by the members of the college to their responsible office as compilers of the Pharmacopœia; for surely, if it occupied that place in their attention which it claims, they could not be so unacquainted with the history of the work as this statement implies.

Dr. Seymour's reply contains another statement which I believe to be far from correct, though it may not be capable of such easy and palpable disproof. The Doctor says, "I know that a large portion of the reformed Codex was taken from that," (the London Ph.) I know not on what foundation Dr. Seymour's knowledge of this fact may rest, but I presume not upon a personal examination of the works in question. Admitting (what, however, I am not sure is the case) that the interval between the publication of the two works was sufficient to allow of this wholesale appropriation, I am unable to discover any internal evidence that the compilers of the Codex availed themselves largely of the opportunity. If they have been guilty of robbery, it is certain they have not the excuse of poverty to plead. Of the first 200 articles in the Codex, (comprising the chemical compounds,) more than half have no representatives in our Pharmacopœia. Of those preparations which are common to both works, the majority are so different in the processes or proportions, or are accompanied in the Codex with such additional details, as to preclude the idea of simple transference. And with regard to some which are most nearly identical, may not this be accounted for by supposing them to be derived from a common source?

I forbear to occupy your valuable space with further particulars, but must beg room for the expression of my regret that, in the various schemes of medical reform which have been recently agitated, the subject of a national Pharmacopœia has occupied so little attention. The necessity of a single authorized Pharmacopœia for the whole of the United Kingdom becomes daily more urgent. In these days of rapid and general locomotion, a prescription may be required, within a few weeks or even days, to be dispensed in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin; and the probability is, that it would be compounded, on these several occasions, with ingredients prepared by three different authorized formulæ. The inconveniences arising from this state of things, to all parties concerned, are too obvious to require comment. If the existing colleges cannot agree to co-operate for the removal of this public evil, it is time this part of their duty was transferred to some newly-constituted body, uninfluenced by those mutual jealousies, clashing interests, or supposed difficulties, which have hitherto prevented so desirable a consummation.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, H. B.

THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE, SURGERY, AND OBSTETRICS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

"What's in a name?" *Much*, then, if the general practitioners *will have* an "Institute," which is about as necessary and as much wanted as a "parrot wants a pipe." In the name of common sense, let it be called by something which, at least, will give us an idea of what it is, and is to be. As to the term "Institute of General Practitioners," I, in my simplicity, deem it little better than sheer nonsense, certainly anything but euphonious. Let it be named as above; why should we not now be called "The Faculty"? and, as your correspondent well suggests, let "M.F." be the addition to the name, instead of the unseemly "L. A. C." and M.R.C.S.E.

Take up the subject, and you will oblige your sincere admirer,
"A SKETCHER IN CHARCOAL."

THE LATE DOINGS AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If the gentlemen elected assistant-surgeons at University College Hospital, sent to the council as good testimonials as those printed in last week's LANCET, be assured they (the council) would, in vindication of themselves, have printed them. No one finds much fault with one of the appointments, *every one does with the other*. It would have been a treat to have seen a concours. I know something of more than one of the candidates, and my knowledge enables me to state that Mr. Marshall would not have been successful. His taste did not tend that way; he prefers fiddling in the dissecting-rooms, studying, perhaps, the perinæum of an ornithorynchus rather than the anatomy of hernia. If report speaks truly, Mr. Marshall himself was surprised, no doubt never believing that Messrs. Quain and Sharpey could or would

go so far. The whole matter is a surprise—no one can understand the jugglery by which the council are acted on. The council are knocked about like footballs, and yet declare that nobody moves them. It is sincerely to be hoped that THE LANCET will not rest until everything is investigated; until it is clearly shown how Mr. Quain, being compelled to turn his longing looks from the chair of surgery, continued to seize that of clinical surgery; how Sharpey, in addition to his guarantee, has got the curatorship of the museum; seeing poor Ellis deprived of this remuneration, and given a professor's worthless gown, and told to bargain with Quain for the emolument. It is altogether a nice affair, from the plots against Mr. Cooper to the intrigues which have enabled Quain and Sharpey to share the loaves and fishes amongst themselves and their protégés.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

London, August 30, 1848.

M.B. LOND.

A NEW PROCESS FOR MAKING COMPOUND DECOCTION OF ALOES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As I have found the following method to answer extremely well, perhaps it may be of service to some of your numerous readers.

