sides, of so little real value, as a test of professional attainment, is their licence, in an honorary point of view, that I have never yet met with any licentiate of the Apothecaries' Company who ever uses it as an *honorary degree*, but simply as *one of necessity*, when seeking some appointment where its production is considered necessary. Though with every wish to have not only a general but also perfect registration of the medical profession, I would still caution non-licentiates of the hall to be careful how they comply with this request of the council of the Royal College of Surgeons, lest by these means they may suddenly find themselves served with a notice either to present themselves for examination at Rhubarb Hall, or incur the risk of an action for penalties for practising without a licence from that most scientific, learned, and worshipful society.

A NON-LICENTIATE OF THE HALL.
June 14, 1841.

LIFE-ASSURANCE COMPANIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—A gentleman lately called to inform me that he intended insuring his life, and asked permission to refer the company to me. Of course there was no objection, and the application soon arrived, with all the paraphernalia of the usual interrogatories. But in addition to these was a distinct paragraph, informing me "*that all persons proposing to effect assurances with this society, are required to furnish the usual certificates of health, &c., free of charge, or fee of any kind.*" To this I added the marks !!! stating that being responsible to the company the fee must come from them, not directly from the patient, and thus returned their communication. The gentleman being informed of the circumstance soon made his appearance, and offered me any fee I pleased if I would answer the questions, as he was anxious to complete his arrangement. I told him that a fee from *him* was not my object, but that a contention existed between the medical profession and *some* of the assurance companies, upon what we considered a want of rectitude on their part, so that the point at issue was not one of money but of *principle*. After hearing the explanation he fully coincided in the justice of my proceeding, but rather reproached me for not having informed him of the difficulty when he first mentioned the subject; for he had already, he said, given a deposit, and had been examined by the professional gentlemen belonging to the institution. His remarks had their weight, and I was at length induced to consent, although reluctantly, to fill up the paper which was again to be forwarded for that purpose. Now,

sir, I do regret having been foiled in this instance; and as true repentance necessarily includes reformation as to future conduct, I have firmly resolved never to commit the same error again. But I find some assistance is requisite, and that is a printed list of those assurance companies that have yielded to reason, and now treat medical men with that respect which is due to their station. When persons are about to insure they generally acquaint the medical attendant with their design, and with the name of the company, and with such a list very few words would, in the hurry of practice, be necessary. If the name referred to were wanting, I would show them the list, and say, you must excuse me, *these are the only assurance companies I can at present correspond with.* Now, sir, perhaps you, or some of your readers, will kindly suggest a plan for supplying the profession with such list, which I think should be renewed every two or three months, for the convenience and admission of new converts, for I find that many of those institutions are still opposed to the "golden rule," and possess such a rock of assurance that they will not listen to any reasoning on the subject; the sooner, therefore, they are subjected to what Goldsmith calls the most cruel of all treatment—"neglect," the better. I am, Sir, yours truly,

MEDICUS SUBURBANICUS.

June 18, 1841.

* * We do not recommend that such a list as our correspondent suggests should be supplied, having been from the first agitation of this question of opinion, that the position which many medical gentlemen have adopted in their intercourse with the assurance companies is altogether wrong, and one which is always liable, as with our correspondent, to foil them in the end,—the fate of wrong principles. The fee was due to the surgeon by the party who asked the company to insure his life. The companies always *refuse* to assure unless supplied with a proof of health; which proof passes direct from the surgeon to the company, instead of going through the hands of the assurer, only to afford the company an additional guarantee against fraud. The company does not, by that course of proceeding, become the debtor of the surgeon.

HAND-BILL FOR PATIENTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I have taken the liberty to submit the inclosed certificate to your notice, 1000 copies of which I have circulated in the parish of Bethnal-green to-day. I annex

the residence of my friends to my name in this letter, that no other party may be suspected as accessory to a proceeding for which I alone am responsible. I have the honour to remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

CHARLES WELCH,

Junior Assistant to Mr. Pearce, M.R.C.S.
135, Bethnal Green-road,
July 5, 1841.

