CHLOROFORM IN DENTISTRY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following case may prove interesting, as proving one of the many advantages the new anæsthetic agent, chloroform, possesses over ether:—

A married lady, twenty-six years of age, applied to me, in the beginning of August, to have several teeth extracted; I administered ether—by a modification of Hooper's Inhaler—but the effects produced were so violent as to preclude all possibility of operating. A week afterwards I again attempted to narcotize her, thinking that the previous excitement might have been caused by the great dread she had of the ether—which fears were now removed,—but on this occasion the effects were still more violent. After the lapse of ten days she again applied to me, and at her urgent request I made a third attempt, which was followed with similar results to the two former. On each occasion the patient suffered severely from headach and sickness, for some hours after the application of the ether.

Thinking this a favourable case to test the efficacy of chloroform, on the 19th instant I persuaded the lady to allow me to give it a trial. I put half a drachm on a sponge, holding it to the mouth and nose; in half a minute the patient was sound asleep, but I continued the application of the sponge for a minute; I then extracted two superior molars, cut across and destroyed the nerves of the four upper incisors: this operation occupied about three minutes, during which time the patient was in a sound sleep, and on recovering, which she did in two minutes after the operation was over, she said she had had a pleasant dream, felt no pain, and was quite unconscious of what had been done. No headach, or any disagreeable after effects.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

Glasgow, Nov. 1847.

GEO. BUCHANAN.

REMUNERATION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I should not have deemed it necessary to intrude myself further upon your notice, if the remarks of "A COUNTRY PRACTITIONER," in reply to those offered by "AN OLD ASSISTANT," had been given with more justice. My object in introducing the subject was not to offer unwarranted rebukes to the members of our profession, but simply to record, from a long and unfortunate experience, the feelings I entertained upon the difficulties and pecuniary hardships which, as a respectable and responsible member of society, I had myself encountered. It is, perhaps, my lot to feel more acutely upon this subject than "A COUNTRY PRACTITIONER," being one of the class who, from limited influence, and still more limited means, has graduated in the profession, and subsisted upon the remuneration he has received for his services. I am not therefore in a position to feel the justice of the observation, that an assistantship is merely a "probationary servitude," or to be content with a beggarly pittance, simply because it is generally deemed so.

I am only desirous of recording the fact, that in lieu of a compensating remuneration for our arduous and important duties, the profession reward us "at the minimum rate of second-class footmen;" and this observation does not apply alone to the man of four or five hundred a year, but to the more fortunate members of our profession.

There are other points in "A COUNTRY PRACTITIONER'S" letter upon which I might further dilate; but I shall take the liberty of mentioning one, and that is, the assumption of a month as the period required for relaxation from active duty. The illustration intended to be inferred was, that a change is necessary, but that the crippled state of an assistant's resources would not even allow of this reasonable indulgence.

I shall feel much obliged by your insertion of these remarks; and with thanks for your consideration of our cause, I remain, Sir, your very obedient servant,

November, 1847.

AN OLD ASSISTANT.

Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The following gentlemen, having undergone the necessary examinations for the diploma of the College, were admitted members on the 19th instant—viz., Messrs. James P. Teebay, Liverpool; William Pearce, Bingley, Yorkshire; George Richard Pemberton, Delphi, East Indies; Warren Fincham, Spring-gardens; James Wilkinson

Elliott, Malta; William Jeffrey Edwards, Glasgow; George Roper, Colby, Norfolk; John Urquhart, Aberdeen; James Fitzgerald Uniacke, Cork; George Henry King, Manchester; Nathaniel David Scott Wallich, Upper Gower-street; and Thomas Green, Grasmere, Westmoreland.

APOTHECARIES' HALL.—Names of gentlemen who passed their examination in the science and practice of medicine, and received certificates to practise, on Thursday, November 18th, 1847:—Robert Walmisley Baxter, Bromley, Kent; Benjamin Kealley, St. Ann, Soho, Westminster; John Beecroft, Ely, Cambridgeshire; Robert Alexander William Westley, Bombay.

DEATH OF DR. ALEXANDER WATT.—The death of Alexander Watt, LL.D., City Statist, and Warden of the Cathedral of Glasgow, has recently occurred. Dr. Watt was unquestionably one of the founders of the science of Vital Statistics, and materially strengthened the hands of Mr. Farr, of the General Registration Office. He discovered a very remarkable law in reference to the ages at which deaths occur in the same diseases in different localities. He found, for example, that out of 100 persons who died of fever, in Edinburgh, 12 were under the age of 5 years, 29 under 20 years, and 70 above 20 years; and that in Glasgow precisely the same mortality occurred at these ages. He extended his observations to other towns, and found the law to hold invariably. He established a similar law with reference to other diseases, as scarlatina, small-pox, croup, and measles, and thus added another proof of the important fact, that the Creator has not left human life to depend on chance, but guides it, like his other noble works, by fixed and unerring laws. Dr. Watt was not content with deducing these laws from the data afforded to him in this country, but he was at considerable personal expense in obtaining bills of mortality from the United States, to assist him in his important generalization. Aware of the highly imperfect system of registration pursued in Scotland, Dr. Watt in his reports took occasion frequently to point out the disadvantages under which our country labours in reference to this point, and was more than once the cause of representations being made to the legislature, of the importance of raising us in this respect to a level with England. The Scottish Registration Bill, brought last year into Parliament, was in answer to these suggestions—and will, it is hoped, pass into a law during the next session. There is every reason to believe that Dr. Watt would have had a part in the administration of this law, from the strong support which he received from statesmen and men of science. The Marquis of Normanby wrote from Paris, in March of the present year, to the Lord Advocate, urging his claims, and stating "the assistance he derived from Dr. Watt's valuable researches, in the study which Lord Normanby pursued for many years with so much interest, in reference to the subject of public health." Dr. Watt was author of not only the *Reports of the Vital Statistics of Glasgow*, but also of valuable papers in the *proceedings of the British Association*, on the *Statistics of Towns in Scotland*, in the *proceedings of the Statistical Society*, of the *Philosophical Society of Glasgow*, and in *THE LANCET*.

PORTRAIT OF MR. FERGUSSON.—A very striking and spirited lithographic portrait of the Professor of Surgery at King's College has just been published, by subscriptions from his colleagues, pupils, and friends. It is a faithful portrait of this rising surgeon, and will prove a valuable addition to the "medical portrait collector." It is proposed by the gentleman under whose able superintendence this print has been produced, to publish, from time to time, a series of similar lithographs of the most prominent members of the profession. Such a series will be acceptable to many persons desirous of perpetuating the likenesses of friends and teachers, or of making acquaintance with the features of contemporary medical worthies. William Hunter called engraving the "universal language," and portraiture may well be termed the universal biography.

KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL.—Dr. George Johnson, medical tutor of the college, and well known by his contributions on the pathology of the kidney, has just been appointed an assistant physician to this hospital, in consequence of the great increase of out-patients applying at the institution.

ANTI-HOMŒOPATHY.—The case of the Count Antonio, at Milan, seems to have been very generally misapprehended. The homœopath gave ordinary doses of strychnia, under the pretence of treating that nobleman's disease infinitesimally. But three doses being taken together, poisoned the patient. The unfortunate dupe trusted to the infinitesimality of the homœopath, and was murdered. There are homœopaths in London playing the same game at the present time.