"so reluctant to obtrude himself upon the notice of his professional brethren"? Does he confine himself "to the prominent part absolutely required for the cause of truth and justice"?

Sir, with your kind permission, this subject I must consider in another communication.

Yours faithfully,

London, January, 1854.

SPECTATOR.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As an observer of recent events in our professional hemisphere, and having abstained from all interference or comment till I became acquainted with *facts*, I must acknowledge that the information conveyed in the last week's number of *THE LANCET* is so satisfactory and tangible to the unbiassed mind, that further comment will be superfluous; at the same time you are aware that censure is the tax man pays to the public for being eminent; such a man cannot think of escaping, and he admits his weakness if affected by it. The illustrious persons of antiquity, and, indeed, of every age, have passed through it; it is a fiery ordeal from which there is no escaping, but by obscurity; it is a concomitant of greatness, as satires and invectives were an essential part of a Roman triumph!

If men of eminence are exposed to censure on the one hand, they are as liable to flattery on the other. If they receive reproaches which are not due to them, they also receive praise which they do not deserve. In a few words, men in a high position are never regarded with indifference. For this reason, such persons have seldom their true characters drawn until after their decease; their personal friendships and enmities then cease, and the interests they were engaged in are at an end. It is, therefore, the privilege of posterity to adjust the characters of the more deserving and eminent, and to set matters right between antagonists who by their rivalry divide parties into faction. Some historian may arise who will not write "*recentibus odiis*," as Tacitus expresses, with the passions and prejudices of a contemporary author, but make an impartial distribution of the wreaths of Fame to those who merit them.

We know that human nature appears deformed or beautiful according to the different lights in which it is viewed; the intention of our Creator is, that we should subdue the passions and cultivate the rational faculties, not undermine each other by *secret* treachery or by *open* violence, compassionating each other's weaknesses and relieving each other's wants, full of generous regard for the welfare and prosperity of the whole human race, these should be the dictates and the end of science, bearing in mind, that in these days of progress men are expected to resemble the gods; and Tully observes,—"*Homines ad Deos nullâ re propius accedunt quam Salutem hominibus dando.*"

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

Pentonville, Jan. 30, 1854.

WILLIAM SETH GILL.

THE CONDUCT OF MR. GAY AND HIS INFAMOUS ADVOCATES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—After having read with attention, pleasure, and considerable interest, the frank letter of Mr. Halswell, who has had the misfortune to be much and most unjustly censured as the person who was especially the *fons et origo mali* of all the disagreeable discussion that has taken place concerning the dismissal of Mr. Gay from the Royal Free Hospital,—a letter that was published in *THE LANCET* of the 28th inst.,—I cannot but come to the conclusion that all the slanders that have been heaped upon you,—all the allegations that have been accumulated upon your devoted head,—all the aspersions which have been so freely circulated against your character, are wilful and malignant falsehoods, purposely spread abroad in the futile hope that they will do you irrevocable harm in public estimation.

I think that every honest, and unprejudiced, and disinterested person will be found to come to the same conclusion if he reads the emphatic communication from Mr. Halswell, and at the same time impartially reviews the several circumstances concerning the Royal Free Hospital that have come before the public. It has, Sir, for instance, been stated that against Mr. Gay the Messrs. Wakley entertained violent prepossessions; that they were ready to inflict at any moment all the injury in their power upon him, so soon as a chance offered. But what, Sir, has been the fact? Has *THE LANCET* up to this movement held Mr. Gay up to the reprehension of its

readers? Has it published communications of a hostile nature, criticising his character and disparaging his talents? So far is this from the truth, that it has been a subject of regret to myself and many other brother practitioners who are subscribers to your valuable periodical, that we were not furnished with all the information we desired with reference to Mr. Gay's conduct prior and subsequent to his dismissal from his hospital duties. Yet, Sir, all the while that you have pursued this generous course towards Mr. Gay, his unprincipled advocates have run rampant in the columns of your contemporaries, uttering allegations of the most unfounded kind, and *inventing* statements that appear upon investigation to be wholly untrue. Justice and truth, however, assert their prerogative at last. The medical profession will ponder well on Mr. Halswell's letter.

Let me consider, Sir, the accusations that have been circulated against the editor of *THE LANCET*. It has again and again been asserted that Mr. Wakley was the prime mover in, and sole author of, the dismissal of Mr. Gay. What, Sir, is the truth? Let me cite the words of a gentleman whose accuracy it is impossible to impugn:—"On introducing to the notice of the committee, in July last, the subject of the injurious imputations on the hospital contained in Mr. Gay's memoir, *I was solely influenced by a sense of duty towards the governors of the charity.* Motives of a private nature I had none—I could have none." So far, says Mr. Halswell, was Mr. Wakley from entertaining the slightest personal hostility towards Mr. Gay, that when "I mentioned the matter to the Committee, Mr. Wakley immediately remarked that he had no doubt that when the subject of discussion was mentioned to Mr. Gay, he would instantly set matters right and exonerate himself from all blame." And, again, Mr. Halswell states subsequently that in consequence of an interchange of letters that had taken place between Mr. Wakley and Mr. Gay, the former gentleman stated to him and to the Committee that he considered himself disqualified—having expressed a strong personal opinion upon the subject—from taking part in the points that referred to Mr. Gay's conduct; and, continues Mr. Halswell, in his letter to Mr. Wakley, "I can declare, and most truly, that this resolution was scrupulously kept by you, and that you neither voted nor addressed the committee on a single occasion when this painful subject was under deliberation."

