Granting, too, that women were employed more generally than at present in the practice of midwifery, would it cease to be considered a branch of "those noble sciences," while the aid of a hospital surgeon is to be sometimes required? I shall not dwell on the absurdity of women being *exclusively* employed in the management of any business, the most difficult and important part of which is to be conducted by men of "enlarged intellect," who, in order to preserve the purity of women, must derive the knowledge required for that business by inspiration, or some such supernatural means; nor shall I point you out, Sir Anthony, as the brightest example of a hospital surgeon, if he is to be selected for his enlarged intellect. When the practice of midwifery was in the hands of females, they as well understood how to break the "intricate hinges of life and death," as any "grave disinterested physician, or experienced hospital surgeon."

But do you really believe, Sir, that the corruption of the manners of women is in any degree occasioned by the employment of men as midwives? You know that many other things in this luxurious age, tend to produce that effect, without the assistance of accoucheurs. And how the morals of our wives, widows, daughters, and nieces, are to be improved by following the business of midwifery, I am quite at a loss to conjecture.

I am equally at a loss to imagine, why it was necessary to go so far as China for an example of the delicacy of women. In the reign of Charles II. when it was predicted that the world (not the moral world, as in the present instance) was about to be destroyed, the Duchess of Portsmouth observed, "that she would go to China." If this matter were properly examined, I incline to think that China would not serve your turn, Sir Anthony, any more than it would that of the Duchess of Portsmouth. You are fond of reading, I am informed, especially before delivering a Hunterian oration, and you might have read that the Roman ladies, who, according to some of the Latin writers, were remarkable for the *purity* of their manners, did not employ men in the business of midwifery. And these ladies, too, had not the advantage of a modern education, printed books, nor a Carlisle to teach them how to suppress their passions. When you write again, Sir Anthony, I should advise you to make yourself acquainted with your subject—at least in theory; but do not be ambitious of obtaining the character of a moralist.

You may observe that, in this letter, I have attempted to show the weakness of your argument. In my future communications, should they become necessary, I will endeavour to prove the fallacy of your conclusions:—that it is the same reason

which induces a good painter to paint portraits, that prompts a surgeon to undertake the business of midwifery. It is not for the gratification of lust, Sir Anthony; it is for bread:—it is for the bread which some hospital surgeons are endeavouring, by all means in their power, to monopolize and withhold. I remain, yours,

May 23, 1827.

A COMMONER.

P.S. As the pamphlet which I have attributed to you is anonymous, the author of this letter will remain unknown until that work is acknowledged, and not any longer.

MR. MACKELCAN'S REFUTATION OF THE CHARGES OF MR. SHAW.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Mr. Shaw having thought fit to publish some gross misrepresentations respecting me in the Medical and Physical Journal of the present month, and having previously industriously circulated the same; I shall esteem it a favour if you will allow me, through the medium of THE LANCET, to put the profession in possession of the facts of the case, and of the correspondence which has taken place on this subject. What degree of credence may be attached to the assertions of Mr. Shaw, after the perusal of these documents, I shall leave others to determine.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN MACKELCAN.

6, North-crescent, Bedford-square.

June 9th, 1827.

6, North Crescent, Bedford-square,
June 1st.

SIR,—I have been told that you have accused Mr. Wardrop and myself of most dishonourable and ungentlemanly conduct, in relation to a case which was under your care in the Middlesex Hospital a few months ago. You no doubt recollect that the patient I allude to died twenty-four hours after leaving the Hospital, and I understand you to have said, that you had obtained leave to examine the body, and had appointed an hour so to do; but that I in the mean time, without possessing any right to do so, went to the house, made the examination, took away the diseased parts, and told the friends that it was just the same to you as if you had done it yourself, as I would relate to you what I had found, and show you the preparation; that Mr. Wardrop had aided and abetted

me in this transaction, and that you termed me an "emissary" of his. I must request that you will, as soon as possible, address to me an answer, acknowledging or denying that you have made such a statement to any one.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

JOHN MACKELCAN.

