

honesty must at once answer both of these questions in the negative.

In a future article we will endeavour to show in what manner the utility of the inquest would be increased by adding to the number of post-mortem examinations to the extent here stated. It will also be well to notice the effect of a power relative to medical testimony, which juries at inquests have derived from the operation of the Medical Witnesses' Act.

THE ROYAL MATERNITY CHARITY.

IN consequence of the lamented death of Professor DAVIS, the office of physician to this important and extensive charity has become vacant. Mr. JOHN HALL DAVIS, the eldest son of the deceased physician, is a candidate for the unoccupied situation, and having distinguished himself at the University of London, as well as at University College, for his ability and professional attainments, and considering the irreparable bereavement which his family has just sustained, we cannot believe that there is a gentleman in the profession who will openly stand forward to oppose the election of such a candidate. In the beginning of the month of November last the late Professor DAVIS, in consequence of his rapidly declining health, felt himself bound, in duty to his class, to resign the chair which he held in University College. Immediately afterwards, the pupils, as a spontaneous act of their own—unprompted and unsolicited—sembled in a body, and drew up, signed, and addressed the following memorial to the Council of the College:—

“ We, the undersigned, pupils of the class of midwifery in University College, London, beg leave to present the following memorial to the Council of the College:—

“ University College, Nov. 10, 1841.

“ Your memorialists having with regret perceived that Professor Davis, in consequence of ill health, has retired from the duties of his chair, beg respectfully to express a wish that the course should be continued on the same principle as that on which it has been commenced; and, for the accomplishment of this object, they believe no one

to be more capable than Mr. John Hall Davis.

“ This opinion has been founded on, and is confirmed by, the experience which they have had of his power of conveying information displayed in the mechanical department of the class, the assistance and advice which they have received from him in the more difficult cases of midwifery in which they have had occasion to consult him in the absence of his father; and, lastly, the tact and ability which he has displayed in examining the class during the late illness of the Professor.

“ Should the Council be pleased to adopt the recommendation thus respectfully submitted, your memorialists will ever entertain a deep sense of gratitude for the kind consideration thus afforded to them.”

(Signed by the whole class, with the exception of two absent students.)

A document testifying more strongly to the ability of a teacher and practitioner, or one of a more honourable character, considering the relation in which Mr. DAVIS had stood to the pupils, as their instructor, friend, and associate in attendance upon parturient women, was never addressed to any individual, whatever may have been his standing in the profession. Such a testimonial is alike creditable to the memorialists, and the object of their solicitude.

In a case of this kind the senior members of the profession ought not to be indifferent or inactive. If there were a *concours* for the appointment, not a word should we write on the behalf of Mr. DAVIS. We should fearlessly see him enter the arena of mental strife, confident that if he did not become the victor, he would yet obtain distinction for his own individual character as well as honour for the institution in which he was educated. But inasmuch as his qualifications are undoubted, and his claims to support unquestionable, we earnestly hope that,—under the afflicting position in which he has been placed by the death of his father, out of respect for the memory of the deceased, and from a benevolent desire to render a service to the living,—the members of the profession will call into action all the legitimate influence which they can command on such an occasion, in order to secure the election of so estimable and deserving a candidate. We repeat, that we cannot believe that there is in the profession one *gentleman* who will oppose the election of Mr. DAVIS.

The Fifty-ninth Report of the Visiting Justices of the County Lunatic Asylum at Hanwell. London: J. T. Norris, Aldersgate-street. 1841.

Third Report of the Resident Physician. Report of the Chaplain.

THESE reports, forming, under one cover, a volume of 140 pages, will be read with deep interest, not only by the medical profession but by the public at large. They contain a most lucid enunciation of the principles upon which the treatment in the Hanwell Asylum is founded, and satisfactorily demonstrate that it is as safe in practice as philanthropic in theory. In the report of the resident physician the general features of his system are developed, strongly enforced, and well and variously illustrated by details of cases under treatment in the asylum. In short, the facts embodied in this valuable volume for ever set at rest the great question of the practicability, as well as the humanity, of the new method of treating the insane; and in noticing its contents we cannot refrain from expressing our gratification that the intestine warfare by which the proceedings of the committee and Dr. Conolly have been so seriously embarrassed, is ended, the management of the asylum being now carried on in a spirit of unity and concord. "The interruptions of illness," says Dr. Conolly, "have, during the last year, made the resident physician more than usually dependent on the activity and fidelity of the officers and servants of the asylum; and he wishes he could sufficiently express his grateful acknowledgments to each and all of them. It is a source of great satisfaction to believe that there is not an officer or attendant in the whole of the numerous establishment who is, at this time, disposed in any way to impede the general and well-known design of the resident physician. From every department,—the medical, the economic, the household,—he receives uniform and valuable support."

We learn that the Middlesex Bench of Magistrates have, in a spirit which does them credit, directed an extra number of these reports to be printed, for useful general distribution; and we suggest to our medical brethren that applications should be made by them, and by the secretaries of the Metropolitan and Provincial Medical Societies and Libraries, to the visiting justices, each for one or more copies of them for the use of the members. We do not doubt that such

applications would be successful. To facilitate them we subjoin a list of the committee which precedes the report of the visiting justices. Amongst them we recognise with great pleasure some of the most useful members of the last committee, but we deeply regret the absence from the list of the name of Mr. Tulk, their late excellent chairman, and that of Mr. Garford, whose upright and indefatigable, though unostentatious, services to the committee, we believe, that it would be difficult to replace. The following is the list, with the addresses:—

Mr. Sergeant Adams, 5, Stanhope-place, Hyde-park.
 Benjamin J. Armstrong, Esq., Southall.
 George Baillie, Esq., Hanwell-grove.
 Charles Devon, Esq., Teddington-place.
 Wm. Beckwith France, Esq., 63, Cadogan-place.
 Sir John J. Hansler, Tavistock-square.
 Robert M'William, Esq., 12, Torrington-square.
 W. A. Mackinnon, jun., Esq., 4, Hyde Park-place.
 Henry Pownall, Esq., Spring-grove, Hounslow.
 Thomas Russell, Esq., 8, Park-terrace, Camden-town.
 Captain Jelf Sharp, Twickenham.
 John Simpson, Esq., Hackney.
 Arthur Smith, Esq., Grove-terrace, Kentish-town.
 John Stock, Esq., Poplar.
 John Wilks, Esq., 3, Finsbury-square.

MEDICAL STUDENTS AND THE CAUSE OF MEDICAL REFORM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is natural for students of the medical profession ever and anon to turn from the present to the future,—from the details of the lecture-room, and the high-flown theories of the modern professor, to the more important part of their affairs, the object and end of their studies,—their prospects of *practice*. In such contemplation they cannot but with great concern reflect upon the chances of *success* which may be theirs, as well as the circumstances that influence them, and encourage or forbid hope.

At the present time, to medical students the prospect is most dreary, and so great a sense of the difficulties of their situation appears to be impressed upon them, that the greater number seem to have settled down into a miserable lethargy,—to have