PALMER'S ARTIFICIAL LEG IN LONDON.

[THE following letter from Mr. Palmer, inventor of the improved artificial leg which goes by his name, and which has often been referred to in this Journal, will be read with interest, not only on account of the gratifying success which it represents an American invention to have received abroad, but for the allusions contained in it to the personal characteristics of many of the eminent surgeons of London.—ED.]

DEAR SIR,—Four weeks have elapsed since you shook my hand so kindly in the Crystal Palace, when about taking your leave of that Tabernacle of Nations, to return to our dear America! I hope you had a pleasant passage home, and am most certain it must have seemed sweet to arrive there and seat yourself in an easy Boston chair, after climbing over Alps, and traversing Arabian deserts on the backs of camels.

I promised you to write often, and the cause of non-fulfilment has been the fear that my letters would not interest your readers, or that in complying with your request (while I should gratify many friends) I should necessarily make such use of the “pronoun I,” as would cause many unacquainted with my very humble self to make as free use of the “interjection O”!

But my word is pledged; and as you insisted that I should tell the tale of my adventures in this metropolis, and that I should tell it in my *own way*, it shall be entered upon—and if you or any of your readers discover that I am getting into any places where so humble an individual has no right, you have only to pay my passage back in one of the Collins steamers, to keep me from setting my *foot* on “Royal Carpets” after September next.

But, in passing, I beg to remind you that I have not forgotten the time, some years since, when you, through your potential Journal, did so much to open the way to my present success; and to state, that but for your kind assistance, and that of your medical compeers in America, I might now be found among the granite hills of my native State—a State, by-the-by, *endared to my heart by all the most pleasing and hallowed reminiscences*—instead of finding myself (as recently) in the “Uxbridge House,” surveying the mutilated hero of Waterloo and compatriot of Wellington—or *squeezed* among the invincible tatterdemalionary corps in Gauntlet Alley, leading from the Crystal Palace to Piccadilly!

I arrived in London April 17th, and after taking a short time to get the ground steady under me, so that the Patent Leg should not, like the “Golden” one—

“In a whirligig bout,
Stick stiffly out,
Like the leg of a *figurante*,”

I commenced my calls on the surgeons by visiting Professor Fergusson (Prince Albert’s surgeon), and was received with all the respect due—not to *myself*, for that would not be worth mentioning—but to the various eminent American surgeons who had honored me with letters of introduction to him and to others. Prof. F. examined, with much appa-

rent delight, the invention, and (if you will pardon the liberty I take in assuming a right not *formally* delegated) I will give you the verdict, *verbatim*, of this very eminent surgeon, and also of some of his compeers in London. In my journal I have carefully kept the same from day to day, and some of the remarks are so quaint, characteristic and significant, as to merit publication just as they fell from the lips of the authors. Prof. Fergusson is a man of pleasing, unaffected address, but somewhat commanding in figure and physiognomy. After inspecting long and carefully all the minutiae of the invention, he very gravely said, "It is *clever*! perfect! *WONDERFUL*." He then gave me a letter of introduction and recommendation to Mr. Cameron, medical attendant of Lord Anglesey. It was written in the most unequivocal terms of commendation of the limb and the inventor.

Upon presenting the letter at the Uxbridge House (the town residence of the Marquis), I was most kindly welcomed by Mr. Cameron, and by him conducted to the private apartments of "his Lordship" to receive an introduction. The old hero I found writing at his table, notwithstanding his locks have been whitened by the frosts of more than three score years and twenty. He arose, and greeted me with kindly words and smiles, bidding me welcome to London and to his mansion. The Marquis's leg fell (with Napoleon's homicidal glory) on the field of Waterloo, and a monument is there to its memory erected.

Mr. Pott, an ingenious man, who had, also, lost a limb, had the honor of making for the Marquis the description of leg which he has ever since worn, and which is called the "Anglesey Leg" in America. Mr. Pott is now dead, and so is also the only man who learned the business with him, and who remained in this country. The workmanship of the successor here, is not equal to that of some artisans in New York.

The Marquis, by my permission, ordered in his leg-maker to see the improved mechanism, and asked him what he thought of it. It was a hard question—he might as well have asked Napoleon what *he* thought of the fight at Waterloo! The artisan hesitated; but the hero continued, "I *think it is most DEVILISH CLEVER*!" The Marquis showed me all his riding and walking limbs, and the manner of applying the same.

