Having thus done justice to John, I am bound, according to those principles of honour and honesty in which I was early instructed, and from which I trust I have never departed, to do justice to Thomas, although unsolicited on his part, by saying what I believe I mentioned before the Committee of the House of Commons, even if it should not be reported, that the council of the College of Surgeons did not take any public steps to ascertain the merits or pretensions of any of their members whom they made fellows, neither did they strictly observe any rule that I am aware of, in making them. No one ought, therefore, to feel any distress from having been omitted, nor any one any gratification from having been included; the whole thing not being less a failure for any useful purpose, than it has been a source of extreme dissatisfaction to the great body of English surgeons.

With respect to the examination for the fellowship, I regret I do not entertain the same opinion of their value or utility, as they appear to be supposed to possess by my friend Dr. John Hall. There is not one of those who have undergone this examination, I should suffer to put his finger on me one whit the more readily, from his having succeeded in obtaining the honour to which he aspired; and, although I do not presume to judge of what the opinion may be of my colleagues of the court of examiners in their collective capacity, I have lately seen three of them, each of whom has filled the office of president, earnestly recommending a very young member of the college, not old enough to be a fellow, for a high surgical appointment—I may even say of the greatest public importance—in preference to three gentlemen, his opponents, all members and fellows of the college, after examinations awarded by themselves, their examiners; and I cannot but conclude with the greatest respect towards my colleagues, that they do not therefore differ essentially in opinion on this point, from

Your very obedient, humble servant,

Berkeley-street, Jan. 12, 1849.

G. J. GUTHRIE.

PHYSICIANS AND M.D.'S.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Allow me, through the medium of your journal, to inquire of the editor of the "London and Provincial Medical Directory," why, in the street list of the work for the current year, all the physicians residing in Bolton-street are favoured with the title of "Phys." after their names, while all in Curzon-street and Dover-street, (the worthy president of the College of Physicians amongst the number,) have only plain "M.D." tacked on to theirs. The same occurs with respect to many other physicians in various parts of the metropolis, and even in the same street; in Brook-street, for instance, Dr. Holland is styled Phys., but Dr. Tweedie gets M.D., and so on with many more of equal standing, and possessing equal qualifications.

I am really at a loss to understand the meaning of these perhaps significant marks of the editor, (for I presume they are his own,) and my only object in seeking for information on the subject is, that the profession and the public may know which is the more honourable distinction.

Again, there are other physicians whose names appear in the body of the work with both M.D. and fellow or member of the Royal College of Physicians after them, but in the street list stand naked and shorn of every title.

Now, as the editor in his preface avers that "every line of the work may be said to embody a fact," perhaps he will be kind enough to disembody whatever ingredient of that nature is contained in these and some other strange anomalies with which it appears to abound.—I remain, Sir, yours &c.,

January 4, 1849.

SCRUTATOR.

BLOODLETTING IN INFLAMMATION.

"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?"

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—At page 683 of THE LANCET for December 23rd, 1848, we are informed by Dr. Garrod, (who gives a table of the results of different venesections by Becquerel and Rodier,) "that bloodletting by no means counteracts the most marked morbid state of the blood occurring in inflammation—viz., the increase in the amount of fibrin;" and at page 3 of the same journal, for January 6th, 1849, we are told by Dr. Walshe, that "by bloodletting you diminish local congestion, you lessen the momentum of the circulation, you defibrinize the blood, and you promote absorption of exudation."

May I ask which of these two statements has the sanction of the majority of the profession?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Wales, Jan. 1849.

M. E. V. E. P.

MEDICAL FEES AT INSURANCE OFFICES.

We have received the following note:—

Legal and Commercial Life Assurance Society.
London, Jan. 13, 1849.

SIR,—Dr. Woodfall, the physician to this Society, has just called my attention to your having omitted, in publishing the list of offices recognising the payment of medical fees, this Society, which was certainly one of the first admitting the justice of such a practice.

This Society, I believe, is the only one which has put the medical profession on a footing with that of the legal. It therefore, I think, deserves to be mentioned among those of a liberal character.—Yours, obediently,

J. C. HARDY, Secretary.

We have also lately received a circular, of which the following is an extract:

Engineers, Masonic, and Universal Mutual Life Assurance Society,
345, Strand, London.

SIR,—The directors of this office understand that circulars have lately been sent to the members of your profession by the directors of other life assurance offices, intimating that in future the fee to the medical attendants of parties proposing to assure their lives will be paid by the office, instead of—as has hitherto been the custom—by the persons so applying.

