rendering illegal the sale of that abominable compound of opium and spices called "Godfrey's Cordial,"—that upas draught yecept "a real blessing to mothers,"—that most impudent compound termed "Parr's Life Pills," and every other quack pill or potion, it will be received with more respect than if the same were presented without the members of both houses of parliament having been previously informed of the same, and urged to support it by their own private medical attendant. The evils of quackery only want to be more fully exposed, to secure, in a great measure, our object.

The third object of such a society would be, to secure a Bill for the registration of every qualified practitioner in England, and for obtaining the means of punishing those quacks who practise without a proper qualification, by information before two magistrates, who should have the power to inflict a fine of 5*l.* for the first offence, and imprisonment with hard labour on its being repeated.

I am well aware that some will consider it quite impossible to put down quackery; no barrister or solicitor is allowed to practise unless properly qualified,—no clergyman to preach, unless properly ordained; and it is difficult to perceive why the medical profession alone is to be left without defences. At present we must try to protect ourselves, and if every qualified medical man join with us, how small a sum would be necessary from each member of this society for such a purpose.

Lastly, so long as our government continues deaf to our remonstrances, (and if we become and remain united—if we throw aside those petty jealousies, those miserable heart-burnings, which are so common amongst us, and which stamp us with disgrace; for if not true to each other, how can we expect the public to be so?—if we act more worthy the character of men and of Christians—these our just demands cannot be long resisted,) it would be the duty and object of such a society to inform the public of the dangerous nature of the quackish compounds they so unthinkingly swallow; and if OUR LEAGUE, by the circulation of pamphlets containing sound physiological knowledge, educates the public mind on the subject in question, we may hope to see the dawning of that coming day, when the whole race of quacks will be driven from the land, when the mists of delusion shall have vanished, when the scales of ignorance will fall from the eyes of the public, when the fate of the quacks of the present day must be that of the exorcists, necromancers, and wizards, of a more deluded period even than our own.

I am well aware that the above are very hasty and imperfect hints. I have no wish to become the leader of this great movement; I am quite willing to fight in the ranks under any leader that may be selected. The subject has not been sought by me, it has been forced upon me; but happy shall I be indeed, if, by drawing your attention and that of the profession to it, some plan may be hit upon for the annihilation of quacks, both in and out of the profession. If this is accomplished, may I not say, "*nec ego frustra?*"

Your very obedient servant,

East Retford, Nov. 1846. JOHN CHARLES HALL, M.D., M.R.C.S.

THE STUDY OF ANATOMY AT MANCHESTER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Allow me, through the medium of your esteemed publication, to make a few remarks, on what (in common with my fellow-students) I consider to be a most shameful arrangement in the supply of the dissecting-room of the Manchester Royal School of Medicine, with subjects for anatomical investigation.

The bodies retailed to the students are *almost* always opened, and not merely opened, but frequently so hacked, that, besides destroying the thoracic and abdominal portions, the neck is half spoiled at its base, and parts belonging to the upper extremity are cut away. But this is not all. Owing to the uncouth examinations, the vessels from the arch of the aorta are cut off so high up, that it becomes next to impossible to inject the head, and neck, and upper extremities; and so many smaller vessels are also cut across, that the compound used runs out in a regular stream, thereby preventing a minute injection, not to mention the mess that it makes besides. Again, the subjects are in such a state, that it is exceedingly difficult to obtain a good view of the parts concerned in hernia. Add to all this, that we do not get a quarter part of the number that should be supplied. For example, last session, 1845-46, we had sixteen subjects; allowing six parts to each, it will amount to ninety-six, or a little more than one portion for every individual student.

To qualify or explain the word "*almost*," used in the first

part of this complaint, I would observe, that in the session, 1844-45, there were provided, I think, three unopened bodies and in 1845-46, two.

Who, or what, is the cause of this? Nearly all the bodies obtained are brought from the workhouse, and it is the duty of the resident medical officer to make all necessary examinations of those who die within the walls. That post is now occupied by Dr. Francis—

"Multa petentibus,
Desunt multa."

Doubtless, Dr. F. would urge this as a reason for his continuous researches in every body; but do not scores die there annually of the same disease; and might he not, without the shadow of a loss, spare some of these from his scalpel, for the benefit of those who are comparatively uninitiated? For it is reported that the post-mortems are frequently mere formal examinations, and often take place, not for the sake of explaining anomalous symptoms, but merely to increase the number.—

"Quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit
Ab dis plura fuit——."

I would observe, in application of the quotation, that if abstaining from plunging the knife into a body known to have perished from a definite disease, is considered by the resident medical officer, self-denial, by how much the more he so exercises it, by so much the more will he be gratefully remembered by the Manchester medical students.

