ALLEGED NEGLECT OF A LECTURER AT
GUY'S HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As you have always proved yourself the friend of the Medical Student, I beg leave to call your attention to the manner in which one of our Lecturers performs his duty—I mean Mr. Aikin. This gentleman does not illustrate his Second Course of Lectures by any experiments, resting satisfied with having “fully exemplified them in *the first*.” Now, as I have just entered to the hospital as a pupil, this proceeding is highly injurious to me; and I hope you will be so good as to give this a corner in your very valuable journal, hoping it will have a good effect.—I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant.

Guy's Hospital, Feb. 7th, 1834.

POST-MORTEM INCISIONS. — (*From a Correspondent.*)—An instrument for sewing up the abdomen, &c. after *post-mortem* examinations, has been lately invented by Captain Bagnall. It seems well adapted for the purpose, and by its use the accident of pricking the finger, which is so often of serious consequence, cannot possibly happen. It has obtained the approbation of the *Society of Arts*, and is, we believe, in use at *St. George's Hospital*. It consists of a pair of forceps, one blade of which is a little longer than the other, and has a fissure running a little way down it from its extremity. Into this fissure, when the instrument is closed, is received a beak, which projects at right angles from the other blade. This beak is about two-thirds of an inch long, and is grooved on the side towards the extremity of the instrument. When in use the forceps is held in one hand, and a probe-pointed straight needle with a ligature in the other; the edge of the flap is seized by the instrument, and when its handles are closed, the beak of the one blade penetrates the skin, and enters the fissure of the other; the needle is now passed along the groove of the beak, and when the instrument is opened the needle is free. Probably with a little practice the anatomist may sew as neatly and quickly with this instrument as with the needle alone; and the danger from pricking must be quite obviated, as there is no sharp point in the apparatus. The instrument may be had from Thompson of Windmill-street.

BOYER.—(*From a Letter dated Paris, Jan. 20th.*)—“The venerable Baron Boyer, has joined Cuvier, Scarpa, and Portal, in that abode where sorrows cease! Boyer possessed great virtues. He rose from poverty. He is another example of the fruits of great perseverance, for he most certainly was not a man of genius. During his studies he was partly supported by a female friend, a young washerwoman, whom he afterwards married, and with whom he lived most happily. There were many admirable traits in his character. He was highly equitable in his conduct on all occasions, and a most honourable professor of surgery. Napoleon had the highest opinion of him, and had him to attend the empress on the birth of the King of Rome. Her confinement was unusually tedious, and Buonaparte observing a good deal of agitation in Boyer's manner, said to him, ‘Do not allow yourself to be agitated, but suppose yourself on attendance on a bourgeois and not on an empress.’ What would Napoleon have thought of the head that directs the trembling hand of your oracle at St. George's, or the theatrical brandish of the scalpel with which the great ‘Autocrat’ of Guy's Hospital used in my day to astonish the assembled multitude?”

“Baron Dupuytren is still in Italy. Monsieur Roux, by the regretted event, has arrived at the summit of practical glory!”

MR. HEMMING OF KIMBOLTON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In taking up THE LANCET of February 8th, I was surprised and amused to see my name denounced for no offence whatever. The malignity of the anonymous production betrays the source whence it emanated,—the pen of a neighbour, who is mad that another should presume to compete with him. My accuser has yet to learn how his character as a gentleman or a Christian will be raised, by his endeavour to excite religious persecution, by the concealment of his name in his slanderous imputations, or by his unceasing jealousy and rancour, whether in private or public.

As your constant reader *ab initio*, you will not expect that I was ever so enamoured with the Hall as to seek their license to practise when it was not needed. My having been in practice on or before August 1st, 1815, is as full and legal a qualification under the Act as the purchased certificate of the Company. Thanks to my accuser, who should have styled himself “a jealous practitioner and no licentiate,” and to a worthy confederate-informer, *par nobile fratrum*, the Hall have examined into my qualifications, and are satisfied. My education is, after all, of more importance than my legal fitness. That cost little, if anything, short of £1500. Besides reaping the advantages and honours of a metropolitan school

of eminence, ten years of my life were employed in collegiate study,—five at Wymondley College, which was instituted by the celebrated Dr. Doddridge, and five at the University of Edinburgh; the last two of which were devoted to medicine and surgery: an education which I flatter myself will prevent my ever disgracing myself in the eyes of the public, or dreading comparison with my accuser. My library consists of, perhaps, some five or six hundred volumes of standard works beyond the scanty limits of his.

It is painful, though self-defence requires it, to speak of oneself, nor had I intended even to have addressed *THE LANCET*, except in detailing some cases and plans of treatment, which I think might prove not uninteresting to your readers; but these I must defer till I have more leisure. I am, Sir, yours with much respect,

JOHN HEMMING, A.M.,

Member of the Wernerian Society.
Kimbolton, February 10, 1834.

