Turning our eyes from the past to the future, let us hope that the triumph of empiricism is drawing to its close, and that the thousands of inquiring minds now pursuing science in the right road, may so enlighten our race that even the by-lanes and mountain-paths of medicine may be improved. Chemistry has done wonders for us by assisting us in our inquiries into the phenomena of life, as well as by furnishing us with new powers of analysis in our simplification of remedies. Medical science, though not susceptible of mathematical demonstration, is as capable of verification by induction as any other. We may, therefore, entertain glowing hopes of its future progress. When the true calculus shall be adopted we may certainly count upon the abandonment of old fallacious doctrines; juggling magnetisers will no longer afford sport for the intelligent public, or earn contempt for our profession; homœopathy will be cleansed from the absurdity of infinitesimal doses, and the true principle upon which it is founded will be admitted into the family of ascertained truths.

From what chemistry has done already for medicine, may we not infer great achievements for the future? In the department of vegetable analysis, an accuracy has been obtained, the very attempt at which had been abandoned in despair by the most illustrious chemists of a former age. The Royal Academicians of Paris, in their analysis of several hundred plants by the operation of heat, published by Geoffroy, failed in establishing any distinction between the most inert and the most poisonous plants; whilst the elegant researches in this branch of science, recently conducted in the same country, have succeeded in detecting and separating several of their most subtle and active ingredients. A number of these have been arranged together under the title of vegetable alkalies, from the common property which they possess of neutralising acids, and forming crystallisable compounds, analogous to the neutral salts. They differ very much in their chemical composition from the mineral alkalies, these being all compounds of a metallic base with oxygen, while the former are compounds of the usual elements of vegetable matter.

Dr. Basham now entered into a minute detail of the chemical and medical properties of the various alkaloids, which we regret we have not space for. From these triumphs of chemistry he drew the favourable inferences, already stated, as to the future contributions of that science to the healing art.

Having delivered these introductory remarks, the lecturer proceeded to sketch the prospectus of his course, dividing his subject into four divisions:—

1. Pharmaceutical processes by which remedies are rendered fit to be administered.

2. General principles of therapeutics.
3. Natural history of medicaments.
4. Theory of dietetics.

Having given his reasons for adopting this arrangement of his subject, the Doctor entered into many details and reasonings regarding each division, and having afforded some excellent advice to the pupils constituting his auditory, touching the moral principles which should actuate their conduct as students and as practitioners, concluded with a very appropriate peroration.

RECLAMATION OF DR. GRANVILLE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—The appearance of a review of Dr. Roe's work on whooping-cough, in your Number for Sept. 22, and certain remarks of the reviewer, respecting the use of prussic acid in that disease, which would lead one to believe that he is imperfectly acquainted with what has been done in this country with that powerful medicine, render it necessary (in order to protect my professional interest), that I should set the reviewer right, while, at the same time, I expose a most glaring attempt of the author reviewed, to set aside the labours and claims of another, through misrepresentation and the suppression of facts.

It is a principal and avowed object of Dr. Roe's publication to induce his readers to believe, that before its appearance the medical profession could have known nothing, or very little, of the efficacy of prussic acid in whooping-cough; and that he, Dr. Roe, ought henceforward to be looked upon as the individual to whom we are to be indebted for this valuable therapeutical discovery. The preface, the introduction, and parts of the text of Dr. Roe's volume, contain palpable insinuations of that pretension,—a pretension which, to judge by some remarks in your Journal, seems to have deceived even the able reviewer of that work.

The reviewer's words are these:—"It has already been observed, that the chief object of the work before us, is to recommend the use of hydrocyanic acid in the treatment of whooping-cough. Accordingly, Dr. Roe details several cases, in which that remedy was employed with manifest advantage. The results of his experience, &c. &c. . . . are such as to warrant a trial of this powerful remedy in all cases in which it is applicable, and we trust that a more extended experience will confirm the high eulogium pronounced upon it by Dr. Roe."

