promotion of medical knowledge, available for these purposes, to the exclusion of others who might do so, but when it is considered that the medical corporations have consisted of physicians and surgeons attached to the metropolitan hospitals, and who have been advanced by seniority, (which is likewise a most injudicious mode, destructive of the spirit of emulation,) it will not occasion much surprise that many of their members should not have been greatly distinguished for scientific or professional acquirements, or that these bodies should have felt but little concern as regards advancing the interests of the profession. In some respects, indeed, their proceedings have been highly detrimental to the community, especially with respect to the facilitating the examination of candidates for the diploma, in consequence of which, not only has the profession been overstocked greatly beyond the public demand, but many improperly-qualified persons have been admitted, as in the instance of the pastry-cook from Taunton, who was able, after a year's sojourn in London, to return with the diploma of the College of Surgeons,—practising homœopathy under its sanction,—and thus, while many deserving members of the profession are unable to obtain a livelihood for their families by their exertions, irregular practitioners of all kinds abound and flourish.* Mr. Guthrie stated, in his evidence before the former parliamentary committee, that candidates were suffered to pass the college who could not spell very common words in their own language; and he likewise observed, before the existing committee,—“It has been stated that the examinations of the present day are more severe than those of twenty years ago; that the examiners are more influenced by the pressure of public opinion. In this there is not the slightest truth whatever; on the contrary, the examinations of the present day are, if anything, rather less severe than those which took place twenty years ago. I am particularly anxious to state that fact.” This gentleman also said, that when he joined the council, some of the examiners had attained to a great age,—ninety or ninety-five years,—and could not sit through the examinations without going to sleep, admitting that the examination fees were a most important consideration, and that, in consequence of the poverty of several of them, it was proposed to portion off those above seventy years at £150 a year. This statement of Mr. Guthrie, as to the great solicitude for the examination fee, is corroborated by the circumstance, which was published in one of the medical journals two or three years ago, and which was never contradicted—that an examiner of this college, instead of retiring, disposed of his post to another member of the council, (not the next in rotation,) on condition of receiving half the yearly fees.

THE LANCET, moreover, quoting from the *Trades Weekly Messenger*, states that the number of medical men is as great as that of the butchers, and nearly as great as the bakers; and this may well be the case, when the same number of this journal mentions that thirty-one members passed the examination for surgeons in the course of the week preceding the brief vacation of two months. On the 21st of August, 1848, twelve passed; on the 24th, nine; and on the 28th, ten. How many, or whether any, were rejected, is not stated.

On this point a correspondent observes, (March 24,) and it is now generally conceded, that the “examinations at the several colleges, as at present conducted, are not sufficient tests of the candidates' knowledge in medicine and surgery. The many unemployed and disappointed members of our overstocked profession can, unfortunately for themselves, bear testimony to this assertion. It is lamentably true, that a great many are weekly licensed to practise whose preparatory education would scarcely enable them to discharge the duty of clerk to a small mercantile house. I know a young man who very lately passed a College of Surgeons, who is very indifferently acquainted with his mother tongue, and of course in blessed ignorance of all other modern and ancient languages, whose anatomical knowledge was confined to the brain, for which he obtained his diploma. As long as the many licensing corporations are permitted to make their curricula ‘soft and easy,’ as an inducement for a candidate to buy their parch-

ment, so long will the profession be inundated and degraded by qualified quacks, neither able nor willing to support its rapidly declining respectability.”

“The mercenary competition,” says the editor of the *Medical Gazette*, “which exists among the licensing bodies of Great Britain and Ireland, is the secret cause of the degradation of the profession. Until this scandalous competition is suppressed, there can be but little hope that the profession will assume that respectable position in the social scale to which it is justly entitled.” And again, “If the universities and colleges of the United Kingdom are prohibited from granting diplomas for several years, we verily believe it would be attended with less evil to the community and to the profession itself, than the continuance of the practice here brought to light—viz., the sending out yearly on the population of this country an army of 269 physicians, 660 surgeons, and 373 apothecaries, deriving their qualifications from sixteen different systems of study, and receiving their licences to practise from so many different colleges, universities, and societies.” A quarterly periodical, (*Edinburgh Medical Journal*, January, 1848,) referring to the “evil results which have happened, and which it must be the business of the legislature to cure, from surrendering the profession to be mismanaged by certain great medical corporations, for their own selfish and ambitious purposes,” likewise observes, “It is a disgrace to our legislature that they have made no progress hitherto in the cure of evils of the nature of which they are, or ought to be, fully aware. Far be it from us to desire the destruction of our medical colleges; but our legislators will never make any progress in the intolerable anomalies and grievances of medical legislation, if they do not resolve to turn a deaf ear to remonstrances proceeding from such bodies as are founded, as they too generally are, on selfish and exclusive views, and if they do not base their measures on public interests alone, to which the whole machinery of medical schools, colleges, and incorporations, ought, in all reason, to be altogether subordinate and subservient.”

