easily relieved, and of anxiety which could be readily dispelled?

If rash and officious are the terms by which the promoter of such a laudable purpose ought to be assailed, then do I fully merit the severity of criticism in which your correspondent has so freely indulged; but if to mitigate the severity of affliction, if to check the career of protracted suffering, if to arrest the progress of unnecessary irritation, and to relieve the excited feelings of surrounding relatives, be considered a commendable motive for exertion, then it will appear that such harsh and pedantic remarks have been offered prematurely, and without reasonable foundation, and having for their object no other purpose than that of displaying in brilliant colours the deep learning and extensive research of Mr. Hall Wright, and to exhibit in degrading contumely my ignorance "of the extremely beautiful process of parturition."

No doubt, in his estimation, it would be a safer mode of practice to await, ere a helping hand should be outstretched, twelve hours, *according to authority*, that all might be done *secundum artem*. O, no! rather let your patient linger hour after hour in the intensity of her sufferings, lest established forms should be violated, lest *great names* should be contemned, lest your correspondent's opinions should be nullified.

And where, let me ask, is the fairness, where even the advantage, of bringing up *great names* in array against the mode of practice which I thought fit to adopt; when his sheet-anchor, Dr. Burns, expressly states in his "Principles of Midwifery," fifth edition, page 394, "I have had no opportunity of trying this remedy" (the ergot). What then is the reasonable inference to be drawn from this admission? Surely that Burns, in composing his able and luminous treatise, adopted a mode of argument that would, in its amplification, embrace all the remedies and modes of treatment of which he had any experience; no further did he go. The administration of ergot was to him personally unknown. Ought we then, who have later authorities and ample evidence for our guides, to feel ourselves bound by his dictum, in cases which, under all their circumstances, never came within his observation, valuable as it is in general? Certainly not. If then we are at liberty to deny the paramount authority of such a man as Dr. Burns, surely we may be pardonably allowed to reject that of Mr. Hall Wright.

Your correspondent talks much about "dilating pains," and asserts my "ignorance of the extremely beautiful process of parturition," because I am unwilling to see them continuing long after the effect, which they are calculated to produce, has been gained. These "dilating pains," or at least

what *he calls* dilating pains, must, on to account, be interfered with. They may continue for many hours, they may cause intense suffering, and materially affect the after progress of the labour. But these considerations are to be of no avail. Even though you may have the power of exciting these irritating and "dilating pains" into an expulsive action, and thus bring the case to a successful and speedy termination, yet here you must pause. There is no *authority* for so acting; you must wait *twelve hours*. Though relief is in your grasp, you must not afford it. Wo be to the daring innovator, who, regardless of authorities and of great names, presumes to act upon his own judgment! Even should complete success crown his endeavours, still will he be exposed to the rigid criticism and logical analysis of your correspondent. "A Nero playing upon his harp, in view of a city in flames, is a less frightful picture of humanity than the philosopher, who, basking in the serenity of his own speculations, is yet indifferent to the ignorance he could correct, the error he could remove, or the misery he could relieve."

I am, Sir,
Your well-wisher, &c.,
T. CALVERT GIRTIN,

Islington, Nov. 1830.

[The letter of our correspondent was mislaid, or it should have been inserted in an earlier Number.—ED. L.]

FOUNDATION OF THE MEDICO-BOTANICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The late disagreements in the above Society are by this time generally known throughout the country. Many mistakes have gone forth prejudicial to its founder, Mr. John Frost. I have read, from time to time, the different accounts in the papers, and have lamented that nothing occurred to enable me to offer my aid to rescue Mr. Frost from the imputations cast upon him. Your valuable Journal has, however, afforded me an opportunity of gratifying my wishes. In the number of THE LANCET for January 16th, which I regret I did not receive till to-day, I read, with surprise, that you had been informed, the Medico-Botanical Society owes its origin to the exertions of Mr. Thomas Gozna, Mr. Raphael Smith, and Mr. John Smith. Without delay I sent for the subsequent Number, expecting to find that those Gentlemen had convinced you, and your readers, of the incorrectness of your Correspondent's communication. I was disappointed, and concluded

they could not have read the statement. I am sure had they done so (particularly the Messrs. Smith, with whose character I am well acquainted), they would have lost no time in resigning the palm to him who alone deserves it.

