

much impurity as to render the preparations much less satisfactory, and experience does not confirm my expectation that malt could advantageously be substituted for sugar. Mr. Allan and Dr. Shelley, of Epsom, are now constantly in the habit of using the fermented preparations, and speak of them in the highest terms; to these gentlemen I am indebted for much valuable information on the subject. Dr. Golding Bird has also done me the favour of trying the wines of senna and aloes at Guy's Hospital; he acknowledges them to be excellent and efficient preparations, and that although made many months, they were in perfect preservation. He questions, however, whether they may not be open to the same objection as the old cerevisiæ—viz., being liable to turn sour, but if the simple chemical principle be properly applied, and thorough fermentation effected, I see no reason to expect it, and can fairly appeal to the results which I have already obtained. In the present advanced state of chemical knowledge, we cannot doubt that the principle of fermentation may now be applied far more efficiently than at the period when the cerevisiæ were in general use; then, indeed, its application was a mere empirical procedure.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,  
Ewell, Surrey, August, 1849. BUTLER LANE, M.D.

### A FEW WORDS ON DISPENSARIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—One of the greatest evils under which our profession groans, is, I am happy to see, fairly placed before us in your last week's LANCET,—I allude to the "gratuitous-advice" system, and the letters thereon from Dr. Stewart, of the St. Pancras Dispensary, and Mr. Courtenay, of the Islington Maternity Charity.

Dr. Stewart's letter is that of an honourable man; I trust, unfairly placed. You truly, as happily, designate such as "Black-Sheep Charity." From the St. Pancras Royal Dispensary, with its staff of M.D.'s, to the small affair for five-shilling midwifery at Islington, together with the whole tribe of gratuitous-advice mongers rising up under every conceivable pretext, what is evident?—but endeavours, under the specious garb of charity, to obtain that share of practice which should be the meed of patient, unobtrusive merit and industry. The whole gratuitous-advice system is a gross imposition, both on the profession and the public. We are constantly complaining, and with reason, that our professional services are neither sufficiently estimated nor remunerated by the public; but, Sir, how can we in reason expect that others should hold our services as worth much, when we ourselves value them at nought? The conclusion naturally arrived at is, either that medical services so freely given away are in themselves valueless, or used as snares for patients. One correspondent from the small affair at Islington repudiates with scorn the charge of "fishing for midwifery practice," stating, however, that he supplies as good midwifery at five shillings as others do at ten shillings. Is, then, our noble profession come to such a pass, as to have recourse to arts heretofore confined to low shopkeepers advertizing, "Great reduction in prices!" The next handbills liberally distributed to "the green-grocers' stalls, &c.," will surely be headed, "Selling off at prime cost!" Yet, except in degree, what difference is there between one and another of these charity humbugs? Our ancient endowed hospitals are noble institutions for the suffering poor, and eminent as schools for medical science. But what was a blessing has been made a curse to the profession in the spread of gratuitous advice by institutions miscalled charities, of all sorts and descriptions, and the individual efforts of private M.D.'s. In every county town in the provinces, each market-day sees the arrival of the regular physician, the eye and ear doctor, the bone doctor, and occasionally a worm doctor, all ready to administer to the different ailments of their fellow-creatures; but to give "the devil his due," the bone-setter is the only one of this peripatetic crew who does not affect to give away, nor is he, therefore, the lowest in public estimation. Do the other professions so act?

Looking at the swarm of so-called charitable institutions for the relief of all descriptions of ailments, or rather, doctors, I am reminded of a reply of Abernethy, when on a visit to his estate in Warwickshire. He was asked to become patron to an eye and ear infirmary just established,—"Eh! eh!" said he; "what! eyes and ears, man—eyes and ears! why, what the devil's the nose done?"

Pray do, Sir, preach a crusade against these pseudo charities, which begin and end at home.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
August 8, 1849. CHIRURGUS.

### REFUSAL OF MEDICAL FEES AT ASS. OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me to give a suggestion or two on the insurance question.

1. It is allowed on all hands that the medical man ought to be paid, the only question being who should pay. The insurer says, "I don't ask or get the information; I must not pay." The office says, "We ask for your benefit; we cannot pay."

2. Is it not clear that the advantage is mutual; each is acting for his own benefit. The insurer hopes he may get insured more cheaply, the office hopes to diminish its risk in taking the insurance.

3. Is it not therefore clear that in some way both should pay? But as the office is the medium through which the questions are asked, should it not be the medium also through which the fee should come?

4. I would propose, therefore, that the office should demand half the fee—half-a-guinea—from each applicant, and pay the whole fee—one guinea—to the referee.