“It would appear,” said Sir James Clark, in his letter to Sir James Graham, “that the members of the medical corporations are alone consulted upon the subject, and that they, as might be expected, are strenuously exerting themselves to obtain all they can, each for his own institution, while the claims and feelings of the great body of the profession seem likely to be lost sight of.” A morning paper also aptly remarks, “Our medical bodies have stood out upon their peculiar rights, and for their peculiar practice, till at last the profession has got into a condition in which there is no law, no control; in which the public life is sacrificed, and the medical man is persecuted and neglected by those very institutions that were formed for his benefit and protection.”—*Daily News*, May 30, 1848.

(To be continued.)

REPORT OF A CASE OF INJURY TO THE HEAD, FOLLOWED BY A LOSS OF MUSICAL FACULTY.

By C. W. LATHAM, Esq., M.R.C.S. Eng., London.

A CIRCUMSTANCE in the history of a case of congestive apoplexy, which has recently been under my care, the subject of which is now convalescent, appears to me sufficiently curious to interest some of my professional brethren, especially such as advocate the doctrines of phrenology.

“James T—, aged sixty-three, an old seaman, but who has been employed as a brewer's servant for the last thirty years, about two years ago, while in the employ of Messrs. Truman, Hanbury, and Co., received a severe blow on the top of his head, from the falling of a heavy cellar-flap, on the under surface of which were affixed two iron bolts; one of these struck him on the right parietal bone, at its posterior superior angle, close by the posterior fontanelle. He was for a short time rendered insensible by the blow, but quickly recovered and returned to his work. Before this accident he was fond of music, could (to use his own expression) “sing a very good song for a commoner,” was in the habit of whistling, and singing at his work, and possessed a tolerable facility in acquiring new airs. From that time, however, he lost all musical power; on attempting to sing the most familiar air, he could not get over more than a single bar, when he became confused, and struck out into two or three other different tunes. He recognised any music which he had previously heard, but was quite incapable of singing it himself, or of acquiring anything new, as before.

* Instances analogous to the following are by no means of uncommon occurrence, though not often made public:—“An appeal is advertised in this day's *Times*, to which we beg the attention of the benevolent, as the case appears to be one peculiarly worthy of public sympathy. The late Mr. Langstaff was well known to medical and scientific men as an eminent surgeon, and a distinguished pathologist. He devoted many years to the formation of the most complete private anatomical museum in this country, and we regret to find that his daughter is now compelled to seek pecuniary assistance from the public.”—*Times*, Dec. 18, 1848.

What, it may be asked, would have been the fate of Sir C. Bell, but from the income which he derived from his lectures?—who was, nevertheless, obliged to leave London at a late period of his career, and whose widow was left in great measure dependent upon the pittance of £100 per annum, granted by Government.

This is the only injury or inconvenience which he sustained; his memory, in other respects, and all his other faculties, are unimpaired; but although he has repeatedly put himself to the test since, he finds that his musical powers are still thus in abeyance."

Bethnal-green-road, 1849.

Reviews.

On the Extraction of Teeth, with an Account of a new and much less painful Mode of Operating. By HENRY GILBERT, M.R.C.S.L., &c. London: Renshaw. 1849. 8vo, pp. 66.

WE have before taken occasion to notice in terms of high commendation the operating chair invented by Mr. Gilbert, the use of which, in tooth-drawing, is certainly calculated to obviate many of the disadvantages attending the use of the instruments at present employed for the purpose. The ostensible aim of the pamphlet before us is to describe the chair and explain its uses. After alluding to the injuries of necessity caused by the forceps, *sine fulcro*, the key, punch, pelican, &c.; the resting unduly on parts within the mouth, breaking down the alveolus in twisting the tooth, or *easing* it (save the mark!) out of its socket, &c., all for want of a fulcrum *out of the mouth*, Mr. Gilbert proceeds:—

"Twenty years' practice as a surgeon could not fail to supply me with numerous cases in which the operation of tooth-drawing was required; neither could it fail to inspire me with feelings of sadness at the amount of human suffering and of injury inflicted from the imperfection of our instruments and our modes of operating. These feelings have not been mine alone; I feel persuaded that the majority of my medical brethren have shared them with me, and earnestly wished for some instrument or apparatus to be invented, the employment of which would render the extraction of teeth as satisfactory and as successful as operations are on other parts of the body.

Thus influenced, I was induced to turn my attention particularly to the consideration of the means necessary to effect the object I had in view. A careful study of the anatomy of the parts, *i.e.*, of the teeth and alveolar processes, more especially of the fangs and their respective directions, led me to adopt the conclusion John Hunter had previously arrived at—namely, that "It would be best of all to attempt the extraction of a tooth in the direction of its axis;" and not by means of the lateral motion required with the forceps, nor by the crushing action of the key. One step was thus gained; but had I stopped there, but little had been done. The extraction of a tooth perpendicularly, or in the direction of its axis, although decidedly the best and least painful that can be devised, cannot be adopted with the instruments in ordinary use, unless there be a fulcrum employed *external* to the mouth. If a tooth be pulled out with the aid of the common tooth forceps, perpendicularly, the body of the instrument must rest on the adjoining teeth, which serve as its *point-d'appui*, and the pressure may, and in all probability will, induce inflammation of the socket, or of its lining membrane, and ultimately, perhaps, even the loss of the tooth.