Mr. Thomas Gozna, for a very short period at the commencement of the Society, was appointed, by Mr. Frost, its secretary,—Messrs. Raphael and John Smith, two of the committee. I was admitted a member in March, 1821, and I do not think I can do better (to convince your readers of Mr. Frost's claim as the founder of the Society, and of the office he then held) than copy the ticket given me on that occasion, which ticket now lies before me.

"Medico-Botanical Society.

"To Mr. John Hodges Tucker.—This is hereby to certify, that you are admitted a member of this Society, providing you obey the regulations of it.

"By order of the Committee,

"JOHN FROST,

"Managing Director.

"London, March 15, 1821.

"Honorary."

You will see by this, Sir, that I became a member of the Society in its infancy, and that I possess the power of doing justice to the persecuted.

The Messrs. Smith were two of the committee when I entered; I was in the daily habit of meeting them at our valued preceptor's, Mr. Joshua Brookes, of Blenheim-street, and elsewhere, and solemnly avow, I never heard them lay any claim as to the formation of the Society. Mr. Thos. Gozna had resigned the office of secretary previous to my becoming a member, and Mr. Frost, the managing director, acted as secretary *pro tempore*. Having never had the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Gozna, I cannot say how far he might be concerned in laying the foundation, but, judging from the office he held (under Mr. Frost), and from his having abandoned the Society so early, I may rationally conclude he could not have possessed much zeal for its advancement, and that he cannot be entitled to the merit imputed to him. Mr. Frost, and the members of the Society, proposed to me to fill the office of secretary, vacated by Mr. Gozna. I accepted it with pleasure, and lamented when circumstances compelled me to resign.

Were I to enumerate all I have witnessed of Mr. Frost's labours, with a view of establishing the Society, I should take up more of your valuable work than you could spare; suffice it to say, that Mr. Frost's unceasing zeal was the constant theme, not only of the members of the Society, but of almost all the pupils of Mr. Brookes, and those of other esteemed teachers, in different branches of

medical science. Several of the members, whom I may call friends,—Messrs. Isaac Clubbe, Viveash, Harrison, &c., from whom I received letters and verbal communications in 1822 and 1823, after their settling in practice, in different parts of England,—have spoken of Mr. Frost in the highest terms of praise, and have requested me to offer him their best wishes for the welfare of "his" Society, expressing, at the same time, a very high opinion of Mr. Frost's scientific acquirements. Were those members in town, or near it, they would join me in this testimony.

I have not by any chance seen Mr. Frost for nearly seven years. The last time we accidentally met, he was doing that, which, if publicly known, would raise him higher in the estimation of good men, than even the enthusiastic zeal he has displayed from the commencement of his Medico-Botanical Society.

I trust, Sir, Messrs. Smith and Gozna will come forward and disavow themselves the originators of the Society in question, and not allow a leaf, much less the whole wreath, to be plucked from the brow of the well-deserving founder.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

your obedient servant,

J. H. TUCKER.

16, Howland St. Fitzroy Sq.

January 26, 1830.

ABUSES AT ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am induced to write to you on the present occasion, by the irregularity of attendance on the part of the two senior surgeons of this hospital; a sufficient cause, I trust, for this intrusion, and of sufficient importance, I hope, to demand attention. Mr. Keate I have not seen there these last eight or ten days; Mr. Walker (I think) having seen a *few* of his patients for him. the house-surgeon on others; but one poor man, a patient of Mr. Keate, admitted, I believe, on account of secondary syphilitic symptoms, was shamefully neglected; having caught cold while in the hospital, he was attacked with pneumonia; yet had nought but decoct. sarsæ, though the pulse was 170 per minute; the lips blue; breathing *exceedingly difficult*, &c. So he went on for several days, I believe, before I saw him; since that the house-surgeon has told me he was dead; his bed is vacant.

Now, as to Mr. Brodie, he professes to give a clinical lecture every Thursday; can he say he has done so, when he is reminded that last Thursday he promised to give it