5. But the difficulty is here. The offices know well that medical men do not like to offend their patients by refusing to fill up the forms, and they calculate upon this want of courage, or whatever it may be called, and act accordingly.

6. To meet this, I would propose that a general declaration, in such form as this, be drawn up:—"We, the undersigned, filling, &c., decline in future to fill up any forms for insurance companies, unless accompanied by the usual fee;" that such declaration be printed and distributed to all medical men throughout the country, so that each may return his copy signed; that the declaration, with all the names appended, be printed and forwarded to all the insurance offices; and also to all the subscribers, inclosing postage stamps towards the expense of printing.

7. Thus the subscriber would be able to forward to any patient a copy of this paper, showing that his refusal is a matter of principle and (after such signature) of pledge; and a simple intimation that his name would be found to that document would be a sufficient answer to any applications from offices.

8. Appended to this document should be a list of such offices as give the fee.

9. Would not some one of the medical societies be doing good service in getting up such a document on a matter which more specially affects that section of the profession?

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,  
VIS UNITA FORTIOR.

### PROPOSED FORM FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHLOROFORM INTERNALLY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have, for some time past, prescribed chloroform to be taken internally in various diseases—viz., dysmenorrhœa, spasmodic asthma, cholera, &c., with considerable success, but was much puzzled, at an early period of employing it, as to the vehicle for its administration, from the difficulty of holding it in solution; this, however, I have now overcome, as I find that it readily mixes with linimentum saponis (always at hand), and that the combination does not form an unpleasant draught—equal parts of each are the proportions I use. If you think this communication of sufficient importance to be made known, the publication of it in your valuable journal will give it universal diffusion, and oblige,

Yours very truly,  
Brompton-crescent, 1849. CHARLES F. POLLARD, M.R.C.S.E.

### APPLICATION FOR A JUST REMUNERATION FOR PAROCHIAL MEDICAL SERVICES.

COPY OF A MEMORIAL FROM THE MEDICAL OFFICERS TO THE BOARD OF GUARDIANS OF THE HALIFAX UNION.

To the Board of Guardians of the Halifax Union.

The Memorial of the undersigned Medical Officers of the Halifax Union, sheweth—

That your memorialists are desirous of bringing the subject of medical relief to the poor prominently before you, in order that the question may receive your united and most serious consideration.

That your memorialists are labouring under the most weighty responsibilities in the faithful discharge of their onerous duties; that the health and lives of thousands of human beings are entrusted to their care under the most trying circumstances, demanding the most assiduous attention and

patient forbearance, together with an amount of energy which must never flag by day or by night.

That as a remuneration for their services, and the necessary supplies your memorialists have to furnish, the board of guardians have fixed certain salaries; but these, in many instances, are so extremely inadequate, that the medical relief of the poor is made to press most unjustly on the resources of the medical officer, instead of being divided among the whole body of rate-payers, of which your memorialists form a part.

That your memorialists have no other object in view than the attainment of even-handed justice, and a fair apportionment of remuneration for the time, skill, labour, and supplies, which each in his several district, and in pursuance of his vocation, must, at all times and at all seasons, be prepared to furnish.

That your memorialists are desirous of cultivating the best understanding between themselves and the board of guardians, as it appears to them that both have most responsible duties to perform,—the board of guardians to the rate-payers, and your memorialists to the sick poor.

That your memorialists, in conclusion, humbly pray that their memorial may be kindly received, and that the board of guardians may grant it that consideration which they believe to be justly due to a question involving a fair and adequate remuneration to the medical officer, for most arduous, and, in many instances, dangerous services.

WM. NOWELL, Halifax; JOHN ROBINSON, Ripponden; WM. ELLIOTT, Sowerby Bridge; THOS. ROBERTSHAW, Sowerby Bridge; FRED. S. GARLICK, Halifax; W. H. PEACOCK, Halifax; C. W. PEARCE, Halifax; JAMES HILEY, Elland; WM. BROOK, Stainland; TRAFFORD HOLMES, Hipperholme; ROBT. M'LACHLAN, Shelf.

Halifax, August 8, 1849.

[\*\* We beg to be furnished with a copy of the response of the guardians, whenever it is received by the memorialists.—ED. L.]

#### ON DEAFNESS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is now generally admitted that deafness prevails greatly in England, and is much on the increase. Deafness varies much in different persons. There is a kind of deafness which is very troublesome to treat as regards improving it, by many authors called nervous deafness, a state where the power of hearing is lost by a violent roaring noise, exceeding, I imagine, what is technically called tinnitus aurium. Is such a condition depending on a local state of auditory nerve; or is it general; or on what is it depending? I always find patients complain of an increase of the symptom by sleep, by exhaustion, by mental emotion, and by gastric irritation, the ear appearing in its natural and proper state. I trust you will do me the favour of the insertion of this letter, with the view of calling attention to the subject by the numerous readers of THE LANCET, in the hope of eliciting further information on the best mode of treating such, as also some explanation of the pathological state.—I am, Sir, obediently yours,

MEDICUS.

