

Messrs. Fergusson, Smith, and Norman do not know, and such knowledge is confined to Edinburgh, he should have kindly favoured us with a little more light on the subject from thence, and not have left us, on his mere word, to give up a fixed idea as to what carries is, for one so indefinite as he propounds, and which may do for any malignant change in bone whatsoever.

I am, Sir, yours &c.

H. BURFORD NORMAN.

Duchess-street, Portland-place, May, 1849.

THE PROPOSED CHARTER OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have seen, with regret, in recent numbers of *THE LANCET*, erroneous statements regarding the proposed new charter for the College of Physicians. But they did not appear to me to call for particular notice, because I imagined that they would easily be corrected by those who, being really interested in the matter, would take the trouble of referring to the charter as last amended, and published in several journals, and to the outline of a Bill for Regulating the Profession of Physic and Surgery.

For instance, it has been stated repeatedly, but incorrectly, that all those physicians who should be admitted as members of the college without examination, during what has been termed the year of grace, would be compelled to pay a registration fee of £5, in addition to the fees payable on admission to the college. Whereas, it is clearly expressed in the outline of a Bill, that all persons entitled to be registered at the time of the passing of the Act would pay for registration a fee of 10s., the fee of £5 being proposed, prospectively, for those who shall in future enter the profession as physicians or surgeons. It has indeed been made a matter of complaint, that any fee at all should be exacted for compulsory enrolment in the College of Physicians. But it is right to remember the actual position of all those who would be affected by this regulation. For, as to the present extra-licentiates, they cannot be compelled to become members of the college. It is clear that special registration of their existing privileges must be allowed to as many of them as should choose to demand it. None, therefore, of those who would be affected by this regulation are at present possessed of a strictly legal title to practise in England as Physicians, unless they be graduates of Oxford or Cambridge; nor are they entitled to practise in London. The real ground, however, of this regulation is, that it is an essential part of the proposed scheme of medical reform, that for the purpose of promoting order and discipline in the profession, all practitioners in each of the three kingdoms should be enrolled in the college appropriated respectively to the class to which they belong. The fee to be paid by members thus admitted into the College of Physicians is to be reduced considerably below that which has hitherto been paid by every one who ever has been admitted a member. More could hardly be done for them, since those who have already paid highly for the rights of membership would be sure to complain loudly if the same were now bestowed on many others gratuitously.

But the object of this letter is, to notice a statement in *THE LANCET* for May 19, the erroneous nature of which may not be immediately obvious. It is to the effect that the members of the College of Physicians, admitted under the fourth and fifth clauses of the new charter, and intended "to form an inferior class, who cannot be admitted to the fellowship either by election or examination." It is added, that "this cunning device on the part of the college, for it deserves no other term, will not render the great body of provincial physicians more in love than they are at present with the proposed charter of the College of Physicians."

In truth, this statement "deserves no other term" than that of the invention of an ingenious but over-suspicious imagination. For the clauses on which it is founded, as they now stand,—and the draft of the charter has not yet been perfected,—do not necessarily bear the interpretation thus put upon them. And I beg to assure you, from a full knowledge of the fact, that no such "cunning device" ever was devised by the college. It never was intended that the members of the college admitted during the year of grace should be inferior to, or different from, other members, as to eligibility to the fellowship, or in any other respect.

If the author of these statements concerning the College of Physicians and its proposed charter would refer to the correspondence which took place last year between the college and the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, and also to the exposition which has appeared from time to time in the

Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal, of the views and feelings of that Association, and of the great body of provincial physicians, he would find that the tone and spirit of his observations are by no means justified by the circumstances of the case; nor are they consistent with the more candid remarks on the same subject, made on some occasions last year, in leading articles of *THE LANCET*.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Bolton-street, May, 1849.

FRANCIS HAWKINS.

NAVAL ASSISTANT-SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg you to be so kind as to give insertion in *THE LANCET* to the questions addressed to medical men proposing to enter the navy, which I inclose to you.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

FRED. JAMES BROWN, M.D. Lond. & Edin.

H.M.S. "Howe," Bay of Naples, Feb. 1849.

Questions for every medical man to propose to himself, before applying for an assistant-surgeoncy in the Royal Navy.

1. Having studied five years, and received a diploma in surgery and a licence to practise medicine, can I submit to the irksomeness of assisting a naval surgeon for twice that period?

2. Granting that I am of a submissive disposition, and capable of passing through this first stage of a surgeon in the royal navy, can I so far humiliate myself as to accept position and treatment similar in every respect to that accorded apprentices on shore? For example:—First, must I dine with the children, and dispense with a private sleeping apartment? Secondly, must I be excluded from the society of visitors, or only introduced with the "young gentlemen"? Thirdly, must I brush my own clothes and my boots, and even make my own bed, unless I pay a servant to do these things for me, who might refuse if he thought proper, as servants are not allowed by the rules?

