Costello cannot readily absent himself from England, nor thinks it necessary to remove one of his patients to Paris, to display before the Academy his dexterity, it is nevertheless true, that he also is a candidate for the honours of that learned body, a monopoly of which Mr. Edwards so confidently promises his protégé. What may be the result of the competition is of little consequence. I allude to it chiefly with a view of preferring, as another proof of the upright and straightforward conduct the former gentleman has observed in this affair, the fact that he has not been afraid to submit his instrument to the tribunal before which M. Heurteloup appears in person.

There is a calumny, both on the profession and the country, of which Mr. Edwards has largely availed himself, and to which he makes reference in his present letter. He has dinned it into our ears from the commencement of his labours, that M. Heurteloup is a foreigner, and that, on that account, his progress has been impeded. Had it been true, I should have been ashamed of my countrymen, but Mr. Edwards himself has, in the pages of your journal, disproved his own assertion. Had M. Heurteloup been an Englishman, his reception both by the public and the profession would have been very different from what it has been. With thrice the ability, he would not then have enjoyed half the reputation or a fourth of the practice he now possesses. Our hospitals and public institutions would not have been thrown open to him. From our leading physicians and surgeons he would have met a freezing civility, and even the powerful advocacy of Mr. Edwards would have been withheld. But being a Frenchman and a Baron to boot, he was irresistible. Long since it has been observed, that "Englishmen have a great bias to patronise exotics of every kind, whether animal or vegetable, to the neglect of the native, indigenous productions of our own soil." This observation is as true now as in the days of Addison, for every day adds fresh testimony, that no nation so largely as ourselves, takes the *omne ignotum pro mag-nifico*. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A SURGEON.

August 2, 1833.

. The foregoing letter is a continuation of a personal controversy which ought long since to have terminated. Lithotomy is an exceedingly important operation, and its brilliancy ought not to be tarnished by invective, or illiberal allusions towards any of the individuals who practise it. We believe that the merits both of Baron HEURTELOUP and Mr. COSTELLO are of sterling character, and will ensure success in any enlightened community.—ED. L.

MEMORIAL AGAINST THE INDISCRIMINATE RELIEF

OF APPLICANTS AT THE
SHEFFIELD DISPENSARY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to forward to you a copy of a memorial which has been addressed to the Governors of the Sheffield Public Dispensary. I think you will concur in the propriety of medical gentlemen coming forward, as we have done, to support their own interests and dignity; and, I hope, that the example of Sheffield will be followed in other large towns. The memorial is transmitted to you for insertion in THE LANCET, where we shall be glad to see it.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

HENRY BOULTBEE.

Sheffield, Aug. 3, 1833.

At a Public Meeting of the Members of the Medical Profession, held at the Savings Bank, on Wednesday evening, the 31st ult., CORDEN THOMPSON, M.D. in the Chair, it was Resolved,—That the following Memorial should be presented to the Governors of the Public Dispensary, at the Special Meeting to be held on Monday next.

To the Governors of the Sheffield Public Dispensary.

Gentlemen,—Viewing the great and continued abuses of the objects and intentions of a medical charity, which have existed in your institution, and which have for some time past been matter of notoriety, especially among the members of the profession; at a full and general meeting of the latter, held on the 22nd inst., it was unanimously agreed to address you on the subject. * * When your memorialists consider the vast importance of persons, compared with the population, that are receiving advice and medicine gratuitously, whether from the numerous benevolent societies, the various excellent parochial establishments, or the more strictly medical charities of the town and neighbourhood, they cannot resist the conclusion, that *gratuitous medical relief is already too extensively afforded*; and that here, as in all similar cases, the very facilities of obtaining such relief, multiply the applicants for it beyond all reasonable bounds.

When, further, your memorialists reflect on the accumulated instances in which it has been undeniably ascertained

that the circumstances of persons obtaining relief at your institution *have been such as to render them altogether improper objects of charity*, not only are they strengthened in the preceding conclusion, but they feel, and they wish to express that feeling in the most decided manner, *that they are suffering a serious injury at your hands.*

They are aware, gentlemen, that *your own medical officers*, with commendable zeal, *have already represented to you this fact*; and in further corroboration thereof, you have now the united testimony of the profession.

It is not for your memorialists to dictate corrective measures, but they cannot refrain from expressing their opinion, the truth of which they think must be obvious to every capacity, that no effectual remedy against the abuses complained of will be found, *unless governors shall carefully examine into the circumstances of the patients whom they recommend.* The prevalent system of indiscriminate and unlimited recommendation, opens a door, of the very widest description, for the entrance of abuses.

Whilst the chief labour and toil, the anxiety and the responsibility, attached to our institution, devolve upon its medical officers, *whose services are gratuitous*, it were surely a matter of personal honour, to say nothing of right, that each governor should, on his part, exert himself to guard against any misappropriation of its benefits; to take care, in short, that the practitioner, whilst freely carrying the aims of benevolence into effect, is not himself defrauded of his just dues.

Charity, Gentlemen, you are aware, like every other virtue, demands exertion on the part of those who practise it; and in the opinion of your memorialists, the mere annual subscription of a guinea, is far from constituting a benevolent or praiseworthy act; whilst at the same time the subscriber neglects to ensure, so far as his knowledge and ability extend, the appropriation of that sum to the succour of really indigent persons. The individual trouble this might impose would be trifling; nor can the right of recommendation be said to be honestly and conscientiously exercised by such as shrink from that trouble.

Justice, it should be remembered, precedes generosity, and your memorialists cannot insist too strongly on this point, the disregard of which mars the purport of your institution, and at the same time *injures the intelligent and industrious practitioner*, without whose exertions its very existence ceases.