Sir, how is it, I want to know, that notwithstanding these implicit and honest avowals—avowals, mark you, made by a gentleman who was a member of the committee, a magistrate, and a deputy-lieutenant of the county; how is it that regardless of assurances from persons of the most unexceptionable character and most unimpeachable integrity, that still, up to the moment at which I write, the editor of *THE LANCET* has been ceaselessly and bitterly assailed in a perfect torrent of vituperation and gross misrepresentation? Are the persons who strive in this obstinate manner to shed all the obloquy in their power upon a gentleman, who it appears, upon irrefragable testimony, has purposely abstained from taking any part whatever in the "Gay crisis," to be believed by temperate and just men, when they assert that the prominent parts which they are thus taking are forced upon them solely by their sympathy for "the cause of truth and justice?" I cannot but think that there must exist private motives; that reasons at present in the background, and studiously hidden and concealed from public knowledge, will before long become too palpable to escape detection, and that any of my professional brethren who took up Mr. Gay's cause, as the cause of an injured and wronged man, have already discovered, to their sorrow and lasting regret, that they have been the slaves and dupes of artful, designing, and unprincipled men.

Mr. Gay first propagated the slander against Mr. Wakley, and this was his *gratitude* in return for "the many acts of kindness he had received" from that gentleman. In less than three months, what will be the unanimous opinion of the profession of the character of a man who could be guilty of such conduct? Events will supply the answer.

I beg to remain, Sir, yours &c.,

Hammersmith, Jan. 1854.

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

ALLEGED PROFESSIONAL TRICKERY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was not a little astonished at seeing, this morning, in your journal of January 21st, a malicious attack upon my character, by an "Enemy to Humbug," headed "Professional Trickery."

In answer to this, I have only to say, that I *deny in toto* the

authorship of the paragraph which he quotes from the *Medical Directory*. I also most emphatically deny that I caused anything of the kind to be inserted, or that I was aware such a statement had been sent, having a special reason for making no return this year. Therefore, so far as I am concerned, the injury attempted to be inflicted upon me is unjust in the extreme, and only due to the vilest quack in creation.

It really seems that your correspondent would not so attempt to injure my professional reputation, unless prompted by some private and selfish motive, and it appears on the face of his letter, *possible, nay, very probable*, that your "Enemy to Humbug" was the *very person* who sent, or caused to be sent, to the *Directory* the statement he now so forcibly denounces.

I think it would be better for the "Enemy to Humbug" in future to give his name, when he takes upon himself so unhesitatingly to attempt the ruin of another, else he at once assumes the character of a low-minded, sneaking coward, a perfect "Anguis in herbâ." I should not have noticed his anonymous letter, had not the charges brought against me so serious a tendency. At least, this *philanthropic* (?) correspondent should confine his observations to the *truth*.

I cannot finish without pointing out what appear wilful mistakes on his part.

He begins by stating that, "In the first place, this young man calls himself 'Late resident-accoucheur to St. Bartholomew's Hospital; I beg to say that Mr. Hall never held such an appointment at this hospital.'" Now, sir, this is simply a quibble of words. The Midwifery Assistant, as he is vulgarly called, is obliged to reside within the walls of the hospital; he has all the midwifery belonging to the hospital under his charge; he attends as many as he chooses of them, the remainder he appoints to students who have finished their course of midwifery lectures (if they refuse to go, he is obliged to attend the labours himself); and should any further assistance be required, they must send for him; he has also the opportunity of performing all the operative midwifery occurring during the time he holds office; and, besides this, he superintends and prescribes for the patients in the ward appropriated to diseases of women, in the absence of the physician accoucheur, who generally comes down to see them twice a-week. Therefore, I say I *did* hold such an appointment.

He then goes on to say, "The post which Mr. Hall held was that of Midwifery Assistant, an appointment that any pupil can gain who has attended a certain number of labour cases, and who has entered his second year's study." This, sir, he knows to be a thoroughly false statement; for he must be fully aware that the Midwifery Assistantship is given as an additional reward to the person who gains the *Practical Midwifery Prize*. This prize was awarded to myself in May, 1852, and I was in consequence appointed Obstetric Assistant for the following year. Yet should the prizeman be unable to hold the office, it is given to the man best qualified in midwifery who is willing to accept it; but in such cases a legally qualified man is always preferred; and up to the time I left the hospital, I believe there has been only one instance in which anyone was appointed (except the prizemen in midwifery), who was not either M.R.C.S. or L.A.C., and that gentleman had displayed much more than ordinary knowledge in this branch of medicine; he also, I believe, obtained a diploma long before his period of office expired.

