injustice ever prevail at all their conferences. At a glance may be observed self-interest and dishonesty of purpose, and a desire to compromise the standing and welfare of many thousands of my brethren. I blush to say they are not to be trusted. I earnestly hope that such artifice and designing manœuvring to interrupt the parliamentary inquiry, and to lead the profession away by such rotten schemes will not avail. Do save us from such machinations. Let me entreat you not to be deterred or delayed with your Registration Bill; many thousands are with you, and ready to lend their advocacy in support of so admirable a measure. This is the third session in which the Bill has been under consideration! The principles of it are so just and equitable, that not a single argument can be reasonably urged against it. No time should now be lost in enacting the Medical Registration Bill into law; that equal rights and privileges may be awarded throughout the profession. I could add much more in favour of this absorbing subject, but I at present abstain from any further trespass on your time. Wishing you every success in such a cause, and that you may vanquish all your enemies, and your labours and exertions may be crowned by a triumphant issue,

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

April, 1848.

COLLEGIAN.

THE "BERNCASTLE TESTIMONIAL."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—After the "moral force" victory gained in the court of Mr. Justice Coleridge, your subscribers will be glad to hear that Dr. Berncastle has entered an action against the jury who brought in the iniquitous verdict against him. I am daily, I may say by every post, receiving letters sympathizing with Dr. Berncastle, and I feel confident that I have only to inform the profession, through your pages, how their subscriptions are to be forwarded, to find its members coming forward liberally, and without delay. Let those who have suffered remember, that

"Haud ignarus mali miseris
Succurrere disco;"

and those that have not, that what is his lot to-day may be theirs to-morrow.

Subscriptions had better be forwarded, by post-office order, to me at Lewisham.

May 31, 1848.

CHARLES WILSON STEEL.

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MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND "GRINDING."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The simple fact of "grinding" as in use among medical students, has been much considered of late before the committee of the House of Commons, but the origin of the act met with no consideration, although this question is one of some interest, and of no small importance. Inasmuch as it is chiefly in use for the examination at Apothecaries' Hall, I shall confine my present observations to that body. I am thankful to say that I have passed that examination without

grinding, (more, perhaps, through the kindness of my examiner than my own knowledge,) and therefore I feel that my defence of grinding may have more weight than that of one who has profited by it.

In the first place, I will contend that it is not a "refuge for the destitute;" for many, very many thoroughly hardworking men, and men who would do credit to any school, grind, merely to secure themselves against a pluck; many such I have known, who, with a fair examination, could not have failed to pass, and in many parts of the branches of their profession, knew far more than the examiners themselves. Others, again, grind to acquire a certain method of answering certain questions, which answers are often quite at variance with the present received opinions; these opinions taking some little time to ingratiate themselves into the favour of some of the examiners. I cannot deny that many men, who have wasted their whole time, grind to get through and to get a licence to practise, and that these men depend wholly upon the notes of the grinder, which said notes, they are assured, are almost certain to pass them. I have known men pass who had learned these notes by heart, but who did not understand (for this, indeed, does not appear to be necessary) many of the points contained in them; not unfrequently these very men are complimented, perhaps even receive the honours of the court, and yet they have never studied their profession.

It is tolerably clear, then, that there is something wrong, something rotten; for if these things are facts, (and every one who knows anything about it, will allow them to be so,) it is evident that this examination is not a proof of a man being fit to practise. Is the fault in the student? Is he to be blamed because he goes to that man who is nearly certain to get him through? On the contrary, if he cannot depend on himself, I think he is quite right to go to some one on whom he can depend. Is it in the man, familiarly called the "grinder"—I think not; few men, I can testify, work harder, or deserve more every penny that they earn. From what little I have seen, I am forced to the conclusion, in my own mind, that the fault lies with the examiners. Of course, in this, I am obliged to reason somewhat upon hearsay; my own examination was conducted with the greatest kindness and fairness, but the reports are not always the same. You can easily imagine that a man, entering that dreaded room, knowing that he must be either admitted or rejected, must feel somewhat anxious; and meeting with a hasty examiner, the small remnant of his intellect may evaporate. This is a necessary accompaniment, more or less, of every *viva voce* examination, where the candidate is tolerably at the mercy of his examiner, as to bullying, &c., and where the spleen of the examiner can be vented on the hapless individual who presents himself.

But, Sir, how far is a medical student expected to know all the various branches of present professional study? The grinding students acquire a particular knowledge of certain portions. You will allow that the Hebradendron Cambo-gioides, the Asagræa Offic., are more important medical plants than the Allium Cepa and All. Sativum, yet are the classes and orders of the latter demanded, while the former are passed over. Again: Dr. Pereira is generally acknowledged to be the first authority of the day on *Materia Medica*. He says codeia is the stimulating principle of opium; at the Hall they want narcotine, which Dr. Pereira says acts like quinine. Whom are we, as students, to believe? If a man is going up, and fears the consequence of naming codeia, he avows his belief in narcotine, though an unbiassed opinion could scarcely fail to turn towards the former; an opinion to which the high standing and indefatigable industry of the Doctor thoroughly entitle him. Again, Sir, we are taught at our schools (at least I was) that the undulatory theory of light is the correct one; the corpuscular, however, receives favour at Blackfriars.

Is a student to be blamed because he gets up these points? And may he not be more profitably engaged than in learning how to make a steam engine, a pump, &c.? Yet is a candidate somewhat obliged to attend to these points, because they have been asked, and therefore may be asked again.

Further, I must contend that when a certain number of candidates present themselves, the examination, to be fair to all, must be alike to all. One man is rejected on an examination, while perhaps he could with ease have passed those of all the other candidates. This is far from fair to the unfortunate candidate, it is excessively discouraging, especially if he have worked hard. I have known such cases. Be it remembered, Sir, that I personally feel no disrespect to the examiners at the Hall; on the contrary, I feel grateful for their kindness to me individually. I am only attempting to defend