affairs of the charity should be ignorant of these facts." That these circumstances have been long since discussed I freely grant, but that they have ever been *satisfactorily explained* I most positively deny, and my subsequent remarks will clearly prove the truth of my position.

I was not, Sir, at all surprised at the silence with which Dr. Thos. Leigh Blundell treated the accusation in the first instance; what most astonished me was, that he could venture to publish, with such unblushing effrontery, a tissue of what he calls "facts," not merely containing slight and excusable inaccuracies, but *being positively destitute of one solitary truth*, at the same time knowing well how easily myself, my friend Mr. Pye Smith, and two or three others, could refute him. Before proceeding to the brief statement of facts, I will most distinctly and emphatically reiterate the charge made by Mr. Bamford.

In January, 1852, it was rumoured that Dr. Ramsbotham would resign his position, in consequence of his intended removal to Portman-square, and it was thought probable that Dr. T. Leigh Blundell would be appointed to the eastern district. At the annual meeting of governors, held at the London Tavern on February 5, 1852, a motion, proposed by Mr. Alderman Wilson, and seconded by Mr. Bamford, was carried by a majority of *two only*, to the effect "that the physicians' stipends should be reduced from £60 to £40, and the surgeons' remuneration should cease altogether, and that all future appointments should be gratuitous." At that meeting I and others of my colleagues learnt that Dr. T. Leigh Blundell, upon the prospect of Dr. Ramsbotham's resignation in March, had made the proposal above-mentioned to Mr. Norris, the chairman. Of course, a good deal of indignation was very naturally excited in the minds of the medical men present by such a disgraceful proceeding on his part; and, after having had a conference with my colleagues, I wrote him the following note:—

"1, Kingsland-road, Feb. 23, 1852.

"DEAR SIR,—As the resolution of the last general meeting of governors places the medical staff of the Royal Maternity Charity in a somewhat disagreeable position, it is proper for us to know the opinions of each of its members. I have been requested by my colleagues to ascertain if the report, that you have proposed to Mr. Norris, the chairman of the committee, to take upon yourself the duties of your own and Dr. Ramsbotham's district, upon his resignation, and to find the services of surgeons for £100 per annum, be true. Will you kindly let me know if such be the fact of the case?

"I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.,

"Dr. T. L. Blundell."

"P. L. BURCHELL.

On March 1st, 1852, the accompanying reply reached me:—

"3, Finchbury-place South, March 1, 1852.

"DEAR SIR,—In reply to your note of the 23rd ultimo, written on behalf of your colleagues of the Royal Maternity Charity, I can truly state that it was with much surprise that I received a notification of the new arrangements respecting the medical staff of the Charity. Presuming that the medical officers are bound to abide by the decision of the committee in this as in other matters connected with our duties, I do not see that we have any other alternative than to bow to their dictum.

"With regard to the remaining portion of your note, I may add, that although the retirement of Dr. Ramsbotham suggested to me the proposal you mention, and that it was a matter of conversation between Mr. Norris and myself, still *no official* communication has passed from me to that gentleman on the subject; but even had it been otherwise, I do not see that such an offer could be deemed injurious to the interests of my colleagues in the Charity with which we are connected.

"I remain, dear Sir, yours truly,

"T. L. BLUNDELL.

"P. S.—I regret that serious indisposition has prevented my giving earlier attention to your note.

"P. L. Burchell, Esq."

Dr. Ramsbotham, as expected, resigned the post of physician in March, and on April 16th the surgeons were informed by the secretary of the charity that Dr. T. L. Blundell, who had removed to New Broad-street, had been appointed to the superintendence of the eastern division, vacated by Dr. Ramsbotham. In reply to which announcement, the medical officers remonstrated with the committee, objecting to this arrangement on the ground of Dr. T. L. Blundell's proceedings connected with the charity, and well known to the committee. Shortly afterwards, at a meeting of the surgeons, an address to the committee was agreed upon, in which the firm determi-

nation was expressed to hold no communication with Dr. T. L. Blundell; and never to meet him in consultation, in consequence of his unprofessional conduct.

On May 12th, Dr. T. L. Blundell was attending a difficult case (a patient of the charity) in my locality, and sent a message requesting my immediate assistance; as it was a case of great urgency; in spite of what had occurred, I did not feel myself justified in refusing. After the delivery, I plainly told him that I went out of compassion to the woman, and from no respect I entertained for him. He called upon me subsequently, when I gave him distinctly to understand that I would never have anything whatever to do with him, either in the charity or out of it. He went directly from my house to a meeting of the committee, which happened to be sitting, and made the complaint against me of refusing to meet him on the business of the charity. I attended the next meeting, on June 14th, 1852, to explain, when our letter, above referred to, was also read, signed by seven of the eight surgeons of the district, over which Dr. T. L. Blundell then had charge; the result was, that the committee expressed great regret at our dissensions, but did not feel itself justified in disturbing Dr. T. L. Blundell, in consequence of his long association with the charity. We, of course, had no hesitation in adopting the only alternative left us—namely, at once to disconnect ourselves from the medical staff of the institution. Our resignations were accepted on July 1, 1852.

