six medals, the same number that was given for the exercises of the previous session, were distributed amongst the competitors. My motto was placed fifth on the board; but Professor Simpson gave the fifth and sixth prizes to two competitors lower down on the list, not for their answers, (one of them having only answered nine out of the twelve questions;) but, as the Professor very justly observed, because "they had acted as house-surgeons at the Maternity Hospital,* and had been very zealous and assiduous in the discharge of their duties." These two medals were afterwards entered on the college prize list as for "Clinical Midwifery." No competition had, however, taken place in that department, nor had any been proposed during that, or in the previous session. After the prize distribution, I requested the doorkeeper to go into the Professor's retiring room, (into which the tray of papers and envelopes had been removed from the class room,) and to bring me my exercises. I did not tell him what my motto was, and he was too obtuse to think of asking me. He returned, however, in a few minutes, bringing my sealed envelope, with my motto outside, and name inside. Either Mr. Keith, junior, must have been there to give it to him, or he took from the tray the first that came to hand, which happened to be mine! Upon my sending him back, with a request that I might have the papers themselves, and not the envelope corresponding to them, I received for answer, that Dr. Duncan said I must not have them, it being usual to retain the papers; whereupon I went into the room, and not wishing to trouble Doctors Simpson and Duncan, who were engaged in conversation with several students, I myself took the papers from off the tray, and carried them away with me. These papers I have now in my possession, with the exception of that containing the remarks on the air-tractor, which, together with the drawings seen by Dr. Duncan, is in the possession of Dr. M. Hall, of London, to whom both were forwarded on his expressing a desire to inspect them. They shall be sent to Dr. Simpson, if he wish to see them. Dr. Duncan's ungenerous insinuation that I was a disappointed man, is the mere offspring of his too apparent wrath. Regret at the success of others, especially of our friends, is a feeling entertained only by very narrow minds. Although Dr. Duncan may be highly capable, therefore, of appreciating such a sentiment, I, on my part, disclaim all knowledge of it. With the first four successful candidates, and with the two who received medals for having acted as house-surgeons to the Maternity, I was, both before and after the competition, on terms of the most cordial friendship; and, knowing their abilities, I could not be otherwise than satisfied with the result, especially when I was led to believe, from the Professor's own words,† that he himself had made the decision. The first trial I made of my invention, before sending in an account of it, was with an apparatus quite as applicable as a vaginal speculum, but, of course, capable of a vast deal of improvement. I made considerable improvement in my plans of the instrument before sending in my paper, and should have gone on with it at the time, had I not foolishly supposed that Dr. Simpson considered the instrument worthless, and beneath his notice. I never tried it in a labour, not having met with one that required such artificial assistance; nevertheless I believe the only alteration requisite, in my instrument of 1847-8, in order to render it available in actual practice, will be a broader rim and more adaptable curve to the edge of the trumpet-shaped cup, and to the stem of the instrument, leaving out the springs, and thus simplifying rather than complicating it.

Dr. Simpson, it seems, works the materials of brass, leather, &c., with his own hands: one cannot otherwise account for the immense amount of "time and labour" which Dr. Duncan says the Professor has expended in the construction of his instrument. Here, then, the Professor has a great advantage over me; he has also abundance of opportunities for experiment, which I have not. Still the plan of the instrument remains the same,—it is the plan of the *air-pump*, and not that of the *sucker*, though the primary principle is in both the same. To adopt the sucker plan, a thick, very strong, slightly elastic, and flat disc—as, for example, thick leather, or vul-

* The office of house-surgeon to the Maternity is filled sometimes by graduates; frequently by third, second, and even first years' students, and may be held for any length of time.

† "I must say that, on the whole, I never saw better answers, and any one of you is quite competent to pass me at the M.D. examination." "I have estimated the value of the answers by the number of facts embodied in them," &c. . . . "Mr. B—, in his answer to the third question, has made one mistake respecting the part of the pelvis at which the rotation takes place, and for that I have deducted from the high number otherwise attached to his answer," &c. . . . The Professor used the personal pronoun *I*, it seems, only *pro forma*, and as a matter of course; but how was I to know that?

canized caoutchouc—would be required, with a flat, inelastic ring, for adaptation at its margin, as in the Professor's favourite simile of the *limpet*; but the former method is the use of an inelastic, shallow cup, admitting of close adaptation at its rim, in order that a vacuum may be obtained in it by a common exhausting syringe, or small air-pump, such as I myself used, at least fifteen years ago, in performing pneumatic experiments for amusement.

The Professor's improved instrument, as far as hitherto described, differs from mine (as figured in the drawings intended for his inspection, in Session 1847-8) only by its having two cups, one of metal inside, another of India-rubber. Many improvements may be made in the shape of the instrument, bearing in mind the pelvic axes, and with abundant opportunities for experimenting; but this, which should be a pleasure, rather than a task, need not consume the vast amount of time and labour which we are so loudly called upon to give Dr. Simpson credit for.