3. On receiving a commission from the Admiralty to do the duty of a naval surgeon, after eight or ten years servitude shall I be able to do that duty as well as on the day I first entered the service? For instance:—First, will the neglect of reading and study (which naval assistant-surgeons state to be an evil inherent in the present system in her Majesty's ships) cause me not only to retrograde in the science of my profession, but also to lose most of the zeal and energy I now possess? Secondly, shall I not be morally responsible for the deaths of patients which may occur as a consequence of my deteriorated skill in the art of the prevention and cure of disease?

On a calm consideration of these questions, am I justified in becoming a candidate for an assistant-surgeoncy in the royal navy?

ADULTERATION OF DRUGS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having occasion to employ preparations of valerianic acid, and particularly the valerianate of iron, I have been the victim of a singular fraud, to which I am sure you will readily call the attention of your medical friends, as it is by no means pleasant for a practitioner to be administering a substance which does not contain even a trace of the preparation he desires to employ, and for which he has paid an extravagant price. The article to which I refer is sold in London as a superior valerianate of iron, soluble in water. Now, as true valerianate of iron is insoluble in this fluid, although soluble in alcohol, and readily decomposed by admixture with dilute hydrochloric acid, which instantly separates the valerianic acid, (unmistakable, from its odour &c.) finding none of these properties in the article in question, I was induced to examine it, and found I had been using a little tartrate or citrate of iron, scented with oil of valerian. How many remedies get into disrepute, from like causes!—Yours,

MEDICUS.

TREATMENT OF GOUT AND RHEUMATISM BY ANODYNES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—For some years past I have conceived both gout and rheumatism to be altogether neuralgic affections; and under this impression I have for a considerable time treated all cases of this kind that have come under my care chiefly by anodynes, topically applied; and the results of this practice have in no degree disappointed my expectations.

In rheumatic fever—which, I think, may be fairly considered asympathetic of many co-existing local irritations—I content myself—and generally my patients too—with clearing out the *primæ viæ*, and applying lint, dipped in strong solutions of opium, or of belladonna, to the seats of pain, covering in the wetted lint with oiled silk, that the soothing effects of warmth and moisture may at the same time be attained. And I have found the febrile state, the local irritations being subdued, easily controlled by the acetate liquor of ammonia, combined with tincture of hyoscyamus and nitrate of potash.

In gout, unquestionably, the constitutional state must be more particularly attended to, especially so far as regards the prophylaxis; and in young and robust people, where rheumatism occasionally attacks the heart, I yet think it sometimes necessary to bleed from the arm. That, however, in these cases, we might not often, if not always, trust to narcotics, I am by no means well assured.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

Liverpool, May, 1849.

JOHN COOPER, F.R.C.S.E. &c.

POOR-LAW TRICKERIES.—THE HUDDERSFIELD GUARDIANS AND MR. TATHAM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have the honour to enclose you a circular, (in the name of the committee appointed to collect subscriptions to indemnify Mr. Tatham for the losses he sustained in prosecuting his suit against the Huddersfield guardians, an account of which suit appeared in your journal, some twelve months ago,) and I shall feel obliged to you, on public grounds, if you will call attention to the matter.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

West Parade, Huddersfield, May, 1849.

GEORGE PHILLIPS.

We extract the following passages from the circular, which we have elsewhere commented upon:—

"In 1847, cases of fever accumulated in the town of Huddersfield to a degree that rendered it necessary to open a temporary fever hospital, for the treatment of these cases alone. Attendance on this hospital had not been provided for in Mr. Tatham's contract with the guardians of the poor; but as soon as it was opened, Mr. Tatham was specially requested, by the relieving-officer of the district, to attend it. That request Mr. Tatham unhesitatingly complied with. He attended from the opening of the hospital to its close. He had in this hospital 160 cases of infectious fever; 57 other cases of typhus to attend in other parts of the town; and general cases of sickness in addition. Of these 160 cases in the hospital, 77 were removals from other medical districts, by the guardians themselves; and for his attendance at the hospital generally, and for these 77 cases in particular, Mr. Tatham claimed compensation of the guardians to the amount of £106 3s. 6d. That compensation the guardians at first wholly refused.

