MISGOVERNMENT OF THE NORWICH INFIRMARY LUNATIC ASYLUM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The last sound of woe uttered from the gloomy cells of the Norwich Infirmary Asylum had well-nigh been stifled, or fallen to the ground unheard and uncared for. The seventy thousand inhabitants of Norwich listened to the moan with dull and heartless apathy; that which individually concerned no man was no man's business, and but for the indignant remonstrance of THE LANCET, the tailor partisan would quietly have succeeded the dismissed railway clerk.

It is satisfactory to find that the *Norwich* visiting justices have been zealous and vigilant in the discharge of their duty. They possess great power, which they will undoubtedly exercise with firmness and discretion. Their duty, however, towards the unhappy lunatics confined in this den of despair is not yet completed. They have nothing to do with party predilections or finding places for the unsuccessful, but they have to see that one well acquainted with the care and treatment of the insane be appointed to the vacant office. It is true they cannot compel the guardians to appoint a *medical superintendent*, nor can they coerce them as to the appointment of anyone who may be selected by that court, but they can do that which the Commissioners in Lunacy have done more than once: they can refuse a licence to an asylum conducted upon principles opposed to that system which experience, reason, and humanity indicate as the only one conducive to the care and welfare of the insane.

I trust, Sir, that your exposure of the iniquities practised in the infirmary asylum will have its due effect, and that the magistrates, guardians, and inhabitants of Norwich may be roused to a sense of what is due from them towards afflicted humanity.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

November, 1856.

A NORWICH RATEPAYER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your leading article in THE LANCET of Nov. 15th, on the Norwich Infirmary Asylum, you have been led into an error concerning the patient, Emma Walpole, whose treatment by the master has caused his dismissal. It is there stated that "she died from hæmorrhage from the lungs *very shortly after Mr. Bell's treatment*." The fact is, that the patient died *fourteen months* afterwards; and, except that she suffered from lupus, she enjoyed good health to within a few days of her death: even her uterine functions were regularly performed.

Possibly this statement may remove the "grave doubts" you entertain on that point of my evidence which stated in effect, (and I still hold the same opinion,) that I did not believe that the cold-water treatment adopted in July, 1855, had the slightest effect in causing death, after only a few days' illness, in October, 1856—a lapse of at least fourteen months. It will be only just to Mr. Bell, who has already had enough to answer for, and to myself, the honesty of whose evidence you impugn, to insert the correction in your next impression.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. DAY,

Temporary Medical Officer at the Norwich Infirmary Asylum.

Norwich, Nov. 1856.

THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The navy continues very properly to be extremely unpopular amongst our profession. The October *Navy List*, on being examined, shows that certain seventy-four ships in commission should have for their full complement of assistant-surgeons as many as 115, while in reality they have only 47, there being 68 wanting. Also, nine full surgeons are wanting. In the seventy-four ships, there are 68 medical vacancies. Six ships have no medical officer; one of these is on the African coast; and another in the West Indies. Two surgeons and five assistants-surgeons resigned; and ten medical officers died during the quarter. To show how hard up the Admiralty are, the assistant-surgeons "for service" number 257; and of these, 241 are employed, there being only 16 on half-pay, and these perhaps paid off within two or three weeks before the List was put into the hands of the printer. In the meantime the health and lives of the seamen are more or less endangered by the scanty number of medicos.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

October, 1856.

NAVY.

THE ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—At a meeting of governors of the Royal Medical Benevolent College, held at my house, Oct. 29th, 1856, it was resolved that a courteous application be made to the Council for a minute account of the expenses of the College so far as they relate to the school for exhibitioners. Such application was made by Dr. C. Taylor, of Bethel-place, Camberwell, on behalf of the meeting, who undertook to defray any expense to which the College might be put in preparing the same. The following is the reply received from the Council:—

"Nov. 6th, 1856.

"SIR,—I beg to inform you that your letter of the 31st ult. was read and considered at the Council meeting yesterday, and that the following resolution thereon was passed:—

"Resolved,—That inasmuch as the Council of the Royal Medical Benevolent College act under the sanction of an Act of Parliament, which prescribes (Bye Law 11) that the books shall be open to the inspection of any governor, the Council cannot sanction any claim upon their officers to furnish any abstract or analysis of their accounts except the statement submitted to their auditors, and subsequently to the annual general meeting. That a copy of the above resolution be sent to Dr. Taylor."

"I hand you herewith a copy of the revised laws and bye-laws, as presented to the annual general meeting in May last.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"Chas. Taylor, M.D."

"ROBERT FREEMAN, Secretary.

It will be seen by Rule XI. that any governor is entitled to inspect the books without licence from the Council, and it certainly appears most arbitrary to oblige medical practitioners to spend their valuable time in extracting accounts from books, which they might not understand, which ought to be freely rendered, and which the secretary informed me *he* could prepare in the course of an hour. The governors have now no alternative but to call an extraordinary general meeting. The following memorial has been prepared for that purpose, and all who desire to co-operate are requested to make copies of the same, have them signed in their respective neighbourhoods, and forward them to me or to J. M. Deere, 35, Lincoln's-inn-fields, on or before Dec. 6th next, as it is intended to forward the memorial to the Council on Dec. 8th.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Walcot-place West,
Kennington, Nov. 1856.

MATTHEW FRENCH WAGSTAFFE.

(COPY OF MEMORIAL.)

"To the Council of the Royal Medical Benevolent College.

"We, the undersigned, being governors of the Royal Medical Benevolent College, request that you will convene an Extraordinary General Meeting of the governors of the institution, to re-consider the resolution relating to the increased charge for exhibitioners, passed at the meeting of Aug. 11th, 1856, with a view to its being altogether rescinded or satisfactorily adjusted; and also to take into consideration the affairs of the College generally, more particularly as to its working expenses and the further development of the educational department."

EXPERIENCE OF "A NOLD NURSE."

To the Hedditor of THE LANSCT.

SIR,—i ask your pardin for making so bold as rite to you, has if an old woman like me could ave anything to say that a learnd gentelman like you did not know befor, but i ope Sir that if you spare time to rede this, may be wen their is a corner to spare you woud put it in your paper, has i beleive all the Doctors that is real rispecktable takes it in.

i have ad many yeres experience Sir, & have took a deal of notis both with growing young ladys, and halso with married ladys hin there confinements, and it semes to me Sir, that meddicle gentelman wen they are called to attend in most of the hilnesses which ladys in general ave, thay are not made akwainted harf suffisient with the ushul ways of their pashents, or they woud insist on manny things being done different. i ave seen young ladys grow up has well and strong as there brothers til fourteen yere old or therabout as you know Sir, and then turn of has dellikat has if thay ad ad sum dizese all there life. All the meddicle books show that you know the reson well enuf in ginerall—it was them as furst set me to taking notis; but then Sir, tho the Docter knows it is all tite stays hor want of good eksersise or both, he never says nothing about the stays. i do hassure you Sir, young ladys and ladys thats