#### LAY OPINIONS ON LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am anxious to support your comments on the letter of Mr. Perceval in THE LANCET of August 4, by observing, that insanity has certainly much to do with religion, or rather the want of it, therefore it is a fitting subject for the consideration of the divine, if by his persuasions he can enforce such a contented and resigned state of mind as befits a Christian. Then, many would not be so mad as to go to law.

And insanity has much to do with the law, for the blasted hopes of the litigants on both sides of the question are often such as to drive both the appellant and defendant stark mad. Both these learned branches, then, certainly should have some experience in matters of insanity; the one as witnessing the inefficacy of his influence as a preventive of mental aberration and hopelessness of conscience; and the other as witnessing it as a result of their style of settling disputes, which so often is, by taking the bone of contention from both parties, and thus between their inertia and activity leaving a demented body to the physiological skill of medical men.

But as to the medical man's claim to be the most able to discriminate the taint of lunacy, and the best qualified to treat

it, it is scarcely necessary to remark how constantly insanity is, as a symptom, connected with diseases of the system, and resulting from them; and also how frequently it induces diseases of the system which require a modified treatment, that will harmonize, at the same time, with the treatment of the mental affection, and not be opposed to it. Also, insanity being a disturbed state of the nervous system, sympathizing so frequently with the condition of the blood, and often originating from disordered functions of the various viscera, who but those who have devoted their lives to the study of those sympathies are qualified to decide upon them?

Unfortunately for Mr. Perceval's argument, the Agapemone case, on which it is founded, resulted from the exhortations of the minister of religion; and, forsooth, it would be irreverent in medical men to trespass on the mysteries of the faith held by Mr. Perceval and his fellow-thinkers, as the peculiar faith, or want of faith, in spiritual matters, which he seems to attribute to medical men, in his opinion disqualifies them for interference in things spiritual. Now, when Mr. Perceval can annihilate the sympathy that exists between the mind and the body, we will admit that the lawyers may wreck the mind at their pleasure without any chance of relief from medical treatment.

When divines understand the sympathies of the soul and mind, and in what respect they influence each other, through the relations of the nervous and sanguineous system, and the action of the ordinary operations of life upon the blood, we may expect they will know how to prevent irreligious folly; for such a thing as religious madness never occurred in this world, but too much of madness from the absence of religion, or mistaken notions of it—the fountain which should supply the genuine feeling being dry or mudded.

The tendency of the judicial arrogance displayed on recent occasions in matters of insanity coincides with the sentiments of the generality of those who are secluded under the affliction, which is, that all the world are mad except those who are confined, and that the order of things should be reversed.

The destitute in means and the destitute in mind are objects of public solicitude, and they claim to be protected and made comfortable, but not that, as a class, they should multiply on the face of the earth, and maintain in perpetuity the hereditary dispositions to those errors and omissions that furnish the food of litigation, and keep up the vexations of society. For instance, there must be a prevalence of out-door wisdom now in Ireland, for the courts of law have no causes, and effects are more secure. So, from the seclusion of the needy, and the absence of the witless, the lawyer's avocation is nearly extinct.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

NON HABEAS CORPUS.

August, 1849.

#### THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you, through the medium of your powerful journal, draw the attention of the Council of the College of Surgeons to the unfairness to country practitioners, of one of their by-laws, relating to candidates for the fellowship.

Take, for example, my own case; and doubtless there are many in a similar position. I am ineligible for examination because I cannot produce certificates of six years' study at recognised schools of medicine; and yet I have been a member of the College four years. Two years I held a surgical appointment at a provincial dispensary, and since then have been engaged in private practice. Five years I studied at a London hospital; eighteen months I was a dresser, (and strange though it be, were I but a B.A., this would be deemed sufficient,) in short, I could fulfil everything required, except the six-years' certificate, which I believe but few country members would be able to produce. Is not this hard?

I trust this will meet the eye of some of the council, who will at once acknowledge the injustice, and who, if they can give no assistance or advice to their professional brethren in the country, will at least try to set aside the hard requirement, and oblige, among them,

Yours, obediently,

A WOULD-BE FELLOW.

#### MAL-ARRANGEMENTS AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is now some nine weeks since a letter appeared in your columns, remonstrating in no very measured terms certainly, but in strict accordance with truth, on the unjust system carried on in University College, more especially in reference to the medical library, and the comforts of the