of the University is essentially honorary: were a man forbidden to practise his profession without possessing it, he might reasonably complain of the severity of the ordeal. Its exactions with regard to certificates, attendance on lectures, &c., are very moderate; the fees are comparatively trifling, the grand point being to pass the examinations. Once let these become light and easy, and the degree is thenceforward not worth having. Why, Sir, the whole arrangement is exactly calculated to carry out the suggestions offered by yourself in the same number of *THE LANCET*, with regard to maintaining a high and scientific standard of medical education. You advocate examinations comprising history, classics, mathematics, dissections, practical (experimental) chemistry and physiology, in addition to the ordinary routine; and in every item the senate has forestalled you. Can you point out, at home or abroad, one institution so singularly fitted to elevate the status of the mass of the profession? Can you conceive any system better adapted to place the country surgeon on a scientific equality with the wisest of his neighbours—ay, though they be the nurslings of the Isis or the Cam?

No man knows better than you, sir, that for years the general practitioner has not held the position which he ought to occupy. A variety of circumstances—and chiefly the disgraceful conduct of the council of the College of Surgeons—has tended to sink him in the scale of society. Many a young man has keenly felt this too. He devotes himself earnestly to the study of a noble and godlike science, a middle and laborious path of which he is henceforth destined to pursue. The law drives him to college and hall for permission to earn his daily bread; but when thus become possessed of rights, valued chiefly in a business point of view, he is still conscious of a deficit; he feels himself looked upon (most unjustly) as one of an inferior grade, as a better sort of tradesman, and seeks to establish himself as a man of science and a gentleman, by becoming a candidate at Somerset House. The attempt need never be made in vain. For these and other reasons the University of London has a powerful claim on our gratitude and respect.

All this, however, applies to the institution as a whole. Let us now briefly examine those parts of the system that have incurred the censure of your correspondent. Though quite true that each examiner *may* reject a candidate on his own subject, without reference to other branches, I will venture to assert that this is rarely, if ever done. I know, from personal experience, that the approbation and favourable report of the chemical professor, has been avowedly permitted to extenuate deficiency in another branch. Again, in almost every subject, the candidate has several chances, one or two written and one oral examination; if he really gets on badly on each occasion, he will most probably fail, but cannot consider himself rejected upon trivial and insufficient grounds. He cannot expect to obtain the prize in view without running a long and arduous race.

Nor will the reference of *Justitia* to the hall and college avail him aught. At the latter, (or I greatly mistake,) a man may be, and occasionally is, sent back from either of the four tables, without being permitted to go the round; and as for the hall, men are often plucked, (I know,) in twenty minutes perhaps, much less; and it would take a keen examiner to strike, in that time, a fair average of the candidate's proficiency in all the branches. The same principle is clearly to be recognised at each place, and the difference, if any, is only in degree. Here, too, the candidate has been fairly and fully warned, that proficiency is expected in every department; whereas, in a less methodical and more condensed investigation, he might have hoped to escape altogether questions in the collateral and auxiliary sciences.

The second clause in the indictment is amenable to almost the same treatment as the first. Passing at all is not compulsory, nor is entrance upon practice interdicted by delay—the unfortunate one may either make altogether an honourable retreat, and practise as thousands of good men and true are daily doing; or he may unite scientific studies to his practical pursuits, with a view to fresh and more vigorous attempts; thereby carrying out the advice always offered with kindness and feeling by the very men who pluck him. Again, compare the course of study, nature of examinations, and value of the diploma here, with their several analogues at other institutions, and the period of remission will be found, in proportion, lenient and moderate enough. Where, however, a year's retrocession has unfortunately followed each examination, the arrival of M.D. is, I confess, tedious and protracted; the real source of regret, in these cases, is, that gentlemen should have come at all to what is so palpably the wrong shop. Before

concluding, sir, allow me to remark, that I am not vain enough to suppose that the humble effusions of my too feeble pen can be required to uphold an establishment, to which, though in a most subordinate capacity, I am still proud to belong; that I ever rejoice to see in a public journal, notices of its members, its proceedings, and its questions, as tending to bring before the eye of the profession, a new and brilliant field for the exercise of an honourable ambition. Above all, sir, let me entreat you, by upholding the dignity, and seconding the efforts of the senate, to add another and a noble buttress to that rampart of protection, with which you are encircling the rights of our fraternity.—Yours, very obediently,

July, 1846.

DISCIPULUS.

CORONERS' INQUESTS AND MEDICAL EVIDENCE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

Sir,—I shall feel obliged by your inserting the accompanying resolutions in the forthcoming No. of *THE LANCET*.—I am, sir, yours faithfully.

G. E. STANGER, Surgeon.

Nottingham, August, 1846.

