but of course these women must be subjected to regular periodical supervision, in case they should contract any more serious form of disease.

One word in conclusion respecting the increase of charitable institutions for the treatment of diseased prostitutes, in favour of which Mr. Simon expresses an opinion in preference to State supervision. I believe it would be quite hopeless to expect to enlist the sympathy of the public to any useful extent in this direction; in support of which opinion I would refer to the struggling condition of the Lock Hospital, the only special institution in the metropolis, which, in spite of the prestige of its 120 years' existence, and of much aristocratic and influential support, is only able by charitable contributions to maintain with great difficulty thirty beds for female, and fifteen for male patients.

But it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that Lock hospitals for the treatment of women on the voluntary principle, though they may be works of the truest charity, are nearly, if not quite, useless, from the sanitary point of view, in effecting any diminution in the amount of venereal disease in the general population. Diseased prostitutes will never, as a rule, seek admission till they have done all the mischief of which they are capable, and till the increasing severity of their symptoms compels them to do so; while their treatment as out-patients is a positive injury to the public health, by enabling them to continue their pernicious career for a longer period with comparative impunity to themselves.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JAMES R. LANE.

Berkeley-street, Piccadilly, September 20th, 1869.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to return you my best thanks for your article of last week. I wish I could think myself deserving of even a small part of what you say of me. My claim on your readers' sympathy is a very small one. The action of the House Committee has not caused me the slightest inconvenience, inasmuch as I had reckoned upon it beforehand; while I have had the great pleasure of discovering that I have more kind friends than I thought. To all these, and to the many gentlemen previously unknown to me who have written to express their approval, my best thanks are due. There is little credit in being a Smithfield martyr on such terms. It is chiefly, however, on public grounds that I thank you for taking the matter up. The real matter in dispute is not my case—that is insignificant enough,—but the question whether the endowments of St. Bartholomew's are properly administered. I affirm that they are not, and that the only effectual remedy is to remove these public funds from the hands of those who have shown themselves incompetent to manage them, and to entrust them to a small body of persons responsible to Government, and selected with a view to their fitness for such a duty. The combined action of all who are interested in such a reform will surely succeed in gaining the attention of the Legislature. With a view to facilitate such a combination, it is intended to occupy the time which would have been taken up by the usual inaugural address on the 1st of October, in holding a meeting of old and present students of St. Bartholomew's, outside the walls, at which these questions will be discussed.

The following passages from letters which have reached me within the last few days are so much to the point that I venture to quote them:—

From a Governor of the Hospital:—"I am convinced that of late years the administration of the hospital affairs has been left too much in the hands of a few, and is more and more removed from the general supervision of the governors, who are such only in name."

From a Fellow of the Royal Society:—"I have long felt the grievous unreality of the out-patient system, which in fact amounts to a mockery of God and man both.....Every good and sensible man must wish you God speed."

From a gentleman of large experience in the question:—"I have always maintained that the indiscriminate administration of medical relief at the general hospitals, as now

carried on, is a great abuse of the charities, and a delusion and snare to the public."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

10, Staples-inn, W.C., Sept. 22nd, 1869.

CHARLES MAYO.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—All who have ever been connected with St. Bartholomew's Hospital must feel regret at the frequent complaints that have appeared in THE LANCET. These complaints uniformly expose the want of administrative tact displayed by the Managing Committee, recently culminating by the dismissal of Dr. Mayo for daring to complain that he was unable to prescribe in a satisfactory manner for an unlimited number of patients in the limited time at his disposal.

This Committee have systematically treated with supercilious indifference every suggestion which might benefit the hard-working members of the school—the resident medical staff,—and this, too, while they been spending thousands in gilding their banqueting hall for the reception of royalty.

This state of things ought not to be permitted to last without a Government inquiry, to prevent, if possible, money left for a charitable purpose being diverted and spent in frivolous extravagance.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Gladstone may be able to spare time next session to appoint a Commission to inquire into, and, if necessary, to devise some plan to control, the funds now vested in the hands of governors who are at best only irresponsible trustees.

