the rights of brotherhood with the managers of the *British and Foreign Review*.

A recent number of "*Coffin's Botanical Journal and Medical Reformer*," edited by ALBERT ISAAH COFFIN, is full of gratitude to the *Quarterly* for its liberal treatment of all the quackeries. The conductors of that journal must be highly gratified by such Coffinite extracts as the following. We wish them joy of their allies:—

"THE LANCET has opened a fire upon the principles promulgated by OUR FRIEND the *British and Foreign Medical Review*. He seems to disapprove of the liberal questions on which they have treated, deprecating such a course as arrant quackery; but a time will come, nor is it far distant, when such liberal discussion will become rampant in defiance of all the attempts of THE LANCET to put a stop to them. We do not wonder at opposition when interests are at stake; they only bring such subjects as these into the notice they deserve, and give an opportunity to a discerning public to judge for themselves. With many of our contemporary's late remarks we fully agree, such as, Mesmerism is a valuable curative agent. 'There is,' says this *Review*, 'no reason why an intermittent, monotonous, or equally continuous action on the visual nerves should not produce sleep and its results, as well as the same kind of action on the auditory nerve: and we might extend this principle to the tactile nerves. That the sleep so produced should differ in its nature from ordinary is almost a necessary result; but what a field for neurological observation is hereby opened out!' We think these remarks are not to be gainsayed. How often have instances occurred in which persons, allowing their visual organs to be directed intently and fixedly rigid upon one given object,—allowing their retrospective thoughts to dwell in melancholy mood upon past scenes—have lapsed from dreamy unconsciousness into profound sleep. We are reminded of an instance related by Sir Walter Scott in his 'Lord of the Isles.' Sir Walter mentions his hero as being in a cave with his eyes intently fixed on the roof, his thoughts fondly roving to other and far dearer scenes of his imagination. The scene appears to undergo a complete change, and he fancies himself surrounded by scenery of the most gorgeous description, a second fairy land, his family and friends surrounding his couch, and his soul filled with a kind of ecstasy. In the midst of this wild delirium of joy he falls fast asleep and is with great difficulty awakened. Much injury and positive annoyance frequently arises from an undue excitation of the nerves, and who will dare deny the great benefit arising to a patient from that excitability being allayed, and that nervous feeling effectively quieted?"

We scarcely know which contains the greatest amount of nonsense—the mesmeric theory of the *Quarterly*, or the story with which COFFIN has capped it. The one is certainly worthy of the other. As COFFIN has told the *Quarterly* his story, we hope the *Quarterly* will indulge COFFIN with another equally piquant *morceau*.

WE have received numerous letters from gentlemen whose good opinions we value most highly, thanking us for the advocacy of the rights of medical officers of the army and navy by THE LANCET. It is a high pride and gratification to us, to have been instrumental in any way in the removal of the grievances under which so large and honourable a class of medical men have suffered. We can assure the medical officers that the successes already gained will not render us insensible to the reforms still to be contended for. From the vantage ground already gained, other victories remain to be won.

We must observe that naval and military surgeons have, in the agitation of their just claims during the past two or three years, set an example of energy, perseverance, and unwavering fidelity to their cause and to each other, well worthy of imitation by the profession at large. In obtaining the Military

Order of the Bath, one thing is very remarkable, namely, that no aid was afforded by either of the Colleges or Universities. It is grievous that no support should have been given to this noble cause by the College of Physicians or the College of Surgeons. That such a statement as this could be made, of itself proves that there is something wrong and anomalous, and which severs these corporations from all active sympathy with professional men, in all but that which relates to mere examination and title.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE EDINBURGH MONTHLY JOURNAL AND ITS CONTRIBUTORS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In a letter which you have inserted in the last number of THE LANCET, Mr. D. R. Rankin, of Carlisle, accuses the conductors of the *Edinburgh Monthly Journal*, and especially accuses me, of having tried to "alter facts observed and recorded" by him in relation to a case of turning that occurred in his practice, and an account of which is published in the July number of the *Monthly Journal*.

The case in question was interesting, first, in consequence of turning being performed with success to both mother and child in a labour where the pelvis was greatly obstructed by the presence of a large tumour; and secondly, from this tumour becoming eliminated and expelled upwards of a month after delivery. With the manuscript account of the case, the separated tumour was sent to Professor Goodsir, who, on examining its structure, at once recognised it to be an undoubted specimen of the well-known and common fibrous tumour of the uterus. In his manuscript report of the case, Mr. Rankin, however, had fallen into the error of describing the tumour to be ovarian, and not uterine; and the correction of this palpable blunder in his published communication constitutes Mr. Rankin's main ground of accusation of want of "morality," &c., on our part. I shall not stop to inquire whether we should have committed a greater breach in professional "morality" in announcing a tumour as ovarian when we knew it to be indubitably uterine, or in quietly correcting, as we did, this evident error before the case was given to the public. And certainly we had no interests whatever at stake, except the simple interests of truth, in publishing the case as a uterine, instead of an ovarian tumour.

