Mr. Fergusson now tried to overcome the anterior stricture by the application of potassa fusa, a small particle of which was carried down to the strictured part on the end of a bougie. After this operation was repeated several times, the pubic aperture almost healed up, and Mr. Fergusson attempted to pass No. 1 catheter through the stricture, but ineffectually. A gum-elastic catheter was, however, again passed into the bladder, by the aperture in the perinæum, and kept in for half an hour, or three quarters, at a time, so as to prevent the orifice from closing. The pulse was at this period weak, the appetite bad, the tongue pretty clean, and the sleep tolerable. On the 30th of May, about six weeks after the first operation, the patient was again brought to the theatre, when Mr. Fergusson, after the man had been tied as for the operation of lithotomy, proceeded to use the urethrotome.

This instrument is composed of a deeply-grooved director, about seven inches long, supplied with a handle, and a smooth rod, likewise supplied with a handle, at the end of which is a narrow-bladed sharp bistoury, about one inch in length, which glides within the groove, and is buried in it. The director was, in this case, introduced into the urethra, carried as far as the obstruction, and the bistoury, which corresponds in breadth with the depth of the groove, was passed along it, and made to divide the stricture, by gently moving the handle. This first step allowed No. 2 catheter to pass, which was left in the urethra for three hours; this, by gradual efforts, during a few weeks, was brought to No. 5. The urethrotome was now again used, and Mr. Fergusson passed No. 8, which was easily introduced, and left in the bladder. This having been accomplished, the patient, who had been rendered insensible by chloroform, was removed, with the catheter secured in the urethra, and Mr. Fergusson stated, in some remarks which he made after the operation, that of the divisions of stricture either within or without the urethra, the first was certainly best known. Mr. Stafford's instrument, which had been contrived for the purpose, had some disadvantages, and had never been fully adopted by the profession, many members of which do not know it at all. Mr. Fergusson had been originally led to use, in strictures situated near the meatus, an instrument pretty similar to the present; at that time, however, he was content with a simple director and common bistoury. Now, with this improved instrument, the bistoury could be passed along the groove without being seen, and the extent of the section to be made could be easily regulated. Still, as the director is straight, it can only be used in front of the turn which the canal makes around the pubis; but, by its means, catheters of a large size would be admitted into the urethra, and, being secured there, would contribute largely to secure the permanent dilatation of the passage. He (Mr. Fergusson) considered, that the urethrotome was a great improvement in surgery, and he had much pleasure in bringing it forward.

The further progress of the patient was as favourable as circumstances would allow. He was kept very quiet, and the catheter remained in the bladder; so that both fistulæ were placed in the best circumstances for cicatrization. The upper one healed perfectly, and that of the perinæum appeared to contract. Before, however, it was quite closed, Mr. Fergusson thought it advisable to allow the patient to recruit his health by leaving the hospital and seeking the country air. He was therefore discharged, about four months after admission, with the fairest hopes of ultimate recovery.

The fact of the urethrotome rendering an impassable stricture at last permeable to No. 8 catheter, is certainly of great value: the use of the instrument is so very simple, the pain it inflicts so trifling, and its beneficial effects so rapid, that it is likely to take a prominent rank among the instruments intended to overcome obstinate and cartilaginous strictures of the urethra.

HALIFAX MEDICAL PROTECTIVE SOCIETY.

ESTABLISHED AUGUST 26, 1850.

"Unity, amity, energy."

At a meeting of medical practitioners in the town of Halifax, the following rules were proposed and carried. The meeting was numerously attended.

1. That a Society be formed, called the "Halifax Medical Protective Society."
2. That the Society consist of all legally-qualified practitioners, practising regularly, in the town and neighbourhood.
3. That the objects of this Society be, to give especial attention to the subject of the illegal practice of medicine and surgery by unqualified persons.
4. That, if need be, some member of the legal profession be employed by this Society to institute proceedings against such

persons as may be found to be practising illegally within the parish of Halifax.

5. That each member of this Society pledge himself, as bound in honour, to decline meeting any person who may be considered by a majority of this Society to be practising illegally or irregularly.

6. That this Society be supported by an annual subscription, from each member, of ten shillings, and by such donations in furtherance of its objects as individuals may be disposed to contribute.

7. That Dr. Kenny be permanent chairman of this Society; Solomon Smith, Esq., treasurer; and Frederick Smith Garlick, Esq., secretary, assisted by George M. Stansfeld, Esq.

8. That Wm. Ferguson Holroyde, Esq., be the solicitor of this Society.

9. That the subscriptions be paid to the treasurer as early as possible.

Correspondence.

"Andi alteram partem."

THE KOUSSO — BANKSIA ABYSSINICA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET of the 29th of June last, I observe a most interesting report of the cases treated by "Kouso," from a clinical lecture delivered by Dr. Budd, on the 31st of May, in King's College Hospital; and as it appears to be a medicine but recently introduced into Europe, and to be hardly attainable there at times, save at a most exorbitant price, I take the liberty of addressing to you the following brief notice of the plant, a sample of which I hope to be able to forward to Dr. Budd, at King's College Hospital, by the next mail, *via* Southampton.