Lastly, it is owing to the applications of our demonstrator, Mr. W. Smith, to the authorities at the workhouse, being futile, that I feel thus obliged to make public, through you, the present state of affairs, as being the only likely mode of redress. Authenticating my letter, by enclosing my name and address, I remain, Sir, your very obedient servant,

Manchester, November, 1846.

A STUDENT.

SYPHILIS, AND THE QUACKERY OF DRUGGISTS.

[LETTER FROM MR. YOUNG, DRUGGIST, SUNDERLAND.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Though I am a quack, according to your interpretation of the term, yet I trust your contempt for my character will not exclude a subscriber from addressing to the profession a few words of justification.

I am a druggist in one of the largest seaports in the empire, and one branch of my business is to prescribe for the various forms of syphilis. Before I urge my own vindication, allow me to express the satisfaction I felt in reading the very important statements respecting the awful prevalence of that disease, to which you have felt it your duty to direct the attention of the government and nation. And permit me to say, that I appreciate the wisdom which has induced you to reserve your opinion on the remedy—knowing the delicacy of the whole subject, and the necessity of the public mind being first awakened to a just conception of the magnitude of this question of social morality. Expecting you to advocate the introduction of some system similar to that of France, I fancied I already heard indignant remonstrance from an Exeter-Hall convention, denouncing such a proposition as a public recognition of vice, and a stain on the moral reputation of Christian England. Why, indeed, thousands of honest people have no adequate knowledge of the extent of this dark pestilence,—its very existence is to them a mystery, and is associated in their minds only with the degraded libertine, who may well be allowed to endure a just retribution.

Now, for many years I have had occasion to see much of syphilis, and it is my conviction, that in the maritime population not one in five escapes the infection of sexual disease. What reflections does such a fact suggest!

And let it be remembered that the secrecy the patient labours to preserve is so natural, that he will subject himself to the treatment of any quack rather than confess his shame to the family practitioner.

Every day brings to our counter erring mortals in search of relief; and may I not say to the profession—Though I have not studied anatomy, physiology, and pathology, in your schools, yet observation and experience have taught me how to address myself to the diagnosis and successful treatment of the less complicated forms of venereal maladies; and is it to be expected that I am to say to my customer, (when I sincerely believe I can relieve his suffering,) "O, sir, I really don't understand your complaint; you must go to a medical man." Why, in such a case the fellow would take me for one who did not understand his business, and so far from following

my advice, would tumble into the voracious jaws of the first unprincipled quack he encountered.

I will freely acknowledge, that did the masses of my countrymen entertain what, in my heart, I believe to be the luminous and comprehensive views which distinguish the Editor of *THE LANCET*, then, indeed, the necessity for my quackery would cease to exist; neither would I be troubled with applications for relief. We have, however, not to deal with some imaginary era of intellectual civilization, but with humanity as it is.

You may be disposed to class my claim to conscientiousness with those of Professor Henderson and Dr. Madden, on whom you have inflicted so terrible a castigation; yet, nevertheless, I will affirm that I never prescribe for any individual unless I believe I am able to afford him assistance.

I would scorn to touch the money of the man to whom I could not return an equivalent; and if any case presents itself of serious aspect, I at once refuse the responsibility of its treatment, and urge on the patient the importance of an immediate application to a legal practitioner.

I hate quackery as much as any man; I have seen its murderous curse blast the lives and happiness of my acquaintance. I have never permitted either old Parr's, Holloway's, or any other universal specific, to enter my shop; if I did so, I should think I lent my name to breathe a simoom of death amongst those who placed confidence in my character.

If any man will show to me that my practice is a breach of moral principle when I prescribe for those cases I believe I understand, and in which there is no probability of their application to a more competent adviser, I will then abandon my quackery for ever.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Sunderland, Dec. 1846.

JOHN YOUNG.

* * We shall offer some remarks on the subjects of this curious letter in the next *LANCET*.—ED. L.

ILLIBERALITY OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In common with many others, I have read with great interest several articles "On the Controlment of Syphilis in the Metropolis," and your comments on the illiberality of certain institutions in refusing admission to persons afflicted with venereal diseases. I thank you for calling public attention to the subject; and allow me to inquire, if you are aware that at the London Hospital such a law still exists, and is not infringed on? as appears to be the case at the Bloomsbury Dispensary, from the letter of Mr. Cooper, which appeared in the last number of *THE LANCET*.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

December, 1846.

SCRUTATOR.

* * We thank Scrutator for directing our attention to the subject; and for the credit of the institution and the medical officers, trust that our correspondent is misinformed. We will, however, make inquiries, and revert to the subject.—ED. L.