I need scarcely add, that occasionally, as most of your intelligent readers well know, large uterine fibrous tumours have been separated and expelled after delivery; but I am not aware of any authentic recorded instance in which such a phenomenon has occurred with an ovarian tumour. In Mr. Rankin's case, the tumour, as proved by its structure, was uterine; but the mere supposition that the expelled mass in this instance was ovarian, implies a series of very strong pathological improbabilities. For it implies that within the body of a living woman, and all within a few weeks, a large ovarian tumour, which was so loose and unattached at the time of delivery as to admit of being dislodged upwards from the pelvis into the abdomen, afterwards descended again into the pelvis, became organically attached to the vaginal or maternal canals, had these canals freely and completely perforated for its exit; that the tumour itself ultimately passed through this supposed perforation, and that this perforation into the peritonæum subsequently and safely closed,—a series of pathological engineering difficulties which no ovarian tumour ever yet, I believe, accomplished. And we have no doubt that if Mr. Rankin has ever an opportunity of making an examination of the dead body of his patient, her two ovaries will be found both present, and perfectly entire.

Mr. Rankin says "a part of the narrative of his case" was left out. In this I believe he makes an inadvertent misstatement. None of the narrative of the case was left out; but certainly a few preliminary or concluding paragraphs were omitted, because they were irrelevant to the case, and were, to boot, generally either simply too foolish, or too obscure for publication. Mr. Rankin adds that I had "no warrant" to alter his communication. You and all other journal editors do not ask for such a power, but use it when required. And in a note addressed to Mr. Rankin on the 10th July, I explained to him how I considered myself specially empowered to act so in his case. As Mr. Rankin

in his letter to you alludes to this note, permit me to add a copy of it.

"DEAR SIR,—I greatly regret that you should feel displeased with the mode in which your case of turning has appeared in the *Monthly Journal*. It was by my advice that the paper was admitted; your friend, Professor Goodsir, through whom you sent it, empowered me to alter it in what respects I might deem it right to do so; and I am sure I took more pains with it than if I had myself written the article. Professor Goodsir, who, I believe, saw and examined the mass thrown off, agreed with me that the obstructing and eliminated tumour was most certainly a fibrous tumour of the uterus, and not a diseased ovary, as you supposed; and I added the word 'uterine' in the title, and altered one or two expressions in the text in accordance with this view. With your history of the case I did not further interfere. And as to 'direct' standing for 'direst,' &c., these are all errors of the printer, in reading your manuscript; not changes made by me. I omitted some of your concluding remarks, because I deemed them quite incorrect, and as detracting from the importance of your communication. When you are next in Edinburgh, if you will be so good as look in upon me, I will try to show you at more length that Mr. Goodsir and I were right in our views; and that my sole and sincere object was to make your communication as correct and valuable as possible.

Yours, &c., J. Y. S."

Allow me to make one concluding remark. All who are personally acquainted with Mr. Rankin will, I believe, consider the present communication as a work of supererogation, and will have little or no doubt of his writing many more letters to you on the matter, if you will allow him. You will, however, I hope, excuse me at any future period from wasting more of my own time or that of your readers with this subject.

I remain, yours, &c.,

Edinburgh, August 15, 1850.

J. Y. SIMPSON.

FACTS OPPOSED TO THEORY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I see, from THE LANCET of 20th of July, that Dr. Carpenter has replied to my letter on the prophylactic powers of alcohol. In answer to his letter I beg, firstly, to thank Dr. Carpenter for his encomium on myself, and his apparent candour and temper. The first, however, I do not feel to deserve, and the second I and your readers can only expect. In my former letter I said, "I may remark, *in limine*, that he recommends total abstinence in all cases, as he has discovered, from the written testimony of others and his own personal experience, that the excessive, or even the moderate, use of alcoholic drinks is injurious to a sound mind as well as a sound body, in the common exigencies of life." In reply Dr. Carpenter denies this. I beg respectfully to maintain what I have previously written, and I have his essay in proof. The quotation from my letter implies the "average man," and includes not the exceptional cases, for on Dr. Carpenter's own showing, in the exceptional cases there is something wrong in the individual either as regards position in life, hereditary or acquired dispositions, or other circumstances. If, therefore, in the "average man" there is something wrong in the ways I have shown, Dr. Carpenter admits that it is necessary for the average man to take habitually small quantities of alcoholic liquors for the maintenance of bodily and mental vigour.