In the report above alluded to, I observe that the "Kouso" is called the "Brayera Anthelmintica," from Dr. Brayer, who first introduced the use of the plant, or rather made its virtue known in Europe. On referring to Bruce's Travels, vol. vii. Appendix, a minute and accurate description of the medicine is found, as also an engraving of the plant in the volume of Plates. That great and much-calumniated traveller calls it, in testimony of esteem for a friend, "Banksia Abyssinica;" and I submit, with all deference, that as James Bruce was the first traveller who brought the plant into notice, the name given by him ought to be retained.

In the appendix to the second volume of the "Highlands of Ethiopia," by the late lamented traveller, Sir W. C. Harris, the following mention is made of the "Cossoo," by Dr. Kirk, who was a member of the embassy:—

"'Hagenia Abyssinica' ('Cossoo') affords, in a cold infusion of the dried flowers and capsules, the famous drasticum purgans and anthelminticum of the Abyssinians. The tree is one of the most picturesque in appearance."—Vol. ii. p. 414.

In Southern Arabia, on the sea coast, and along the shores of the Red Sea, it is well known, and considered a most valuable medicine. In the Northern and Southern Abyssinia it is universally used about once a month, the trees being numerous, and the medicine costing hardly anything. At Hurrur, a province bordering on the kingdom of Shoa, it is well known, and used; though the Somali tribes, residing to the eastward, on the N.E. horn of Africa, are unacquainted with its virtues. Bruce mentions that no Abyssinian will travel without it; and I am informed by my friend Lieutenant Cruttenden, Assistant Political Agent at Aden, that such is actually the case, to his knowledge: the few Abyssinians who visit the port of Aden invariably bring with them a supply. The dose I understand to be a small handful of the flowers mixed with water, in which sometimes tamarinds are infused, the patient, whilst under its effects, keeping far aloof from every one. Its operation is speedy and most effectual.

In a country like Abyssinia, where almost all, if not the entire population are more or less affected with tape-worm, the "Kouso" is a special blessing of Providence, as a medicine within the reach of the poorest shepherd, and infallible in its effects.

Mr. Coffin, an Englishman for many years naturalized in Abyssinia, and now a chief of some importance, visited Aden a few years ago, and whilst staying with my friend above mentioned, administered a dose of the "Kouso," with the happiest effect, to an officer of H.M. 17th Regiment. Mr. Coffin never travelled without a supply of the medicine, and even during his stay at Aden, took it regularly himself, and administered the customary doses to his attendants who had accompanied him.

I am not aware if the officers of the surveying vessels of the

Indian navy, when employed on the coast of Abyssinia and Nubia, used the remedy or not. I believe they did, as I am aware that many of them suffered greatly from tape-worm; and one of the party, although eighteen years have elapsed, is not free from the disease even at the present day.

On making inquiries in the Aden bazaars, I had no difficulty whatever in finding the plant. The Arabs, indeed, fortunately for them, are almost free from the disease that so afflicts their Abyssinian neighbours; but it is known to them as a purge. The specimens brought from the bazaar are decidedly inferior, and so old, that I conceive the flowers must have lost a considerable part of their virtue. I do not, therefore, send any of that; but a native has despatched an order to Massowah, the port of Abyssinia, for a supply, which I shall not fail to forward to England by the earliest opportunity. I feel sanguine of being able to procure a regular and constant supply in a short time, at a very cheap rate, through the medium of two Abyssinian youths, formerly educated in Bombay, and now residing with their father near Adowah. The sample now in my possession has been obtained from this source. I am not yet aware of its cost, but I am confident that even were it sent overland from Aden, it would not prove an expensive medicine.

You are at full liberty to make any use you please of this communication. Should, through my agency, the use of the plant become more generally known, it will afford me sincere pleasure; and if there are any other points relative to the plant, on which you require information, I shall be most happy to furnish them, so far as lies in my power.

I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

JAMES VAUGHAN, M.R.C.S.L.,

Assistant-Surgeon Bombay Army; Port & Civil Surgeon, Aden, Arabia Felix.

Aden, Aug. 7, 1850.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Seeing in your journal that Koussou has been tried in England for the extermination of *tænia*, I beg to add the result of two or three cases. The first was that of an Englishman who has been domesticated in Abyssinia, and after a year's residence in the country, was attacked with tape-worm; the medicine taken was Koussou, which had the effect of giving him two months' freedom from them, but at the end of that time they returned, and continue to do so unless a dose of this medicine is again taken. Removal from the country has not eradicated them, and on this man's return to Abyssinia, when I saw him, he was suffering from them, until a respite was obtained by having recourse to the usual dose as breakfast, sufficiently to produce giddiness and nausea, followed by purging, when he voided a live worm, upwards of a foot in length. This is an almost universal complaint of the country, and the Koussou is the remedy generally used; but four or five other vegetable substances are also taken, of more or less power, and possessing similar properties. The production of the worm is by some attributed to the water, by others to the eating raw meat, which, together with grass (?), may not be improbable. The scarcity of salt is another imputed cause.