Does this plain, unvarnished tale correspond with Dr. T. L. Blundell's assertion that he made the offer in a casual conversation with the chairman, with a view of aiding rather than profiting by the troubles of an institution to which he had been for so many years attached, being virtually without colleagues in his district, stating that these troubles arose from the resignation of the surgeons, when that event did not come to pass till five months later, and *was the consequence* of his unprofessional offer and conduct, and *not its cause*? The dates of the transactions will speak for themselves, and for their accuracy I will vouch, of which any governor can convince himself at the office, 17, Little Knight Rider-street, Doctors' Commons.

Under these circumstances, I should be glad to know whether Dr. T. L. Blundell cannot very fairly be charged with disgracefully attempting to supplant his colleagues for a mere addition of pay, and of subsequently "boldly and publicly," and with virtuous indignation, denying the charge?

I pause for a reply, and beg to apologise for the space this communication must occupy in your valuable columns, if you will kindly favour me by its insertion in your next issue.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

P. L. BURCHELL, M.B. Lond.,

And for Twelve Years one of the Surgeons to the
Kingsland-road, Jan. 15, 1854. Royal Maternity Charity.

THE ANTI-LANCET CONSPIRACY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If to disinterested and upright persons the line of conduct that Mr. Gay pursued prior to his dismissal from the office of surgeon at the Royal Free Hospital had—notwithstanding the arrogant but somewhat grotesque announcement, "that his conduct had ever been such as was in his opinion best calculated to promote the usefulness and general reputation of the institution"—appeared of a somewhat questionable nature, surely his proceedings since the commencement of what he terms this *truly infelicitous affair* must have seemed of a most equivocal kind. First of all, he confidently asserts that, until certain recent circumstances of an unfortunate nature, he not merely was in "constant and friendly communication" with all his colleagues, but that his conduct had hitherto given the most unqualified approbation to all concerned in the government of the hospital; and yet the public are reluctantly but very explicitly informed by the Committee of Management that, so far from correct is it that his conduct had given them unqualified approbation, that they are coerced to admit that he has again and again committed "acts of resistance against the rules and regulations of the hospital."

Why, Sir, by the disclosures that an imperative sense of public duty have compelled the committee to make, it is evident that the conduct of Mr. Gay, while surgeon of the Royal Free Hospital, has been but too often that of a very vain, a very rash, and hot-tempered man—one who, disinclined to listen to the voice of reason, was regardless of all advice that urged him to turn from his inconsiderate course, and perversely determined, come what may, to set the rules of

the institution at defiance, and beard the presiding authorities with audacious contumacy. Yet, upon the part of the hospital committee, he was always treated with considerate urbanity and conciliatory kindness. Often were his wishes complied with; frequently were his suggestions, when not of an extravagant kind, at once attended to, and proceedings calculated to subserve irregularities, generally overlooked with a gentle remonstrance.

But what effect had successive acts of forbearance on the part of the hospital authorities upon this officer? Did it make him turn from his presumptuous opposition to their desires, or refrain from pursuing the objectionable practices, the continuance of which, if long allowed to pass without comment or reproof, would subject the managing committee to the imputation of vacillating weakness or habitual indecision? Sir, so far was Mr. Gay from doing this—so far was it from his intention to abstain from his offensive conduct, that only recently are the authorities compelled to report the following scandalous behaviour:—"Complaints had been repeatedly made by Mr. Gay that the hospital did not contain a proper theatre for the performance of operations; but no sooner was the present commodious theatre erected, than he declared that he *would not operate therein*, and he persisted in performing his operations in the wards until a special order was issued to make him desist."

I have now, I think, disposed of this gentleman's confident boast that his conduct was such as to give at all times unequivocal satisfaction to all parties connected with the Free Hospital. Sir, Mr. Gay's veracity, you will perceive, is so unimpeachable, that people may implicitly rely on his assertions with confidence and safety. But Mr. Gay has again and again stated that he has been in "constant and friendly communication with all his colleagues," and "is not aware that he has ever at any time given them cause of offence."