As this was the of the first offices which adopted that practice, the directors of the Engineers' Office think that it is due to themselves to inform you of that circumstance.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

FREDERICK LAWRENCE, Actuary and Secretary.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—During the last week the enclosed card was sent to me, with a long circular to be filled up and returned. It commenced, "How long have you known?" &c. My simple answer was, "How long will insurance offices continue to extract information from medical men for their own benefit, and not remunerate the medical man for his trouble? Yours, &c."

You will see, by the enclosed, that Richard Hartley Kennedy, Esq., late physician general, Bombay, is the deputy-chairman; and Robert Francis Power, Esq., M.D., Queen-street, May-fair, one of the directors.

Is it creditable to medical directors, at insurance offices, to be seen patronizing the condemned system of extorting beneficial services from their brethren, because the proposed insurer happens to be a patient.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

No FEE, NO ANSWER.

* * The printed card contains the names as stated by our correspondent.—ED. L.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If you think the accompanying correspondence worthy of a place in your truly useful journal, I would feel obliged by your publishing it, and am, Yours truly,

T. B. EAMES, M.R.C.S.E.

Kearsley, March, 31st, 1848.

SIR,—As medical attendant to Mr. P. F—, of Kearsley, I have been handed by him a schedule from the Atlas Insurance Office, to fill up. If it is your wish I should do so, I would feel obliged by your remitting me the usual fee, as I consider my opinion altogether to your advantage; I beg also to say, that, about four years since, his life was insured in the Ormskirk branch office, when his schedule was filled up by a Mr. S—, a quack residing in this neighbourhood.

I have no doubt he can again have it filled up by the same person, at the same cost, but as I consider my opinion worth paying for, I decline giving answers to your several queries until hearing from you, and remain,

Sir, your very obedient servant,

To Mr. Charles Ansell, Actuary.
Atlas Insurance Office, Cheapside, London.

T. B. EAMES.

I received the accompanying communication:—

(COPY.)

Atlas Insurance Office, London, April 3, 1848.

SIR,—I have received your favour of the 31st ult., relative to a proposed assurance upon the life of Mr. P. F—. The directors are sorry they cannot have the pleasure of remitting you a fee in this case, as they feel obliged invariably, and on principle, to decline paying fees to the medical gentlemen referred to by parties desirous to effect life assurances.

The medical referee makes his report on behalf of the pro-

poser, to enable the latter to effect the assurance he desires, and under this arrangement the directors think the company ought not to pay the fee.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,
To T. B. Eames, Esq., Kearsley. C. ANSELL, Actuary.

I returned the chart, unfilled, with the accompanying note:—

Kearsley, April 5, 1848.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 3rd ult., and beg to say, I do not feel myself called upon to give a professional opinion to the Atlas Insurance Company, who in nowise contributed to the expense of my education. The chart which was left with me, I send according to Mr. P. F——'s direction, and remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

To Mr. Charles Ansell.

T. B. EAMES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As you request, in the leading article of THE LANCET, of Saturday last, any information with reference to the assurance offices, I cannot resist furnishing you with a case which occurred to me some years since. A gentleman, a patient of mine, was anxious to assure his life, and called on me to request I would answer any inquiries made to me from the — assurance-office. I at once said my report would be a most unfavourable one. He, however, determined to try his luck, and presented himself at the office; and in due course I received their usual list of queries, in answer to which I said, so soon as my fee of £1 1s. was forwarded or promised, I should be happy to supply them with all the information in my power; but without, I must beg to decline any further communication on the subject. I however received in reply, a long list of jesuitical reasons why the office ought not to pay the fee. I referred them, in answer, to my former letter, and stated it to be my final determination to adhere to all there stated. The worthies, however, unwilling to lose what they thought a healthy life, were satisfied with the opinion of their own medical officer, and my patient's proposal was accepted. He assured his life for £3000, paid the premium, and in four months dropped down dead while getting into a cab. He had been suffering for years from heart disease; and had these gentlemen of the assurance office been liberal enough to send to me one guinea, I should, in the conscientious discharge of my duty, have stated all I knew; they, however, refused, and had to pay £3000; the family of my poor patient were provided for, and I must say I was hard-hearted enough to rejoice. Should you think this worthy of insertion in your valuable journal, I think it will show these most illiberal assurance directors, that it is not always their best policy to withhold from medical men that which is their just due. A few facts of this sort, and a few more of your sharp castigations, will show them that it is to their interest to remunerate justly and fairly medical men from whom they seek valuable information.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Nov. 1848.

