the philosophy of Linnæus that the qualities of medicines are, in a general way, to be determined by their effects on the organs of taste and smell." The definition that I have been taught of *postulatum*, differs most essentially from that which Mr. Houlton has given. I quote an authority which I do not think is to be disputed, when I give him the following explanation of a *postulatum*: "Postulates are fundamental principles, in any art or science, which are taken for granted as being such easy and self-evident propositions as need no explication or illustration to render them more plain."

I take my leave of Mr. Houlton, as I have occupations of more consequence to myself than replying to his ill-founded assertions, and shall not again notice any communication he may make. I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE G. SIGMOND, M.D.

24, Dover-street, July 29, 1840.

LETTER FROM MR. OWEN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Perceiving in THE LANCET for July 25, another article connected with the comparison of Mr. Nasmyth's discoveries and mine, I beg to say that it is not my intention to reply to that paper; and that, so far as I am concerned, this controversy is at an end. I have asserted nothing, in my published observations upon this subject, which I do not know to be true; but I owe it to myself to express my regret, that the irritation produced by the charges so pertinaciously advanced against me, should have led me, in some passages, into the employment of language which my calmer judgment disapproves. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

R. OWEN.

London, July 28, 1840.

OPERATION ON MR. WATT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Having been shown THE LANCET of the 18th instant, a letter containing some illiberal observations against Sir Richard Dobson, for having permitted Mr. Liston to amputate the arm of my late lamented husband, Mr. Watt, formerly assistant-surgeon of Greenwich Hospital, and having also seen Sir Richard Dobson's reply to the above, I shall feel much obliged if you will permit me to state in your valuable Journal that his explanation of the operation is strictly true.

Will you, also, permit me to express my sense of Sir R. Dobson's kindness in yielding to my feelings, in allowing one long

known to my family to operate on that unfortunate occasion, and to express my extreme regret that his kindness and liberality should have been so misconstrued. I am, Sir, your much obliged servant,

R. SAMPLE WATT.

2, Bennett-street, East Greenwich,

August 3, 1840.

* * * The letter of Sir Richard Dobson, last week, was perfectly satisfactory, but we yield our own judgment respecting the necessity of inserting the above note to that of the lady who deemed it right to send it.

MANUFACTURE OF PHYSICIANS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—It is notorious that a man may obtain the degree of "Doctor of Medicine" (the highest grade of rank in the profession), with the slightest *evidence* of medical education. For instance, an apothecary of this town, who was in practice before 1815, and, therefore, not needing to possess the Apothecaries' licence, this year retired from general practice, went to town, and bought a degree of M.D. from a German University; and by a late regulation of the London College of Physicians, with a mere examination *pro formâ* obtained its licence to style himself Member of the Royal College of Physicians, London. This degree (from Erlangen) was not obtained without, at least, a show of knowledge and professional acquirement. His thesis on the occasion is entitled "Description of a New Modification of the Obstetrical Vectis," and extends to about three pages of a description of the instrument and its mode of application (equal to a column of THE LANCET), and to five pages of cases. The only peculiarity in the instrument, is its being a little more bent than the ordinary lever, and being, therefore, *not a little* more dangerous to mother and child. Its mode of application is precisely the same as that of all levers that ever were or will be made, and the cases are of an every-day kind. When, in the true spirit of those who recommend cures for all diseases, the author says that he applies his lever to the groin in breech cases, *the breadth of the blade at the curve being one inch and seven-eighths*, it is impossible to avoid carrying one's eye forwards to the next paragraph, to see whether the author did not also use it for turning. In Case 4, where the head was "*immoveably* fixed in the brim of the pelvis," with the face to the pubis, the author pleasantly says, that after his two pupils had failed, "I, however, easily succeeded, by converting the presentation into a natural one."

In order to obtain credentials to practise as an apothecary, the worst remunerated grade in the profession, it requires an ap-