" St. Matthew, Bethnal Green.

" Medical Certificate.

" I hereby certify that the following persons, namely,—

Dr. F—, of — Road,

Mr. T—, of — Road,

— E. M—, of — Road,

— J. B—, of — Terrace,

" Are not legally qualified to practise as Apothecaries in London, or any part of England and Wales.

" I further certify that in the 21st section of an Act of Parliament of the 55th year of the reign of his Majesty, King George III., it is stated, ' And be it further enacted, that no apothecary shall be allowed to recover any charges claimed by him in any court of law, unless such apothecary shall prove on the trial that he was in practice as an apothecary prior to, or on the said 1st day of August, 1815, or that he has obtained a certificate to practise as an apothecary.'

" I also certify, that according to the 20th section of the same Act of Parliament, any one found practising as an apothecary without the aforesaid qualifications is liable to a penalty of 20*l.* for every such offence.

" Witness my hand, this 29th day of June, 1841,

" CHARLES WELCH, Ball's Pond-road."

* * This, under the present administration of the law, is a new, and not an improper, mode of advertising unqualified medical practitioners to the public; but we erase from the "certificate" the names and addresses of the persons advertised, because Mr. Welch does not state that he is in a condition to prove that the parties are practising as apothecaries. Neither, in fact, does he deny that they are members of one of the Colleges of Surgeons, or graduates or licentiates in medicine of other British institutions. Moreover, Mr. Welch does not, in assuming the office of advertiser, announce that he is himself a licentiate of the London Apothecaries' Company.

SOCIETY OF LUNATIC-ASYLUM OFFICERS.

A CIRCULAR, of which the following is a copy, has been forwarded to the medical

officers, generally, of the lunatic asylums of Great Britain. In no department of medical science is the want of co-operation amongst its professors so severely felt as in that which involves the treatment of insanity:—

" Gloucester, June 19, 1841.

" Dear Sir,—It having long been felt desirable that the medical gentlemen connected with lunatic asylums should be better known to each other—should communicate more freely the results of their individual experience—should co-operate in collecting statistical information relating to insanity—and, above all, should assist each other in improving the treatment of the insane—several gentlemen who have the conduct of lunatic asylums have determined on making an attempt to form ' an Association of the Medical Officers of Lunatic Asylums.'

" For this purpose they propose to meet ANNUALLY, at the times and places which ' the British Association for the Cultivation of Science' shall select for holding their meetings; and to hold a first, or preliminary, meeting this year, on the 29th of July next, at Devonport.

" I have been requested by these gentlemen to learn how far their brethren will co-operate with them; and I shall feel it a personal kindness, therefore, if you will, as soon as possible, give me your opinion upon this proposed association, and also inform me if you will give it your support. I beg to remain, dear Sir, your obedient and faithful servant,

" JAMES HITCH,

" Resident Physician, Gloucestershire General Lunatic Asylum."

INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOLIC FLUIDS ON SICKNESS.

It has been affirmed by a philosophical writer on drunkenness (Macnish), that, "abstractly considered, liquors are not injurious. It is their abuse which makes them so, in the same manner as the most wholesome food becomes pernicious when taken to an improper excess." The writer, however, nowhere throughout the whole of his interesting work, affords any data which can authorise such a deduction. We would put this simple case to an unprejudiced person. Suppose one hundred individuals were to live on wholesome food, and abstain from all alcoholic fluids; and suppose another hundred, *cæteris paribus*, were to use stimulating drink, which of the two sets should we anticipate to be most healthy, at the end of a given period. We do not believe that there would be two opinions on the subject; and yet we are told, "abstractly considered, liquors are not injurious," and that it is their abuse which makes them so. But who is to define the imaginary line, between use and abuse? Some men become