Take the ingredients as ordered by the "Pharmacopœia Londinensis." Put the aloes, myrrh, and carbonate of potash into a common coffee percolator; place a funnel in, and adapted to the size of, an infusion pot capable of holding a quart; in the funnel put a good-sized piece of sponge, and on the sponge place the percolator; then gradually add boiling distilled water, until twelve ounces shall have percolated; let the liquor stand a short time, until the temperature is diminished; lastly, put it into a proper bottle, add the saffron, extr. of liquorice, and tinct. card. comp., shake it frequently, and in a few days or a week, when strained, it will be fit for use.

Or, all the ingredients may be placed in the percolator at the first; then proceed by percolation; and lastly, add the compound tincture of cardamoms.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Old Kent Road, Sept. 5, 1848. J. TAYLOR.

REMOVAL OF NITRATE OF SILVER STAINS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I take leave to communicate two methods which I have discovered for the removal of stains caused by nitrate of silver, which I believe will be found superior to that proposed by my friend, Dr. W. B. Herapath.

Both methods consist in the conversion of the silver stain into the chloride of silver, and then washing out the chloride with a solution of the hydrochlorate of ammonia, in which it is very soluble.

The first method consists in applying to the stain a solution of the chloride of lime, and then washing the chloride of silver out with a strong solution of the hydrochlorate of ammonia; but this method, from the application of the chloride of lime, cannot be used when the stain is upon coloured articles.

From the poisonous nature of the materials used in the following method, it ought not to be employed when the former is available; it, however, has the long sought for desideratum of removing silver stains without destroying the colour of the article stained. This process is simply that of washing the stain with bichloride of mercury dissolved in a solution of hydrochlorate of ammonia. In this process the bichloride of mercury is decomposed, and the chloride of silver so formed is at the same time removed by the hydrochlorate of ammonia. By one application the so-called "Indelible Ink" is instantly effaced.

The reduction to a single process by this method, and its not injuring colours, are desiderata not possessed by any other process; and in addition to these advantages may be mentioned the cheapness and ease with which the articles used can be procured.

Old Market-street, Bristol, J. ST. J. GAGE PARSONS, M.R.C.S.E.
August, 31st, 1848.

MEDICAL FEES AT ASSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having recently refused to answer the questions respecting the assurance of two lives for the Clerical, Medical, and General Assurance Company, in consequence of that company not being willing to pay me the ordinary fee, I shall feel obliged by your informing me, at your earliest conve-

nience, what offices are in the habit of recognising our just claims for remuneration.

I would strongly advise all my professional brethren who consider they are entitled to a fee for such services, to remember the titles of those offices, and in a very short time every office in the kingdom would find it to be not only its interest, but absolutely essential to its existence, to make a suitable return for the opinions of medical men, which they are so ready to make use of, and without which they cannot venture to grant a single policy.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Dover, August 20, 1848.

EDWARD JONES.

THE UPTON-ON-SEVERN UNION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It has been with no small degree of pain that I have for the last few weeks read the correspondence published by the Upton-on-Severn surgeons; for it appears to me, that the great bearing of the case on the profession *generally* is being, and indeed is already, laid aside; and instead of its being a public, it becomes a private case, between the late and the present medical officers of the union. Surely, would it not have been more proper to have put Mr. West's case, as showing the impropriety of his taking the Powick district, on the score of not letting the guardians *feel* the want of a medical officer, than of placing it on the more private and personal ground that Mr. Braddon has done in your number for the 2nd of September?

No one can for an instant sympathize with Mr. West. The part he has played has indeed been unworthy a medical man,—to give in to the wishes of his influential friends, and accept the appointment, thereby doubtless improving his private influence and practice, but most decidedly not his standing in the eyes of the profession; for even if he did not approve of the proceedings of the late officers, surely he did not intend to record his approval of the principle of the present system of poor-law medical relief, which he undoubtedly tacitly did, by helping the guardians out of their difficulty. On such an occasion, should he not have borne in mind the system, rather, at which the blow was struck, than the individuals who struck it?

It would be fruitless here to expatiate on the so-often urged point of medical men, as a body, being always foiled in their attempts by want of unanimity, than which a more striking instance than the present can scarcely be found. But most assuredly, so long as guardians find that medical men squabble amongst themselves, and so long as they can find men so anxious to accept the enviable position of union doctor, as Mr. Marsh seems to find it,—or men as Mr. West to accept office, even for a day,—while brother professionals make a strike against a system that even Messrs. West and Marsh must acknowledge to be degrading,—so long will neither members of Parliament, guardians, or the public, acknowledge or try to mitigate the humiliating position of the poor-law medical officer.—I am, Sir, yours very obediently,

September 4th, 1848.

JUNIUS.