Thanking you for the impartial manner in which you have dealt with this air-tractor controversy, allow me, Sir, to subscribe myself, yours faithfully,

Nottingham, April, 1849.

JAMES MITCHELL.

MEDICAL FEES AT INSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Lately, a patient of mine, Mr. A—, referred the National Provident Institution for Mutual Life Assurance, &c., to me to certify as to his state of health &c. as an insurer. I received and filled up the office paper, and returned it, observing, at the same time, that I was surprised that that office remained amongst the few exceptions to the non-payment of fees to the medical men they applied to for information respecting the life proposed; to which observation I received the following letter, below which is my reply:—

(COPY.)

National Provident Institution,
Gracechurch-street, March 3, 1849.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your certificate, on behalf of your patient, Mr. A—; and observing your remark, "that you are surprised this office remains amongst the few exceptions" as regards the payment of the fee. I assure you are not desirous of remaining under a wrong impression on this head. I believe that you will find, on inquiry, that, excepting a few offices, (and those nearly all new ones, and mostly of very small transactions,) the great bulk of life offices, including, I believe, all the mutual ones, uniformly refuse paying this fee—a demand, we consider, which ought to be borne by the proposer, for whose benefit the transaction is made.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

To Dr. Ridge, Putney.

JOS. MARSH, Secretary.

(REPLY.—COPY.)

Putney, March 5, 1849.

SIR,—I have received your letter of the 3rd inst., in answer to an observation made by me on the medical certificate of Mr. A—. You style yourselves a "mutual" insurance office, by which title I understand is meant a mutual benefit to all parties.

First. To the parties insuring, having a benefit in the profits of the company, over and above the *bonâ fide* amount insured.

Secondly. To the office itself, having a profit as a mercantile speculation.

(a.) To establish a reserve fund against all losses, and to pay all policies as they become due at the death of insurers.

(b.) To pay every director his salary for attendance, &c., likewise the actuary, secretary, clerks, &c., house-rent and taxes, books, pens, ink, paper, &c.

In addition to which, the directors have a very decent little patronage. If this office, then, be a mutual one, it is evidently intended to be so in every acceptance of the word to all parties in connexion with it. If you ask me, for the protection of your office, the state of health of a person with whose constitution and habits I am well acquainted, you should pay me a "fee" for such information, if I tell you the truth. I may inform you that he is a good life, and you insure it. On the other hand, he is my friend and patient, and I know he has not made any provision for his family, and I know, also, that his life is a precarious one, and not good enough for an insurance office to risk taking; but, with the usual honesty and honour of my corps, under the seal of "your answers will be considered strictly confidential by our office," I tell you of this fact. Who am I serving? You cannot say "the proposer," for I have thrown him over. It were better he had never referred

to me. I am serving your office—strangers!—a body of men of whom I know nothing!

You say there are only a few offices who pay the medical fee, ("and these nearly all new ones, and mostly of very small transactions.") I send you a list of them; perhaps they will be complimented by your observations.

Also, that "the great bulk of life offices, including, I believe, all the mutual ones, uniformly refuse paying this fee." Why? Perhaps this great bulk of offices have not inquired! But the time has arrived for medical men to answer such questions.

Some half-century since, life insurance was a much newer idea than it is at present, and medical men were not aware how much they were contributing "gratuitously" to the vast profits of all such establishments, by furnishing them with unexceptionable lives. A quarter of a century afterwards, the idea took greater hold of men's minds, and insurance offices are now as "plentiful as blackberries," and reckoned amongst the safe mercantile speculations of the day.

Your office, I see, was established in 1835; only fourteen years!—no great age, methinks, for its secretary to talk sneeringly of "new ones paying for that solid information which alone can insure their profits."

Because, then, old offices have gained and acquired enormous capitals by the gratuitous information of medical men, all new offices are to expect the same usage to continue! But the medical profession have now made a just stand against the practice; they cannot, in fact, any longer, in justice to themselves, throw over old friends to serve total strangers,—they can only answer honestly, or not at all.

Some few years since, our patients might, perhaps, have been offended at our not serving them, believing, as they did, the assertions of insurance offices, that they (the proposers) alone were to be the parties benefited. They now, however, begin to see the whole matter in a clearer light, and it will henceforth be the duty of every medical man to explain these matters to his patients.

Then let the old offices look to it; they must continue to be supported by new lives; but let ten thousand medical men only decry every office not paying them their fee, and recommend the "new ones" that do, and you will probably find that in a few years the new ones will be the most popular and most thriving. Depend upon it, Sir, life insurance offices lack wisdom when they lack liberality in "feeing" the medical stranger. Because it has not been a custom to do so, is no excuse why the custom should not be introduced, and I am of opinion that the amount per annum paid by each office for the "strange fee," will be returned with interest. Attach this hint upon the honour of the medical corps.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

To Josh. Marsh, Esq.

BENJAMIN RIDGE.

