THE LATE JAMES G. WAKLEY, M.D.

WE might fill several pages of our present number with grateful tributes to the work and character of the late Dr. Wakley, Editor of *THE LANCET*. It is very gratifying to those concerned in this Journal to receive such communications, and very painful to them to be unable to publish more than a few of them. Those whose communications do not appear will understand the extreme pressure on our space, and will believe that, even out of deference to him whose loss is so acutely felt, we must use it so as to advance the great ends of Medicine. The following lines are from one whose friendship Dr. Wakley valued much. Their authorship might have been guessed without the appended name, which many English readers will, however, be glad to see, as of one still bound by strong ties to this Journal.

IN MEMORIAM—J. G. W.

Non secus ac fierunt Palinurum Troes ademptum
Per freta nocturnam nave tenente viam,
Defendus nobis raptus de puppe magister
Pervigil adversas tot superare vices:
Digne, mari rerum, qui molireris habenas
A patre donatas deficiente manu,
Direxti cursum, medica ducente Minerva,
Quo genus humanum cunque petebat opem.
Ergo perpetuus carum sopor urget amicum
Quem Pudor et lugent cum Probitate Fides?
Cui fuit in terris curae praestare salutem
Illum habet in caelis non peritura Salus.

J. P. STEELE, M.D.

IDEM ANGLICE REDDITUM.

As wept the Trojans wandering o'er the deep
Their missing Palinure's directing power,
We mourn our Palinurus, prompt to keep
Unerring watch through many a fateful hour:
Oh worthy, on life's waters, of the helm
Thy sire bequeath'd thee! In thy yearly course
Thou hail'dst each harbour of the healing realm
Whence Science still could perfect her resource.
Sound is thy slumber; yet, from o'er thy grave,
Unselfish Worth and Faith, in accents soft,
Say: He whose part below was life to save
Shall rise, redeem'd, to better life aloft.

J. P. S.

From medical officers of the Royal Navy letters of condolence have been received, expressive of their sense of their "loss of a sturdy friend and advocate of the rights of their department—one who, during thirty years, never failed to render his aid on every just occasion, by bringing their wrongs and claims to the knowledge of the profession at large, by opening his columns to the communications sent to him by the trusted representatives of the corps."

"THE LANCET" AND THE LATE DR. WAKLEY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In one of his essays Bacon says that "they are happy men whose natures sort with their vocations." After reading the articles which have appeared concerning the late Dr. Wakley, I have come to the conclusion that his life was singularly happy. His nature seems to have sorted with his essentially responsible vocation of Editor of *THE LANCET* in a fashion that is seldom observed amid the feverish changefulness of these latter days. It was indeed fortunate that such was the case, more especially when one remembers and considers the great and, in my opinion, beneficent influence which *THE LANCET* possessed, and

continues to possess, over the words and actions of the medical profession. Under the guidance of Dr. Wakley, it became something more and better than a merely Medical Journal. It has discovered to the profession, and continues to enforce the discovery upon the attention of medical practitioners, the fact that the science of medicine has a higher end before it than is to be found in the everyday work of patching up decrepit humanity. Beyond the usually understood routine of general medical practice there are many questions of moment, with the settlement of which the medical practitioner is concerned. I have always regarded the prevention of disease as the most important part of my duty as a medical practitioner, and I am glad to say that the education of the people in the first principles of sanitary science is becoming the fashion. The necessity for watchfulness in the education of children has frequently been insisted on by the late Editor of *THE LANCET*. The recognition of insanity in connexion with criminal outbreaks, and the consequently intelligent restriction of the insane criminal; the intimate, and, as I believe, inseparable connexion between physical and mental life; the improvement of the race by means of patient investigation into the wide and far-reaching subject of hereditary transmission of physical virtues and defects; the supply of rational and informing amusements to the multitudes whose thoughts are in their eyes and ears,—with all these, and other questions the medical practitioner is concerned, and it will not be the fault of *THE LANCET*—if a continuity of its excellent purpose be preserved—if he remain hard and fast in a narrow and thought-obliterating groove.

I have been impelled to write these words by a consideration of the manner in which Dr. Wakley discharged the onerous duties of Editor. For editors in general I have a profound and occasionally panic-stricken respect. They are, in the best and most real sense of the term, absolute monarchs. Dr. Wakley seems to have been a genial and kindly occupant of the editorial throne. For a long period of time, he conducted, with marked and increasing success, a Journal to the words of which, not only a profession singularly jealous of any infringement of its rights, but also the intelligent public, turn an interested ear. He seems to have possessed in full measure a store of that discerning and discriminating wit which, with keen vision, separates the gold from the dross of human life, and without which learning is an unfruitful field; and yet such men as he pass from the knowledge of their kind with little ceremony. A statesman, a soldier, a man of science, or a leader in literature must die in a rude gothic fashion, on the uncurtained stage of life; but the journalist—the interpreter of the world's incoherent babble—dies after the more decorous fashion of the great dramatist, out of the sight of men. The busy world is astonished for the moment when it learns that the editor of this or that important journal is dead. He had laboured with hearty devotion to the cause in which he was engaged, but his labour had been in secret, or known only to the few who had laboured by his side. The influence, however, that such a man exerts on the course of human life and the character of human action remains as an indefinite and immortal essence, and I am Positivist enough to believe that for the honest and conscientious journalist there is an impersonal immortality of the sweetest and most unselfish kind. I do not know if the breathless world will pause for a moment's reflection upon the worth of such a man as Dr. Wakley, or bewilder itself over the consideration of monument and memorial. To his friends, with whom there is not only the sadness of the recent sorrow, but also the satisfaction of reflecting upon his character and worth, the best monument will be the fragrant memory of his well-spent life.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Glasgow, Sept. 5th, 1886.

ROBERT MACPHERSON.