Now, sir, I contend, that it is just as proper to call the person who holds this post the Resident-Accoucheur which he really is, as to apply to him the name of Midwifery or Obstetric-Assistant; but the *Honour and value* of this post does not depend upon the name you choose to give it, but upon obtaining the *Practical Midwifery Prize*,—one which your own practice alone can secure you, and upon the amount of practical knowledge and experience you gain, both in midwifery and diseases peculiar to women. On referring to page 177 of the same *Directory* your correspondent quotes from, I find a predecessor of mine takes the same title my friend (?) objects to; therefore he might, with as much justice, have attacked him as myself; but of course that would not have answered his present purpose. In reference to a "pupil who has entered upon his second year's study" obtaining the Obstetric Assistantship through gaining the prize, it is an utter impossibility.

Next, your correspondent informs you that my paper on "Placenta Prævia" was so pitiable a production that the Managing Committee declined to print it." I thank him! The paper of which he complains was never intended to be printed in its original form, and I stated this to the Secretary of the "Abernethian Society," where it was read. Now, sir, I do not suppose for one instant that my paper was worth one single inch of type, but I believe this was not the reason why the

Publishing Committee declined to print it. (Since your correspondent has opened this subject I am compelled, though reluctantly, to continue it.) In that paper I advocated, in a slightly modified manner, the treatment of Drs. Simpson, Murphy, Radford, and Barnes, which has saved many lives that would have been sacrificed by the more common practice. This, sir, was in direct opposition to the views and lectures of the Physician-Accoucheur, who was the only one among the Publishing Committee practising midwifery. Was it at all likely, would it not be contrary to common sense to imagine, that he should wish a mode of treatment to be circulated and advised strongly amongst the students attending his course of lectures, so contrary to his own, and which he condemns so strongly.

Next, this "Enemy to Humbug" complains that my "Essay on Scrofula has never been printed, and failed in the object for which it was written." True, the essay has never been printed, but now is in preparation for publication; true, also, it did not gain the prize, and, indeed, I should have wondered if it had, for the subject of the prize was not known until nearly three months out of the twelve (in which it was to be written) had expired, and soon after its appearance I had the misfortune to receive a dissecting wound which caused a serious illness, incapacitating me for nearly six months—therefore I completed my essay in a little more than three months, whilst my opponent had the power to apply nine months to his, (I could give more reasons if I felt inclined;) and mine would never have appeared for competition had not friends persuaded me to send it in, much against my own wish.

Now, Sir, if your correspondent believed that I had myself furnished the paragraph to the *Directory*, I have not so much to say against his noticing it (although I think none but a madman would, except to serve his own ends), still I think he might have first ascertained directly from myself, or through the medium of some medical journal, whether I was its author, before he attempted to inflict upon me so serious an injury. But the gross misstatements and insults he has offered none can justify, whilst, on the other hand, if he was aware that I had not furnished the material to the *Directory* (and his false representations and the sarcastic style in which he writes lead me to infer this) it is the most malignant piece of villany I could have imagined one professional man to be guilty of towards another.

To conclude, if your well-wishing (?) correspondent had given his name, I could have answered him much more to my own satisfaction, and perhaps could have judged and exposed his motives; but not having the honour (?) to know my enemy, I must judge from his letter alone, and the conclusion I must draw from this is that which I think every unprejudiced mind must infer—viz., that instead of wishing to see me made "timely wise" (as he states), he in truth desires to see me "timely ruined."

Assuring you that no one is a greater "enemy to humbug" than myself,

I remain, yours, &c.,

F. RUSSELL HALL.

St. Andrew's-street, Cambridge, Jan. 1854.

THE VACCINATION EXTENSION ACT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The union medical officers and public vaccinators have lately been much abused, and have (being a very patient and long-suffering class) taken it very quietly. One thing has, however, been entirely overlooked by your many correspondents who propose that every medical man should be appointed a public vaccinator. The chief objection now is that the vaccinator may and does vaccinate the private patients of his medical brethren, and that too gratuitously. This is true and unavoidable at present, but the remedy proposed is infinitely worse. Suppose in a town where there are six doctors who vaccinate "by appointment" gratuitously. Mr. A. will then have not one only—the union vaccinator—to call and ask Mrs. Z— if he "shall vaccinate the dear little baby," but he will have five other oppositionists to call and rub hands, and ask "how the other little ones are," and "regret Mr. A. should not have already thought proper to vaccinate Johnny, but now having some very good matter perhaps she would like him to operate," &c. &c. Surely, sir, the evil would be a hundred-fold increased by this competition. Unworthy and unprofessional, I grant, but still a necessary consequence of adopting the views of many of your correspondents. Agreeing entirely with "An Union Surgeon," and disagreeing totally with most of the views not only on this, but on other subjects, taken