In an institution where there are 1000 governors, if every governor were to send such circulars as that to which I allude, without due investigation, what must be the result?

It will, I think, be admitted, that in all such cases the safe and usual course is to avail of the rules and regulations in order to remedy the evil.

The committee are unanimous in the opinion, "that so long as they can satisfactorily arrange all the difficulties they may encounter in the fulfilment of their by no means easy duties, without bringing them before you or the public, they will be considered by you, in so doing, as following the wisest and most judicious course for the promotion of the welfare of the charity."

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
QUARLES HARRIS, V. P.

P.S.—It is scarcely necessary for me to take the trouble to refute the mistake contained in the leading article of *THE LANCET*, that Dr. Little established the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, the governors having recently testified, in the strongest manner, their knowledge of the fact that it was founded by me.

Dr. Little justly enjoys the credit of having introduced into this country the operation of cutting the tendons for the cure of club-foot, &c.

This is recorded in the archives of the hospital, and is constantly announced in the reports and prospectuses.

While I claim the honour of having been the founder, I readily bear testimony to the great blessing Dr. Little has conferred upon society.

The hospital has rendered that blessing permanent, and in addition to the ten thousand who now have cause to rejoice, I trust that in future generations there will be hundreds of thousands.

SELF-SUPPORTING DISPENSARIES.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—The view you take of the so-called self-supporting dispensaries gives general satisfaction in this quarter; but from what took place at a meeting held in Finsbury-square, many gentlemen resident in this district fear that their views on the subject will be misrepresented; they have desired me, therefore, to request that you will kindly permit the accompanying statement to appear, if possible, in the forthcoming number of *THE LANCET*, that it may counteract any false impression which those interested in the advocacy of self-supporting clubs may endeavour to make on the profession by a distortion or misstatement of facts connected with that meeting.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Vittoria-place, Dec. 24, 1850.

A. BARNETT.

Great disgust having been expressed by several gentlemen, at the proceedings which took place at a *conversazione* held in the neighbourhood of Finsbury-square, on Dec. 23, 1850, in support of the self-supporting dispensaries, an influential meeting of general practitioners was convened on the following day, at the residence of Dr. Barnett, to consider the subject fully.

An able exposition of the so-called self-supporting dispensary system was made, during which it was stated, that if the whole population of the metropolis was equally divided amongst the medical practitioners resident therein, there would not be more than 2000 persons at most to each qualified medical man,—out of which number not more than 100 would be fairly eligible for election as members of the self-supporting clubs, and that of the 100 eligible, not one-half would be induced to avail themselves of the medical arrangements thus made for them.

Localities very favourably situated for the formation of such clubs were mentioned, where, with all the exertions of zealous and energetic but misguided men, in a population of 20,000, not more than 400 could be induced to join such pseudo-self-supporting clubs,—a number which, divided amongst the ten resident medical men, would yield an annual income of £7—less expenses.

This statement was considered by many present as over-rated, inasmuch as the population would not give more than 1000 to each qualified practitioner; and children were treated (for readiness in calculation) as adults, although they would only be paid for at the rate of a halfpenny each per week. The following resolution was then unanimously adopted:—

"This meeting is of opinion, that the self-supporting dispensary system, as advocated by Mr. Smith, of Southam, is calculated to degrade the general practitioner, and to reduce him to a condition similar to that of Mr. Woodcock Simpson, surgeon, whose death is recorded to have taken place in Gainsborough Workhouse—an instance of an overworked and ill-paid member of the medical profession."

Several of the speakers having declared it to be monstrous that physicians and pure surgeons should come forward to advocate the extension of a principle to another class of the profession, which they considered derogatory when applied to their own, it was resolved—

"That in the opinion of this meeting, the advocacy, by physicians and pure surgeons, of measures having a tendency to depreciate the pecuniary value of the services of a class of medical men to which they do not themselves belong, will lessen them in the estimation of the general practitioner, and engender discord between those two classes of the profession."

A vote of thanks having been passed to the Editor of *THE LANCET*, for the able and manly manner in which he had supported the general interests of the profession, a few desultory observations were made as to the propriety of physicians applying such pseudo-self-supporting principles to their own body before recommending their adoption to an already ill-paid class of practitioners. The meeting then adjourned.

THE DISUSE OF INSTRUMENTS OF RESTRAINT IN LUNACY.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—Mr. Gardiner Hill cannot think that I am unfair towards him in adopting his own preface to his published lecture, as almost *verbatim* my view of his position with regard to the Lincoln Asylum.

E. F. BROMHEAD,
Vice-President of the Lincoln Asylum.

PREFACE to a Lecture on the Management of Lunatic Asylums and the Treatment of the Insane, delivered at the Mechanics' Institution, Lincoln, on the 21st of June, 1838, by Robert Gardiner Hill, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, London, House-surgeon of the Lincoln Lunatic Asylum.

"The object of the following lecture is simply to advocate the total abolition of severity, of every species and degree, as applied to patients in our asylums for the insane, and with this view to show—first, that such abolition is in theory highly desirable; and secondly, that it is practicable, in proof of which assertions the present state of the Lincoln Lunatic Asylum is adduced. There such a system is in actual and successful operation—the theory verified by the practice. It may be proper to state here, that the principle of mitigation of restraint, to the utmost extent that was deemed consistent with safety, was ever the principle pressed upon the attention of the Boards of the Lincoln Asylum by its humane and able physician, Dr. Charlesworth. At his suggestion, many of the more cruel instruments of restraint were long since destroyed, very many valuable improvements and facilities gradually adopted, and machinery set in motion, which has led to the unhoped-for result of actual abolition, under a firm determination to work out the system to its utmost applicable limits.* To his steady support, under many difficulties, I owe chiefly the success which has attended my plans and labours. He originated the requisite alterations and adaptations in the building, and threw every other facility in the way of accomplishing the object. * * * * *

"The author is proud to have learned in such a school, and gladly owns the obligation.

"Lincoln Lunatic Asylum, April 13, 1839."

CONVENTION OF POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—The committee have reason to believe that Lord John Russell has expressed a desire to obtain information on the subject of Poor-law Medical Relief, and that he entertains opinions favourable to the objects of the Convention; they have, therefore, with the view of improving this aus-

* * See Proceedings of the Lincoln Lunatic Asylum relative to classification, inspection, and other matters bearing upon the subject of restraint, in the Appendix, (A.)"