formed as to the process of assimilation, to use urea in this way.

Were it not for the importance of the subject, I could not have prevailed upon myself to reply to any anonymous correspondent, though his language, as in the present instance, were kind and even flattering.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

W. REID CLANNY.

Burlington Hotel, Cork Street.

Oct. 6, 1829.

LITHOTRITY.—CLAIMS OF M. CIVIALE AND BARON HEURTELoup.

I SHOULD have attended much sooner to the article of Mr. Edwards on the process and history of lithotrity, had not other and very pressing occupations prevented me. Lithotrity is too little known in England for me to let pass unrefuted, the inaccuracies and misrepresentations with which the article alluded to abounds. Its imperfections as a history, will be readily detected; but it is also made the vehicle of complaint against the whole body of medical men in this country, as well as of calumny against Dr. Civiale and myself; and on these grounds I feel obliged to notice it.

Mr. Edwards fears, that the merit of the distinguished foreigner is not duly appreciated. Seriously, Sir, what right has Mr. Edwards to complain, that Englishmen should withhold their patronage, or bestow it too feebly, when in this they do no more than follow the example of the French themselves? Mr. Edwards is utterly mortified at the humiliating idea, that a large body of surgeons can be influenced by such unworthy motives as avarice or national jealousy. Let me ask for what reason Mr. Edwards supposes the respectable body of surgeons to be actuated by such sordid motives? Is not this, like many other of his assertions, at once gratuitous and undeservedly reproachful? Is there no more honourable way of accounting for the apathy of the surgeons? It does not enter into Mr. Edwards's head, that the objections to M. Heurteloup's improvements, which caused them to be almost universally rejected in France, may have set the majority of that large body right? It does not occur to him that my letter, though showing very briefly the defects of M. Heurteloup's instruments, may have had due weight with English surgeons. Why, then, should Mr. Edwards utter these cries of upbraiding and distress, while he lavishes the assertions, that Civiale has failed in Paris, that M. Heurteloup has succeeded there, and that I am a mere agent despatched hither by Civiale to embarrass the progress of his *protégé*? He does not reflect that he

has to deal with one who has the advantage over him, of knowing what he is speaking about.

Civiale completely failed!!! This is strange indeed! Civiale is rewarded for his invention, and labours by the academies at different times, in sums amounting nearly to a thousand pounds. The government confers a title on him. One of the most eminent surgeons in France, the Professor Baron Dubois, affected with stone in the bladder, confides himself to him, but four months since, for his cure. The highest scientific men in Europe honour him with their correspondence and friendship. Foreign potentates bestow on him medals and distinctions. The patients arriving in Paris, place themselves, almost without exception, under his care. In the short space of five years, nearly one hundred and forty persons owe their cure to him. The administration of Hospitals places at his disposal an entire ward at the Hôpital Necker, for the reception of his poor calculous patients; yet Civiale, we are told, has failed in Paris! while M. Heurteloup, who has succeeded, triumphed, carried all before him, abandoning the theatre of his successes, and the support of all those whom envy or jealousy of Civiale had identified with his cause, takes refuge amongst a people, to whose language and habits he is a stranger, and there quietly suffers himself to be insulted by the complaints which Mr. Edwards pettishly indulges in, against the apathy, the want of due appreciation, and the feeble patronage, which his *protégé* experiences in England. Now if M. Heurteloup had done so much for lithotrity as Mr. Edwards would have us believe, Civiale, instead of committing the folly of sending an agent to this country to impede his progress, ought to have rejoiced at M. Heurteloup's leaving him in undisputed possession of the field in Paris. Under such circumstances, M. Civiale, if he had the slightest perception of his own interest, would have favoured this determination of M. Heurteloup, by giving him a "golden bridge" for his exit from France, rather than have recourse to the only step which was calculated to provoke the revival of a competition, which, according to Mr. Edwards, would have been so fatal to his pretensions. How humbled a man of merit may be by an indiscreet partisan!

