tagion, or exposed to the contingencies of warfare, be that in the cockpit of line-of-battle ships, in the gun-rooms of frigates and brigs, or in armed boats, have always done their duty. It is desired by the naval authorities to keep us amongst naval youngsters, to be a menial and servile convenience of commanding officers of ships, to prevent irregularities among these brats; we all of us decline such an abominable employment, we "shirk" it; this is not our duty in the naval service. There is a wonderful difference between our duty and the degradation we have appealed against. The honourable member for Montrose very properly suggested that chaplains and assistant-surgeons should be placed on the same footing on admission into the service, and certainly it would be just and proper to give us the rank, pay, and accommodation of chaplains. Such arduous and dangerous services are never required from the minister of religion, as are from the medical officers. We hear of mates being our superior officers in every respect; the pretensions of these youngsters have been before handled in the columns of *THE LANCET*. Their vaunted superiority is exhibited in true colours in *THE LANCET* of October 30th, 1847. By the insertion of these remarks you will very much oblige me. They will be an advantage to the cause of naval assistant-surgeons, and exhibit to the members of the medical profession, the value the Admiralty sets on the merits and labours of medical men, and the feeling of that board towards us.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
May, 1848. AN ASSISTANT SURGEON R.N.

COD-LIVER OIL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In answer to the letter of your correspondent, (at p. 540,) I beg to say that in my experience in the use of the cod-liver oil, which extends over a period of twelve years, I have never seen any ill consequence result from it—nor has it been noticed by the different authors who have written on the subject. On the contrary, it has seldom failed, when long persevered in, to afford amelioration of the symptoms in those cases where a cure could not be effected.

It may be given with confidence in all cases where the powers of life are low, and where the improper assimilation of the food is the cause; it affords nourishment when none other can be borne, restores the functions of digestion, and furnishes the frame with fat in a truly wonderful manner.

Although it generally restrains the undue action of the bowels, it will, in some constitutions, produce diarrhoea: when this is the case, astringents may be prescribed. That in common use in Holland is the acorn coffee, which is prepared of the same strength as common coffee, and given two or three times a day.

Success will depend as much upon long perseverance as on the quality of the oil prescribed. The brown coloured oil should invariably be preferred, as it has been found to contain more of the active principle, whatever that may be, on which its virtues depend, and it effects the cure in half the time required by the lighter coloured.

I remain, your obedient servant,

Guernsey, May 23, 1848.

EDWARD CAREY, M.D.

REFUSAL OF A CERTIFICATE OF LUNACY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some time since I was applied to, to receive a young gentleman about twenty-one years of age, who required medical and moral treatment. I gave my terms, and was called on by a gentleman who said the young man was a friend of his. He stated the nature of the case, adding that the patient fancied every one was against him, and had then just taken into his head that an attempt was being made to poison him, and that poison was put into all the dishes at the table. He was then residing at a clergyman's house with three or four other young gentlemen. On hearing all this, I said that I considered he came under the regulations of the Act 8 & 9 Vict., cap. 100—(I think it is called Lord Ashley's Act for the Regulation of the Care and Treatment of Lunatics.) The friend stated he thought his patient's medical attendant would not give the required certificate, as not being necessary, he not considering him of unsound mind, and that the clergyman with whom he then was had taken him without any hesitation, and did not require the certificate. I afterwards heard from the gentleman; and I firmly believe the only reason I did not receive the patient was my requiring the necessary certificate, for the suspicion was, and still is strongly on my mind, that he came completely under the

regulations of the said Act. In this case, it appears that the medical attendant was opposed to giving a certificate, and that the clergyman would receive him without one, both acting in direct contravention of the law relating to lunatics and persons of unsound mind; for the Act makes no distinction between them. If such occurrences take place as in this instance, medical men have not an equal chance of obtaining patients, if they strictly comply with the law. Is there no means of giving greater publicity to the fact; for this is the second case in which a great difficulty has occurred (to me) in procuring certificates.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
VERAX.

* * We believe that our correspondent is right in his view of the case; but there is no law to compel a medical practitioner to give a certificate of lunacy.—ED. L.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.—THE MEETING OF GRADUATES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am very glad to see that the graduates of the University of London are at length taking a step in the right direction; and though as yet I am but an undergraduate, I trust it will not be thought presumptuous in me to suggest a measure which cannot fail to prove beneficial.

I would recommend that the committee in London request communications on the subject from the graduates at large, or where there are several graduates, as in some of the large provincial towns, to invite them to meet and communicate their opinions to the committee.—I remain, yours faithfully,

JOHN MANLEY,
Undergraduate in Arts.

Nottingham, June 14, 1848.

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, June 8th, 1848:—William Costall May, 26, Bow-lane, Cheapside; Thomas Limbery, Appledore, Devonshire; Charles Crighton Bramwell, North Shields; Robert Thomas Deakins, Bicester, Oxon; James Eyres Coward, Tiverton, Devon; John Sinclair, Liverpool.

TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES IN HOLLAND.—The Dutch Father Mathew is Dr. Huyde Cooper. A like temperance movement is taking place in Hanover, where the excise revenue has diminished in the following proportion:—In 1839, it yielded 551,158 dollars; in 1843, only 392,080. The Academy of Belgium has declared itself favourable to the views of temperance associations.

CHEAP PHYSIC.—Prospectuses have lately been distributed in Madrid, wherein it is stated that several doctors and licentiates in medicine and surgery have formed a society, called the "Medical Union," the members of which offer their services in all kind of diseases for the humble consideration of two reals (five pence) a month. One hardly knows who is to be commiserated the most, the physician or the sick!

CONGRESS OF SCANDINAVIAN NATURALISTS.—This congress, which met last July in Copenhagen, is to hold its sittings in Stockholm, in July, 1850. The King of Denmark has conferred distinctions on several northern savants. Berzelius has been honoured with the Grand Cross of the Order of Danebrog.

EXCISION OF THE HEAD OF THE FEMUR.—This operation was performed, on Wednesday last, in Brownlow-street, Drury-lane, on a male patient, 33 years of age, by Mr. Henry Smith, late house-surgeon at King's College Hospital, and the author of an essay on the subject, which has appeared in the present volume of *THE LANCET*, (pp. 361 & 413.) It is, we believe, the first instance in this country of the operation having been undertaken on an adult, and certainly it has never before been performed by so young an operator. Amongst the surgeons present were Professors Fergusson and Partridge, Mr. Arnott, Mr. Bishop, Messrs. Bowman, Shute, Walton, Ure, Nunn, &c.;—the first-named tendered valuable assistance on the occasion. Chloroform was administered by Dr. Snow, and the extraction of the head of the bone and great trochanter was completed in about five minutes from the period of the first incision. Up to Thursday noon the patient had not experienced any untoward symptoms. We expect shortly to present our readers with a detailed report of the case.—REP. L.