendance.

24. On calling to-day I found my patient to be quite recovered; she requested, however, that another mixture might be sent, as