The next and concluding step, therefore, was to obtain an apparatus which should supply the external fulcrum for the extracting instrument to rest on, while in use—an object so desirable, that several attempts have already been made for its construction, but hitherto unavailingly. My object was, to obtain a *fixed fulcrum, external to the mouth*; on which, during the extraction of the tooth, the instrument would rest, and thus obviate the difficulties and objections connected with the instruments in general use. The chair which I use, is an ordinary easy chair, with a back that can be inclined to any angle, the top of which is semi-cylindrical, for the reception of, and to enable the operator to come close to, the head of the sufferer. At the right hand side of this chair there is fixed a strong steel bar or stem, on which again there is a socket capable of sliding on it, and of being fixed at any required height by means of the set-screw, which, on being turned, presses the piece against the stem. The movable bar, which is thus capable of being raised or lowered at will, holds another piece of steel, or arm, placed horizontally to the chair, which again holds a third piece of metal, the latter being the fulcrum on which the extracting instrument rests.

The teeth are extracted by means of the ordinary forceps, adapted to the fulcrum, in the following manner:—The ope-

rator first causes the person to recline back in the chair, and adjusts the bearing, so that it will come between the jaws (when a back tooth is to be extracted); he then takes hold of the tooth with the forceps, which will rest on the bearing, if a lower tooth is to be extracted, and by moving the forceps upon the bearing as a fulcrum, he lifts the tooth out of the lower jaw. If a tooth is to be extracted from the upper jaw, the forceps are introduced below the bearing, and act so as to draw the tooth downwards out of the jaw. The bearing and sliding piece should be covered with any soft fabric or substance. By these means teeth can be drawn, in accordance with John Hunter's directions, perpendicularly, or in the direction of their axis."—pp. 60-63.

The chair is certainly an admirable invention, and since it was spoken favourably of in *THE LANCET*, (we were the first to notice it,) many other periodicals have recommended it to public attention, which we believe it is now receiving. Some operating surgeons have considered it very useful, not only in dental practice, but also in operations for strabismus, and other proceedings in which great care is requisite, and a fulcrum desirable. The book before us, by the way, is filled with much irrelevant matter concerning the construction &c. of the jaws and teeth, which, when addressed to professional persons, for whom it is intended, only repeats, for the hundred and fiftieth time, what they have all known before. We recommend Mr. Gilbert, or his publisher, to cancel the first forty pages of the pamphlet, and sell the remaining sheets for about a fifth of the present price.

The Human Brain; its Structure, Physiology, and Diseases. By SAMUEL SOLLY, Esq., F.R.S., Senior Assistant-Surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital, and Lecturer on Clinical Surgery, &c. Second Edition. Longman. 1847. pp. 688.

In whatever light we contemplate the great nervous centres—the brain and spinal cord, with the cerebellum, or even the solar plexus, the supposed focus of the nerves of involution—we cannot but conclude, that after all the inquiries that have hitherto been made into this most interesting portion of human anatomy, it remains a region as yet little known. The Bells, the Graingers, the Marshall Halls, the Fovilles, the Galls, Leurets, the Owens, the Blumenbachs, and many others besides, less known, indeed, but not less enterprising and successful in the fields of science, have, however much they themselves have already achieved, nevertheless left much more behind them still to be accomplished, in regard to the physiology of the nervous system, either by their immediate fellows in research, or, more probably, by some future generation of investigators, who shall follow in their steps, inherit the treasures which they have scarcely unlocked, and explore those invaluable possessions, by means of a light, from the employment of which we are at present held back in the shade. What astrology once was in respect to astronomy, such is the imperfect knowledge of the brain, and its wonderful radiation of nerves, in relation to some more intelligible demonstration of the functions of the cerebro-spinal system, as yet wrapped up within the womb of time. As Galileo Galilei and Sir Isaac Newton emerged from amongst their race, unravelling the laws for the sun, and the moon, and the earth, and the other revolving planets, so did Harvey startle the world by his bold but simple demonstration of the circulation of the blood, and Hunter exhausted the very terms and phrases spoken by the last generation of pathologists, when, single-minded and alone, he proved the functions of the capillary vessels, (the workers, as he called them,) and established the doctrine of plastic inflammation. Another genius, as mighty as those whose names we have just mentioned, is called for, in order to collect the beads of the scattered facts of the history of the nerves, and string them together upon one unbroken thread, visible to the weakest sight, and available to the meanest understanding. When this end shall have been attained—nor do we hesitate at expressing our conviction that such an achievement may not be far distant, inasmuch as every