There is one class of patients in particular, commonly relieved at your Dispensary, that cannot in any way, your mem-

orialists consider, be deemed proper objects of charity, so long as they retain their situations; namely, *domestic servants.*

And again, your memorialists are decidedly of opinion that *the general employment of women in midwifery cases is strongly to be condemned*, since it does not afford to the patient the protection from danger, nor the skill and knowledge, essentially requisite at so critical a period as that of parturition. It is impossible to arrive at a correct conclusion on this subject by inspecting tables of deaths and recoveries from child-birth. The evils, resulting from the practice alluded to, are *ulterior and consecutive*. Lingered, painful, and often fatal, disorders, are the consequence of this practice; a fact of which your memorialists have had too frequent and too sorrowful experience.

But independently of these serious considerations, your memorialists are unanimously of opinion, that an establishment of this nature connected with the Dispensary is *altogether uncalled for*, since most ample provision for attendance in necessitous cases of midwifery *already exists at the poor-house.* There, too, the plan which is acted upon prevents the possibility of improper objects being relieved.

Finally, Gentlemen, it cannot surely be needful for your memorialists to advert to the notorious improvidence of the lower orders, *nor to the striking augmentation of that improvidence, which has universally been observed to follow the lavish extension of gratuitous relief.* Not only by this means are the good intentions of the charitable frustrated, but an increasing evil is inflicted on society, and that evil is transmitted to posterity.

Your memorialists have almost daily opportunity of witnessing the truth of these observations: of remarking how that which ought to be laid up against the accidents of life, is wasted in riotous and luxurious living; how evil habits are thus acquired, and the future is regarded with recklessness or indifference, because it is considered as already sufficiently cared for by others. And, truly, Gentlemen, unless some efficient measures be adopted to repress the growing abuse of your charity, the swelling numbers exhibited in each annual report, so far from yielding a means of estimating the amount of good effected, will rather tend to demonstrate the extent to which the evil has been carried.

Had not this evil already assumed an important magnitude, your memorialists would not have felt justified in thus publicly addressing you. They were persuaded, however, that such a measure was imperative on them, not only in justice to

themselves, but also in compliance with their duty to the public, who will thus be better enabled to judge of the extent to which your charity is entitled to support. And whilst your memorialists thus firmly, yet respectfully, express their sentiments, these, they doubt not, will receive from you all the consideration and attention which their importance demands.

Signed by

CORDEN THOMPSON, M.D. Chairman

John Carr	Henry Hardy
Ed. Gillott	W. Favell
J. F. Wright	James Wild
James Walker	R. G. Holland
John Foster	Knowlton Wilson
H. P. Harwood, M.D.	G. C. Holland, M.D.
G. Reedal	J. Favell
H. Boulton, F.L.S.	R. S. Taylor
Geo. Turton	Charles Eadon
E. Thompson	Francis Pearson
Wright Wilson	John Hall
Joseph Law	Joseph Riley
Thos. Reade	Wilson Overend
Joseph Ingall	Henry Fisher
John P. Lewis	E. W. Richardson
John Green	John Turton.

PETITION OF

LONDON PHYSICIANS

TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

AGAINST THE

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,

*Presented to the House of Commons,
Aug. 5, 1833.*

*To the Honourable the COMMONS of the
UNITED KINGDOM of GREAT BRITAIN
and IRELAND in Parliament assembled,
the Petition of the undersigned PHYSI-
CIANS, practising in London,*

HUMBLY SHOWETH,

That the Charter of the Royal College of Physicians of London was granted by Henry the Eighth, for the advancement of medical science, and for the protection of the public "against the temerity of wicked men, and the practice of the ignorant."

That six physicians were named in the Charter, who, together with all men of the same faculty, then resident in London, were constituted one body, commonalty, or perpetual coilege.

That the perpetuity of the College was to be kept up by the future admission of all men of the same faculty into the College.

That several of the six physicians named

in the Charter, studied at, and possessed degrees from, foreign universities; and that no distinction is mentioned, as regards the University where a physician may have obtained his degree.

That all physicians entitled to practise in London, are equally entitled, under the Charter, to admission to the Fellowship of the College.

Your petitioners are prepared to show, that by-laws have been framed, and long acted upon, by the College, which are directly opposed to, and in violation of, the letter and meaning of the said Charter.

That the physicians, practising in London, are invidiously divided by the by-laws of the College into two orders: one is denominated Fellows; the other, constituting by far the majority, is designated (and by implication degraded) by the term Licentiates.

That the Fellows have usurped all the corporate power, offices, privileges, and emoluments, attached to the College; that the Licentiates do not participate in these benefits, but are illegally excluded from all the offices, and any share in the management of the corporation; and so far is this principle of exclusion carried, that the Licentiates are not even admitted to the library or museum of the College.

That there exists no foundation in the Charter, or in the Acts confirming it, for such distinction of orders, and consequent exclusion from all privileges.

That, according to one of the by-laws, no physician can claim admission as a Fellow, unless he has graduated, or been admitted *ad eundem*, at the universities of Oxford or Cambridge, where medicine is imperfectly taught; while physicians who have graduated at other British or foreign universities, celebrated as schools of medicine, are unjustly excluded from the Fellowship by this obnoxious by-law.

That the College was admonished from the bench, by the Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, to amend their by-laws, in reference to the admission of Licentiates into the Fellowship: that, influenced by this censure, the College framed other by-laws, deceptive in their character, which, whenever they have been acted upon, have tended still further to depress and injure the order of Licentiates.

That the College demand and receive a large sum of money from the Fellows and Licentiates, for the supposed privilege of practising as physicians, within a circuit of seven miles round London, and that they do not and cannot protect them in this privilege.