Now, Sir, the task which I propose to myself in my present communication, is to prove that Dr. Roe's pretension is vain, unfair, and unfounded. Vain, because it implies a superiority of knowledge above the rest of the profession, which is not substan-

tiated. *Unfair*, because it aims at an act of injustice against a brother practitioner. *Unfounded*, because it is devoid of every ground of support. These several points I shall proceed briefly to illustrate by comparative statements, such as Dr. Roe himself will not be able to gainsay, inasmuch as they will be derived from his own work, and from another long since before the public. I shall then leave the readers of *THE LANCET* to determine the degree of merit that appertains to Dr. Roe's volume on hooping-cough (as far as the employment of prussic acid is concerned), beyond that of having followed in the wake of another volume, which has been for *many years* in the hands of the medical profession, and which anticipated everything that the learned Fellow of the College of Physicians has advanced regarding the efficacy of prussic acid in that disease.

I must premise my statements by reminding you of the following historical facts, in the medical literature of this country, which seem to have escaped the recollection of the talented reviewer of Dr. Roe's volume in *THE LANCET*.

In 1815 I published a paper on the internal use of prussic acid, in the "Monthly Medical Repository."

In 1817 I again called the attention of the profession in this country to the same subject, by giving a full translation of Professor Magendie's publication on prussic acid, as a cure for convulsive cough, phthisis, &c. The translation was inserted in the "Journal of Science."

In 1819 I published "Farther Observations" on prussic acid, in the cure of several diseases, hooping-cough included. Lastly,—

In 1820, I published a larger volume, entitled "An Historical and Practical Treatise on the Internal Use of Prussic Acid, with several Formulæ" being a much enlarged edition of my work of the preceding year.

Up to the time of my writing, not a single English pen had been employed on the subject; nor had prussic acid been prescribed in this country. This fact, and these publications, I should have thought quite sufficient to make it notorious that I had been the first to introduce and recommend the use of prussic acid in England—the more so, as all the reviewers of those days admitted the fact, and gave me full credit for it.

Let us see, however, what the volume under consideration says on this subject:—"Having witnessed the great benefit which many patients in St. Thomas's Hospital derived from the use of prussic acid, prescribed for them by Dr. Elliotson.....I was induced to think it *might probably prove a remedy for hooping-cough*, not being then aware that any author had recommended it as such."—(*Dr. Roe's preface.*) And he goes on to state, that "a trial of it upon se-

veral children suffering from the disease, in its simple form, was attended with such striking effects, that I could not entertain a doubt that this medicine possessed a specific power over hooping-cough."—(*Ibid.*) Dr. Roe had already mentioned, in another part of the said preface, that "more than ten years have elapsed since I began to prescribe hydrocyanic acid for hooping-cough." As the Doctor writes in 1838, it must have been about the year 1828, that he was, by inspiration, induced to think that hydrocyanic acid would cure hooping-cough, he not knowing, at the time, that any other practitioner had so recommended it.

Now, I must beg my professional brethren to attend to the following statement:—Dr. Roe, who, of course, as an improving physician, I must suppose to be desirous of reading all important new works on medicine, having his attention directed to the internal use of hydrocyanic acid, by some casual observations in one of the hospitals, did not know, in 1828, that a large historical treatise on prussic acid, including its effects on hooping-cough, had been published in 1820, only eight years before, and reviewed by one medical journal in 1821, by a second in 1822, and by a third a year later; making a difference of only *five* years between the publication and general notice of the treatise in question, and the period of *ignorance* of Dr. Roe as to the existence of any such work.

In the midst of this ignorance Dr. Roe tells us, that he went on prescribing the prussic acid in hooping-cough, all along imagining himself the first practitioner who had employed it,—until at length, at the expiration of three or four years (or, at all events, of some given period of time), he formed the resolution to write a book on the subject, with a view to communicate his observations and experience to the profession. For this purpose, he states, that he set about collecting and preparing the necessary materials, when, lo! "in the course of my inquiries, I found that Dr. Granville had pointed out the efficacy of the same remedy *some years* before." Such a discovery, one would have thought, ought to have induced the learned author of the "Treatise on Hooping-Cough," to set aside his claim to originality in the peculiar treatment recommended; but no, he still maintains it, and reconciles it with justice by another fallacious averment, that "Dr. Granville had not done more than state the fact."

Dr. Roe having found out all this, proceeds to mention, in another part of his volume, that he "believes Dr. Granville has the merit of having introduced the medicine in this country." As Dr. Roe affirms that he had read my work on prussic acid (edition 1819), wherefore concede under the form of a dubitative expression

merit which he thinks to belong to me, when it stands declared in the very title-page of that work thus :—"On the Internal Use of Prussic Acid in Hooping-Cough;" and also in the first page of the preface in these words :—"Having been the *first* to call the attention of the profession in this country to this important subject?" &c. &c.