My opponent refers me to par. 194, which he thinks I have overlooked. This paragraph he would apply to my own case; at least, I presume so, from what he has said he suspects of me, near the conclusion of his letter. I can assure him that it does not apply, inasmuch as I have neither weak digestive powers, nor am I aware of any hereditary predisposition, nor have I, in early life, been addicted to taking alcoholic liquors beyond an occasional glass with my friends, and because it was the usage of society. Nor do I at present habitually have recourse to the moderate use of those drinks with a view of sustaining weak powers, or enabling me to undergo an amount of extraordinary exertion; and I may state, that it was not for such reasons that I referred to the condition and habits of the night-soil men. My reasons for giving these references I will endeavour to point out in as few words as I can. If it be admitted as a fact that the different varieties of fever arise from particles of noxious matters entering the blood, and thereby contaminating the system, I may ask whether it is unsound practice to adopt measures likely to remove these particles speedily. If not, the earlier these measures are had recourse to the better. Alcohol, being a stimulant, excites the circulation and respiration, and stimulates the excretory organs; nearly all the functions of the body go on with more vigour and activity when this agent is administered. Inasmuch,

then, as the lungs, skin, and kidneys remove all noxious matters from the body, I think it will follow that all noxious matters, of whatever nature or kind, will be the sooner removed by such an agent as alcohol, and less likely to be retained in the system than if left to Nature and the ordinary strength and health of the body to resist them. If this explanation be rational and probable, in spite of the assertion of the teetotaler, I would hold, that if alcohol be a poison, it is a poison far less dangerous, unless taken in excess, than the powerful, dangerous, and deadly febrile poison to which we may be exposed. Nor does it follow that an agreeable stimulant, like alcohol, is wrong, if a different theory of fever be adopted. Dr. Carpenter, in answer to the argument in discussion, refers me also to paragraph 140, referring to regiments stationed in India, and to the opinion of officers in command of those regiments; but that reference does not oppose the opinion and conclusion given in my first letter, nor are the instances applicable to the point I at present argue, if they did oppose my conclusion, which might have been too general, for the circumstances of the locality and climate are so widely different from the climate of this country, and the localities and occupations I named. Dr. Carpenter, after stating that the 84th regiment, which marched in 1847 from Madras to Secunderabad, was free from disease during that march, and this for the reason of the comparative abstinence to which all the men adhered. He mentions that another regiment, the 63rd, (which had not adopted the same system, but continued their usual habits on a march in the contrary direction,) lost several men, besides having many sick, when it met with the 84th. This in no measure opposes the point I wish to maintain, nor the explanation I have just given; and however perfect that evidence was, I may again observe that it is inadmissible. I may be excused deviating from the subject here while I ask Dr. Carpenter whether the evidence he has obtained shows that the teetotalers in these regiments were more healthy and free from disease than the moderationists.

From these remarks my opponent may see that the point to be discussed is not, as he thinks, whether habitual teetotalism is better than habitual intoxication, but whether habitual moderation is not better than habitual teetotalism for those in this country exposed to noxious effluvia. I agree with Dr. Carpenter that intemperance is bad, and no one in his senses would deny this; but I differ with him on the point at issue in particular—and after that it may become a question whether teetotalism with "all men" is preferable to moderation.

As regards my own personal feelings and experience no evidence or argument will be of the least avail, and I speak with deference and respect to the gentleman with whom I am at present contending, for I am positive moderation is preferable to abstinence. As regards the night-soil men, to whom I have referred, I could only speak from what I had heard, and what little I had seen. And for the better satisfaction of Dr. Carpenter and your readers I have obtained the following particulars concerning them from an individual by whom they are employed:—

Statement of the age, number of years employed on emptying ash-pits, attacks from fever, cholera, and deaths therefrom, of 118 nightmen, employed at Liverpool, July, 1850.

Age from 20 to 24	...	...	...	...	17
" 25 " 29	...	...	...	...	21
" 30 " 34	...	...	...	...	19
" 35 " 39	...	...	...	...	23
" 40 " 44	...	...	...	...	18
" 45 " 49	...	...	...	...	8
" 50 " 54	...	...	...	...	8
" 55 " 59	...	...	...	...	2
" 60 " 64	...	...	...	...	2
					118
Years employed— 1 to 4	...	...	...	...	22
" 5 " 9	...	...	...	...	24
" 10 " 14	...	...	...	...	25
" 15 " 19	...	...	...	...	19
" 20 " 24	...	...	...	...	14
" 25 " 29	...	...	...	...	3
" 30 " 34	...	...	...	...	10
" 35 " 40	...	...	...	...	1
					118

There are only two total abstainers among them; eight have had attacks of epidemic fever, but recovered; none are large drinkers. They are chiefly employed in a district where the ashpits are not drained. From cholera, four suffered, one recovered, and three died, but the attack was attributable to other causes than their employment. One man, aged forty, had eaten