been or may be advanced against the adulteration of coffee with chicory.

Against this practice we allege,

First: that such adulteration *necessitates the commission of a moral fraud*, and further, that it is frequently made the cloak for pecuniary fraud and extortion.

When a purchaser enters a shop, asks for an article, pays the price demanded for it, he has a right to expect that he obtains that for which he asks, and not a mixture of two different things, one of which he probably positively objects to, and the relative proportions of which are regulated by the will and conscience of the vendor. The grocer who, under such circumstances, places in the hands of the purchaser an adulterated commodity, commits a moral, and frequently a pecuniary fraud.

We will suppose the following case of poisoning, not an improbable or unfrequent one:—An infant has been given an overdose of Godfrey's cordial; the proper remedy is a strong infusion of coffee—the coffee already in the house, inasmuch as it is the most readily obtained, is used, and consists principally of chicory. *The child dies.* Who is the party morally responsible in this case?

Second: that *it is unjust to the producer of coffee.*

The grower of coffee has at least a right to demand, in consideration for the heavy tax which he pays for the privilege of being permitted to import his coffee into England for disposal, that the sale of the article, and its estimation with the public, be not injured by the practice of adulteration, carried on under the sanction, and with the connivance, of the legislature.

The payers of duty on other excisable articles are protected against adulteration by law, and the coffee-grower has a full right to demand, in common honesty, the same amount of protection.

Third, that *the revenue is injured.*

Whatever lessens the consumption of an excisable article, of course injures the revenue. It has been proved that the mixing of chicory with coffee lessens the consumption of coffee, and therefore, by so much is the revenue diminished and injured.

If the loss in the revenue were so much gain to the public, there would be less reason to complain, but this is not the case; the advantage is pocketed by unprincipled grocers.

Fourth: that *the public is defrauded.*

That the public, and especially that large section of it, the poor, is extensively defrauded by the adulteration of coffee with chicory, to say nothing of roasted corn, beans, dog biscuits, &c., has already been clearly proved. Let those who entertain any doubts upon the subject, consult the table of analysis which we gave in our Report on Coffee.

We have now clearly shown that the disadvantages and evils resulting from the mixture of chicory with coffee, in the manner and to the extent now practised, are great and manifold, and that they demand the application of a suitable remedy.

The remedy which we propose is simple, moderate, and just: it is, that the "Treasury minute," authorizing the mixture of chicory with coffee, be rescinded. The effect of this would be, to place coffee upon the same footing with all other excisable articles, as tea, pepper, &c., and that penalties would attach to its adulteration.

Chicory would of course still be sold; but in place of being so clandestinely, it would be vended openly, and under its proper name, and at its fair value.

Public morality, the interests of the revenue, of the grower, the consumer of coffee, and the honest tradesman, alike require the adoption of the remedy here pointed out.

The next Report of the Analytical Sanitary Commission will be on

MUSTARD,
ITS ADULTERATIONS.

MEDICAL CORONERS.—"Judge Jackson stated emphatically in Court, on Thursday, during the progress of a trial in which reference was made to the Coroner's Court, that none but medical men ought to be appointed to the office of Coroner, as from their education they were peculiarly qualified to discharge efficiently the duties of the office. This opinion of his lordship appears to be acted on of late, very generally, both in Ireland and England, as medical men are elected almost everywhere that a vacancy occurs."—*Limerick Chronicle*, March 8.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

CHEMICAL MEANS FOR THE PREVENTION OF BED-SORES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I wish to communicate to my professional brethren, through the medium of your journal, a very simple means of preventing the urine of persons suffering dementia, paralysis, &c., which is usually passed involuntarily, from excoriating their skin, and producing extensive and sloughing sores.

To those in charge of large establishments for the insane, of general hospitals and workhouses, these sores are often most painful to witness, most difficult to manage, and tend to the rapid destruction of the patient. They are commonly supposed to arise from the pressure of the sacrum and other prominent parts, in the long period of the recumbent posture: but I am satisfied that though this may be an assistant cause, the main one is the irritating quality of the urine, with which the clothes of the patient and of his bed become wetted; and which rapidly decomposing, excoriates the skin by the ammonia which is disengaged, and which keeps up a distressing irritation afterwards, leading to the bed-sores alluded to.

To prevent this has long been a desideratum; and the success of the method I now make use of has been most gratifying to me, and to several friends who have witnessed its results.

