want of a safe and simple instrument for the closure of the body after post-mortem examinations, and, at the same time, suggests a contrivance to obviate the accidents so frequently occurring from wounds of the common needle.

His suggestions, although ingenious, if carried into effect, would not, I think, with deference to his opinion, ever be in general use, for it would render this simple operation complicated and difficult, causing the necessity for the use of more than one instrument. I, therefore, beg to submit to the profession a needle with a self-acting guard, constructed by me. This needle is at all times blunt, except when pressed forward by the finger applied to the eye end of the needle. Immediately the pressure is removed it again becomes blunt, so that whether inserted into the skin, or hanging by the thread, it cannot wound the hand, even if knocked against it. The accompanying wood-cut will fully explain my contrivance, which, although so simple, I hope you will consider worth a corner in your Journal. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

62, Strand, March 10. F. F. WEISS.

REPLY OF DR. SPILLAN
TO THE
REVIEWER OF HIS TRANSLATION
OF THE
PHARMACOPŒIA.

"Quod medicorum est,
Promittunt medici; tractent fabrilia fabri."
HORACE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—It has been sometimes urged, as an objection to the utility of a liberal education, that it too often unfits the person who receives it for the more active business of the world; that it incapacitates him, in fact, for what some person has called the "minor concerns of life," namely, the consideration of pounds, shillings, and pence. We could, however, adduce some instances to show that this result does not always follow. A very striking instance of an exception presented itself recently in the matter of the new *London Pharmacopœia*. A threat, purporting to emanate from the London College of Physicians, went the rounds of the different papers and periodicals, in which it was stated, that the College had sanctioned one particular gentleman to publish a translation of the *Pharmacopœia*, and that law

proceedings would be instituted against any other person who should presume to publish a translation of the same book. That this threat was but a manoeuvre on the part of some interested person, or persons, I was satisfied for many reasons: 1st. I very naturally considered, that the College possessed too high a sense of its own dignity to suffer itself to be made a cat's paw for the private emolument of any person. 2ndly. I saw that to the published threat the name of the Registrar of the College was not annexed, which proved at once that the College had nothing to do with the matter, although it was subjected to no inconsiderable obloquy, in consequence of being supposed to sanction so odious a monopoly. Finding that no member of the College evinced any disposition, in consequence of the threat held out, to attempt a translation of the work, I determined to undertake it. I now find that my having done so has aroused very angry feelings in the gentleman said to be appointed by the College to translate the work, and has led him to the adoption of measures totally irreconcilable with professional etiquette. Among these I do not allude to the *philippic* contained in the last Number of THE LANCET, bearing the signature of Mr. S. A. Sandall, the chemical assistant of the gentleman, but for which I shall consider myself indebted to the translator himself, who is the real author of the production.

The first "inaccuracy" noticed, is in my remarks on acetic acid, wherein I state that 1000 grs. (not 1,000, as the reviewer erroneously has it), "should saturate 148 grs. of cryst. carbonate of soda." In support of my statement I could adduce the very first authority, Dr. Paris. (See the last edition of his *Pharmacologia*, p. 337.)

In my remark on hydrochloric acid, I say that "its not acting on gold leaf, proves the absence of nitric acid." The reviewer objects to this, and says, very pertly, that "its non-action proves the absence of chlorine." I beg leave to ask him, Whether it is not by the action of nitric acid on the hydrochloric acid that the chlorine is produced, and therefore the presence of chlorine argues that nitric acid had entered as an impurity into the hydrochloric acid. In my quotation from Dr. Paris, on the subject of hydrocyanic acid, which quotation the candid reviewer says "may be right," but which quotation I take leave to tell him he knows to be right, I shall merely say, that I have been so long accustomed to rely on the authority of that gentleman, that I could not for a moment suspect him of inaccuracy. By the way, I shall take this opportunity of suggesting to the reviewer that he might have left the detection of Dr. Paris's inaccuracy to some one else, for reasons well known to himself, and not entirely unknown to one or two others. *Verbum sap.* I wish

it to be understood that I identify the translator and the reviewer.

