

ABUSES AT ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S  
HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Notwithstanding the numerous grievances which your valuable LANCET has removed at Bartholomew's Hospital, there are still, I am sorry to say, many more which imperiously require the immediate use of that all-powerful and never-failing remedial agent. I now solicit its use for the cure of the following complaints: viz. "There are no post-mortem examinations at this Hospital;" "the long-contemplated improvements in the operating theatre have not taken place;" and the want of "a new dead-house." These are just a tithe of them. I will now proceed to consider the first, the other two I shall postpone to a future opportunity. Since the commencement of this season, in October, we have had only one notice of a post-mortem, and that was conducted by Mr. Earle in the operating theatre. How is this, Mr. Editor? Do the post-mortems form a part of the "medical and surgical practice" of this Hospital? If they do, what has become of them; and when! aye, when! are they conducted? Many of the students believe that the "surgeons and physicians" are about to make this a separate part of our studies, and that an additional tax will be levied before we can witness the opening of dead bodies. If this be true, Mr. Editor, "What will become of us?" They have already got all my money, and, if they want any more, I shall be obliged to leave London.

This is a mysterious piece of business altogether, and when mystery prevails everybody asks questions which nobody can answer; this accounts for my being obliged to ask so many questions. But suppose that witnessing of autopsies forms a part of the "practice;" whose duty is it to give notice of it? Ask the house-surgeon if it be his, he answers No.—Ask the "dressers," they answer unanimously No.—Ask the beadles to take a notice to stick up,—they say, "I sha'nt!"—"I was employed," say they, "by the governors for the use of the hospital, and not by the medical men for the use of the students." Thus you see how we are treated. The universal cry is, What must be done?—Oh! is the universal reply, write to THE LANCET. Well, I have done so, and I will now patiently wait the result. Young men in the country well know what use to make of these defects at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. They may expect similar treatment if they intend to pursue their studies within its walls. Your obedient servant,

A BARTHOLOMEW PUPIL.

## DR. OSBORNE'S SCARIFICATOR.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—By your journal of this date, I observe that Mr. Thompson of Whitehaven has entered his claim with Dr. Osborne, for the honour of inventing the instrument for scarifying, newly introduced to the profession by the latter gentleman, through the medium of the *Dublin Medical Journal*.

With their respective claims I am unacquainted, but probably it will not be considered impertinent in the capper of a London Hospital to state his opinion of its efficacy.

Mr. Scott, an eminent surgeon of Norwich, whose active interest in all that appertains to his profession, is beyond praise, directed my attention to Dr. Osborne's paper immediately subsequent to its publication, and I have given the polytome a fair trial. The result is a perfect conviction that it is unsuitable for private practice. Long and equable incisions are certainly desirable, and this instrument will accomplish the first, and, with great caution, the second; but the objections considerably counterbalance those advantages. The operation is slow and painful, or, if done quickly, there is but little control over the length and depth of the incisions, and if employed on a restive patient it will be extremely difficult to use. With the box-scarificator, an inexperienced operator will sometimes produce much inconvenience, but the polytome in similar hands would prove *mischievous* and *disfiguring*.

I have essayed on a medical friend, and several hospital patients. They describe the instrument as inflicting a "*painful scratching cut*." Two or three, who had not been previously cupped, and on whom I tried both instruments, without intimation of my intention, described the click of the old instrument as *unpleasant*, but gave unequivocal indications of *torture* on the application of the new.

I am aware that the French surgeons are in the habit of making their incisions with a scalpel, but I much question if that mode of operating could be introduced here; and though Dr. Osborne and Mr. Thompson have a natural fondness for their offspring, and are, no doubt, more *au fait* in the use of the instrument than myself, and thus indulge in sanguine expectations of its success, I am convinced it can never be generally employed.

The medical officers of the Westminster Hospital, to whom I exhibited the instrument, without comment, were unanimous in their disapproval. Sir Anthony Carlisle,

with his characteristic humanity, observed, that in all operations the degree of pain inflicted on the patient should ever be a consideration of high importance, very justly adding, that the peculiar excellence of the old spring scarificator consisted in the incisions being given with a "*rapidity passing sensation*." A familiar illustration of this principle is found in the gunshot wound.

Though somewhat irrelevant, I may be permitted to observe, that Sir Anthony is attached to the application of the *tourniquet* in cases of amputation, even where digital compression would suffice, having observed that the ligature materially lessens the pain of the operation. Analogous to this is the diminished sensibility of the surface over which a cupping-glass has just been affixed.

To both gentlemen, I, in common with others of my peculiar profession, feel indebted for their endeavours to supply a desideratum in the instrument of my vocation, and I trust my observations will be taken in good part. I will candidly own that my own attention has long been directed to the same end, but not yet with a sufficiently favourable result. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE F. KNOX,

Copper at the Westminster Hospital.  
14, George-Street, Adelphi,  
Dec. 28th, 1833.

## THE MEDICAL CORPORATIONS OF LONDON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your leading article of this day, you comprise, under one general insinuation, the GRADUATES OF MEDICINE. You remark, that while the apothecaries are denouncing the Apothecaries Company, the surgeons the College of Surgeons, the Graduates "express, in very soft accents, their disapprobation of the proceedings of the institution in Lincoln's-Inn-fields, and loudly proclaim the benefits which have been conferred on the profession by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries." And you then add, that the Graduates "vent their indignation against the institution in Pall Mall East."

These statements may be resolved into two:—

First, That the apothecaries condemn their Worshipful Company; that the surgeons condemn their Royal College; and that the graduates condemn their Pall-Mall-East College.

Second, That the graduates in medicine

observe some *beauties* in the Worshipful Company, which the Licentiates of that Company, labouring under its oppression, do not, from that very circumstance, so readily perceive.

In regard to the first statement, I have merely to ask a person of your discernment, whether it is to be wondered at, or to be slightly treated, that when the apothecaries see and decry eloquently the evils of their Company, and the surgeons of their College, the *Graduates* should see and vent the torrent of their indignation against the institution in Pall Mall East? Surely, you will not deny to the Graduates the privilege of crying when *they* are trodden upon, when you give that privilege to the apothecaries and surgeons? Solomon says (I think he is the person), "The heart knoweth its own bitterness;" surely, then, as the apothecaries know theirs, the surgeons theirs, the Graduates may be permitted to know and declare theirs. In *unexcited* moments, Sir (for when you are writing or dictating the *leader*, I have no doubt that you are much excited, that you often have a good laugh, often feel the *temporals* throbbing from the activity of destructiveness, combativeness, and conscientiousness, when some abuse presents his hideous deformity before your mental vision), I am sure you will allow the Graduates the privilege, which you cannot deny even to the worm, of turning when trodden upon.

You, however, in your leading article, with the view, no doubt, of showing the imperfect view of reform these Graduates possess, institute a comparison between the three corporate bodies, and state that "the College of Physicians is really a liberal, pure, noble institution, when compared with those receptacles of tyranny and of avarice—the College of Surgeons, the Company of Apothecaries," p. 529; and you point out the circumstance wherein the liberality of the College of Physicians is manifested, namely, *that they will examine any one who has a medical degree*. But, Sir, you should have added what you know full well, that the *peculiar* feature in the College of Physicians, which makes it stink in the nostrils of every enlightened man, is that no man can become a Fellow, unless he be of a *particular religious creed*. I ask, Sir, is there any stamp of illiberality so base, so disreputable, so insulting to the human conscience, belonging either to the Apothecaries Company or to the College of Surgeons? The answer is—No. Well, Sir, are not Graduates justified in holding up to the indignation of mankind such an audacious interference with the rights of conscience, such a determination on the