To JOHN SHAW, Esq.

In answer to this letter, the following was received from Mr. Bell:—

SIR,—Mr. Shaw is now confined with fever, and his friends cannot let him be disturbed with a correspondence of the nature you appear to desire.

I can so far answer your note as to say, that Mr. Shaw has not at any time joined your name with dishonourable and ungentlemanlike conduct.

I have, in common with Mr. Wardrop's best friends, very much regretted the course he has pursued; I have been sorry on his own account, and very much surprised that he should have attempted to injure Mr. Shaw.

Your statement in this letter, supposing that you made the dissection, implies nothing further than incivility to the surgeons of the Middlesex Hospital, inasmuch as the parts were not submitted to their inspection. This was unprofessional and improper, and if you did this, you have an apology to make to me, who, after attending the patient anxiously with Mr. Shaw, have not had an opportunity of seeing that our opinions were correctly formed.

If I offer you the opportunity of making an apology, it is for the reason, that having seen the ill consequences of unprofessional conduct, you may separate yourself from those who have been guilty of it.

I am, Sir,

Your very obedient

CHARLES BELL.

Soho Square, June 1.

To which letter I returned the following answer.—

SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, which, I am sorry to observe, contains no satisfactory answer to the communication which I addressed to Mr. Shaw.

Inasmuch as Mr. Shaw *did* say to Dr. Tweedie, that I had made use of his name to obtain permission to examine the body, and that I had stated to the friends "that it would be the same as if he were present." I must consider that he has connected my name with that which, according to his own account, is "dishonourable and ungentlemanly conduct." But that my con-

duct on that occasion was neither dishonourable nor ungentlemanly, I have the authority of Mr. Shaw himself to declare; since in a conversation with him on this subject on the following day, he said that he had been positively refused permission to examine the body: that he had never met with such a set of beldames; that I was *exceedingly fortunate* to obtain permission, and that I *did* PERFECTLY RIGHT in losing no time in making the examination.

Since I addressed the letter to Mr. Shaw, I have seen the June Number of the Medical and Physical Journal, in which the very phrase made use of by Mr. Shaw to Dr. Tweedie, (*in connexion with my name*.) is repeated, namely, that "I had said it would be the same as if he were present;" and a few lines further on, that "men who had acted so unwarrantably in using my (Mr. S.'s) name," and so forth. How then, I ask you, Sir, as the friend of Mr. Shaw, can I accept of your assurance for him, that he has "never joined my name with dishonourable and ungentlemanly conduct?"

As the fact of my having examined the body, of my having taken the preparation to Mr. Clough, for whom I officiated, and of his having requested me to present it to Mr. Wardrop, is known to many of my professional friends; and as Mr. Shaw has thought fit to *publish* such unjust aspersions on me, I have no other course left but to protect myself in the same way from his injurious misrepresentations, and it will then be seen whose conduct has been most "unprofessional and improper."

However pacific the feeling which you have expressed may appear, in kindly affording me an opportunity of making *you* an apology, I beg leave to say, that I am not conscious of having done you or Mr. Shaw any wrong, and therefore have none to offer.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN MACKELCAN.

To C. BELL, Esq.

June 4th.

The annexed is a brief history of the case, as far as I am concerned:—

In the month of October, 1826, I was requested by Mr. Clough, of Norton-street, to see a patient of his, who was said to be suffering from rheumatism; I found the man complaining of severe pains in his arm and shoulder, and on being told that he had been recently exposed to wet, I concluded that he had rheumatism, and ordered some purgative and other medicines, of which the blue pill was a part. On my next visit I examined the patient more carefully, and ascertained that he had an aneurism of the root

