tained before, my intentions should be placed in such a light. I was satisfied with the possession of a fact, which, the moment I had maturely realized, I published.

If I, as a general practitioner, had manufactured the article alluded to, and then puffed it forth to the world with a novel name, and a flaming and exaggerated account of its properties—capable of producing every opposite effect—sold and dispensed only by me or my agents—the secrecy of manufacture known only and kept to myself,—then, and in such case, I think your stricture would have been merited; but when my attention was first directed to the liquor sennæ comp. by Mr. Colchester, I had no other object than to obtain a knowledge of its effects as an agent in fulfilling the indications he proposed; and upon the acquirement of such information, sufficiently proved, without hesitation I put you into possession of the simple fact, that through you such fact should be communicated to the profession generally.

Some years ago you did me the honour to publish in *THE LANCET* a paper, by me, on the effects of the ethereal tincture of lobelia inflata. I there stated that I obtained the preparation I employed from Apothecaries Hall; you did not then require the formula of the tincture, of which I was, and still am ignorant; but the absence of this knowledge, either to me, to you, or others, has never lessened the efficacy of the lobelia; nor will the publication of the exact form employed in the manufacture of the liquor sennæ comp. deteriorate, in the minutest degree, from the high and deserved praise which Mr. Colchester has won for himself, in having produced that which no other pharmaceutical chemist ever yet produced anterior to him; nor will it add one additional virtue to his preparation, though it would, I have little doubt, considerably diminish the favour which liquor sennæ comp. would gain among medical men.

You, Mr. Editor, are generous enough to allow me to differ without suspecting unworthy intentions; you are not illiberal enough to quarrel with me because I express an opinion strongly and emphatically adverse to your own; and therefore permit me to remark, that I am fully satisfied that the profession at large cannot, and will not, regard my paper as one savouring of "quackery;" and you, I imagine, upon reconsideration, will do me the justice to cancel your observation, and acknowledge it was too hastily penned.

I have not been a reader of your excellent journal, now a period of fifteen years, without observing, that upon all occasions you have ever expressed yourself as most jealous of the honour of the profession; and the slightest deviation from that high dignity which should ever be preserved by professional men, has met, on every occurrence, with the severest censure and condemnation from you. That which you claim for the profession and its privileges, I claim an equivalent for the pharmaceutical chemists and their privileges. Let me solicit an equal care and protection for him, who, if he be an honourable man, has a most legitimate right to credit and emolument, accruing from a discovery, which, after much time, expense, and trouble, and labour, art, and knowledge, he has perfected, and that, too, for the good of humanity.

Thinking and feeling as I do, and anxious as I am that every man should wear the wreath his own skill and handiwork has wove, I cannot require the information you seek of Mr. Colchester; nevertheless, I have placed the number of your journal in his hands, and must leave him to act as may appear best.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

Curtain-road, Shoreditch, Jan. 1st, 1846.

ALFRED BOWER.

ON A NEW BLACK DRAUGHT.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—I beg to observe, in answer to your note at the conclusion of Mr. Bower's letter, in *THE LANCET* of the 10th January, respecting my compound senna liquor, that the only active medicinal agent in its composition is senna in a concentrated form, deprived of its mucilage and other impurities, combined with a very pure extract of liquorice root, and a little sassafras, with a small proportion of spirit. I consider this explanation of the preparation sufficiently satisfactory for the medical profession to make use of it with perfect confidence.

Considering the time, trouble, and expense bestowed by me upon the compound senna liquor, in order to bring it to its present state of purity, uniformity, and elegance, I feel it no injustice to the profession to withhold entering further into the minutiae of its manipulation, upon which its uniformity of action and pleasantness of taste so much depend; and, indeed, were I to make public every particular with regard to its preparation, I feel certain that the members of the profession

would not thereby be benefited, being themselves unable, for want of time or the necessary apparatus, to make the article; they might be induced to purchase the compound senna liquor of other makers, some of whom, as the preparation is troublesome, complicated, and tedious, would probably do with this as has been done with some other valuable preparations, soon reduce the strength, alter the method, shorten the time absolutely necessary for its manufacture, &c., until the compound senna liquor would lose the reputation it has obtained, and perhaps be rejected by the profession as useless, inert, and altogether unworthy their patronage and confidence.

Hoping you will be so kind as to insert this in an early number of your valuable publication,

I remain, Sir, yours respectfully,

WILLIAM MARKHAM COLCHESTER.

Old-street-road, Jan. 1846.

THE SECRET LAWLESS COMMITTEE.

To the Committee of the National Association of General Practitioners in Medicine and Surgery.*

GENTLEMEN,—It having been announced, on authority, that her Majesty's Secretary of State has determined on abandoning his medical Bill, a crisis has arrived in the affairs of the medical profession, which renders it incumbent on you, in the faithful discharge of the duties confided to you, to declare publicly and explicitly what you have done to produce this result. You are bound to show to the profession that your efforts have been honest and disinterested; that your intentions are honourable; in a word, that you may have been deceived, but have not deceived them.

Your enemies—and they are neither few nor insignificant—already assail your character as a public body; while your friends, although still trusting that the result arrived at is not your fault, though it may be your misfortune, are constrained to acknowledge that the cause confided to your hands has been most unfortunate since you undertook its protection. With a liberality as unwarranted as unexpected, compromise and concession have followed each other in quick succession, until, at length, having nothing left to concede, you yourselves declared that "concession had reached its utmost limits." True; it could go no farther.

Your mysterious secrecy was especially unfortunate, as, although the position of many of your members placed them almost above suspicion, there are also many with whom it is otherwise, whose corporate interests tend to the present unhappy aspect of medical reform, and are best promoted by the defeat we have just sustained. Their presence on your Committee required that your proceedings should have been less private, and causes the integrity of your conduct to be suspected.

Not twelve months since, the cause of medical reform was confided to your hands—it was then all but triumphant; the exertions of medical reformers had succeeded, after years of toil, in exciting the attention of the public as well as of the profession, and in awakening her Majesty's Secretary of State to a due sense of our grievances, and to the expression of his intention of remedying them; the press of every political shade supported us; victory was all but in our hands. We confided in you, and cheerfully left the laurel we had hardly earned to be gathered by you. Alas! a few short months have sadly changed the scene. Under your auspices, the grievances of the profession have been disregarded—their rights frittered away—injury tamely submitted to has been followed by insult; and, to fill the cup of our degradation, her Majesty's Secretary of State has declared us unworthy of his notice.

In that happy state of ignorance as to their political affairs, in which it has pleased you to maintain the members of the medical profession, I know not what we should expect—conjecture alone remains. Allow me, then, to adopt the language of interrogation, as best suited to my condition, and inquire as follows:—

Are we still to possess twenty heads, but not one home?

Are the members of the profession to be still deprived of all corporate rights and privileges?

Are the few to continue to monopolize the honours of the profession, to the exclusion of the thousands, and reap the advantages purchased with their money and procured by their exertions?

Are the members of the College of Surgeons to be still degraded by the stamp of inferiority, whilst their juniors in age,

* We had not space for the whole of this letter. The Committee, as it is at present constituted, can do nothing but mischief. There ought to be a GENERAL MEETING of the members of the Association.—ED. L.