to send for me in consultation, and this omission unqualified by any extenuating circumstances—of sending me a note, a verbal message, directing your prescription to me or my surgery, or giving me the earliest intimation of what was going on—any one of which would have been an excuse I could have received; and even now, if it be possible you can be under any misapprehension of my charge against you, and can say that you had no intention of slighting me, can give any reason for the omission, I could yet pass all over. The absurdity of my upbraiding any medical man for rendering assistance in case of emergency is a sufficient refutation of such a silly charge; but if any refutation is required by any person, I shall refer them to my first letter, where they will observe, I spoke of your going when sent for as a matter of course; in your own words “Had you not visited the patient under such circumstances you ought to have been scouted out of the profession.” But having given your attendance, it then became your duty to send for me in consultation; and your omitting to do so is the breach of professional etiquette of which I complain; and more especially now, as, by your own admission, there was nothing urgent in the case, forbidding five minutes’ delay, and that you knew I was within five minutes’ call. I contend, also, it was your duty to have sent for me in justice to your patient. How could you tell that he was not under the influence of medicine which I had given him? You make use of an expression, “the wife followed my directions, and immediately after service called on Mr. Saxton with the prescription:” thereby insinuating that she followed your directions in bringing the prescription to my surgery. This insinuation is not true; by your own admission you told her to get the medicine “prepared somewhere,” and she distinctly told me you had given her no directions whatever to me; and for the fact of the prescription finding its way to my surgery there are no thanks due to you. She came to me after service, and told me of your visit, that you had ordered this medicine, handing the prescription; and stating that her husband was so much better she thought he did not require it, and asked my opinion on that point, which I refused to give; as I always decline further interference in a case when I discover there has been clandestine consultation with other medical men. And this is the abuse, I presume, of which she complains; it is only from extraneous information I learned that the medicine had not been prepared somewhere and taken.

Your next assertion that you called on me within three hours may be correct, but my impression is, the time was much later than six o’clock; however, can any one reasonably state, that calling on me three hours after the occurrence of a fainting fit could avail the patient anything, or be giving me the earliest information of what was going on, when the residence of the patient was closely adjoining both mine and yours? I am, however, willing to give you credit for calling, as far as it goes, and it may be some excuse, but I am only informed by your letter, that your call was not subsequent to your finding I had declined further interference in the case. I must also express my surprise, that you should say it would have been useless sending the prescription to Mr. Saxton sooner, as Mr. Saxton has neither apprentice nor assistant, when it is notorious to all, not wilfully ignorant, that my wife’s father and brother, both experienced dispensers of medicine, are residing near, and are constantly dispensing medicine for me: had I been 500 miles off there would have been no delay; but how vain the excuse, when you knew I was within five minutes’ call.

Another untrue assertion you make is, that I before charged you, rudely and untruly, with influencing a patient not to employ me. I never did so. I related to you that a friend of mine informed me such was the case, and the remarks that I made to her at the time; and on your assuring me there was not a word of truth in it, I took no further notice of it. In conclusion, I beg to thank you for your kind advice; no doubt your intention was benevolent. I cannot do less than return the compliment at my earliest opportunity, perhaps with the publication of the above.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

To Dr. Wood.

W. W. SAXTON.

REMUNERATION FOR MEDICAL SERVICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I apprehend that there are few practitioners in medicine and surgery who will not agree with you that the subject of fees, legally obtainable, is one of the utmost importance to the profession, and ought to be made a prominent matter in any forthcoming measure of medical reform.

The custom of charging for medicines is fast becoming obsolete, and deservedly so; indeed, the fact that medical practice, during the past few years, has completely changed, is well known to all; formerly, in every slight ailment the medical adviser was consulted; now, it is only when the medicine-chest and “suggestive” skill of the druggist have been exhausted, that we are called in; therefore it is that our remuneration ought to be, nay, must be, more liberal. The public are well aware that a sixpenny powder is equally efficacious with an eighteenpenny draught.

I am of opinion that in average country practice, five shillings from the upper classes; three-and-sixpence from the intermediate; and two-and-sixpence from the lower (each inclusive of medicines) would be a fair remunerative legal fee, with a proportionate mileage for out-town visits.

Where, from superior ability, a more wealthy neighbourhood, or a firmer position, larger fees could be obtained, by all means be it so; but those I have quoted, or some similar scale, should at all events be rendered legal. We should not then find, as I believe is now almost universally the fact, that in a practice of £600 per annum, £100 would be annually lost in bad debts. Nor would this be without its advantages to our patients. Instead of wearisome journeyings from morning to night, evenings at ledgers, and Januarys occupied in writing bills in order to obtain a precarious livelihood, medical practitioners, as men of science, would have time to devote to studies, and thus enable their brains to cope more successfully with disease, *tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

RUSTICUS.