Last year the medical casualty department at St. Bartholomew's Hospital was conducted in a slipshod manner; many cases that required more than ordinary attention, or a more careful diagnosis, were passed over or escaped the notice of the house-physicians, no doubt from the great number they had to prescribe for in the limited time at their disposal; otherwise it would be inconceivable that a case of syphilis with a primary sore should have been treated with "haustus ammoniæ acetatis" by one of them for three weeks, when the patient, failing to improve and growing tired of the treatment, went over to the dresser for the day, by whom the real nature of the complaint was for the first time discovered. An urgent case of pleurisy with effusion, sent up by a medical practitioner of good standing and an old pupil of the hospital, was playfully treated with a little linctus. Many other cases could be given which received similar treatment, but it would be taking up too much of your valuable space to give the long list of blunders committed last year. These blunders would not have been brought to light had not the House Committee vaunted that the house-physicians last year prescribed in a satisfactory manner for a number of patients with which their successors profess themselves unable to cope.

Far better would it be for the reputation of the hospital to return to the ancient mode by which the medical casualty patients were seen, than to entrust the lives of patients to the tender mercies of inexperienced and newly-fledged M.B.s, to be seen by them at the rate of thirty seconds a patient.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

Sept. 15th, 1869.

AN OLD BARTHOLOMEW STUDENT.

SURGEONS AND INSTRUMENT-MAKERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Not being a constant reader of THE LANCET, the letter of Mr. Christopher Heath escaped my notice, until a friend accidentally directed my attention to it; hence the delay in my reply. As the incidents related in that letter seem to reflect questionably upon my behaviour, I ask in common fairness that you will grant me the space to give my version of the transaction, that you and your readers may judge the same upon its true merits, and see how far it will "elucidate the question" of "the relation of medical men and the public to instrument-makers or surgical mechanicians."

Towards the end of April a gentleman, say Mr. A., applied to me for a pair of crutches, and seeing that he had lost his leg, I inquired into the cause of his not wearing an artificial limb, when I learnt that his stump was slightly

contracted, and that attempts at extending the knee-joint had been fruitless. I then asked the question whether these attempts had been accompanied by a surgical operation, and upon receiving a negative reply, gave Mr. A. my opinion to the effect that I had little doubt but what the knee-joint could be extended, were he to submit to the operation of having the hamstrings divided. Upon being asked by Mr. A. whether I knew of "a competent man" to perform the operation, I gave him the names and addresses of two eminent surgeons.

A short time after (on May 3rd, about eight days after the above conversation occurred), Mr. A. called upon me, accompanied by Mr. Heath, or, I should say, Mr. Heath brought his patient Mr. A. to me, requesting me to prepare an apparatus for the extension of the knee-joint, as he, Mr. Heath, intended to operate on Mr. A.'s knee. This I did, and when the apparatus was finished, Mr. A. called upon me to have it tried before submitting to the operation, when he made, in course of our conversation, the following remark: "Considering," he said, "that I am in England on a visit for a limited time, the prospect of being laid up for six (?) weeks, through the operation, makes me feel inclined to give up the whole affair;" continuing by dwelling upon several other advantages which would accompany his doing so. Upon this I replied that before coming to such a decision, he had better try the apparatus without operation, as it might be possible to get the knee-joint extended without division of the tendons. Whether my object, in saying so, was to withdraw Mr. A., as a patient, from Mr. Heath, or to assume the latter gentleman's position, you and your readers will be able to decide from the above. Such accusation, however, left as a verbal message by a friend of Mr. Heath at my house, and delivered to my clerk, to the effect that I had followed the practice of another instrument-maker by endeavouring to take patients away from medical men, was the first intimation I had of Mr. Heath's wrath against me. Pressure of engagements prevented me from making inquiries about the meaning of the accusation, until Mr. A. called upon me with the operation performed upon his knee; when, seeing that this latter had been done, I naturally concluded that the matter was set at rest. Although Mr. A. told me of Mr. Heath's displeasure, still I could not possibly believe that the latter gentleman would give so much importance to a sentence, thoroughly insignificant in itself, contradictory to what I had stated before to Mr. A., and logically against my own interest.