Another inaccuracy is my using the vulgar, obsolete term, "sulphuretted hydrogen," aye, not less than three times, gentle reader, instead of the more fashionable term "hydrosulphuric acid." To this I reply, that the objection to my term is puerile; it is redolent, in fact, of the thing whose name forms the subject of the criticism. "The rose by any other name would smell as sweet." The same may be said of the term "muriatic acid."

And now that we are on the subject of new names, I cannot help remarking, that their introduction into the Pharmacopœia is much more calculated to mislead both the student and the practitioner, than the inaccuracies with which I have been charged by the translator. Nay, I shall go so far as to say, that in some instances these names are in direct violation of the principles of chemical combination. But on this part of the subject nothing shall induce me to say another word. There is an old saying, that "Tis a foul bird that soils his own nest;" and the public have been so kind as to nestle me in, and in a manner to identify me with the new "Pharmacopœia Londinensis," so completely, indeed, that Mr. Phillips cannot himself possibly feel more interested in its future success, and, only that it might be too cruel and too provoking, I would go so far as to say, that he cannot possibly feel more gratified, nay, more delighted, than I feel, at its present success. With respect to the "incorrect" diagram, as the reviewer calls it, borrowed from Dr. Reid, I shall merely observe, that Dr. Reid, as the reviewer probably knows from experience, is very well able to defend himself.

With respect to Dr. Ure's method of trying the strength of any solution of hydrocyanic acid, I use the term "prussiate," or "hydrocyanate of mercury," instead of "cyanuret." In this the reader will see that I am rather old-fashioned, than wrong. With respect to the criticism on chloride of lime, read "partially" instead of "probably." This was a misprint, and amongst some of the other inaccuracies, occasioned by my anxiety to have my book out, to keep company with Mr. Phillips's Pharmacopœia; I was always partial to good company. The error in the symbol for carbonate of soda, is another misprint, and was corrected by me, *three weeks ago*, at my publishers.

And now, having dwelt sufficiently long on the inaccuracies noticed by Mr. Phillips, (he must excuse me for still holding myself indebted to him for the kindness), I shall conclude by stating, that to fair and candid criticism I have no objection; it is what the public are entitled to, and that to which every man who sends a book into the world

must be liable; let it not, however, be suggested, or soured, by motives of ungenerous resentment, nor prompted by the calculations of sordid pelf. Among the real inaccuracies, there does not occur a single one of a character which is calculated to endanger the life, or infringe on the health, of a human being. I have in no instance advised the administration of 30 minims of the *liquor arsenicalis* three times a-day. The dosing of such powerful medicines is not a matter to be relied on when coming from persons who are not accustomed to prescribe medicines, or to see their effects on the human system. We readily admit the comparative harmlessness of allowing such persons to dispense those mild preparations, so often resorted to in slight cases, such cases as those, for instance, which are alluded to by Juvenal, in his thirteenth Satire, where he says,—

"Tu venam vel discipulo committe PHILIPPI;"

but in cases where life is at stake, and where violent medicines are employed, we must be more cautious. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

D. SPILLAN.

4, Francis-street, Bedford-square,
March 8th, 1837.

*** Mr. Phillips really stands absolved from the necessity of occupying any part of our pages with a disavowal of the authorship of the communication criticised by Dr. Spillan. The name of Mr. Sandall was attached to the letter, and Mr. Sandall only is responsible for its contents.—
ED. L.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE MEDICAL SOCIETY.

Friday, March 3.—Mr. Morton, President.

REMARKABLE SPECIMENS OF MORBID ANATOMY.

MR. MORTON detailed three cases of peculiar interest, which had lately come under his notice in the dissecting-room. They were as follows:—

1. *Blindness of the left eye, atrophy of the left optic nerve, and osseous cyst within the eyeball.*—The body of a female, aged 93, was lately brought into the dissecting-room of University College. The left eye was observed to be much altered from its natural appearance. Its cornea was completely opaque, and of a dull pearl colour, presenting in its centre the remains of an old ulcer, which had become cicatrized. The cicatrix presented a yellowish colour, intermingled with the pearly colour of the rest of the cornea. The eyeball had lost its natural degree of sphericity, being somewhat