There is a third and newly-established school in Portland-street, and the fees are exactly the same with those of the Andersonian. I am informed by intelligent students, that its teachers are conspicuous for talent and attention.

I must now apologise for the unavoidable length of this letter, but I trust that the importance of its contents will be deemed a sufficient excuse. Should it prove the means of smoothing the difficulties of even a single student, it would prove a rich reward for the trouble of, Sir,

Your obliged servant,

AN ENGLISH STUDENT.

PHYSIOLOGY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In selecting asphyxia as a subject for his Essay, your correspondent, Mr. Thomas, does not appear to be aware of the difficulties with which it is surrounded, and of the probability of its bringing him into the field of controversy, for which at present he does not seem fully equipped, although quite as much so, perhaps, as many who may enrol their names on the list of combatants. The subject is a difficult one, because it involves all that is known on the most important and interesting points of physiological science, the main spring of which is said to be defective, in consequence of our ignorance of the nature or essence of life. This may be the case, but it is very questionable whether the search after it, like that for a hidden treasure, has not, in exploring every habitation in which there is the least manifestation of its presence, been more profitable than if we had early been in actual possession of the secret. Thus the physiologist, who attentively studies the signs by which life manifests itself, and examines minutely every structure in which its works are displayed, acquires more real and useful information than he who vainly endeavours, in his closet, to form correct notions of that essence which is far beyond the reach of our limited faculties. Physiology being one of those uncertain sciences in which it is often difficult to refer effects to their true causes, and to trace causes to their true effects, that man has much the advantage of his brother labourers in the field of inquiry, who, with a zeal to study physiology for its own sake, and who, being previously prepared by education and habits of application, has time and opportunities afforded him of taking a comprehensive and comparative view of the structure, relative situation, and connexion of the different parts constituting organised

beings, from the lowest order of plants through every link of the chain, to the complicated structure of man,—who also examines closely the phenomena which all living beings present, and the order in which those phenomena are developed, and who is bold enough to interrogate nature himself, and faithfully record her responses. Added to these qualifications, his knowledge of the more certain laws which regulate inanimate matter, and his application of them to explain many parts of the animal and vegetable economy, enable him to carry his researches to the very threshold of that portal whereon is written, in legible characters, “Thus far and no farther,” and there “to bend in submissive adoration, acknowledging a wisdom he cannot fathom and a power which he cannot comprehend.” Such a man is the first to acknowledge the narrow limits of his own faculties; and from his habits of close observation and reasoning we can easily discover that he has acquired the scientific tact of separating the pure metal of well-grounded theory from the dross of hypothesis. There have been and still are existing many such men as I have attempted to pourtray, and to whose opinions we ought always to give our tacit assent until we have, by pursuing the same path of inquiry ourselves, either come to the same or to different conclusions. The road to truth is now laid open to us all; the hedge-rows of superstition, slavery, and ignorance, which compelled men to pursue one narrow, dark, and much-trodden track, have long since yielded to the bill-hook of the great pioneer in science, our illustrious countryman Francis Bacon, who, not content only with liberating men’s minds from the state of bondage in which they had long been held, supplied them with a sure guide to direct their future investigations of nature and their inquiry after truth. * * * †

I had a few remarks to make to another of your correspondents, but having already occupied too much space in your valuable columns I shall endeavour to curtail them by only saying, that the gentleman to whom I allude is one who has deserved well of the scientific world for his deep researches in a most interesting branch of natural history; that he is a man of no ordinary stamp, and therefore not to be dealt with without some degree of caution, for if you attack him in his secondary and most accessible haunts, where he is seen

† We take the liberty of omitting from the article of our Correspondent a passage at this part, because its insertion is not material to the good sense of his letter, and would entail upon us a correspondence for which we should not, we are certain, be able to find room. To the playful appeal which follows we have not the same objection.—*Ed. L.*

mounted on his favourite charger, the gigantic Iquinadon, I say, Sir, if we attack him here, he will soar on eagle's wings to a more lofty station, where he wilt sit, like Jupiter on Olympus,

"Montis in excelso consistit vertice Gideon,"

whence my feeble artillery of *argumenta ad persuasionem* will, I fear, not induce him to descend, but will have as much effect on him, as the throwing of squibs and crackers would have on the base of the mountain on which he rests. If he will not come down himself, let him at least send his messenger Mercurius, to say in full detail, how he succeeds in quenching the fire of St. Antonius; or perhaps we may invoke Jupiter to hurl him from his lofty tenement.

I need not say, that it is to Mr. Mantell I allude, who will, I trust, excuse the familiarity with which I have introduced his name, and will kindly take the gentle hint, and favour us with his notes in further illustration of the mercurial treatment of erysipelas.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

J. W. K. PARKINSON.

Hoxton Square, Oct. 10, 1831.

ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

CLINICAL LECTURE

DELIVERED BY

PROFESSOR ELLIOTSON, M.D.,

October 10th, 1831.

FIRST CLINICAL LECTURE FOR THE
SEASON 1831-32.

GENTLEMEN,—It has been my custom, merely to enumerate those cases only which have been admitted in the previous week, and to dwell particularly upon those which have been presented during the same period; but as this is the beginning of the season, and as no cases have been presented but such as were admitted previous to the commencement of the session, I must confine myself solely to the cases which you have seen admitted. The cases were ten in number, six female and four male.

INFLAMMATION OF THE SPINAL LIGAMENTS (?) FROM A FALL.

The first is a girl aged 18, who nine weeks previously had fallen down stairs. In that month menstruation had ceased, and she had experienced such violent pain in the

back as to be unable to walk. I found the whole spine, but especially the dorsal and lumbar portion, exceedingly tender. The fall had evidently produced an inflammatory state of the ligaments of the spine. Whether the amenorrhœa was the immediate effect of the fall, or the result of her fright, it is impossible to say. She was also very costive. The treatment indicated was simple enough;—that of free depletion from the neighbourhood of the spine, and active purging, together with spare diet. I ordered her to be cupped upon the back and loins to a pint, and prescribed half a drop of croton oil every day; she was put upon milk diet. The relief was immediate, and you will see that she will presently be quite well.*

CHRONIC GASTRITIS.

Three cases were, all alike, instances of a very common affection among females—chronic gastritis. The one occurred in a female aged eighteen. She had been ill fifteen months, and was a short stout damsel. Her symptoms were pain and tenderness of the epigastrium and left hypochondrium, with a sensation of heat there, extending up the throat. The pain was always increased by taking food. These are the common symptoms of gastritic affection. The function of the stomach was also very much disturbed, for she complained very much of acidity. The heart frequently sympathises with these affections, and accordingly this woman had palpitation, but there was no preternatural sound of the heart, no inordinate impulse of any one portion of this organ, but one uniformly-increased action,—no sign of organic disease. The appearance of the tongue was perfectly natural, and to this I beg leave particularly to direct your attention, because the tenderness of the epigastrium, and that portion of the left hypochondrium in which the large end of the stomach lies, were exceedingly well marked, and a sensation of heat was felt there, ascending up the throat, so that the inflammatory state of the stomach could not be doubted, and yet the tongue was clean. The truth is, I believe, that in inflammatory conditions of the stomach and intestines, the tongue is generally red on the dorsum, or the tip, or at the edges, but not invariably so, so that if you depend on the state of the tongue, you may conceive there is no inflammatory state of the stomach when there really is, and when the other symptoms show it, and the success of antiphlogistic treatment proves it. Her

* This patient was able to stand and walk perfectly well in two or three days. Menstruation began upon the second day after her admission, and she was discharged free from her complaint without any additional treatment.—*Rep.*