It is most extraordinary in a man of science to make such precipitate assurances as Mr. Edwards does. M. Heurteloup, he says, was not originally destined for the medical profession; yet so great have been his powers of mind, that Mr. Edwards does not hesitate to say, that he is the first urinary pathologist in Europe. In this country, reputations are not established so quickly. In the compliment, well meant,

no doubt, which Mr. Edwards pays to the genius of M. Heurteloup, he overlooks the adage, "*Nemo repente fit*," &c. In the same dictatorial way, he lays it down as an axiom in lithotrity, that the larger the stone is, the nearer it will lie to the neck of the bladder. Mr. Edwards must know, that lithotritists do not admit this axiom. The calculus, whether large or small, as long as it is moveable in the bladder, obeys the movements of the body: thus, in the erect posture, it rests on the trigona behind, and somewhat beneath the neck of the bladder; in stooping forward, it falls against the neck; when the patient lies on either side, it rolls towards the ureter, on the side reclined on, and when he is supine, the calculus lies on the posterior paries of the bladder. These different positions are again varied by the state of vacuity, or fulness of the organ, as well as by the irregularity of the form of the stone or the bladder respectively. His axiom, therefore, not being admitted, Mr. Edwards's reason on Civiale's instrument, cannot obtain.

The position in which Civiale and myself operate, places the stone on the posterior paries. What he states, therefore, about the movement of the instrument, and its powerful elastic branches, falls to the ground. These branches, it is true, are sufficiently powerful for the firm grasping of the stone, and the operator need have no apprehension as to their breaking in the bladder, an accident which has occurred in using the improved instruments. Mr. Edwards says, that it is a gasconade on my part, when I make the not-to-be-tolerated assertion that Civiale's instrument will seize a stone of 25 lines (2 inches) in diameter. I pity the errors into which his imperfect knowledge of this subject betrays him. I now affirm the fact once more; and further, that during the last week, I have satisfied more than twenty medical men of its truth; if Mr. Edwards persist in thinking it a gasconade, let him come and see. He admires the ingenuity with which I make out my case, by defalcating from the programme, the mention of M. Heurteloup's prize of five thousand francs; yet in the very article which he finds fault with for this omission, I state the fact, accompanied with the observation, that the prize was granted on the condition, that M. Heurteloup would publish his instruments, together with the cases of cure effected by means of them. He has not complied with this condition. Mr. Edwards states, that M. Heurteloup's superior skill must, on fair competition, carry him triumphantly through. This is Mr. Edwards's own opinion; it would be repugnant to every feeling of delicacy, to suppose that M. Heurteloup was a party to this exaggerated flattery. After this assurance, he then con-

cludes, "And how much more certainly must M. Heurteloup triumph over one who has never performed this operation with success!" This is a fine specimen of flourish alloyed with falsehood. The cases of Hannah Stewardson, of Bartholomew's Hospital, and of Mr. Stone, of Folkstone, are published; and as to my career in Paris, the majority of the respectable practitioners of that city, who would not lend themselves to a falsehood, can say what it has been. It would be most improper in me to imitate Mr. Edwards's tone of boasting, but when I have been so virulently assailed on the score of failure and inexperience, I trust, I may be permitted, without incurring any imputation of too great vanity, to say, that Civiale alone excepted, I have seen and done more of this operation, than any person living.

Mr. Edwards takes occasion to say some witty things on the simplicity of Civiale's instruments, in criticising the following phrase: "But the instruments employed by Civiale appear to us the most simple, and we are great admirers of simplicity in the construction of surgical instruments. The march of improvement has ever been, from what is more complicated, to what is less so; nature herself is the mother of simplicity." Now this has been literally the case with Civiale's invention. His first instruments were very complicated, and it was not until he had improved them to absolute simplicity, that he dared to apply them to the human body, or that he was able to achieve this important conquest for surgery. Mr. Edwards asserts, and still with his usual confidence, that the instruments of M. Heurteloup, although consisting of a greater number of parts, are more easily managed than those of Civiale.

Mr. Edwards is very apprehensive, that the objections lately made to these instruments, have taken effect. In fact he admits that they have had weight. Mr. Edwards undertakes to show, that Civiale's objections to the improvements of Heurteloup, are as futile and unfounded as were his pretensions to the original authorship. In order to his being able to fulfil this promise, it is proper that he should have a correct idea of the nature of those objections; with your permission, therefore, I shall give a transcript of them from Dr. Civiale's letter to the academy, after they had awarded a prize of five thousand francs to M. Heurteloup. He will here learn a fact, the ignorance of which has led him into so much unwarrantable assertion, that Civiale not only knows those instruments, but also the reasons, which forbid their use.