of the subclavian artery, or of the innominata, and then informed him that it would be necessary for him to have an operation performed for its cure, and advised him to go into an hospital. At Mr. Clough's request, he went to the Middlesex, as that happened to be the nearest to his residence. As I felt much interested in the case, I requested permission from the house surgeon to be allowed to visit the patient, (not being a pupil of the Middlesex, I was not personally acquainted with Mr. Shaw,) and saw him generally every fourth or fifth day, in company with the house surgeon. I was in the habit of asking when Mr. Shaw intended to operate, as I wished to be present, and after the patient had been *three weeks* in the hospital, he informed me that Mr. Shaw had told him, that he could *cure him without an operation*. Being convinced to the contrary, and the man having been sent to the hospital for the express purpose of having the operation performed, I told him, with the sanction of Mr. Clough, that whatever Mr. Shaw might say, he could never be cured without an operation, and that if he chose to leave the hospital, I would get him taken care of by another surgeon. No effectual measures had been taken for the man's relief. At the end of another week, Mr. Shaw introduced himself to me at the Westminster Medical Society, by saying that I had been pointed out to him, as the gentleman who had sent a case of aneurism to the hospital, and in the course of the conversation which ensued, I told Mr. Shaw, that it was my opinion, "that the patient might have a fair chance for his life if operated on; and that if he were not he must certainly die, and that shortly." To which Mr. Shaw replied, "*that he knew that very well, and only kept him in the hospital that he might have an opportunity of examining the body.*"

I still visited the man, and still urged him to leave, and he said he would do so, but from time to time was persuaded to remain in the hope of being benefited without any operation, till it was too late for any thing to save him; at last, feeling himself rapidly getting worse, and not liking the idea of being examined after death, he suddenly left the Hospital, but survived only twenty-four hours. During this time, however, I called at his house, not having seen him for ten days, and was requested immediately, by his wife, to take charge of him for Mr. Clough, as I had done before he left home. He lived only till the afternoon of that day, Dec. 5th. I applied the next morning for leave to examine the body, the man having been under my care, and I only having a right to do so, as acting for Mr. Clough. I was refused permission, as the widow told me it depended on a relation

who was the deceased's executor, and not on herself, and that this relation would not allow it. On again going to this friend in the evening, I obtained his consent, went immediately to the house, and then found no objection on the part of the widow; I examined the body, took the diseased parts to Mr. Clough, who requested me to take them the next morning to Mr. Wardrop, being connected with a subject to which he had paid particular attention, and therefore more valuable to him than to any one else. The next day Mr. Shaw called, and Mr. Clough not being in the way he saw me; he was exceedingly *polite*, told me that "*he had been refused permission to examine the body, that he had never met with such a set of beldames in his life, that I had been very fortunate to obtain permission, and that I did perfectly right in losing no time in making the examination.*" He asked to see the preparation; I told him that I had just taken it to Mr. Wardrop, and that he might see it at any time at Panton-square; at which he seemed very well pleased, and we parted, apparently on good terms. In the evening, Mr. Clough received a letter from Mr. Shaw, the substance of which was, that the preparation should be sent to the Middlesex Hospital, at twelve the next day. Mr. Clough was much surprised at this request, but wishing to act a friendly part, he desired me to call on Mr. Wardrop, and ask him if he would lend Mr. Shaw the preparation, which Mr. Wardrop declined doing, particularly saying, "*Grand Anatomiste; grand Voleur.*" I heard nothing more of the matter, till Mr. Shaw thought fit to circulate and afterwards *publish* the report which I have felt myself called upon thus to refute.

I desired the widow to state the fact of her having given me leave to examine the body, and that I did not represent myself as officiating for Mr. Shaw; the following is a copy of her attestation:—

My late husband, Thomas Gordon, went into the Middlesex Hospital by the recommendation of Mr. Clough and Mr. Mackelcan, and left it from the great fear he had of dying in the Hospital. When he returned home, I requested Mr. Mackelcan to take charge of him again. After his death, I allowed Mr. Mackelcan to examine his body, he having also obtained leave from my deceased husband's executor, not for Mr. Shaw, but for himself and Mr. Clough. Mr. Mackelcan never used Mr. Shaw's name for any purpose.

SARAH GORDON.

Black Horse Yard,
June 12, 1827.