But I am willing to believe that this impression is not founded on adequate grounds, and that we are not aware of all the objects of the Bill, as any law having such an effect as this, would not only be unjust, but palpably absurd. As the law at present exists, the *act* of dissecting is not illegal; pains and penalties are attached only to the stealer, and not to the receiver; at present, therefore, we countrymen (without living under the fostering wing of a hospital) may keep up and improve our anatomical knowledge, of which privilege this now pending *liberal* measure would deprive us.

I can conceive no reason why any set of men, desirous not to retrograde in the path of knowledge, should be prevented using the means necessary to enable them to keep up with the march; while others, because they live in larger towns, are allowed them. Why should dissecting be allowed in Bath, and not in Frome? in Gloucester, and not in Cheltenham? why not, in fact, in the smallest village containing a medical practitioner, as well as in London. I would ask any anatomical teacher and surgeon, if, with even the most accurate knowledge, it is always an easy matter to tie a wounded posterior, tibial peroneal, or radial artery? and if a hand out of practice might not, in such cases, sometimes be baffled? The "country gentlemen" in parliament, at any rate know that such things as scythes and reaping hooks are occasionally used, and the annals of country surgery show that these instruments have sometimes divided arteries as well as blades of grass and wheat. Not only these, but *every other* kind of accident occasionally occurs in the country, where "now or never" the proper means must be applied; and are the persons to whom the public look up on these occasions, and who feel responsible for the lives of the unfortunate, to have obstructions, pains, and penalties, thrown in their way?

What would our classical and literary clergy say, what would Dr. Parr, for instance, have said, had he been told that an act was about to be passed, declaring that, although the studying of Homer and Horace was necessary to a clerical education, yet, as the reading of these authors (as they are sometimes *naughty* as well as *sleepy*) would be detrimental to the public feelings and morals, they should, in future, be studied only in universities conferring degrees, and in cathedral towns? Dr. Johnson says, that mankind require to be reminded more than to be taught; in fact, a whole Number of your Journal might be filled with arguments against the injustice and absurdity of such an enactment. To furnish a single paragraph in its favour, I should consider impossible. But I humbly hope our ministers will not deceive themselves, or the

public, by imagining that *half* measures will *entirely* remove great evils. Should the law be such as I have supposed, will it at all do away with the inducements to body-snatching? Is no dissection carried on in the country? It has been said that the late brutal atrocities in Edinburgh have induced many members to patronise "legal dissection;" to such I would whisper, "Are there no more 'daft Jamies'?"—No more Burkes?"

But if such oversights have been made, I hope, both for the sake of justice towards the profession, and for the cause of humanity, that those who stand on the pinnacles of professional fame, and those who wield the liberal portion of the public press, will not cease in their endeavours to prevent the establishment of invidious distinctions, which are only calculated to fetter science, and to perpetuate crime.

THOMAS WARNER.

Cirencester, April 21.

DR. GORDON SMITH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Allow me, through the medium of your widely-circulated Journal, to clear up a matter, most unimportant in itself, and one which I never intended to make the subject of print, until THE LANCET, and another Journal, of this day, came into my hands. It relates to certain observations I attempted to make at the last meeting of the Westminster Medical Society, in which I was (no doubt very properly) interrupted by my colleague, Professor Thomson, who, upon that occasion, filled the chair.

The fact is, simply, that when in the advance of the British army, after the battle of Waterloo, I had been for so many nights exposed to the open air, that the first thing which presented itself in the shape of a bed, (on our arrival in the neighbourhood of Paris,) was too inviting to be subjected to very accurate scrutiny, and I had the misfortune to be accommodated with one in which, as I afterwards learned, some Prussian soldiers had slept the night before. I there caught *psora*, which I bore about me for four months, in a most distressing manner, because, at first, I did not know what was the matter with me; and afterwards, through false notions of delicacy, I tried in vain to cure it by other means than the employment of sulphur.