The principle of the plan is to make use of a medium which will absorb the ammonia of the decomposing urine, without injuring the skin in return, and this I effect by the aid of dilute sulphuric acid. The application of the method is the following:—

I have a case made of soft linen, large enough for the buttocks of the patient when lying on his back to rest upon, and to extend a little way down the thighs, and on each side of him. These cases I stuff with bran (previously sprinkled with dilute sulphuric acid) to such a degree as to make an easy cushion, which receives the urine as it dribbles from the patient, the ammonia of which is absorbed by the sulphuric acid, and the skin is left uninjured by the urine.

The proportion of dilute sulphuric acid to the bran I find to be about two ounces of dilute acid to one quart of bran, by admeasurement. The dilute acid is that of the pharmacopœia, and the quantity will be found not to wet the case of the cushion, and only to make the bran itself feel in a slight degree moist.

The same quantity of bran put into a fresh case, and sprinkled with a little fresh acid, I have found serviceable and inoffensive for several days, but I should advocate its being renewed every alternate day, at least.

To persons able to walk about and incontinent of urine from the many causes occasioning it, I have found the same means productive of the greatest comfort, by sewing a small bag of the prepared bran to the side of the trousers on which the penis is worn.

I use the same application (substituting deal saw-dust for bran, for economy's sake) on the floors of those of the insane who will be wet and dirty in their bed-rooms, in the urinals of those patients whose urine is disposed to rapid decomposition, and to occasion oppressive effluvia in the bed-chamber, in the water-closets, &c., indeed, wherever ammonia is disengaged, and renders the air of the chamber oppressive.

But its valuable application is in the prevention of bed-sores, and I could give many cases illustrative of the fact, but they would crowd your pages unnecessarily. If our brethren will give the method a fair trial they will save themselves an infinity of anxiety, and their patients an inconceivable amount of suffering.

I am, Sir, faithfully yours,
Sandywell Park, Cheltenham, 1850. SAMUEL HITCH.

MR. SYME ON STRICTURE OF THE URETHRA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In publishing the rude and offensive letter of Mr. Gay, which appeared in THE LANCET of Saturday last, it appears as if, through the desire of promoting free discussion, you had overstepped the limits of what is due to decency and propriety; for you have not only allowed this "man of unimpeachable integrity" to repeat his misstatements again and again, after being convicted of publishing what was not consistent with fact, but have actually

permitted him to circulate, through your publication, the same falsehoods that emanated from a source which you yourself have urged me to treat with silent contempt, and were originally diffused by means of a journal, the very name of which you consider inadmissible into the pages of *THE LANCET*, where, I may remark, one of these groundless calumnies, as a specimen of the credit due to them, has already been contradicted, in every particular, by documentary evidence.

I am anxious to give your readers the information which I possess in regard to the treatment of stricture, but I will not submit much longer to be used as a target for the shafts of misrepresentation and detraction. To all of Mr. Gay's questions my only reply is, an unqualified and indignant denial.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Edinburgh, March 11, 1851.

JAMES SYME.

P.S.—The enclosed letter from Mr. Hamilton Bell relates to one of the cases which have been characterized as "failures" by Mr. Gay. I beg you will publish it, not as a reply to anything said by that person, whom I consider unworthy of notice in the field of professional controversy, but as containing information that may interest the reader.—J. S.

13, Charlotte-square, March 11, 1851.

DEAR SIR,—I am happy to be enabled to report to you most satisfactorily on the case of Captain M——, No. 2 in your work. He was enabled, within a few months after the operation, to return to his duty in India, perfectly restored to health. He has now risen in his profession, and by the last accounts received is "in as good health as he ever enjoyed," so you may congratulate yourself on saving my friend from what must have been a life of poverty and misery, if that life had been preserved, of which there seemed little hope in the beginning of 1849.

Most truly yours,

(Signed)

GEORGE HAMILTON BELL.

Professor Syme.

. We cannot refrain from expressing our surprise and regret, that Mr. Syme, while labouring under the influence of excited feelings, should exhibit such profound ignorance of the duty of an impartial public journalist. As we are not accustomed to be influenced by threats, we trust that the note which we now publish from Mr. Syme will terminate that gentleman's correspondence with *THE LANCET*.—ED. L.

DISUSE OF INSTRUMENTAL RESTRAINT IN THE TREATMENT OF LUNACY.—THE CLAIMS OF MR. R. GARDINER HILL.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—This question cannot rest upon the accuracy or interpretation of expressions used at the Provincial Association at Hull. The report in the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*, to which you make a reference in your last number, did not give entire satisfaction, as will appear in the subjoined letter, October 25th, 1850.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Lincoln, March 3, 1851.

E. V. CHARLESWORTH.

(COPY.)