How was it, then, I ask, that when his indelicate and monstrous puff appeared in a pitiful and vile periodical, which heaped upon his head all the honours and accumulated rewards due to other gentlemen—gentlemen, recollect, that not merely were his co-operators during the time that he had been in connexion with the Royal Free Hospital, but with whom he was upon terms of "constant and friendly communications"—he took no notice of the biographical advertisement, until the committee called his attention to it, and justly and fairly demanded if he had any, and if so what, share in its concoction?—that then it was for the first time that Mr. Gay began "most sincerely to feel that his services had been overrated, and that the zeal and efforts of his colleagues had all the while been grossly ignored." Is it a wonder, Sir, that the hospital committee inform the governors that it "was quite impossible to misapprehend the feelings by which Mr. Gay's conduct had been prompted?" Could they be blind to the ignominy of sanctioning such conduct?

Sir, it was not, mark you, that Mr. Gay was unaware of the publication of his biography, and the inuendoes it cast upon the conduct of his colleagues, for I believe that not merely had Mr. Gay the proof-sheets sent to him for correction, but I have been informed on an authority I cannot impugn, that besides the copies that were sent round to some members of the medical profession by the editor of the wretched paper in which the *Gay puff* appeared, that the subject of the biography actually purchased several scores of the paper in question, and gratuitously and widely circulated this puff of himself—a puff partly of his own composition—to numerous medical men. That he was satisfied with his puff, who, Sir, can doubt? That he had not, in his own language, "ever complained to the editor of any statements or allegations contained in his biography," no one will question. Mr. Gay was too modest a man to do that; his bashfulness prevented—his natural modesty hindered him. Though he felt that his services had been "much overrated," though he regretted that his biography should have given "offence" to any living man; though the "services of the founder and other medical officers had been over-looked;" and though he acknowledged that the statements made concerning him required the "favour of correction;" still Mr. Gay, through sheer bashfulness and modesty—through a *bashfulness* that permitted him to take advantage of the sneers at his colleagues, and through a *modesty* that did not prevent him from availing himself of the opportunity of turning his gross puff into a serviceable auxiliary—audaciously affirmed to his astounded superiors, that "he did not choose to tell the editor of the paper that he was *WRONG* in what he had written!"

Sir, I use moderate language when I stigmatise such a proceeding as this unprofessional conduct. Can we wonder—if all his acts were of a similar character to the few salient ones that

I have described, and which are now well known to the profession at large—that the Committee of the Royal Free Hospital, with every disposition to act generously towards Mr. Gay—with every desire to view his conduct in a generous and forgiving spirit, were forced and urged, nay compelled, consistently with justice to the purposes and ends of the charity over which they presided, to arrive at the inevitable but painful conclusion of dismissing that gentleman from their service, and removing him from an appointment whose duties they could not allow him any longer to discharge without inflicting rank injustice upon his estimable and talented coadjutors.

What, Sir, was Mr. Gay's conduct after his dismissal? How did he strive to convince you that the friendly feelings which he has always entertained towards the Editor of THE LANCET should not be perilled by any act of his? What was the first plan he adopted to prove the truth of his assertions? Why he came down to an ancient and large city hospital, denounced you, Sir, and purposely allied himself to a few interested persons, who have willingly risked their obscure necks in a vain attempt to gain a celebrity which is never, and has never, yet been acquired by the stupid possessors of restless mediocrity and impotent malice! These persons got up a little "agitation;" and several gentlemen of position and established repute in the profession, deceived by biassed and one-sided statements, were induced to come forward in defence of what they erringly conceived was an injured man.

I cannot, however, at this moment inquire into and expose the snares by which many estimable practitioners were deluded. I wish to examine into Mr. Gay's conduct towards one of his colleagues—that one the son of his consistent benefactor and powerful friend during a period of fifteen years. Now, Sir, no gentleman has ever been more grossly wronged, I cannot but consider *wilfully*, than Mr. T. Wakley, jun. But all the allegations urged against this gentleman have been amply refuted by him in his manly, straightforward letters. Did these letters produce the due effect they ought to have done upon every honest and impartial mind? Their influence was attempted to be explained away, the integrity of their statements impugned by anonymous assailants, and then, last of all, as if quite innocent of any power over his licensed partisans, Mr. Gay modestly comes forth to assure his professional brethren how reluctant he is to obtrude himself upon their notice *in this truly infelicitous affair*, having carefully abstained throughout from taking any more prominent part in it than was absolutely required for the cause of truth and justice; but still he begs to be permitted, although he *does it most reluctantly*, to reply to some statements of Mr. T. Wakley.