Dec. 1849.

THE ASSURANCE OFFICES AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Please to publish the enclosed correspondence as soon as possible. Every shot fired at the insurance offices still holding out, should be made known, in order to encourage the timid, decide the wavering, and proclaim to all that the battle proceeds gloriously, and there can now be no doubt of the result.—Your obedient servant,

Albert-terrace, Notting-hill, Dec. 18, 1849.

CHARLES CLARK.

(COPY.)

Albert-terrace, Notting-hill, Dec. 15, 1849.

SIR,—I have received a printed letter from you, containing twenty-three queries respecting the health, habits, &c., of Mr. J. W. K.—, with a view to his life being assured at your office, but no fee being enclosed, I consider that office must possess a vast deal of assurance which expects me to answer them all for nothing. Ask a lawyer for the same amount of private and confidential information respecting his client for nothing, and mark his reply. If the lawyer, then, sells legal knowledge, why not the doctor medical knowledge, which costs him hundreds of pounds, and many long years of hard study to acquire. I am aware that the argument employed by those offices who refuse our legitimate demand is, that it is the duty of the person wishing to be assured to supply the requisite information to satisfy the office of his or her fitness for insurance, in other words, to prove their case, and to pay for it, if necessary: perhaps this may be so, but as the insurance companies are the parties directly seeking the information from the medical man, manifestly for their own advantage; and as it is of the highest importance to them that it should be accurate; I apprehend they are the proper parties at least to disburse the remuneration, let it come, originally, from whatever source it may.

A reference to THE LANCET of Dec. 25th, 1847, if you think proper to take the trouble for nothing, will show you that I was one of the first to advance in the contest, now triumphantly carried on by the medical profession, against such of the insurance offices as are still foolish enough to withhold the recognition of its just rights. You will there see the arguments I adduced, and the course I pursued towards the Eagle Office, on a similar occasion to the present; and as I do not happen to be one of those sneaking cowards who, whilst contending, publicly, for a just principle, will yet privately infringe it to suit their own interest, I am resolved to pursue the same course upon this and every other occasion that opportunity offers, and never sheathe my steel, though it is but a pen, “that mighty instrument of little men,” whilst a single office remains in the field, as the champion of injustice and the foe to our legitimate demands.

Until, therefore, you are just, I will not say generous enough.

to forward me 21s., your twenty-three queries must remain unanswered, at least by me, and I hope no other professional man will be found to act otherwise. Should, however, such be the case, I can only say, he deserves to be denounced as a traitor to a just cause, to his profession, and, in reality, to himself; and were he my own brother, I would not hesitate to do so. Such, however, I am happy to say, from the spirit now almost universally displayed, is not likely to occur; and if the profession continue united and true to themselves, the victory, already partially gained, will be rendered complete and triumphant. Every insurance office in the country must sooner or later succumb, unless they wish to see their business transferred, by the recommendation of our profession, to those other offices which are conducted upon the high moral principle of being just in their dealings with all men.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient, humble servant,

CHARLES CLARK.

To Jeremiah Lodge, Esq., Secretary, Palladium Life Office.

Palladium Office, Dec. 17, 1849.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the due receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, declining to reply to the queries recently addressed to you, as the medical referee of Mr. J. W. K.—

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

To C. Clark, Esq.

J. LODGE, Sec.

THE GENTEEL OUT-PATIENT ABUSE AT THE PUBLIC CHARITIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Amongst the many grievances of which the medical profession have to complain, I think the following one not the least, and it appears to me to be generally overlooked; I allude, Sir, to the indiscriminate admission of out-patients to charitable institutions. This is a growing evil, and I am convinced that it operates most injuriously upon our interests, individually, as much as collectively. The late Mr. Callaway, whilst prescribing for the out-patients at Guy's Hospital, used frequently to remark to me the lamentable want of discretion and restriction, and which was, in his opinion, a gross fraud practised upon the governors, as well as the profession. A very eminent physician, who was mainly instrumental in forming an excellent institution, recently left it in disgust, because persons well able to remunerate medical men were allowed to be out-patients, without the slightest inquiry as to their circumstances. I could enlarge much upon this subject, but refrain from further intruding upon your pages, than by mentioning, that at the Ophthalmic Infirmary, in Moorfields, I know that one half the patients can afford to pay the surgeon his fee, and, in many instances, applicants dress shabbily, and even borrow their servants' bonnets and shawls, in order that they may not be detected plundering the surgeon of his guinea. Now, to remedy this abuse, I would suggest that each applicant be compelled to bring a note of recommendation from the clergyman, or a medical man in the district where he lives, and thus, a satisfactory inquiry being necessarily made, as to the character and circumstances of the person petitioning for gratuitous advice, the original design of the governors will be effected, by only the truly deserving receiving assistance.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Spital-square, December, 1849.