William Lawrence, Esq., F.R.S. (Surgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital and President of the Royal College of Surgeons), I next visited. He is a most practical and approachable man, and received me with none of that cold reserve or *miserable* etiquette which must *sometimes* be endured. I went with him to the Hospital, where the limb was shown to a large number of surgeons. Mr. Lawrence indulged in the strongest terms of commendation; and Edw. Stanley, Esq. (another surgeon of the Hospital) then stated that, "with such a limb to repair the loss, amputations would now be *much less dreaded*." It was suggested that in some way it might be brought within the reach of hospital patients.

I most luckily there met Professor Henry J. Bigelow, of Boston, who having been chairman of the Committee on Artificial Limbs at the last exhibition in Boston, was prepared to assist me essentially. He stated that he had known the invention and its great success since it was brought before the public, and that it was incomparably better than any

other leg in America. The kind and decided terms in which he spoke, did much to make my position easy on my first appearance in a London hospital.

Next, I presented my foot at the door of the great Sir Benjamin; but (notwithstanding I had previously sent the most ample credentials) I was whirled about on the threshold by the following pleasant greeting, unaccompanied by even a glimpse of his person—"Come at *nine*, to-morrow"! Exit, instant. At "*nine, to-morrow*," I found Sir Benjamin in a happier mood, and not perplexed by a score of invalids. He was *very* affable, and entered into a critical examination, which having concluded, he declared very earnestly that the limb was "perfect," and gave me seven letters of introduction to eminent hospital surgeons, calling their attention to the invention as a "very ingenious" American production. I have since learned that he has omitted no opportunity of speaking of the same. He conversed with great freedom, and on *leaving* his door I was honored with his extreme and distinguished courtesy, which contrasted pleasingly with the irascible prelude of the day before. I am now acting under the auspices of Sir B. C. Brodie.

Joseph H. Green, F.R.S. (of the College of Surgeons) has been very active in helping me on, and his influence is very great. He said "it is much the best leg I have ever seen"—gave me an introduction to Mr. Wakley, of the Lancet, who said "I know of no leg which can compete successfully with yours." He proposed giving a notice in the Lancet, which will soon appear.

Bransby B. Cooper (Surgeon to ——— Hospital), after witnessing its action, sprang from his chair, and exclaimed—"It is *wonderful*—it is wonderful"! .

Mr. Skey (Demonstrator of Anatomy at St. Bartholomew's Hospital) said—"It is most admirable"!—"is just what I have thought *might* be done." He continued—"I should prefer to say an Englishman makes the best leg, but I *must* say an American has, and I go for the *best*."

Mr. Guthrie greeted me with—"Who are you"! Answer—"An American." "Your name," continued he. "Palmer," replied I. "Oh yes, I have *seen* your wonderful leg," said Mr. G., "but *let me see it again*." I explained, and showed its practical operation—then asked the venerable compeer of Sir Benjamin Brodie for his opinion. He replied—"I can tell you in a few words what I think of it"—"it is a *much* better leg than is made in London."

Dr. Forbes received me with much kindness, and said, that though not personally acquainted with "such matters, he had the most entire confidence in the opinion of the many eminent American surgeons whose certificates and letters I presented.

Mr. Curling (Surgeon to the London Hospital), to whom I was introduced by Sir Benjamin Brodie, said—"It is most beautiful—the best leg I have ever seen."

Mr. Luke, Mr. Hilton, and Mr. Solly, were of the same opinion.

Mr. Shaw (Surgeon to the Middlesex Hospital) called at my rooms and gave an order for a leg for a brother in Edinburgh, who is a judge of one of the higher courts in that city.

I might go on for hours, giving you the names and expressed opinions of European surgeons who have honored me with their attention ; but the list is *now too long to be read*, and I will close it by informing you that several distinguished French surgeons, among whom are Professor Lallemand, Member of the Institute, &c., and M. Roux, Surgeon to the Hotel Dieu, have invited me to Paris. I have a patent in France, also, and am about to introduce the leg there.

I must not omit mentioning that his Excellency, Abbott Lawrence, received me with his most cheering smiles of encouragement. For such a reception by the American Minister, I am greatly indebted to Peter Hubbell, Esq., a high-minded and distinguished gentleman of Charlestown, Mass., who has for near four years made use, in person, of my invention ; also to Hon. Amos Lawrence, and Thos. Fletcher, Esq., of Philadelphia, who gave me the most valuable letters of introduction. Mr. Lawrence offered every assistance in his power to further my views. He gave me an introduction to Sir David Brewster, who is chairman of the Grand Jury of the great exhibition.