Sir, it is not as your partisan, or as the sycophant of Mr. T. Wakley, that I allude to this matter, but merely because I conceive Mr. Gay, as he has now succeeded in attracting to himself, by means to which I care not to allude, some share of public attention, ought to have all the statements that he makes thoroughly sifted, and the inaccuracies, not to characterize them by a stronger term, that he falls into, freely exposed. Mr. Gay comes forward as the champion of truth and justice. In defence of a partisan, Mr. Gay rashly asserts, that "he saw Mr. T. Wakley hold his hand up" in acquiescence of the vote at the meeting for his (Mr. Gay's) dismissal. What is the truth? Why, that Mr. Gay makes an inaccurate assertion, at least such appears the fact according to all laws of evidence; for not merely does Mr. T. Wakley make a direct contradiction to this unsupported statement of Mr. Gay, but he brings forward, in proof of his veracity, letters of an unimpeachable kind from no less than three gentlemen who were present, situated close to him, and eye-witnesses of all the proceedings that took place.

So much, Sir, for one of Mr. Gay's arguments, or rather "statements," in the cause of *truth and justice*. I take another. Mr. Gay accusingly says, "Mr. T. Wakley's memory must be very treacherous as to another meeting (*the first*) that took place; for I saw Mr. T. Wakley and his father in the room as I passed the window." But the unquestionable accuracy of Mr. Gay is, I regret to say, sadly shaken in this charge by a letter from the secretary of the committee, Mr. W. H. Fenn, who asseverates that the gentleman in question was indeed present in the room at a "meeting between the committee and the proposed proprietors of the school;" but, continues he, "Mr. T. Wakley had left the board-room long before the matter between the committee and Mr. Gay was discussed." See also the perfectly conclusive letter of Mr. Halswell on the same point.

Sir, medical men are never wanting in proper feeling, in the due appreciation of an honest statement, and in the indignant denouncement of an unjust act. Is Mr. Gay, as he asserts,

"so reluctant to obtrude himself upon the notice of his professional brethren"? Does he confine himself "to the prominent part absolutely required for the cause of truth and justice"?

Sir, with your kind permission, this subject I must consider in another communication.

Yours faithfully,

London, January, 1854.

SPECTATOR.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As an observer of recent events in our professional hemisphere, and having abstained from all interference or comment till I became acquainted with *facts*, I must acknowledge that the information conveyed in the last week's number of *THE LANCET* is so satisfactory and tangible to the unbiassed mind, that further comment will be superfluous; at the same time you are aware that censure is the tax man pays to the public for being eminent; such a man cannot think of escaping, and he admits his weakness if affected by it. The illustrious persons of antiquity, and, indeed, of every age, have passed through it; it is a fiery ordeal from which there is no escaping, but by obscurity; it is a concomitant of greatness, as satires and invectives were an essential part of a Roman triumph!

If men of eminence are exposed to censure on the one hand, they are as liable to flattery on the other. If they receive reproaches which are not due to them, they also receive praise which they do not deserve. In a few words, men in a high position are never regarded with indifference. For this reason, such persons have seldom their true characters drawn until after their decease; their personal friendships and enmities then cease, and the interests they were engaged in are at an end. It is, therefore, the privilege of posterity to adjust the characters of the more deserving and eminent, and to set matters right between antagonists who by their rivalry divide parties into faction. Some historian may arise who will not write "*recentibus odiis*," as Tacitus expresses, with the passions and prejudices of a contemporary author, but make an impartial distribution of the wreaths of Fame to those who merit them.

We know that human nature appears deformed or beautiful according to the different lights in which it is viewed; the intention of our Creator is, that we should subdue the passions and cultivate the rational faculties, not undermine each other by *secret* treachery or by *open* violence, compassionating each other's weaknesses and relieving each other's wants, full of generous regard for the welfare and prosperity of the whole human race, these should be the dictates and the end of science, bearing in mind, that in these days of progress men are expected to resemble the gods; and Tully observes,—"*Homines ad Deos nullâ re propius accedunt quam Salutem hominibus dando.*"

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

Pentonville, Jan. 30, 1854.

WILLIAM SETH GILL.

THE CONDUCT OF MR. GAY AND HIS INFAMOUS ADVOCATES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—After having read with attention, pleasure, and considerable interest, the frank letter of Mr. Halswell, who has had the misfortune to be much and most unjustly censured as the person who was especially the *fons et origo mali* of all the disagreeable discussion that has taken place concerning the dismissal of Mr. Gay from the Royal Free Hospital,—a letter that was published in *THE LANCET* of the 28th inst.,—I cannot but come to the conclusion that all the slanders that have been heaped upon you,—all the allegations that have been accumulated upon your devoted head,—all the aspersions which have been so freely circulated against your character, are wilful and malignant falsehoods, purposely spread abroad in the futile hope that they will do you irrevocable harm in public estimation.