I procured some Koussou from Abyssinia, and gave a large dose of it to a patient; the effect was, after considerably affecting the head, stomach, and bowels, the evacuation of fragments of *tænia*, and a whole worm, said to be a fathom in length. I saw, however, two which had passed from him, the smaller one having a shape and size similar to that of a leech, and of a whitish membranous colour. He remained quite free from them for six months, when I began to think him cured, but unfortunately they returned.

Apparently this remedy promises extermination no more radically than pomegranate. Should it prove otherwise, the few native traders at Massowah would, after some time, doubtless export it, at a price within reach of those who commonly suffer from that complaint.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Bombay, July 24, 1850.

JAMES DAUBENY.

CHOREA AND HIP-DISEASE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If I followed the advice of my friends, both in and out of the profession, I should allow the letter in your journal of this day, from Mr. William Highmore, M.D., M.R.C.S., to pass unnoticed—in fact, to treat it with the silence it deserves; but there are a few points which I must reply to, previously to bidding that gentleman a farewell.

In the first place, he questions the possibility of checking the earliest symptoms of hip-joint disease, under any circumstances, in eight days. To this remark I shall merely recommend him to wiser heads than his own—a fact well known to be the case, in certain constitutions, by every surgeon of ex-

perience. In the next, he lays down the law, by saying "the child has not, and never had, incipient hip-disease, that *he* could detect." Now, Sir, I am not aware that Mr. William Highmore has been, or is at the present time, an indisputable authority in these cases, nor should I believe it, after this specimen, considering that he came in at the lag end, and consequently could not be a competent judge, unless he possesses extra powers of clairvoyance, in knowing the past as well as the future. Then he seems quite unaware that in scrofulous children the bowels are often torpid, and the secretions depraved, requiring, and being much benefited by, small doses of mercury-with-chalk; but he would at once, in a sub-acute disease, recommend tonics, such as iron, and leave the remainder to a natural issue. Keep me from such "erudite skill," to use his own words, as he possesses.

Now, with regard to his cherished child, "chorea," I may positively assert that the little patient had not a symptom of that disease: the muscular twitchings observed by Mr. Highmore were merely the result of trifling debility, consequent upon a slight antiphlogistic treatment having been necessarily adopted—a circumstance common after most diseases, either in scrofulous or in healthy constitutions, and readily yielding to the mildest tonics and more liberal diet. This is designated "chorea" by Mr. William Highmore, M.D., M.R.C.S.

With reference to the subject of professional etiquette, I may again state that I made no appointment with Mr. Highmore; I did not know him by name or address, nor was I made acquainted with his temporary residence in town, or engagements; and further, I do not hesitate in stating my belief, that no surgeon of reputation would meddle with, or alter the position of, a patient, until the usual medical attendant of the family had arrived, knowing that he was expected every moment, but detained by some unforeseen circumstance.

I now, Sir, take leave of this matter, and remain, your obedient servant,

GEORGE L. COOPER.

Woburn-place, Russell-square, Aug. 1850.

THE PRIZE ESSAY ON ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If your correspondent, who signs himself "A Candidate who sent in his Essay in Time," will turn to my reply to the first letter of "Justus," (See *THE LANCET* for July 27,) he will see why I cannot give him the satisfaction he seeks. Of course, if he knows so little of me as to think me capable of taking an unfair advantage of my competitors, my denial of having done so will have no adequate weight with him. I would recommend him, therefore, to put his question to Messrs. Gilpin and Beggs, the agents of the donor of the prize; and have only to request, that when he has got what he deems a satisfactory reply from those gentlemen, he will let the readers of *THE LANCET* know whether I was, or was not, one of the parties who "wrote to the adjudicators of the prize, informing them that they could not possibly be ready," and for whose convenience the judges desired the essays to be returned which were ready, and postponed the adjudication for nine months beyond the specified time.

When I say that I court the fullest publicity as to my share in this transaction, and that I am perfectly ready to give all the information in my power to any one who may ask it openly, as one gentleman of another; I sufficiently indicate that I have nothing to be ashamed of in my own proceedings with reference to it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM B. CARPENTER.

Regent's-park-terrace, Sept. 2, 1850.

THE EDINBURGH MONTHLY JOURNAL AND ITS CONTRIBUTORS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your last number appears a letter from Dr. Simpson. As in that letter he claims for himself and his co-editors a power not exercised by others holding the same position in the literary world—a power which must exert a very injurious influence over the literary and scientific interests both of the *Edinburgh Monthly Journal* and of its contributors, perhaps you will allow me, as a contributor of several papers to the periodical in question, briefly to review the powers claimed by Dr. Simpson, and to indicate one of the necessary consequences of the exercise of these powers.

First.—Dr. Simpson claims for himself and colleagues the right to omit any portion of a communication, which portion has for its object the refutation of peculiar, and not universally-admitted opinions, if those opinions are entertained by any one of