JOSEPH HODGSON.

* * Mr. Hodgson is right. The abuse, the existence of which he so justly complains, is one of enormous magnitude, and affects the social status of the profession to a degree greater than can easily be imagined. But it is an evil that has not been overlooked by this journal. Often have we denounced the indiscriminate way in which out-patients in good circumstances have been allowed to participate in the benefit of funds which really belonged to the poor and destitute. By the present practice of receiving and prescribing for, and supplying medicines to, all who apply, the poor are robbed, and the profession is cheated out of thousands annually. We fear that the remedy proposed by Mr. Hodgson would scarcely check, still less strike at the root of, this gigantic evil.—Ed. L.

THE CONDITION OF THE PROFESSION IN RURAL DISTRICTS.

THE crying evil amongst medical practitioners in the rural districts, is a want of true fraternity and unity, a veritable *esprit de corps*.

This evil is especially and most acutely felt by the young surgeon when first entering on practice; and much puzzled must he be to know how to conduct himself in the delicate position and conflicting circumstances in which he finds himself. Fresh from the schools, with an ardent desire to benefit his fellow-creatures, and maintain an honourable standing in society, his first wish must naturally be to live on terms of friendly intercourse, the interchange of kindly offices, the reciprocation of the civilities and courtesies of polite life, with the members of the profession already established in the neighbourhood. He is told that it is his duty to take the initiative, and, contrary to the rules which obtain in every other profession, he must first call on his medical brethren; as if, indeed, it were expected from him that he should ask permission or licence to practise; should, in short, like a poor slave, conciliate the existing powers by placing his head beneath their feet! We ought to reform this altogether.

But, perhaps, taking the world through, the most prevalent evil in the profession, and one which gnaws into its very vitals, paralyzing all our attempts at union and combined action, is the habit of detraction and depreciation of each other, whenever an opportunity is afforded. Not content with building up a good reputation on an honest and independent foundation, we find surgeons (there are, here and there, many noble exceptions) battering down and crushing the good name of their brethren, and then elevating themselves on the ruins. For instance, a surgeon meets with an unfortunate case, (and who does not?) or one of his patients dies suddenly and most unexpectedly; for in our antagonism with death there are many mishaps and mischances, and our last enemy creeps on stealthily, insidiously, nay, mysteriously, and when we least expect it, has oftentimes "put out the light." Well, there is much talk and confabulation with the good wives and country gossips, and each member of the faculty within reach is asked his opinion of the matter.

Has he the manliness and candour to acknowledge that a similar event might have happened to himself, nay, that it has repeatedly happened in the practice of the most eminent men? or rather, is not the trumpet-tongued Rumour, with all its additions and exaggerations, met with a significant shrug or sneer, or, still worse, with a distinct declaration that such or such a death was the fault of the surgeon, and ought not to have happened, and as a corollary to this, a statement that "Had I been employed, I stake my existence the patient would have been saved."

But my letter is already longer than I intended. Should you consider it not unworthy a nook in your valuable journal, I shall take an early opportunity of pursuing this and analogous subjects more in detail, and am,

Sir, your obedient servant,

AN OLD GUY'S-MAN.

Medical News.

APOTHECARIES' HALL.—Names of gentlemen who passed their examination in the science and practice of medicine, and received certificates to practise, on

Thursday, Dec. 20th, 1849.

ARTHUR, WILLIAM, St. Ives, Huntingdon.

COCKERTON, HENRY MILES, Rochford, Essex.

HORNER, JOHN, Lincoln.

HUMPHREY, JOHN, Deal, Kent.

KENT, JACKSON GOODENOUGH, Hampton.

LADD, THEODORE EDWARD, Manchester.

MOORE, WILLIAM JAMES, Hales Owen, Shropshire.

MUGLISTON, GEORGE THOMAS WILLIAM, West Ham.

SWAIN, WILLIAM DARROCH PENNINGTON, Westmoreland.

THE SAMUEL COOPER TESTIMONIAL.—A general meeting of the subscribers, in furtherance of this object, was held on Wednesday, the 12th December, 1849, at the Thatched-house Tavern, in St. James-street; Colonel Wood, of Littleton, in the chair. The first resolution was moved by Mr. Erichsen, in a speech wherein a review was taken of the career of the late Professor Cooper, and a panegyric pronounced on his character, and terminating to the effect, "That a testimonial be established to record the esteem in which Professor Cooper was universally held for his honourable character and private worth; his distinguished acquirements and ability as a teacher; as well as for his invaluable services in the improvement and diffusion of surgical science." This was seconded by Mr. Chippendale, and unanimously carried. Dr. Wood then moved, and Mr. Baker, of Staines, seconded the motion, "That