I have now to add, that through the mistake of your reporter, it went abroad, to a portion of the medical world, first, that I had informed the Society that I had labour-

ed under syphilis; and next, that I had endeavoured to cure myself, like a quack, by the external application of a solution of corrosive sublimate. But it is not with *THE LANCET* that I have any pretext for quarrelling. I have now to direct attention to the *Medical Gazette*; and I beg to observe, that I rose in the Society, on the occasion alluded to, understanding that the reputed Editor of this last-mentioned Journal was present, *for the purpose of warning him, that if he took such liberties with my name again as he has done, he should have cause for sorrow.* I have not forgotten his notes of admiration, and his insinuations of last year; and I desire to tell him, that I have not forgotten the "figure he cut" (to ring one more change upon this *façon de parler*) upon the occasion of a certain *auditor-ship*, about four years ago; he will know what I mean. He has called me "*the worthy Doctor.*" What I may be worth is a subject I have been too busy in endeavouring to serve my country to have time to think about, but I participate in a tolerably general opinion as to *his* merits. For the future, therefore, let me advise him to behave with a little more decorum towards one who, though not at this moment an editor, is considered by competent judges to be *a match for the Medical Gazette*, at all events. Let him not go out of his way to offer an insult to a gentleman who has no idea of doing any thing but his duty, and who would consider it no great honour to be *lick-spittle to a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.*

I am Sir, your obedient servant,
JOHN GORDON SMITH.

FLUIDITY OF THE BLOOD AFTER DEATH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having read the late discussions upon the fluidity of the blood after death, as detailed in *THE LANCET* of last week, I beg to present you with the following case, which bears directly upon the point, should you deem it worthy a place in your valuable Journal. I was called, on Sunday, April 5, to G. Wood, Borough Road, a plethoric subject, middle aged; had been to sea, and accustomed to drink ardent spirits. I found him labouring under sanguineous apoplexy, in which state, I was informed, he had been many hours. I made an incision into the jugular vein; no blood flowed; the temporal artery was then opened, but scarcely a drachm was abstracted from thence. The unfortunate patient was now evidently in the last moments of his existence. As a last resource, a fair and free section was made into the median cephalic vein of the right arm, whence about $\frac{3}{4}$ ij. of blood issued; but in the

interval the patient expired. I placed a bandage on the arm previous to leaving the body, to prevent the hæmorrhage, which I expected would ensue upon collapse taking place, and the blood retiring from arterial into venous cavities.

On Friday the 7th, the deceased was deposited in his coffin, when the bandage was removed, and, on the succeeding morning, I was requested to see the great quantity of blood which had come away. The body was almost literally *swimming in blood*, all of which had flowed *from the arm* during the night. No examination was permitted.

G. H. E., Assist. surg., R.N.
Terrace Street, Kent Road, April 15th.

AN IMPOSTOR.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I shall feel obliged, if you will insert in a corner of *THE LANCET*, something by way of caution to our medical fraternity in the country, relative to a gross imposition which a fellow, (calling himself J**** T*****) is attempting to practise, by asking relief under the most specious pretences. That the scoundrel may be better known, it may suffice to describe him as of a somewhat ruddy complexion, rather short stature, stout muscle, dark hair, and impudent address. Feeling assured that you will not allow his imposition to escape the corrective point of *THE LANCET*,

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

A CONSTANT READER.
Rochester, April 21st, 1829.

STATE OF THE PANCREAS IN SMOKERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Whilst examining the body of a man last night who died from peritonitis, I observed that the pancreas was in a scirrhus state; and, having read that this disease is induced in those who are much in the habit of smoking, I inquired of the mother of the person, whether this was the case with the deceased. She informed me, that it was. I believe a case is related by Darwin in his *Zoonomia*, in which the pancreas was scirrhus, and the patient addicted to smoking.

Probably we may attribute this to sympathy, from the known similarity between the pancreas and salivary glands; this patient suffered no inconvenience from this while living. Indeed, not knowing the particular uses of this gland, we can indeed hardly tell what inconvenience would most probably arise under these circumstances.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Carshalton, April 15. MEDICUS.