Elsewhere, in his volume, Dr. Roe states, that the object of his work is to show that the recommendation of hydrocyanic acid as a cure for this complaint (hooping-cough), given by Dr. Granville, in 1819, was worthy of more attention than it received." This statement is still more reprehensible than the preceding, inasmuch as it involves the suppression of an important fact, and also a charge of supineness, or indifference, on an important point of practice, against the medical profession in England, which that profession does not deserve. The important fact which Dr. Roe suppresses in this place, is the publication of a second and much larger edition in 1820, of the work alluded to by him. Had he mentioned it, he could not have ventured on the statement he has thought proper to make, that my recommendation of prussic acid, either generally, or as a cure for hooping-cough, had not met, from the profession, all the attention it deserved. So far from that having been the case, I expressed, in my second edition, the gratification I felt at having it in my power to add to my own, the evidence of many practitioners, which I could not withhold from the public without a dereliction of duty, as they had either, on my personal recommendation, or in consequence of my former publication, employed the prussic acid in many complaints, hooping-cough included. It is certainly true, that previous to my smaller edition (1819), on prussic acid, I did not prevail (neither could I expect to do so on the slender evidence I had hitherto published) on many practitioners in England to use it; but the moment that edition, which Dr. Roe avers was not much attended to, had made its appearance, the result was far different, as Dr. Roe must have read at page 126 of the second edition, where it is stated, that "subsequently to the appearance of this work the prussic acid has been *frequently* employed by English practitioners, and notice has been taken of this important addition to our *materia medica* by *various* publications."

In confirmation of this statement, Dr. Roe must have read, at page 21, of the same second edition (1820), to which, I repeat, he ought to have alluded, in a note, wherein I mention, that from returns obtained from Professor Brande, in reference to Apothecaries' Hall, and from Mr. Garden, of Oxford-street, I had ascertained that in the interval between the two editions of my book, there had been sold not less than *nine hundred and twenty-eight* ounces of prussic acid,—a medi-

cine which was then administered in such small doses (a drop each), that *two hundred and twenty thousand, seven hundred and twenty such doses* must have been sold in the course of one year, at two establishments only!

Do these facts, in the smallest degree, sanction the strange charge of remissness against the medical profession in England, in paying due attention to my recommendation of prussic acid, when, in the course of one year only, subsequent to that recommendation, and on my simple authority, my professional brethren made so large a use of a new and powerful remedy?

Yet, with all this evidence before him, Dr. Roe has hazarded another even more extraordinary statement, namely, that when engaged, a few years ago, in preparing materials for his present work, he was actually *deterred* from persevering in his intention of making known to the medical profession the power which prussic acid possesses in curing hooping-cough; deterred "by the strong prejudice generally entertained at that time (no time is stated, but certainly since 1828), by the medical men in London, as well as by the public, against the use of that medicine!" Prejudice in the medical men in London, when Dr. Paris, in his lectures on *materia medica*, delivered before the College of Physicians, of which Dr. Roe is a *Fellow*, after the appearance of my edition of 1819, commended the medicine in question, giving me credit for having introduced it; when Dr. A. T. Thomson adopted my views on prussic acid, in his "London Dispensatory," and recommended it as a powerful and effectual agent in many diseases; when my publication of a "*Pharmacopœia Pauperum*," for the Royal Metropolitan Infirmary of Sick Children, contained two *formulæ* for the administration of prussic acid, which has been used in the treatment of hooping-cough at that institution, since 1820, in some thousands of cases; when Dr. Elliotson was in the habit of prescribing the said remedy at St. Thomas's Hospital, as Dr. Roe himself tells us; all which events had taken place long before our author had dreamt of using it himself. Prejudice, indeed!

