qualifications for the office of Coroner, it is not pretended that they are unfit for other departments of the public service. No profession, no class of men in the country, get so much money from the public purse as the lawyers. We say nothing here of barristers; but from under-sheriffs to clerks of the peace, and town clerks, and clerks of guardians, and superintendant registrars, there is no public office of any emolument into which the attorney has not insinuated his slippery nature. No, not one; and hitherto the attorney has excluded the medical man and himself usurped the office of Coroner, for which, in the present state of medical jurisprudence, he is infinitely less qualified than a surgeon for the place of under-sheriff.

In contests carried on upon any public principle personalities will be avoided by a high-minded candidate; and no one can feel more averse than ourselves to any general reflection cast upon any large body of men. But the Coroner is a Judge; and the question of moral qualification must exercise no slight influence upon the electors. We shall therefore quote a sketch by JEREMY BENTHAM, touching the moral peculiarities and fitness of attorney candidates; the severity of which, it must be admitted, nothing could excuse but extreme accuracy.

After a profound study of their character this great jurist says of the legal profession:—"If there is a profession which prepares men to do evil, and to avoid punishment, it is this. If there is a profession which, from a habit wrought by gain, and acquired in supporting truth or falsehood indifferently, effaces all sincerity, all love of truth from the soul, it is this. If there is a profession that teaches a man, by the constant practice of his life, to sell his faculties to the highest bidder, to say all, to accuse of all, to defend from all, for money; to let himself out, soul and body to him who pays best; and, consequently to be always ready to sacrifice for the least advantage the interests of the greatest number, it is the trade of the lawyer."

It is grateful to remark that there are numerous splendid exceptions to this observation; several deviations from this definition of the species by this great naturalist,—even amongst the Attorney Coroners,—but the incontrovertible fact remains, that Medical Coroners should everywhere be substituted for inefficient attorneys. This consummation must ultimately crown the success of the contest in Middlesex.

DISCOVERIES OF SIR A. COOPER.

LETTER FROM P. CRAMPTON, ESQ.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—If the wealth of an individual could afford an excuse for withholding from him any portion of his property, I might stand excused for delaying to restore to Sir Astley Cooper a portion of his fame as a discoverer, of which, by a misprint in the report of a lecture lately delivered by me in the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, I have most unintentionally deprived him. In the report which appeared in many of the newspapers, and in the "Dublin Medical Journal" for the present month, I am represented as having said, that "if we are not indebted to Sir Astley Cooper for the discovery of the true anatomy of the parts concerned in hernia (as if we could be indebted to him for the *untrue* anatomy), he is entitled to all the honour of the discovery, for he was the first to apply knowledge which was of no account, until he used it in explaining the nature and treatment of strangulated hernia." The passage should be read thus—"I will not say that we are indebted to Sir Astley Cooper for the discovery of *the whole* of the true anatomy of the parts concerned in hernia, but I can say, with perfect truth, that he is entitled to the whole honour of the discovery for knowledge, &c." But this is insufficient justice. The fact is, that I had intended to particularise the additions which had been made by Sir Astley Cooper and others to the pathology of hernia, a duty that was the more necessary in the instance of Sir Astley, as he has not, in his great work, put forward his claims as a discoverer, but merely permitted them to be inferred. I should (for example) have mentioned his discovery of the "true anatomy" of the upper abdominal ring, and of the inguinal canal, the fascia transversalis, and the double sac of femoral hernia. Upon these points, as well as upon the anatomy of the thymus gland, I had full notes prepared; but finding that I had much exceeded the limits within which I had intended to confine my lecture, I was obliged not only to

compress what I had to say towards the conclusion of the discourse within the smallest possible compass, but even to omit, altogether, much that should have found a place in a lecture purporting to give an outline of the history of the progress of medicine in connection with anatomical discovery. This limited view of the subject furnishes the only excuse I have to offer for the many omissions in the discourse, which must strike the most careless reader. Among these I may note vaccination, the treatment of inflammation by mercury, and the discovery of the medicinal properties of iodine.

With many apologies for this unreasonable trespass on the columns of your valuable Journal, I have the honour to be, Sir, your very faithful, humble servant,

PHILIP CRAMPTON.

Merrion-square, Dublin,
Jan. 29, 1839.

CONDUCT OF GUARDIANS AT THE LUDLOW UNION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I think it right to forward you the following correspondence, which took place subsequent to the transaction relating to the Board of Guardians, which is inserted in THE LANCET of the 19th January.

I trust that the publicity given to the proceedings of irresponsible bodies, particularly where the helpless poor are the sufferers, will have the effect of eliciting some degree of liberality and humanity when they are wanting; and in the present instance I appeal to any one at all conversant with the ordinary affairs of life if two shillings a week be sufficient to support the recovery of a labouring man from a state of debility from fever to a state of health. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY MEYMOTT.

Ludlow, Jan. 25, 1839.

*To the Chairman of the Board of Guardians,
Ludlow Union.*

Mill-street, Ludlow, Jan. 12, 1839.

SIR:—I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of the unanimous condemnation of my conduct, by the Board of Guardians, for making use of the power of ordering extra diet, which power I considered I was entrusted with, from my having been supplied with printed forms headed "Medical Order for Extra Diet."

I beg further to state that this condemnation was handed to me from the Board in an open manner, written on the back of one of my orders.

I have to request the Board to inform me whether for the future I am to be entrusted with this power; for I do not consider a flat contradiction to my opinion a sufficient

reason for condemning the exercise of a power entrusted to me by the Board. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY MEYMOTT.

Robert Thomas, Clerk to the Guardians,
Ludlow.

Ludlow Union Office, Jan. 16, 1839.

SIR:—I am directed by the Board of Guardians to inform you that the order countermanding a previous one issued by you for James Morgan to have mutton, was given in error, his name having been overlooked in your medical weekly return; and it having been consequently considered that he was not ill or under your care.

The Board regret the mistake, and wish you to continue to use the discretionary power reposed in all medical officers of the Union of ordering such articles as may be considered absolutely necessary for sick paupers. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ROBERT THOMAS, Clerk.

To H. Meymott, Esq., Medical Officer,
Ludlow Union.

CAUSES OF DEAFNESS.—AURAL SURGERY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I conclude, as must every one who reads your Journal, that Mr. Curtis cannot authenticate his cases. I conclude so, because it would have been the most easy thing imaginable for Mr. C. to have given the addresses of his patients, and thus, at once, to have established the truth of his assertions, and to have dissipated all suspicions. By remaining silent, Mr. Curtis belies his principles; he does the greatest injury to "suffering humanity," and, instead of "advancing science to the utmost of his ability," he stands forward a determined impediment to its progress.

No, Mr. Curtis cannot authenticate his cases; and, in face of the assertions of himself and Mr. Wright,* I believe, for the reasons heretofore mentioned (all of which remain unanswered), that "deviations in the quantity and quality of the cerumen, exert no important influence on the function of the organ."

I confess that I cannot see what good object Mr. Wright had in addressing a letter to your Journal upon the subject under discussion. Look at the state of the case. Messrs. Curtis and Wright agree that deafness is produced by a deficiency of the secretion of cerumen; the former finds a remedy for this deafness, and he is immediately classed with quacks, and made the subject of attack by the latter. Ought not Mr.

* Wright on Diseases of the Ear, page 100.