doubtless, after much previous *mental* exertion, since it was shortly after dinner. So that, in line-of-battle ships and frigates, there is actually a cabin in the one, and a dispensary in the other, to which an assistant may retire. In smaller ships some have no assistant, and the surgeon always has his cabin. Where there is an assistant surgeon, however, he is generally alone in the berth, except at meal times, there being so few midshipmen not employed on duty. Besides the fact of an opportunity of being private, the assistant surgeon seldom wants a friend amongst the officers, to whose cabin and library he has access. Again, as the navy is at present constituted, there are few "boys" under sixteen, and many men in a midshipman's berth, whose education, talents, and respectability, are fully equal to any assistant surgeon's. Where then is the "*degradation*" to which the assistant is compelled to submit? Is not this complaint unfounded? Is it not fastidious and exaggerated? If the premises are untrue, the inferences are inconclusive, and are only the more absurd, as they are the more emphatically expressed. Being an English gentleman myself, I have nothing to object to the "Scotch fir," or the "Irish esculent." I am, indeed, too carnal to comprehend so frugiferous an illustration.

I am, Mr. Editor,
Your obedient humble servant,
G. H. H.

Dublin, Aug. 17.

LECTURESHIPS AT ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Probably you will do Mr. ABERNETHY the justice of stating, that Mr. LAWRENCE was offered, and declined, the lectures previously to any proposal of the kind having been submitted to Mr. STANLEY. If you had been as well acquainted with Mr. Abernethy's honourable mind as I am, you would have as readily believed that the poles had met, as that Mr. Abernethy would have written the following passage:—"Mr. Stanley appeared to me the only person educated in your school willing and competent to undertake the task," unless Mr. Lawrence had in the most positive manner declined taking any share in the lectures.

If I have not formed an erroneous estimate of Mr. LAWRENCE's character, he will at least exonerate Mr. ABERNETHY from the imputations with which you have assailed him, relative to this part of the disagreeable affair now under general discussion. Your obedient servant,

EDWARD F. SMITH.

THE LANCET.

London, Saturday, September 1, 1827.

HOWEVER strong the circumstantial evidence which may have led to condemnation, it is always satisfactory to the judge, and to the public, to have the actual confession of the culprit, before the sentence of the law is carried into effect. In the same way, we are glad to find our charges against Mr. Abernethy so fully substantiated by his own letter, which we published last week. It is now recorded, under his own hand, that instead of endeavouring to fill the lectureships in the medical school of the Hospital with men of talent, knowledge, and independent minds, he has been engaged for a series of years in low intrigue and dirty bargains, that he might first keep these lucrative occupations in his own hands to the last moment, with but little regard as to the mode of executing the important duties attached to them; and then, when his hands should have actually lost the power of closing on the tendered fees, that he should transmit them to his own son, in contempt of the just claims of others, even including the poor dependents, whose labours were to bring the money into his pockets. Talk of a "straight forward course," indeed! Never did frightened hare when hardly pressed, double, turn, and twist in such a manner; never (more appropriate simile!) did cunning old fox, with stanch hounds at his heels, try so many tricks and stratagems. He must have felt sorely pressed when he wrote his letter to the Governors, and must have forgotten all the perils that environ the intriguer and the utterer of falsehood, when they commit themselves to paper. His memory does not hold out, even from the beginning of the letter to the end: "*Having pledged myself to resign the office of surgeon, when I should attain the age of sixty*"—"The time of my ix-