"To the Editor of the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*."

SIR,—Will you allow me to correct an error in the report of my speech at the meeting at Hull, which appears in your journal of August 21st. You therein report thus of my observations:—"He (Mr. Hill) was bound to acknowledge that the system (of non-restraint) did, to some extent, (!) originate with himself." Now, the words "to some extent" were never uttered by me, and seem to throw a doubt upon my being, as the records of the Lincoln Asylum indisputably and indelibly prove me to be, the sole author and originator of the total abolition or non-restraint system in the treatment of lunatics.

I shall be obliged to you to insert this my correction of your statement. To Dr. Conolly belongs the merit of adopting and carrying out this system, in an institution eight times as large as that of Lincoln, and I trust the public testimonial which is about to be presented to that gentleman will be worthy of the great services which he has rendered to mankind. But as he himself frankly and honourably avowed, and as from my own knowledge of him I am sure he will again at any time avow, he was not the author of that system. The merit of that, be it more or less, is not one which, as your leading article of September 4th would seem to imply, may

be justly due to me, but one which no one else can claim, and of which I shall not allow any one to rob me.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed)

ROBT. GARDINER HILL.

[The words in '*italic*' are so printed in the original.]

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—You have stated that I am correct in my quotation from *THE LANCET* of the words reported to have been used by Dr. Charlesworth at the dinner of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, at Hull, in August, 1850. That is, at all events, highly satisfactory, and I think conclusive; because it appears to me that *THE LANCET* invariably espouses, without partiality, the cause of truth. Allow me, however, to add the testimony of a living witness of no ordinary character—I mean that of Archibald Robertson, Esq., M.D., F.R.S., Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, a *vice-president* of the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Association*, and physician to the General Infirmary, Northampton.

I am authorized also to add the succeeding letter from Dr. Robertson to the Mayor of Lincoln.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

JOHN DANIEL.

East Ardsley Parsonage, Wakefield, March 10, 1851.

Northampton, March 8, 1851.

DEAR SIR,—I received your letter of the 25th of February, and am sorry that I have been thus tardy in acknowledging it. My silence has been owing to a temporary pressure of occupation.

I am greatly concerned to hear that an attempt has been set on foot to rob Mr. R. G. Hill of the honour—so justly his due—of PRIORITY in the invention and practical application of the non-restraint system to the treatment of insanity. I shall be still more concerned if it should turn out—which I am slow to believe—that Dr. Charlesworth has lent any countenance to such attempt. However, I have the satisfaction of knowing that the matter is in highly competent hands, and that you and the other gentlemen of the committee will see thorough justice done to Mr. Hill.

I wrote yesterday to the Mayor of Lincoln, in answer to his letter of the 25th ult., addressed to me, in which he requested to know if I had a distinct recollection of what fell from Dr. Charlesworth at the Hull meeting. I have answered his letter at some length, and have appended an extract from the speeches at the Hull meeting, as reported in our own recognised organ, the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*. I need not speak of the contents of my letter at more length, as I take for granted it will be laid, by the mayor, before yourself and the other members of Mr. Hill's committee.

I am no partizan in this matter, but an unbiassed witness. I have every friendly disposition both to Dr. Charlesworth and Mr. Hill, as respected members of the same profession with myself, and would gladly do a kindness to either of them. "Sed magis amica veritas." When appealed to, as I have been, in this business, I feel that I have nothing to consider but the cause of truth. For this reason I have spoken openly and conclusively in favour of Mr. Hill's priority of claim.

You are free to make any use of this letter you may think fit. Believe me to be, dear Sir, with great respect,

Yours, faithfully,

Rev. J. Daniel, East Ardsley, Wakefield.

A. ROBERTSON.

Northampton, March 7, 1851.

SIR,—I am very sorry that a succession of very pressing professional occupations has prevented me from sooner replying to your letter of the 25th of February.

In that letter you state that "Mr. Pierce has addressed the public, claiming the honour of *originality* for Dr. Charlesworth" as to the discovery and first practice of the non-restraint system in the treatment of lunatics. You go on to ask whether I "recollect Dr. Charlesworth making use of the expression, at the meeting of the Provincial Medical Association held at Hull in August last, that the *real honour* of *first introducing* the system was due to Mr. Hill?"

When thus appealed to, I have no hesitation in saying that I have a very distinct recollection of the above expressions having been made use of by Dr. Charlesworth, or words to that effect. The information made the greater impression upon me, as it was perfectly new to me. So vague and imperfect was my knowledge as to the first discovery and practice of the non-restraint system, prior to the Hull meeting,