Sir D. Brewster said I had "given good practical proof of the superiority of the invention," and that so valuable an article would not fail of being duly appreciated when they made their awards.

I have noted down in my journal the expressed opinion of every surgeon and member of the Jury on such mechanism as mine, which, however, I do not feel at liberty to publish while their official report is pending ; but this I will say, that no committee, either in Boston, New York or Philadelphia, ever committed themselves half so far in praise of the leg while an award was pending, as have this Jury. You shall be informed of the final issue, and shall have a copy of their report.

I have sent to Springfield for one of our mechanics to come *immediately over*, and shall have a manufactory open here in about one month from this time ; and you, who have so kindly and earnestly interested yourself in my behalf, shall hear from time to time of my future success. And just in proportion as my interests are promoted, or as your very humble, though not unambitious servant is increasingly honored, so will increase the debt of gratitude I owe to yourself and many kind and efficient friends in my own dear country, who have cheered me on by friendly acts at home, and have sent "a wish or a thought after me" across the ocean.

In conclusion—my success thus far has exceeded my own anticipations. I have found a *readiness* to appreciate, and *frankness* to acknowledge convictions, which are beyond my former belief ; in truth, I have been *honored* much beyond my deserts, and been mistaken in high places for a much greater man than I am, or expect to be. I must tell you that, at the request of several surgeons (among whom were Mr. Arnott, Mr. Shaw, and the President of the College) I attended, last week, a grand "*Conversazione*" at the Royal College of Surgeons ; where I was compelled to run the gauntlet from 8 till 11 o'clock at night, between files of surgeons extending across the great room. It was a great opportunity, and whether I successfully embraced it or not, you can learn of the men whose names I have used in connection with the learned assemblage.

Thinking your readers furnished with a sufficient number of capital
 "I's" to enable them to read my letter without spectacles,

I remain your most ob't serv't,

London, July 10, 1851.

B. FRANK. PALMER.

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EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE (CONCLUDED.)

Berlin.—More beautifully arranged cabinets are no where within my recollection, than those of the School of Mines, and the mineralogical collection in the University of Berlin. There is a small piece of meteoric iron, in which a wrought stone is fast, having the moon and stars cut upon it—and the little mass was probably once a ring, and found at Pompeii. Somebody had it made out of the metal from the skies, in a remote age—which demonstrates that meteoric iron fell then, as it now does, occasionally. No such thing as a description of the museum could be undertaken by any others than the professors and curators. One block of malechite, from Siberia, is valued at 4000 thalers—not far from \$2,800 of our currency. The first diamond ever found in Siberia, discovered by Humboldt, was shown me. Some slabs, containing fossil foot marks of the Chirothereum, are striking specimens. The anatomical museum occupies a spacious suit of apartments, but it did not come up to my expectations. Two human skeletons, over seven feet tall, were the gems of the place. All the wet preparations, and those in comparative anatomy, struck me favorably. The zoological cabinet is vast. Every section is unsurpassed for neatness and order. There are 22,000 birds set up. The fossil bones are not numerous or rare to a person who has seen the collections in France and England.

The medical school of the University, conducted by the most learned of men in their several branches, is not a very large one, taking into consideration the reputation of the faculty, and the centralization of every thing scientific at Berlin. Two courses of lectures are delivered in the year, of six months duration each. Two months slip away in a manner to make out only ten months of lecturing. The professors realize but small fees for their laborious services. They would be frightened at such incomes as some very common kinds of talent command in some of the medical schools of the United States. Prof. Weiss and Prof. Gustavus Rose, gentlemen of extensive learning, are the professors of mineralogy and crystallography. Prof. Ritter—that extraordinary man in physical geography—is a tall, large-sized, heavy man, with a gigantic head, covered with flowing, long white hair. He is all kindness and cordiality—and cannot be otherwise than a very agreeable man. He is 72 years of age, having been born at Quedlingburg, Aug. 8, 1779, but active and ambitious as ever. His library embraces his own favorite topics, and some of every thing else. He seems to live in the midst of the collection, as all these German scholars do—for they have scarcely a thought beyond the immediate subject to which their laborious lives are devoted. Prof. Ehrenberg—the literal meaning of whose name is "mountain of honor"—is quite a short man, thick set, with a round full face, hair quite gray, whose enthusiasm is great on microscopical researches. He was born at Delitzsch, April 19, 1795. He,