To maintain this assertion, he has recourse to an illustration, to which I beg your attention for one moment. "The mechanism of a

clock," says Mr. Edwards, "is extremely complicated, yet still so palpable is its application, that the veriest simpleton understands it." Would Mr. Edwards infer that M. Heurteloup's instrument may be managed with the same precision by the most ignorant?—A few words will expose the fallacy that lurks beneath this assertion. Mr. Edwards, satisfied with the clearness of his illustration, is heedless of the gross fault of logic, which he commits in comparing things, which, *inter se*, have no point of comparison. If simplicity be the object, every surgeon should have it in view in the construction of a surgical instrument; but, on the contrary, if it be the objection, or the evil, he ought to avoid it; the lancet, the scalpel, the bistouri, &c. must be thrown aside, and replaced by some self-acting mechanism, which reduces the duty of the surgeon to that of a mere spectator. The difference between the machine, or clock, and the surgical instrument, is this: a clock is managed by a rustic, because the delicate machinery is already adjusted to his hand; he has but to wind the cords, and all goes well; but the lithotritic instrument is altogether a different engine. Its operations are not concerted beforehand; they are quite uncertain. Its effects are not produced *per se*, and independently; on the contrary, they are altogether controlled by the hand of him who holds the instrument. It is introduced into delicate organs deeply seated, and out of view of the operator: here complexity of mechanism in the instrument, requires the direction both of a cool head and steady hands. The slightest obstacle or derangement may confuse the one and the other, and thus render dangerous an operation, which, with simpler means, would have been not only harmless but salutary. There is then a substantive disparity between the two cases. A clock, if I may so speak, knows exactly the duty it has to perform, and cannot go wrong; the lithotritic instrument must be informed every moment of what it has to do; it must be wielded by hands familiarized by long practice to its movements, and endowed with no ordinary delicacy of tact. It were perhaps worth while, and it will not be irrelevant, to give Baron Dubois' opinion of those instruments. M. Dubois being much pressed for his opinion as to their relative merits, before he had himself undergone the operation, very pithily remarked, "*Que l'instrument soit surtout simple cela posé, tant vaut l'homme, tant vaut l'instrument.*" It would be impossible, in a few words, to express more powerfully his approbation of M. Civiale's instrument. Translation might diminish its force; I therefore leave it in the original. Mr. Edwards being an able translator of French, will readily understand it.

In a note which appeared elsewhere last week from M. Heurteloup, he states, that the space between the neck of the bladder, and that part of its sides immediately opposite, may sometimes be too narrow for the free expansion of a three-branched instrument. This objection is removed at once by the statement of the fact, that neither M. Civiale nor myself, operate on large stones in the bas-fond of the bladder. The position which we give the patient, places the stone on the posterior wall of the bladder, where there is always sufficient space for the full and gentle expansion of the branches. It has been said that the branches of this instrument must be extended to a considerable degree beyond the tube, to seize a large stone. This is a strange objection. The part of the branches, which extends beyond the tube, must be an inch, to obtain a separation of three-quarters of an inch, and three inches, to produce a separation of two inches and a quarter, which suffices for seizing a stone of the same diameter.

This separation of the branches is in rigorous relation with their strength and length; for the strength of the branches is an indispensable condition to the success of the operation, whether our object be to crush a small stone, or to fix steadily, a large one. It would certainly be an easy matter, to diminish this length, and still obtain the same degree of separation; but this could not be done, without making the branches much more slender; thus depriving them of that strength, which is the only guarantee of safety in this operation.

In the infancy of lithotrity, its author, M. Civiale, employed an instrument with four branches, which he afterwards reduced to three, in order to have greater solidity without augmentation of bulk. Experience moreover proves, that with the three-branched instrument, the calculus is seized with much greater facility; and yet, nevertheless, the new improvement of this instrument which is now proposed, consists in four-branched pincers, which had been already found to be not only embarrassing, but dangerous. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours, &c.

W. B. COSTELLO.

108, Jermyn Street, Oct. 13th.

GLASGOW ROYAL INFIRMARY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Since you ceased taking notice of our Royal Infirmary, and the proceedings of its surgeons, matters have been daily changing for the worse. The salutary restraint imposed upon them by the influence of the press, is, in a great measure, gone. During