"In this case, Mr. Tatham appealed to the poor-law commissioners, making them acquainted with the facts; and the commissioners, in a letter to Mr. Tatham, (a copy of which they forwarded to the guardians,) said that 'it would be inequitable to hold that Mr. Tatham ought to attend the temporary fever hospital under his contract,'—that 'if the guardians would consent to award such extra remuneration as was justly due for the extra services he had performed, they [the commissioners] were prepared to consent to the payment,'—and 'that if the guardians declined to award such extra payment, it was open to Mr. Tatham to take legal proceedings to enforce his claim, if he was so advised.' That extra remuneration the guardians did decline to grant, and Mr. Tatham had to resort to law. After proceedings had been taken, the guardians appealed to the commissioners to know if they could legally defend the action out of the funds of the Union; and while the commissioners withheld all opinion on the question asked, they recommended that the matter in dispute should be referred to Mr. Austin, the poor-law inspector, for settlement. That recommendation Mr. Tatham closed with. His solicitor apprised the guardians that he agreed to do so. That gentleman also repeatedly tried to get the hearing arranged for, under a proper deed of arbitration, but unsuccessfully. Seven weeks were spent in these fruitless efforts. The very last meeting of the board, before the expiration of term-time, was waited for, before proceedings were recommenced; and then, when all efforts for a peaceable and amicable settlement had failed, declaration was filed, and the case proceeded on to trial.

"At the trial, it was not denied, or attempted to be denied, that the work had been performed; it was not alleged, or

attempted to be alleged, that the sum sought as compensation was excessive; but it was pleaded that there was no written order of the guardians on their resolution-book, directing him to attend the fever hospital; and that therefore he had no claim for compensation.

"The facts of the case are these:—*The hospital was taken by a portion of the guardians*, and a portion of them also instructed Mr. Tatham to attend. Those guardians reported to the general body, at their next meeting, what they had done, and its propriety was unanimously acquiesced in. But no entry of that acquiescence was made in the minute-book of the board. And because this had been neglected at the time, the guardians pleaded their own neglect, and thereby defeated a just and equitable claim."

The facts were laid before a large and influential meeting of the rate-payers of the township of Huddersfield, on the 1st of May, 1848, when the following resolutions were passed:—

"That the overseers should request the poor-law board 'to take immediate steps to ascertain the truth of the allegations contained in their report, with a view to a speedy remedy of the present evils, and a prevention of them in future.'

"That this meeting begs to accord its best thanks to Mr. T. R. Tatham for the manner in which he has maintained the right of the poor to efficient medical relief, in the hour of danger and affliction. And further: that this meeting, sympathizing with Mr. Tatham for the extremely hard treatment he has experienced at the hands of the guardians of the poor, resolves, 'that the overseers of the poor memorialize the poor-law board, in the name of the rate-payers of the Huddersfield township, urging that they will be pleased to direct that the guardians of the Huddersfield Union fully recompense Mr. Tatham for his extra services and great risk of life incurred in attending the fever hospital, and also reimburse the expenses attending the prosecuting his just claim, out of the funds in their charge.'

This resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority.

"Twelve months have elapsed since the memorial was sent up: no other answer than a mere acknowledgment of its receipt has been returned, beyond an intimation, nine months ago, that the poor-law board were in communication with the guardians on the subject. In fact, it has since been fully ascertained that the poor-law board have no power to direct the guardians to make Mr. Tatham any recompence whatever.

"Baron Alderson, the presiding judge at the trial, spoke indignantly of the hardship of the case, on finding that a point of law—viz., that no corporate body can be bound, except by a resolution entered in their own books—interfered with equity. An entry on the minute-book, however, being found, of an offer of £42 having been made to Mr. Tatham, after the legal proceedings had been some time commenced, (which was rejected by his solicitor, as totally inadequate,) his lordship advised the withdrawal of a juror, and the acceptance of the £42 by the plaintiff, thereby desiring to save Mr. Tatham the expense of the costs on both sides. Having effected this arrangement, his lordship showed his sense of the injustice of the transaction by remarking:—

"It will be a disgrace to the town of Huddersfield if they allow Mr. Tatham to be one shilling out of pocket. A public subscription ought to be set on foot, not only to defray that gentleman's expenses, but also to compensate him for his services to the poor, and for the great risk of life he has incurred, in attending to the fever cases. If I were an inhabitant of Huddersfield, I would readily subscribe to it."

"To prevent that disgrace, the friends of justice are hereby appealed to. Mr. Tatham has now been in the service of the public for a period of six years. Besides the loss of the greater portion of the sum claimed for hazardous public services, he has been put to considerably more than £200 actual expense in the prosecution of his suit, and matters connected with the subsequent investigation. Indeed, his total expenses and losses in this business cannot be estimated at less than £400.

"Happily, and in a great measure through his instrumentality, the workhouse and hospital are in a much better condition, and the poor are better attended to."

THE LISTON TESTIMONIAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Shortly after the death of Liston, a numerous committee was organized, consisting of many noblemen and gentlemen, some of the most eminent members of the profession, and most of the professors in University College, for the pur-