P.S.—A list of twenty-three paying offices sent, taken from THE LANCET of Jan. 13, Feb. 17, and March 3, 1849.

THE FIVE-HUNDRED-POUNDS MEDICAL REFORM FUND.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I shall be obliged by your inserting my name as a subscriber of one guinea to the "Medical Reform Fund."

Yours most obediently,

St. John-street-road, April, 1849.

W. WALKER, M.R.C.S., &c.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—W. Weaver Jones, Esq., and Henry VEVERS, Esq., of this town, join me in a subscription of 10s. each to "The Five-Hundred-Pounds Fund."—Yours respectfully,

Cleobury-Mortimer, April, 1849.

THOMAS POPE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—With pleasure will I contribute my half-guinea, or, if necessary, a guinea, to the proposed Medical Protection Fund, and at the same time express my sincere hope that much good may be effected. It would appear, by the acts of the Council of the College of Surgeons, and the Committee of the "Institute," that they are leagued against the members of the former, and against the medical profession generally; striving to bring a peg lower that which is already too low. In fact, it is too obvious that self-interest prevails in their deliberations, and that the general good and welfare of the public are nearly lost sight of. I hope to see a good, thorough, and efficient reform of medical laws, in effecting which some interests must necessarily suffer, and a

change take place in all, to the annoyance of some and the hostility of others, but I trust to the ultimate benefit of all.

The more simple the laws, probably the more effective will they be; that is one reason why I regret the abandonment of your Registration Bill, which, as a basis, I deemed admirable.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Watford, April, 1849.

G. HARVEY BETTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I, as an old medical reformer, think it well not to give a merely mute expression of adherence to the "Five-Hundred-Pound Fund." No scheme of medical reform will prosper in which is sought anything that is grossly iniquitous. Many parties concerned seem to wish to obtain for themselves some unfair advantage. They have some reason to expect such attainment, after what has been so easily attained already. I stand up on the part of the great body of legally-qualified medical practitioners of England against unjust aggressions upon their rights, past as well as contemplated. I go so far back as to call in question the edicts of the Poor-law Commissioners of 1842, compelling candidates for medical officerships to adduce a twofold qualification, while the law only recognises the necessity of one; and I assert, that any medical man possessing the one only which the law requires might still be elected by any board of guardians in the kingdom, and that any attempt of the poor-law board to quash his election, upon the ground of his not possessing the other, would be in turn quashed in any court of justice to which the question should be referred for decision, the law being bound to uphold its own supremacy paramount. The law knows nothing of medical men except as qualified or not qualified, according to law. The edicts of a poor-law board are not laws that can ride down the law of the land. The L.A.C. and 1815 man are, to the full, legally qualified to hold all civil public offices, that of surgeons to county prisons excepted. So much as to law. As to society, those poor-law edicts astonished some noble families not a little, by showing them that the very medical men who had attended them for twenty or thirty years, were suddenly discovered to be not good enough to attend pauper inmates of a workhouse. Law, even up to the present date, exacts no more a double than a triple or quadruple qualification from medical practitioners; it exacts one special single qualification only. If the law is wrong, let it be remembered, that in one—and this the chief—sense of the word, law cannot be wrong. Law is law so long as it is unrepealed and unaltered.

The proposed establishment of a third college would not be an enlightened measure, but a barbarism, tending to throw us half a century back. The bad principle of remuneration for medical services, in the shape of payment for goods delivered, requires to be—by degrees, out of respect to existing interests, but as thus gradually, so in the end efficiently and finally—set aside. There ought to be but two colleges, at most, for examination; both of those in one would suffice. The examination ought to be one and final.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Hampstead, April, 1849.

S. GOWER, M.R.C.S. &c.

Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The following gentlemen having undergone the necessary examinations for the diploma, were admitted members of the college at the meeting of the Court of Examiners on the 27th ult.:—

EARLE, FREDERIC JOHN, Winchester.

FOOTE, CHARLES NEWTH, Sheffield.

LAKIN, JAMES HENRY, Tamworth, Staffordshire.

PHILLIPS, THOMAS BACON, Knightsbridge.

ROWE, THOMAS SMITH, Margate.

RUSHER, RICHARD EATON, Oxford.

SAUNDERS, JAMES WARNES, Norfolk.

SMITH, JOHN WOODMAN, Inverness.

WELCH, CHARLES, Cambridge-road, Mile-end.

At the same meeting of the court, Mr. FRANCIS ANDERSON passed his examination for naval surgeon. This gentleman had previously been admitted a member of the college, his diploma bearing date August 12th, 1842.

SUSSEX COUNTY HOSPITAL.—Dr. Hall has resigned the appointment of physician to this institution.—Mr. George Royde has been elected honorary surgeon to the Brighton Dispensary.

PECULIAR SIGN IN CHOLERA.—Dr. Burguière, late sanitary physician at Smyrna, mentions, in a pamphlet on the Cholera, that a blackish stain of the conjunctiva was noticed upon those patients who were severely attacked.