At a meeting of Medical Practitioners, held at Nottingham, on Friday, July 31st, Dr. Hutchinson in the chair, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

Moved by John Higginbottom, Esq., and seconded by John N. Thompson, Esq.—That it is the opinion of this meeting that the present mode of conducting Coroners' Inquests does not adequately promote the ends of justice.

Moved by G. M. White, Esq., and seconded by Joseph Thompson, Esq.—That as it is impossible for any coroner who is not a medical man, always to know when medical evidence is necessary, and as he might choose to dispense with it in cases where it would be absolutely essential to the finding of a correct verdict, it should be unlawful for a coroner to hold any inquest without taking the evidence of a duly qualified medical man; except in those cases where the cause of death is so obvious as not to admit of any reasonable doubt.

Moved by Henry Taylor, Esq., and seconded by Dr. Phillimore Fliff—That in all cases where a legal investigation of the cause of death is required, it shall not be deemed sufficient to record the following vague and indefinite verdicts—viz., "Died by the Visitation of God," "Death from Natural Causes," "Found Dead," "Overlaid," &c. &c.; but that the true and proximate cause should always, if possible, be stated.

Moved by A. Ebsworth, Esq., and seconded by A. Darby, Esq.—That a committee be formed to procure from the coroners of this town and county retrospective statistical information in support of the foregoing resolutions.

ON THE EFFECTS OF PRESSURE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEETH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is, I believe, an acknowledged fact in physiology, that the effect of pressure is increased absorption; and for such a process to go on, we, in veterinary practice, resort to its application as a remedial agent in cases where abnormal depositions have taken place. But to such a degree does Nature obey this law, that few, who are unacquainted with the practice of medicine, would give credence to it, for the hardest material entering into the composition of the human frame (tooth) is regulated by this law. An instance of this has very recently forced itself upon my observance. A person had been entirely exempt from odontalgia until the time arrived for the *dentes sapientiae* to make their appearance. These happened to be of extraordinary size; and the inferior maxilla being short, and already well studded with teeth, the consequences were, that these last molar teeth, in forcing their way up, exercised continuous pressure on those in opposition, which pressure produced absorption. And when this had gone on sufficiently in the two molars, in approximation to the new comers, as to involve more than a fourth part of the crown of each tooth, the nerves becoming exposed to the irritation of the saliva and the influence of atmospheric air, intense aching of those diseased teeth supervened, which, after every medicinal agent had been adopted that was considered to have any chance as a specific, was only relieved by the efficacious remedy—extraction.

On this account, I infer that a very frequent cause of the teeth decaying, and subsequent odontalgia, is dental pressure, by which absorption soon commences, and ultimately the nerve becoming exposed, intense pain, commonly designated

tooth-ach, supervene. Further conviction of the influence exercised by pressure, results from the fact, that in this case the chasms that the two teeth left after extraction were almost filled up by the other teeth shifting their position.—I have the honour to remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY WILLIAM HOOPER, M.R.C.V.S.
Billericay, Essex, Aug. 1846.

ASPHYXIA IDIOPATHICA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET for July 25th, there is an excellent report upon a case of sudden death by Mr. Robins, in which that gentleman appears to have been at some pains in searching for recorded instances of similar seizures. As the subject is one of great interest and importance, I venture, with your permission, to refer Mr. Robins to an additional series of nineteen cases of sudden death, which he will find reported, with remarks by Dr. Francis, in the number of the Guy's Hospital Reports for April, 1845.—Your obedient servant,
August, 1846. LECTOR.

LETTER FROM DR. MARSHALL HALL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There is an expression at page 82, of the last number of THE LANCET, which might lead to an erroneous conclusion, and which I am therefore most anxious to correct. It relates to Professor Sharpey.

No one has been more prompt and generous in doing justice to my efforts in the cause of physiological science than Professor Sharpey, both in his public lectures and in private conversations. Indeed, I have always ranked that gentleman with Baron Flourens and Professor Müller for his noble candour and generosity, amidst a crowd actuated by a very different spirit. Very early, Professor Sharpey expressed himself, at University College, in the following terms:—

"Many of these facts have been witnessed, and reasoned upon, by previous observers; but to Dr. Marshall Hall belongs the credit of having fully shown their connexion with each other, of having first successfully generalized them, and of having given to this part of physiology the form of a consistent doctrine; and to him belong exclusively the merit of applying a knowledge of these phenomena to pathology. And here, no less than in physiology, the application of the doctrine is of the highest interest and importance; indeed, as regards pathology,—except the introduction of the stethoscope, which after all is perhaps not a fair subject of comparison,—I can think of no single improvement which has taken place since I began the study of medicine, equal to this, or so likely to prove fruitful in important results."