DR. LEE'S CHARGES AGAINST DR. SHARPEY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I continue firmly convinced of the truth of all the statements contained in my paper on the ganglia and nerves of the uterus, published in your journal on the 21st of November last. In the number for December 5th, I have preferred four charges against Dr. Sharpey, as a member of the Committee of Physiology and Council of the Royal Society:—

"The first charge is, that he pronounced a judgment at the Royal Society on an important question in science, respecting which he had neglected duly to inform himself."

"The second charge is, that, with several other members of the Committee of Physiology of the Royal Society, he held an illegal meeting, on the 27th Oct., 1845, at which irregular and unconstitutional proceedings took place, which deceived the Council, and have brought the deepest discredit on an institution the honour of which he was under a solemn obligation to defend."

"The third charge is, that he presented a report to the Committee of Physiology containing statements which have been demonstrated to be unsupported by facts."

"The fourth charge against Dr. Sharpey is, that he was a party to the violation of the regulations established by her Majesty Queen Victoria for the award of the highest scientific honours placed at the disposal of the Royal Society."

These accusations imply, not only misrepresentation, but injustice, and an utter disregard of the statutes of the Royal Society and the mandates of the Queen. Unable to refute these grave charges, and to remove the imputations which now rest upon him, Dr. Sharpey is compelled to be silent, and to take refuge under the frivolous pretext, that he does not feel himself "warranted, consistently with the reserve imposed on a member of the Council, and expected of a member of a Committee, to enter into further explanations respecting the proceedings of these bodies."

When Dr. Sharpey has answered these charges, and proved, to the satisfaction of all scientific men, that he discharged the sacred duty entrusted to him by the Council of the Royal Society in an enlightened, honourable, and impartial manner, and that he did not decide in the dark, without investigation, and contrary to the clearest evidence, I will then forgive him for his personal vituperations.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Dec. 1846.

ROBERT LEE.

SIR B. BRODIE ON SPINAL CURVATURES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In *THE LANCET* of Dec. 12th, Sir Benjamin Brodie publicly declares to the profession, through a lecture delivered in the theatre of St. George's Hospital, on November 25th of the present year, that "when he first became engaged in a considerable private practice, and cases of curvature of the spine were presented to his observation, he was in doubt as to their nature and treatment; that he knew nothing of them from his own experience; that, in this respect, his education had been imperfect; and that he had learned nothing of them from his teachers." In reference to the imputation thus broadly thrown, at this distant period of time, on the character and attainments of those who presided over the school of Windmill-street at the beginning of the present century, I beg to state, that the teacher from whom Sir Benjamin Brodie learned much of his surgery, and nearly all of his anatomy, was the late James Wilson, the immediate successor of Dr. Baillie and Mr. Cruikshank in the school of Dr. William Hunter, and Professor of Anatomy and Surgery, at the time of his death, to the Royal College of Surgeons in London. From this distinguished surgeon and anatomist, with whom he was for some years associated as demonstrator and lecturer on anatomy, and subsequently as lecturer on surgery, it is impossible but that Mr. Brodie must have learned much that Sir Benjamin Brodie might, even now, with advantage remember. It is in the full recollection of the many surviving pupils of my late father, that he taught the spine, like all he did teach, as one who understood what he undertook, and that he directed, on all fitting occasions, an earnest and special attention to the several deviations, by curvature, of the vertebral column, and to their appropriate treatment by surgical or other means. It will likewise be remembered by these gentlemen, that the museum of Windmill-street, formed principally by Mr. Wilson's own hand, was rich in preparations illustrating this very interesting branch of anatomical surgery; and it is, moreover, well known that Sir Benjamin Brodie availed himself to the utmost, during the long period of his connexion with this celebrated school, of the many opportunities which it afforded him for improvement and advancement in his profession. How, then, is it possible that Sir Benjamin Brodie, in cases of curvature of the spine, should have learned from his teachers (I use his own word) nothing! Those who may be at first misled by this declaration of Sir Benjamin Brodie, in disparagement of his former teacher and colleague, will find abundant reason to revise their opinion by perusing the chapter on "Rickets, as affecting the Spine and Pelvis," in "Wilson's Lectures on the Bones and Joints," delivered before the London College of Surgeons, in the summer of 1820, and published in the ensuing autumn. To this chapter of thirty pages, (as to the volume generally,) there is not a surgeon, however worthy, of the present day, who might not, with advantage, refer, for a clear, sound exposition of the diseases affecting the bony and articular structures, for approved and original methods of treatment, and for a manly, generous appreciation of the labours of others in the same department of knowledge. In the voluminous notes of my late father's Lectures, and in his admirable manuscript catalogue of his museum, now in the Edinburgh College of Surgeons, I have further evidence, for those who need it, that in cases of curvature of the spine, there was good anatomical surgery in England, even before Sir Benjamin Brodie "first became engaged in a considerable private prac-