told him that under those circumstances I would not go forward; nor did I proceed until urged by Mr. Beecroft to do so. His lumbago in the head is, I think, a direct insult on the lady who happened to misunderstand my opinion, which was, that I feared tubercle of the brain—an opinion that three weeks' further experience has not shaken. As for me, he is quite welcome to take all advantage of stating what he must feel at the time was not fact. A drowning man will catch at a straw.

My differing, of course, in diagnosis and treatment, will be best explained by Mr. Beecroft's own words and proceedings. He tells us, then, it is a case of hydrocephalus. The same morning he had leeches a very delicate girl very freely; for, in point of fact, she has been in a very critical state for seven or eight months. He was giving calomel and scammony repeatedly. She had sponges dipped in spirit lotion over her head; still he was in the house half-an-hour, and allowed her to be sitting near a large fire, and surrounded at times by a family, numbering eleven or twelve; and this was the position in which I really found her; nor had he ever ordered her into a secluded apartment. My differing, of course, in treatment, did at least relieve both the paroxysms of the head and vomiting completely for five whole days,—no trifling change, Mr. Beecroft will allow, in a well-marked case of hydrocephalus. What I have stated will be corroborated by the patient's own family, and, in future, I shall leave Mr. Beecroft to be sobered down by stern Time.

MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

(NOTE FROM MR. PENNINGTON.)

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The report of the speech delivered by me at the meeting of the National Association, on the 17th ult., is most incorrectly reported. Amongst the most prominent errors, is the sentence that should render them independent of corrupt colleges.

I never uttered that sentence. My meaning has also been misrepresented in a preceding sentence—viz., that it was only within the last year that a prospect had opened of placing themselves on a still higher rank than they had hitherto held, by steadily following the direction that had been adopted by the Society of Apothecaries. Thoroughly sensible as I am of the great obligations to the Society of Apothecaries, no expression of mine could convey the idea that the National Association followed the direction of any other body than those of its own members.—Your humble servant,

R. R. PENNINGTON.

Mr. Pennington cannot doubt the Editor taking this into his consideration in his next publication.

Portman-square, April, 1846.

DISEASES OF THE SKIN.

(MR. HUNT'S REPLY TO MR. CORTIS.)

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—An intelligent correspondent of THE LANCET, Mr. Cortis, is right in assuming, that any comments with which my brethren may honour my papers, will give me pleasure; and it is especially gratifying to me to find my views generally corroborated by the experience of a gentleman, who has evidently paid more than common attention to this much neglected subject. If I mistake not, even on the points on which he expresses his dissent, there is, practically, little variation of opinion between us, as I shall endeavour to show.

1. Mr. Cortis demurs to my exclusive reliance on mercurial treatment in squamous venereal affections, and in order to show that his own experience is at variance with my opinion, he relates a case in which a scaly disease was aggravated by mercury, and afterwards cured by arsenic. Now I verily believe that on my own principles I should have been led to treat this case mainly in a similar way; that is, had I suspected, in the first instance, a syphilitic origin, I should have administered mercury, and finding it obviously aggravating the disease, I should then have abandoned mercury in favour of arsenic, suspecting that I might have been wrong in my first diagnosis; and I need not add that the diagnosis with reference to this important point is sometimes difficult. The opinion I have long entertained, that the venereal scaly disease (the tertiary form of the indurated sore of Hunter) will yield to no remedy but mercury, is founded upon uniform experience; but I am ready to yield my views to any palpable

evidence to the contrary which any correspondent may be able to adduce. There is, however, no subject in the practice of surgery more intricate or unsettled than this, and I have often regretted that the minutely detailed cases of Hunter and Abernethy have been so much disregarded by modern writers. Carmichael's views on this one point have, I think, never been satisfactorily confuted.

2. I turn with pleasure from a subject already worn threadbare by discussion, to the second point of difference between your correspondent and myself. And here, again, the difference between us is more apparent than real. Mr. Cortis says he has used arsenic in various forms of skin disease with very great benefit, but certainly not with universal success; and he then expresses his doubts whether a favourite remedy has not been too highly extolled. To this latter question, however, he himself replies in language which leaves me little to say: "Perhaps it is only fair to suspend our judgment on this head till we have an opportunity of examining all his cases." With reference to Mr. Cortis's own experience, I must beg to remind him that before he can draw from that source any shadow of argument against my own success with arsenic, he must try it fairly in the way I have pointed out, not only under favourable circumstances, as regards the health of the patient, but *alone*, and *in decreasing doses*. It is the *method*, not the *remedy*, to which I wish to call attention. I have not proposed arsenic as a new remedy in diseases of the skin, but I have minutely described what I believe to be a new mode of administering it, and one which I trust our correspondent will one day adopt with success, which will leave him little to complain of. Arsenic will do much, I am well aware, on the plan hitherto adopted by universal recommendation—viz., beginning with a small dose, and gradually increasing it. But this method will not be attended with universal success, as Mr. Cortis, and every other writer on the skin, acknowledges. Nor am I so presumptuous as to affirm that my own method will never fail. I only say that it has never yet disappointed me in a single instance, and I shall feel myself bound to publish the first failure which I may meet with. It may be that I am too sanguine, and I am aware that hobbies are prone to run away with their riders. But my confidence in arsenic was not a preconceived notion; on the contrary, it was gradually inspired by an accumulating mass of evidence, the result of induction from actual experiments, which were so conducted, that they could scarcely deceive me. In most of my cases, I tried the remedy alone, using no other medicine, and avoiding baths and external applications. Not content with this, I frequently intermitted the medicine again and again in the same case, with a uniform result, so that I found I could hold the disease under absolute control. Indeed, I do not know any instance in the whole compass of practical medicine, in which disease is so entirely passive under any given remedy; and I venture to say, that if our correspondent will take a retrospective view of his experience, he will find that in every case in which arsenic has failed in his hands, in the diseases under review, the failure may be traced to one or more of the causes enumerated in my second paper, (p. 77.) and to these I beg leave to commend his attentive consideration.

For the practical and valuable remarks contained in Mr. Cortis's paper, as well as for his account of the chemical analysis and medicinal properties of the mineral spring at Filey, I beg to tender him my thanks, in which I am sure your readers will unite with me.

Herne Bay, April, 1846.

PAULUS ÆGINETA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your correspondent, "Jus," thinks that it is not proved that the Council of the Sydenham Society has been guilty of a "prostitution of the Society's funds" in publishing the silly book of Ægineta. A certain proposition in Euclid is not the less demonstrated because a certain class of readers cannot comprehend the demonstration. Talk of history, it is mere babbling. The Sydenham Society is not a medical archaeological association. Its two thousand readers do not want grains of gold that can only be extracted out of a mountain of rubbish.

But I go to facts. The translation of Paulus Ægineta was commenced as a private speculation, and, after having failed as such, though it addressed itself to a far larger audience than the Sydenham Society, it was taken up by the Council, as though they were purveying food for the medical antiquary, instead of a great body of practical physicians, surgeons, and general practitioners.