that "Electricity is the only element which is constantly in motion, unless restrained; the only one, therefore, that may be said to possess force,"* it may not be uninteresting to a philosophic mind to consider what may be the probable result of such a power acting upon the cerebral organs of the higher order of animals, and what phrenological phenomena may be produced thereby; unless, indeed, it can be shown that there is a manifest inconsistency in supposing that it may have pleased the Deity to have so constituted the animal portion of his creation.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Taunton, August, 1850.

W. F. STEVENSON, F.R.S.

ALLEGED DEATH FROM MAL-PRACTICE AT GATESHEAD.

Si vous lui laissez prendre un pied, il en prendra quatre.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—My attention has been directed by a friend to an article in last week's LANCET entitled "A Death from Malpractice and no Inquest," which, had it not been for the name of the unfortunate woman being mentioned, I should not have recognised the *scurrility* of Dr. Jones's was applicable to me; but as your motto is "Audi alteram partem," I shall as briefly as possible relate the particulars of the case, (for insertion in your next.)

Mary Smith, aged 18, a miner's wife, of plethoric habit of body, but not in the enjoyment of robust health and excellent spirits, as stated by Dr. Jones, which statements are proved to be untrue from the circumstance that she had a fortnight previously lost two brothers by Usworth Colliery explosion, and that she was suffering from severe pain in the hypogastric region, caused by blows inflicted by her husband, who deserted her some time previous to her labour. She was seized with the pains of labour on Friday, when I suggested that the gentleman whose assistant I am should be sent for, as I was apprehensive of after-consequences, from the pain in the hypogastric region. However, as the parties stated they had every confidence in me, I continued in attendance until her delivery took place on Sunday, when hæmorrhage supervened, and notwithstanding the application of cold water, the insertion of the hand into the cavity of the uterus, and the administration of stimuli, no contraction of the uterus took place, and the poor woman succumbed in the space of an hour and a half after delivery. I had not time to send for my principal to consult with me, as he resides at a distance of five miles from my residence. There never were any convulsions, and shortly after my departure, Dr. Jones, who had been my partner three months previously, took upon himself the liberty of entering the house,—for "Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread,"—stating that he was sent by the Viewer of the Colliery to inspect the body, but before a message could be sent a hundred yards to inquire into the truth of Dr. Jones's statement, the Doctor decamped amidst showers of stones from the enraged populace. This is a true statement of the case, and Dr. Jones's *animus* remains to be shown. I have undergone the full curriculum of study enjoined by the College, and was about to proceed to London to qualify, when, from Dr. Jones's conduct, I was compelled to dissolve partnership with him, and from his subsequent behaviour to me, although not legally qualified himself, I have been obliged to act as an assistant, and defer proceeding to London for examination. Now, Mr. Editor, in conclusion, "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones." Dr. Jones did not tell you he deserted his post last September in dread of cholera—a fact which I believe can be attested by Dr. Charlton, Lecturer on the Practice of Physic, Newcastle Medical School, Rev. J. Sheridan, and Mr. Gibson, surgeon of Birtley. Finally, he did not tell you he had been burnt in effigy at Monkseaton, in Northumberland.

I am, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

Usworth, July 31, 1850.

JOHN JACKSON, Medical Student.

THE APOTHECARIES' COMPANY v. BURT, M.D.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having recently received letters from "Vindex," and others, who have not favoured me with their names, will you have the goodness to permit me to avail myself of the medium of your columns to return to them my very sincere thanks for the sympathy they have expressed for the annoyance and expense to which I have been subjected. Some of them have stated that they hoped to see an article on the subject from my pen; but as I find there exists a considerable inclination on the part of many

to accept the compromise offered by the Company in their recent letter to Sir G. Grey, I feel reluctant, if there is the slightest chance of professional unanimity on any point whatever, to allow my individual opinion to stand in the way of so desirable and unprecedented a result. I therefore reserve to myself the privilege of answering, what appears to me one of the most jesuitical productions ever written, at some future time, should circumstances appear to me to require it.

Should the plan of convening a meeting of Scotch graduates in London be adopted, as I most decidedly think it ought to be, without further loss of time, I shall certainly make a point of attending. In the meantime I again tender my thanks to my friendly correspondents, and assure them that if they will write in their own names, they may depend upon it that their communications shall be considered by me most strictly confidential. As regards the suit itself, the only further step taken has been an application on the part of the Company to the judge of the County Court of Wisbeach, for the expenses of the adjournments in April and May. I objected that, as the Company had failed to obtain a verdict, they could not possibly be entitled to recover their expenses. Their solicitor contended that I had occasioned those adjournments, and that as the Court of Exchequer had dismissed the rule *nisi*, it showed that they were not necessary, to which I replied, that although the rule had been dismissed it did not prove that the step I had taken was unnecessary, since the dismissal was accompanied with the laying down of such stringent limitations as rendered the Apothecaries' Act virtually useless in a County Court. The judge, however, decided in favour of the Company. I then applied to the judge for judgment on the point of law reserved—namely, that the Company had failed to comply with the requirements of their own Act—and must therefore be nonsuited—but the judge refused to pronounce judgment, on the ground that the jury not having returned a verdict it was not necessary. Had the jury given a verdict in my favour, of course that would have been so; but not having done so I do not see the justice of this decision. The question of the point of law preceded the argument on the merits, and ought to have been decided at once; and its having been reserved by the judge does not alter the fact of this precedence. Now supposing the point to be in my favour, as I fully believe it to be—it follows that (in a pecuniary point of view) I should have gained by a verdict *against* me—since a nonsuit would have carried costs—surely a very anomalous result. Returning you my thanks for the space you have allotted to this question,

I remain, Sir, your very obedient servant,

JOHN G. K. BURT, M.D. Edin., 1828,

Extraordinary Member of Royal Med. Soc. Edinburgh.

Upwell, near Wisbeach, August 6, 1850.

House of Commons.

AUGUST 2, 1850.

THE DEPUTY-CORONER FOR MIDDLESEX, AND HOMŒOPATHY.

Lord R. GROSVENOR rose, in accordance with a notice given on a former day, to present a petition from the members of the English Homœopathic Association and others, complaining of the conduct of the deputy-coroner for Middlesex, in the case of an inquest upon the body of the late Richard David Pearce. The circumstances of the case to which the petition referred were so notorious that it would not be necessary for him to detain the house by repeating them; he would therefore confine himself to the complaint of the petitioners. They stated that the hon. member for Finsbury, who was the coroner for Middlesex, had appointed a deputy-coroner in the person of his son, who on the occasion of an inquest on a Mr. D. R. Pearce, evinced so little knowledge of the duties of his office, that under his direction a verdict of manslaughter was found against a brother of the deceased, an accomplished and amiable gentleman, who was in consequence incarcerated in the felon's cell at Newgate for two days.

Mr. WAKLEY rose to order. The noble lord had said he would not read the petition, but he was now stating the circumstances, and stating them incorrectly. (Hear.)

The SPEAKER informed the noble lord that he must confine himself strictly to the statements contained in the petition.

Lord R. GROSVENOR.—The petitioners stated that this Mr. Pearce was committed to Newgate, and there confined for two days, and that when the case came before the grand jury, they ignored the bill, and that Mr. Justice Maule, at the trial, stated his opinion in this way: "How any person can say this man has

* See THE LANCET of July 10, 1847, p. 32.