I will take this opportunity of thanking you, Sir, for the ample justice done me in the very able review in the same number of your journal. When the profession understand the subject, as the writer of that review understands it, there will be nothing left for detractors to say or do, whether in the way of "complete anticipation" paragraphs, or in any other way.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
August, 1846.

MARSHALL HALL.

P.S.—As my readers may not understand what I mean by the concluding paragraph, I beg to add, that in one of his notices, Dr. Forbes, as editor of the *British and Foreign Medical Review*, inserted a paragraph with the following heading: "*Complete Anticipation of Dr. Marshall Hall, by Prochaska.*" I know not in what allowable term I can express my indignation, after the lapse of so many years, at this most malignant calumny. In the first place, it is totally unfounded in truth; in the second, Dr. Forbes might have known this by a comparison of a few intellectual moments of Prochaska's work and my own; in the third, such a comparison was due to his own character (I should think) as well as to my own; fourthly, he must have received the paragraph from some ignorant and very malignant person, and should, therefore, have taken double pains to make that comparison.

Lastly, Dr. Forbes has submitted, during a long series of years, to be viewed by a brother in the profession (nay by many) as a false calumniator, without coming forward with either justification (a thing impossible), or confession (a thing which should have been spontaneous and immediate), when the calumny was properly exposed.

What state is our profession in, when such things are tolerated?

NOTE FROM DR. WEBSTER, OF DULWICH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

Dulwich, August, 1846.

SIR,—In your leading article on the labours or discoveries of my excellent friend, Dr. Marshall Hall, in the last week's LANCET, page 162, you appeal to the testimony of another highly esteemed friend of mine, by asking, "What says Professor Sharpey, who is certainly not prejudiced in their favour?" Having had the pleasure of a long intimacy with these eminent men, I could readily answer your question, so as to show that at an early period of Dr. Hall's researches, Dr. Sharpey placed a very high value upon them, and was at all times a most *unprejudiced* witness in their favour. Perhaps, however, I cannot put these points in a clearer light than by giving you an extract from a note of my own to Dr. Hall, written some years since, containing the opinion of Dr. Sharpey, uttered in all sincerity, and which will at once do justice to both these distinguished physiologists.

Extract of Note from Dr. Webster to Dr. Marshall Hall.

Dulwich, 19th June, 1846.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— Dr. Sharpey dined here, with Dr. Maunsell and Mr. Farr, last week, when, on my alluding to what he (Dr. Sharpey) had said in his lectures concerning your labours, he said he considered it his duty to express himself as he had done—1st, because he thought you had been ill used; and, 2ndly, because the importance of the subject demanded it. On some discussion taking place respecting your doctrines, Dr. Sharpey mentioned the case of a paralytic limb, which was insensible to the touch, and could not be moved by any effort of the will, but yet could be moved extensively on certain nerves, before unknown, being stimulated. He added, "You cannot go into a hospital or witness an interesting case, without the words 'reflex function,' or 'excito-motor power,' being used. They were become common household words. There was a beautiful system of actions and effects, and pathological facts and curative indications, which till very lately were either unknown or disconnected and misunderstood. These were now made plain, so as to be understood by every one who chose to understand and be taught; all, or very nearly all this, we owe to Dr. Marshall Hall, but his researches and discoveries are not always acknowledged as they ought to be. I consider that Dr. Hall possesses a mind of the first order, a most acute intellect, and is one of the most ingenious men and closest observers of the present times." These are the words of Dr. Sharpey, as near as I can remember them, and doubly gratifying to me as the words of a friend spoken of a friend.

As the above extract requires no comment, I shall not add another word, but remain, your obedient faithful servant,

GEO. WEBSTER.

QUALIFICATIONS OF NAVAL SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Allow me to correct an error which appears in a foot note to a letter, by "One Concerned," in THE LANCET of August 1st, wherein the writer states that 17l. is demanded upon passing the second examination for the navy, and 5l. 5s. the first. I passed, in 1827, Navy Board and College. Having retired from the service in the following year, I then thought it advisable (to avoid quibbles) to go in for my diploma, which I obtained; but they positively refused to deduct the five guineas, and for which Mr. Belfour gave me no reason.—Sir, your obedient servant,

T. H. B. CROSSE,

Late Senior Surgeon of Artillery, B. L.

Whilst abroad, I lost my diploma, and wrote to Mr. Belfour, requesting a certificate; but this was refused, unless 5l. was forwarded.

Park Terrace, Highbury, August, 1846.

PUTRID FOOD FOR THE POOR.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Though not a medical man, I nevertheless take in THE LANCET, and feeling confident that any remark about diseases and the prevention of them has more attention paid to it in yours than in any other periodical, I do not hesitate to send you the following suggestion regarding the cholera. Let a clerk of the market (or whatever title may be thought more appropriate) be appointed in every parish, to inspect and reject