The inference which Dr. Roe would expect his readers to draw from the views he had taken of the question,—thanks to misstatements, omissions, and suppression of facts,—would be, that he is the first introducer of prussic acid, as a cure for hooping-cough, and that the profession must take the recommendation of that medicine from him, at this present moment (1838). This inference he has succeeded in getting a reviewer in a fashionable morning paper to adopt, who, absolutely ignorant of the entire question, repeats most of the misstatements of Dr. Roe, and exhibits him to his fashionable readers, by the perversion of truth, as the introducer of prussic acid in the treatment

of hooping-cough; and something like the same inference has the reviewer in *THE LANCET* adopted, in the passage I have already quoted. Thus, in the former case wilfully, and in the latter case unconsciously, would my professional claims be injuriously affected, were I not, in the present instance, to come forward and defend them, through your sense of justice, and considerate insertion of my reclamation.

One would be inclined to think, after this *exposé* of Dr. Roe's conduct, that I had exhausted all that could be brought against an author who attempts to strip another of his due; but the worst remains yet to be told, and purposely I left it, for a *bonne bouche*, in this precious banquet of the *sayings and doings* of that physician, who (it should never be lost sight of) is a Fellow of the College of Physicians. Anxious, evidently, to secure to himself the benefit of the inference already alluded to, and fearful, I suppose, that all his misstatements and suppressions might not be sufficient to accomplish that object, Dr. Roe, in one other part of his "Treatise," puts forth the following grave and deliberate misrepresentation:—"It is much to be regretted, for the sake of the public, that instead of *incidentally* mentioning hooping-cough as one of the diseases in which prussic acid is useful, he (Dr. Granville) did not furnish the profession with cases illustrative of its effects." But how stands the fact? Why, that in the very edition of 1820, to the contents of which Dr. Roe has not found it convenient to refer, for the enlightenment of his readers, and eighteen years before Dr. Roe undertook to publish a book on the same subject, giving the results of his experience, in a separate section, solely devoted to the consideration of hooping-cough, I had given, at length, *ten* cases, and referred to *six* more, all of which had been selected from my practice, in the course of *one* year only, being two or three more cases than Dr. Roe himself has numbered at length in his book, embracing a practice of *TEN* years!

I could have fained to hope that Dr. Roe, instead of being guilty of so gross a misrepresentation, had fallen into a mere error, from not having read or seen my second edition of 1820. Unfortunately, that species of explanation is wholly inadmissible; for Dr. Roe himself states, and states truly, that I modified my sanguine expectations of the benefit to be derived from prussic acid, expressed in 1819, by my "second edition, in 1820," and my words of modification to that effect, *actually occur at the tail of the sixteen cases alluded to!*

Ohe! jam satis est.

And I remain your obedient, humble, servant,

A. B. GRANVILLE, M.D.

16, Grafton-street,
Oct. 1, 1838.

NEW MODE OF FORMING SPLINTS.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR:—An article in the last number of the "British and Foreign Medical Review," on the mode of treating fractures by an immoveable apparatus, induces me to send you a description of one which is still more simple, and, in my opinion, more effectual, which I adopted five-and-twenty years ago. I had thought that the same idea must have occurred to hundreds of surgeons besides myself.

I had been visiting a *papier maché* manufactory at Birmingham, and observing how firm a board was formed by the simple process there employed, it instantly occurred to me that it would make the best possible splints for fractures.

Perhaps *all* your readers may not be aware of the mode in which the light and elegant tea-trays are manufactured; they simply consist of whited-brown paper, soaked in paste, and laid, *layer over layer*, until they acquire the requisite thickness, when they are pressed and dried.

My mode was, then, after taking especial care to have the bones in exact apposition, to paste around the limb a sufficient number of strips of thin whited-brown paper, to form the substance required, taking great pains to ascertain that the position remained correct up to the time when the hardening of the mass rendered further anxiety on the subject unnecessary.

It was not often that I left it in this state permanently, though it appears I might have done so without risk; but my object was to form these splints, perfectly adapted to the shape of the limb, and I, therefore, at the proper time, pushed down, between the paper and the skin, a spatula knife, and carefully cut through, with a penknife, from top to bottom, at such distances as were best calculated to form good-shaped splints. These I lined with rag, flannel, or lint, according to circumstances, and the whole being tied with tapes, formed an absolutely perfect and immoveable apparatus, of course most accurately adapted to the limb. In some cases, where considerable tumefaction had taken place, the vacuum left on its subsiding had to be padded; the first layer of paper next the skin, and the outer layer of all were not pasted, but only wetted. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A. L. WIGAN.

Montpelier Terrace, Brighton,
Oct. 4, 1838.