[After this manly, and, as it appears to us, perfectly satisfactory letter from Mr. HEMMING, no further imputation on the professional character of that gentleman can be admitted into our columns unless the accusation be *publicly* authenticated.—ED. L.]

CHEAP PRESCRIPTIONS AND DEAR MEDICINES.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—A gentleman residing in Percy-street, Rathbone place, affords *advice gratis*, but medicines for *cash*. He writes his numerous prescriptions for the poor in such a form as to be unintelligible to any but his own three or four apprentices. Do you wish to have his name? He was, I believe, formerly apothecary to the Middlesex Hospital. I am, Sir, your admirer,

M. R. C. S.

NOTE FROM MR. BUTLER.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—Permit me to correct an error in your report of my observations at the *Westminster Medical Society*, relative to the case of Hypertrophy of the Heart on a Sunday week.

I stated that the organ weighed near four pounds, and not five or six, as mentioned in last week's *LANCET*. As I might be justly accused of exaggeration if this statement were to remain uncontradicted, I trust to your good feeling to insert this note, and thus oblige, Sir, your very obedient servant,

G. W. BUTLER.

February 10, 1834.

MR. COATES.—NOTE FROM MR. PARRY.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—Anonymous communications are always contemptible, even when written with the best possible intention; but when used for purposes of *private pique*, they are not only contemptible but cowardly.

In saying this, I allude to a paper inserted in your last week's journal, by a person styling himself "a Bartholomew Pupil." In this, after venting his spleen on Mr. Earle, the operating theatre, and the dressers in general, he concludes by making a personal, and, in my opinion, a most unjustifiable attack on Mr. Coates, one of the senior dressers of the hospital. The case is briefly as follows:—

On Feb. 1st, Mr. Vincent removed a fatty tumour from the posterior part of the neck, which, from its adhesion to the surrounding parts, required a somewhat tedious dissection before its complete detachment could be accomplished. Shortly after the commencement of the operation, there were cries as usual of "heads, heads!" and some one, standing over the door-way, mentioned the name of Mr. Coates, who immediately receded as far as his duty in attending on Mr. Vincent would permit. I was present during the whole time, and most assuredly did not hear any of the abusive expressions that person has thought fit to circulate, nor do I believe they were ever made use of. Fearing, however, lest some derangement of my acoustic nerve might be the cause of this, I mentioned the circumstance to several pupils, and unfortunately found them equally deaf with regard to all such impressions.

In conclusion, I cannot help hoping, that since the "*Bartholomew Pupil*" relies so much on the *correcting power* of *THE LANCET*, that its beneficial influence may be extended in putting an end to such ridiculous effusions in future. I am your obedient servant,
EDWD. PARRY.

NOTE FROM MR. SLADDEN.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—When an anonymous writer makes a communication to the world through the medium of a widely circulated periodical,—if he wish to escape the imputation of cowardice, or motives even more unworthy, he should be particularly careful how he makes use of the name of any individual; and since his incognito preserves him from *direct* castigation, common honesty should teach him to adhere strictly to the truth, while canvassing the opinions or motives of another. In *THE LANCET* of last week my name has been "taken in vain," by a person styling himself "A Bartholomew's Pupil." I have nothing to do with any part of his letter but that which refers to myself; and of that I must be allowed to say, that although I cannot pronounce it an absolute falsehood, it is, at least, extremely ambiguous, and *in no material respect* in accordance with truth. I hate an anonymous communication—it is mean and un-English. If your correspondent feel the grievances of which he complains, let him state them fairly and openly. That, however, is no affair of mine. All I have to request is, that you will insert this in the next number of *THE LANCET*; after which, I trust, "A Bartholomew Pupil" will have the candour to avow himself, *at least to me*, when I shall have great pleasure in setting him right upon a point which he has either misunderstood or wilfully misrepresented. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
JOHN SLADDEN.

St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Feb. 9, 1834.

MR. COATES.—NOTE FROM MR. STEWART.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—In your journal for last week, I perceive an anonymous communication signed "A Bartholomew Pupil," complaining of the abuses in the operating theatre, in which an attack is made upon Mr. Coates, a dresser of Mr. Vincent, who is charged with having "obstinately persisted in standing in a situation which prevented at least twenty pupils from witnessing an operation performed by Mr. Vincent."

I beg leave to inform you that Mr. Coates was assisting in the operation alluded to, and that if he prevented any one from seeing it, he did so from necessity and not intentionally. As to the abusive epithets which your correspondent asserts were applied to Mr. Coates, they must have been "*sotto voce*" indeed, as they were audible to no one in the theatre; and I strongly suspect that your would-be witty correspondent must have invented them to