ABUSES AT THE "LONDON HOSPITAL."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The almost proverbial certainty of success with which your valuable strictures are attended, stimulates me to address a few lines on the existing and daily increasing abuses at the London Hospital. In the first place, in the prospectuses issued at the commencement of the session, we find "Clinical Lectures by Dr. Gordon, Messrs. Scott, and Luke:" now, since the commencement, not one has been delivered; at least, it is but due to Mr. Scott to state, that I am able to glean from various quarters that he has delivered *one* during the last fourteen months; and considering the great utility of such lectures, as well as the vast scope afforded for them at this institution, you will, doubtless, agree with me in considering complaints not only justifiable, but imperatively demanded. In the next place, the want of punctuality of attendance of our physicians, as well as (when they do come) their going round at an hour when lectures are being carried on in another direction, are also well deserving censure. "Last, not least," the dressing pupils are superseded by individuals, in some cases, perhaps, not so competent as themselves, under the title of house-surgeons, in order to divide and subdivide as much as possible the opportunities of surgical practice afforded at this hospital; added to which, not long since, when an operation was about to be performed, the person whose duty it is to post it up, was ordered by the senior surgeon not to put up a notice of the same.

Many other and valid causes of complaint might be enumerated, but the foregoing may be sufficient to demonstrate the disadvantages under which we labour; and such appears to be the despotic character of the government of the various functionaries of this institution, that one of two consequences seems inevitable, either a complete retraction of lately-framed offensive measures, or an entire desertion of the school by students. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JUSTITIE AMICUS.

November 29, 1844.

THE CONFERENCE AT APOTHECARIES' HALL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me to occupy a small portion of your columns, with a correction of the numerous inaccuracies of your report of the interview between the deputations from the Metropolitan and Provincial Associations, and the Society of Apothecaries, on Tuesday last. As this conference was the most important that has been lately held on the subject of medical politics, it is necessary that the truth should be accurately published. I am astonished that your intelligent reporter should, on this occasion, have so completely misapprehended the sentiments of the several speakers.

In the first place, there is an entire suppression of Dr. Lynch's introductory remarks, and to which, and not to observations of Dr. Webster, the master of the society (Mr. Wallace) replied. The following quotation from Dr. Lynch's speech expressed an expectation to which the manifesto of the society was an immediate answer:—

"That the Assembly hoped the Apothecaries' Society (as the natural guardian, and the only corporation that ever exhibited any interest or sympathy for the great body of the profession) would place themselves at the head of the movement, and, as the time of temporizing was past, the deputation expected the Apothecaries' Society would now lay down some bold and definite line of action."

Again, Dr. Lynch, on the part of the associations, expressed "his unmingled satisfaction at the announcement made by the society," and hoped Dr. Webster would reciprocate these sentiments. Dr. Lynch is made a respondent to some remarks of Dr. Webster, at this period of the conference.

With reference to myself, there is also great misrepresentation. Your report runs—"Mr. Ross was proceeding to inquire the nature of the charter, when Dr. Webster said," &c., leaving it to be inferred that I was interrupted in the course of my remarks, which was not the case. As soon as the resolutions of the society had been read, I addressed the meeting in defence of the elective franchise—which was not expressly named in the resolutions—and continued to enforce my views for some time, without any remark from Dr. Webster.

A portion of my observations ran thus:—"The general practitioners were now contending for a college of their own; but unless the elective franchise was freely and liberally granted to the members, the charter of incorporation might prove a bane, rather than a benefit, to the profession, inasmuch as it might be made an instrument of degradation in the hands of an irrespon-

sible governing body, as in the late case of the charter to the College of Surgeons," &c.* It was to my remarks, and *not* to those of Dr. Webster, that Mr. Bacot replied, by admitting the principle.

After Mr. Asbury had spoken, Dr. Webster read his resolutions; so that your reporter has utterly misstated the true value of the remarks of the different speakers. It is very unaccountable.

As the Medical Protection Assembly has hitherto taken a prominent part in the present movement, and is determined not to relax in its vast exertions for the amelioration of the degraded condition of the mass of the profession, it is highly expedient that these corrections should appear. It is right that the members of the Assembly, who conferred on the deputation the honour of representing their wishes on so important an occasion, should know that we were not negligent of our duty, but, on the contrary, enforced their rights with becoming steadfastness and zeal. —I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

GEORGE ROSS.

Kennington, Dec. 16, 1844.

I am authorized to refer to Mr. Hunter and Mr. Simpson, who were present at the conference, for the truth of these corrections.

The moment that the letter of Mr. Ross was received by us, we forwarded it to our reporter, with a request that he would furnish us with such an explanation as the circumstances appeared to demand. We subjoin his reply, first premising that the report was printed exactly as it was sent to us, without the alteration of a single line; and, further, it so happens that we have not seen, or held any communication, either directly or indirectly, with any member of the conference since it was held, and we are now writing on Tuesday, December the 17th. Our reporter, we believe, is well known to all the gentlemen of the deputation as a respectable medical practitioner. He has reported for us during many years, and on no previous occasion has his accuracy been questioned.—ED. L.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—When I attended with the deputation at Apothecaries' Hall, I did not understand that I was to give a *verbatim* report of the speeches that were there made. It was my endeavour to supply in THE LANCET, as concisely as possible, and yet as distinctly as could be, the views of the deputations, and the answers of the members of the committee of the society, so far as they elicited any information respecting the great principles that they intended to discuss. On referring to my report I feel that I have done so, and if Mr. Ross, or any other gentleman who thinks he has cause of complaint, will sink all *personal* feelings on the matter, I am convinced that he will arrive at the same conclusion.

If the vanity of any gentleman be wounded through the omission of his name from a report, it must be recollected that the reporter has to deal with the opinions of the many, rather than those of individuals; and where there existed such a marvellous agreement between the society and the deputations, what possible good could be effected by giving the individual views of Mr. Ross or any other gentleman?—for it must be remembered that Dr. Webster represented the deputies of several associations, and Dr. Lynch, the Protection-Assembly; at least, Dr. Lynch spoke in the name of the Assembly, and Dr. Webster had been appointed speaker by the delegates from the other societies.

Other gentlemen besides Mr. Ross might have cause of complaint, if a narrow view of the subject were to be taken.

What does Mr. Ross mean by my "misapprehending the sentiments of the speakers?" If he read my report again, he will find that he should have paused before he made that remark. Why, the resolutions of Dr. Webster embody *all* that the deputies desired; and as to the "elective franchise," it is the sole object of two of the resolutions of Dr. Webster—a point that Mr. Ross has overlooked, for Mr. Bacot expressly said that the society accorded with these views in full, although not mentioned in their documents. With respect to the opening remarks of Dr. Lynch, and the other points touched upon in Mr. Ross's letter, I can only say that they did not appear to me to be necessary to the completion of my report.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

THE REPORTER.

Dec. 17, 1844.

* Vide Lloyd's paper of Saturday last.—G. R.