POOR LAW MEDICAL RELIEF.—THE BICESTER UNION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your question "Of what use are Poor Law Committees and Conventions?" in your leading article of the 5th inst., induces me to give an opinion formed upon strict observation of matters connected with the present mode of administering medical relief to the poor, and the system resorted to, to procure such relief, by those to whose care the whole pauper population is entrusted. That opinion is, they are totally useless—unless, by the exposures they are inducing, and likely to induce, they may be the means of having the whole fabric of medical relief to the poor reconstructed, and upon a broader basis. Pressure from without is requisite; and with two or three good men in the cause, perpetually dingling the dirge into the Minister's ears, he must at length awake from the state of lethargy or apathy in which, as relates to general as well as medical reform, he has long indulged. Finality finds few friends, and must succumb to our transatlantic brethren's "go a-head" system.

Until a change is made by which each pauper can seek for medical relief from the person he believes likely to relieve him, or is nearest his residence, and until medical men are better remunerated for their toil and time, the sick pauper will not have that attendance that he justly deserves, and humanity points to

With the existing law, until there is a greater *esprit de corps* among members of the medical profession, which is at present at a discount, the powers that be will have no difficulty in carrying out their Malthusian plan. For instance, in this, the Bicester Union, a highly respected medical officer was arraigned for neglect of duty. The case was formally discussed before an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner and full board of guardians. It was so evident that there was no wilful neglect, that twenty-five out of twenty-seven of the guardians voted in his favour; yet he was dismissed by the irresponsible despots, and by them the board was ordered to elect another in his place. The *esprit de corps* ruling high in the neighbourhood, none of his medical brothers would accept the office, and a person was of necessity elected, which same individual was considered by the same commissioners as incapable of holding the office, after being elected in an adjacent union, for want of qualification! The man incompetent to attend the paupers in one union is quite competent in the next—O tempora! O mores! You say, "If there had been no qualified," &c. Qualification, as illustrated above, is no obstacle. Get money—honestly if you can; but get money—is said to have been the advice of the Scotch parent to the afterwards celebrated Scotch physician. So the poor law commissioners say to the Upton guardians—"Get a medical man, qualified if you can; but so long as he is a medical man, do not look at acquirements, capability, or qualification—but get a medical man."

Alter the law as regards administration of relief to the sick poor; appoint medical inspectors, deputies, and their acting co-equals; and the rate-payers would not suffer more in pocket—the poor, in person, not half so much.

Your obedient servant,

August 24, 1848.

AMICUS PAUPERUM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have been very much gratified to observe that the views I propounded in a letter inserted in THE LANCET of March 18, for what you were pleased to call an equitable adjustment of the question of medical attendance on the poor, have met with several supporters, and more particularly Dr. J. Davies of Coleshill, Warwickshire, who has advocated precisely the same plan, in an excellent paper inserted in THE LANCET of this week. Dr. J. Davies says his system is intended to apply to the rural districts, and confesses himself incapable of forming an opinion how far it might be advisable to extend it to large manufacturing towns. Now I have not the least doubt of its being applicable to all districts, either in country or town. It is notorious that the present system of poor-law medical relief is characterized by cruelty, both to the profession and the poor—the union medical officer being very ill-paid, and the poor, in numerous instances, shamefully neglected. In order to render it satisfactory alike to the poor and the profession, by far the simplest and best system would be, to throw open the poor-law medical attendance to every qualified member of the profession, so as to give the poor an opportunity of selecting any surgeon in the district they thought proper, and it must be apparent to every thinking mind, that they would be much better attended to—at the same time, medical men must be better remunerated. Such a plan appears, on the face of it, so very fair and efficacious, that I cannot conceive it would be opposed, except by some flinty-hearted guardian, on the score of a little extra expense; or some surgeon who has made his medical attendance under the poor-law, on the elder branches of a family, the means of compelling the younger branches to employ him.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

August 26, 1848.

HUMANITAS.

DISEASES OF THE SPINAL SYSTEM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Dr. Marshall Hall, at page 205 of THE LANCET for August 19th, remarks—"no experiment has been devised, to my knowledge, to induce augmented susceptibility of the spinal system, through the medium of the incident nerve or nerves of any part of the spinal system." I may understand him incorrectly, but it does seem to me that his ideas lead him to believe that lesion of an incident nerve is always or at any time a cause of tetanus;—that is to say, that augmented susceptibility may commence in a wounded nerve, and being conveyed to a centre, may create, not excite, tetanus. I may be presumptuous in seeking for a remark or two from him on the subject, but my excuse must be that I have recently known a fatal case of tetanus occur, to which, had I been called, I should have recommended the "perfect quietude" treatment with much hopeful confidence.