I think that every honest, and unprejudiced, and disinterested person will be found to come to the same conclusion if he reads the emphatic communication from Mr. Halswell, and at the same time impartially reviews the several circumstances concerning the Royal Free Hospital that have come before the public. It has, Sir, for instance, been stated that against Mr. Gay the Messrs. Wakley entertained violent prepossessions; that they were ready to inflict at any moment all the injury in their power upon him, so soon as a chance offered. But what, Sir, has been the fact? Has *THE LANCET* up to this movement held Mr. Gay up to the reprehension of its

readers? Has it published communications of a hostile nature, criticising his character and disparaging his talents? So far is this from the truth, that it has been a subject of regret to myself and many other brother practitioners who are subscribers to your valuable periodical, that we were not furnished with all the information we desired with reference to Mr. Gay's conduct prior and subsequent to his dismissal from his hospital duties. Yet, Sir, all the while that you have pursued this generous course towards Mr. Gay, his unprincipled advocates have run rampant in the columns of your contemporaries, uttering allegations of the most unfounded kind, and *inventing* statements that appear upon investigation to be wholly untrue. Justice and truth, however, assert their prerogative at last. The medical profession will ponder well on Mr. Halswell's letter.

Let me consider, Sir, the accusations that have been circulated against the editor of *THE LANCET*. It has again and again been asserted that Mr. Wakley was the prime mover in, and sole author of, the dismissal of Mr. Gay. What, Sir, is the truth? Let me cite the words of a gentleman whose accuracy it is impossible to impugn:—"On introducing to the notice of the committee, in July last, the subject of the injurious imputations on the hospital contained in Mr. Gay's memoir, *I was solely influenced by a sense of duty towards the governors of the charity.* Motives of a private nature I had none—I could have none." So far, says Mr. Halswell, was Mr. Wakley from entertaining the slightest personal hostility towards Mr. Gay, that when "I mentioned the matter to the Committee, Mr. Wakley immediately remarked that he had no doubt that when the subject of discussion was mentioned to Mr. Gay, he would instantly set matters right and exonerate himself from all blame." And, again, Mr. Halswell states subsequently that in consequence of an interchange of letters that had taken place between Mr. Wakley and Mr. Gay, the former gentleman stated to him and to the Committee that he considered himself disqualified—having expressed a strong personal opinion upon the subject—from taking part in the points that referred to Mr. Gay's conduct; and, continues Mr. Halswell, in his letter to Mr. Wakley, "I can declare, and most truly, that this resolution was scrupulously kept by you, and that you neither voted nor addressed the committee on a single occasion when this painful subject was under deliberation."

Sir, how is it, I want to know, that notwithstanding these implicit and honest avowals—avowals, mark you, made by a gentleman who was a member of the committee, a magistrate, and a deputy-lieutenant of the county; how is it that regardless of assurances from persons of the most unexceptionable character and most unimpeachable integrity, that still, up to the moment at which I write, the editor of *THE LANCET* has been ceaselessly and bitterly assailed in a perfect torrent of vituperation and gross misrepresentation? Are the persons who strive in this obstinate manner to shed all the obloquy in their power upon a gentleman, who it appears, upon irrefragable testimony, has purposely abstained from taking any part whatever in the "Gay crisis," to be believed by temperate and just men, when they assert that the prominent parts which they are thus taking are forced upon them solely by their sympathy for "the cause of truth and justice?" I cannot but think that there must exist private motives; that reasons at present in the background, and studiously hidden and concealed from public knowledge, will before long become too palpable to escape detection, and that any of my professional brethren who took up Mr. Gay's cause, as the cause of an injured and wronged man, have already discovered, to their sorrow and lasting regret, that they have been the slaves and dupes of artful, designing, and unprincipled men.

Mr. Gay first propagated the slander against Mr. Wakley, and this was his *gratitude* in return for "the many acts of kindness he had received" from that gentleman. In less than three months, what will be the unanimous opinion of the profession of the character of a man who could be guilty of such conduct? Events will supply the answer.

I beg to remain, Sir, yours &c.,

Hammersmith, Jan. 1854.

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

ALLEGED PROFESSIONAL TRICKERY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was not a little astonished at seeing, this morning, in your journal of January 21st, a malicious attack upon my character, by an "Enemy to Humbug," headed "Professional Trickery."

In answer to this, I have only to say, that I *deny in toto* the