H.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Justly appreciating the remarks made in the last number of THE LANCET respecting the payment of medical men by insurance offices, I beg to forward the enclosed correspondence, of which you may make any use you think proper. To the first letter of inquiry, I replied that I should be happy to afford the desired information upon receiving my fee of £1 1s., to which I considered myself justly entitled, as by the questions they seek to be answered by the medical referee, the insurance company are the parties benefited.

As by their second letter to me the required fee was refused, I have recommended my patient to assure in an office where they act in a just and liberal manner to the medical man.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Bath-street, City-road, 1848.

J. R. POTTLE.

Unless necessary, I should not like my patient's name made public.

Economic Life Assurance Society,
6, New Bridge-street, Blackfriars, Nov. 1848.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the — inst., and beg to inform you, that in filling up the printed form forwarded to you from this office, you are acting as the private medical referee named by Mr. —, and it will be necessary, therefore, that you should come to some understanding with that gentleman. Mr. — would, before being accepted, be examined on the part of the company by the medical gentleman specially appointed and paid for that purpose.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Mr. J. R. Pottle.

A. MACDONALD, Secretary.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am glad to see a revival in your columns of the discussion (if it can be called discussion in which the argument is all on one side) between the medical profession and certain life assurance offices. With your kind permission, I will lay before your readers some dealings I have had with different offices during the last few years; and I will endeavour to show, in such a way as to convince any rational mind, that the system pursued by many offices, of seeking the unrequited services of medical men, is as injurious to the real interests of the offices themselves, and of the insuring public, as it is unjust to the medical profession.

I think I can also develop a plan by means of which those assurance companies who are not open to conviction, may be forced to desist from the unfair practice of which I complain. By way of preface, allow me to lay before you some correspondence I have lately had with a local office. The following was my reply to one of the usual lists of queries from the secretary:—

NO. I.

Mansfield, Dec. 19, 1848.

SIR,—I have received a printed list of inquiries from the Notts and Derbyshire Life Assurance Company, touching the health &c. of the Rev. —, a patient of mine. I beg to inform you in reply, that my invariable practice for some years has been to return answers to these inquiries only when they are accompanied by a fee, or the promise of one.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

To the Secretary of the Notts and
Derbyshire Life Assurance Society.

THOMAS WILSON.

NO. II.

Vicarage, Notts, Dec. 21, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,—Mr. Wood has just shown me your letter relative to the form of queries on the subject of my health. When I requested you to answer them, I never intended that it should be without the payment of a fee. The delay is likely to occasion me no little inconvenience. * * * * Please to mention the amount of fee to be paid, and I will send it to you by post-office order.—Dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

To Dr. Wilson.

NO. III.

Mansfield, Dec. 22, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am very sorry that my quarrel with the assurance companies is the occasion of inconvenience to you, and I hope it will be only temporary. I wish to correct an erroneous impression in your mind, that I expected to receive a fee from you. I never have taken, and never will take, a fee from a patient under the circumstances. I am not contending for a fee, but for a principle—viz., that in all cases the assurance company is the party benefited, and therefore bound in common honesty to requite the service. If the office will pay the fee, I shall be glad to give them the required information. If they decline to do so, I also must decline to answer the inquiries. Allow me at the same time to suggest that there are several excellent offices which now make a point of paying medical men for their trouble, and if the one to which you have applied should refuse to insure your life for want of my unremunerated services, the others are willing to obtain those services honestly.

I remain, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

To the Rev. —

THOMAS WILSON.

I have heard nothing further on the subject, and the probability is, that the life has been accepted without my certificates. This sort of proceeding is now common, though the public are little aware of it; and many questionable lives are passed and insured on the same terms as those of undoubted soundness. Whether there is any security for the stability of offices which conduct business on such a plan, the public will be the best judges.

With your leave, I will continue the subject in a future number of THE LANCET.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Mansfield, Jan. 8, 1849.

THOMAS WILSON, M.D.

NAVAL ASSISTANT-SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your willingness at all times to plead the cause of the oppressed induces me to send you these few remarks, trusting you will give them a place in your valuable journal.

As yet the appeal of the Councils of the Colleges of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland to the Admiralty in favour of the assistant-surgeons of the Royal Navy has elicited nothing