On July 13th, however, Mr. Heath called upon me, and seeing ladies present, and my own room occupied, opened himself a door, leading to the inner hall, where the following conversation took place:—

Mr. Heath: "You told Mr. A. that the operation upon his knee was not required" (or was not necessary, or was useless, or words to that effect, implying a definite expression on my part). This I denied, whereupon Mr. Heath retorted, "But I tell you you did," in a voice so loud that it could be heard in both rooms (leading into the hall), and indicating the excited state Mr. Heath was in. While I endeavoured to explain to Mr. Heath the circumstances under which I was induced to say that "the knee may be straightened, he drowned my voice by saying rather loudly, "It is like you instrument-makers; you try to take patients away from medical men; but I shall endeavour to put a stop to it," &c.; and, seeing that I had no opportunity of making Mr. Heath listen to my explanation, I said, whilst opening the door, that it would be useless to have further words about it, and bowed Mr. Heath out. Altogether, I may have been rude according to Mr. Heath's idea of the behaviour of an instrument-maker towards a surgeon in bowing him out at all; but who, as one man to another, was the rudest, I leave your readers to decide.

The threat with which Mr. Heath left my house—viz., of taking care that I should have no more patients sent me, he has faithfully endeavoured to carry into effect, since he has not only effectually advised Mr. A. to countermand his order for an artificial leg, but also called upon a medical man whose confidence I enjoy, to complain about my rude behaviour, evidently with the object of injuring me in my business.

I have every reason to believe that it was upon my recommendation that Mr. A. applied for medical aid to have his knee-joint extended by means of an operation, although I did not give him the address of Mr. Heath.

I received conditionally the order for an artificial limb from Mr. A. before I had the honour of seeing Mr. Heath at my house for the first time. Granted, nevertheless, that Mr. Heath brought his patient to me, no act or word on my part justifies Mr. Heath to declare that I endeavoured to take his patient away from him, as the object of giving my opinion on the *probable* effect of the use of an instrument without operation is easily discerned from what I stated above.

My behaviour may, as I said before, appear rude according to Mr. Heath's notion of propriety to be shown by an instrument-maker towards a medical man; but when any one gives me the lie in my face, in a "rude" manner, I cannot recognise in such an act anything connected with the medical profession, but estimate such behaviour by the standard of a gentleman; and I believe that the great number of members of the profession who justly can lay claim to that title, will exonerate me, in the face of facts, from the task of offering an apology to Mr. Heath; and few will subscribe to the feelings of resentment which Mr. Heath has shown in the case, which feeling is even discernible in his letter, intended to elucidate the relation existing between medical men and instrument-makers, but very pointedly applied to a special case.

In regard to the avowed object for which Mr. Heath's letter was written, I think I can be borne out by facts when stating that the relation in which medical men and instrument-makers stand to each other depends entirely on the individual knowledge and skill; and if Mr. Heath has not experienced it yet, I hope he will have the opportunity and the discernment to find out what it is to have a dunce of an instrument-maker at his heels, who has neither knowledge nor skill sufficient to bear him out in an opinion of his own. The position, however, of an instrument-maker between the medical man and his patient is of a different kind, at times very critical, and requires a certain amount of tact; but however much can be said on that subject, the less done the better. To me personally instrument-making is only

"Eine Kuh die mich mit Butter ernährt."

On no account whatever shall I offer further remarks on the case, having in the first instance, when seeing Mr. Heath's letter, hesitated whether or not to reply to it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

C. G. GUMPEL.

Leicester-square, W.C., September 14th, 1869.

ANTISEPTIC SURGERY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In recent numbers of THE LANCET, Dr. Morton and Dr. Campbell Black (of Glasgow) refer to my cases of ovariectomy in a way that must lead anyone to suppose that I have no faith in the antiseptic treatment of wounds.

From my first operation of ovariectomy in 1862, to my ninety-second done a fortnight ago, I have, more or less perfectly, used some antiseptic dressing. At first, bags of charcoal, sulphite of soda, sulphate of iron, or Condy's fluid were employed. In my twelfth case I began the use of the tar-bags. This admirable dressing I received from Mr. Wells, to whom I shall ever be indebted for much practical information, which has tended more than anything else to keep down my death-rate, and helped me to avoid the rocks on which I might otherwise have split. For nearly three years, along with Mr. Wells's dressing, I have in every case very freely used carbolic oil or the watery solution, both during the operation and in the after-treatment.

In the cure of other wounds, I now invariably follow Mr. Lister's method. Twice during the past month I have had occasion to operate for cancerous disease of the breast. In both cases the larger vessels were twisted, and numerous small oozing points were secured by carbolicised catgut ligatures. Both wounds were dressed antiseptically, exactly as I have seen Mr. Lister do. In neither case was there a single drop of pus from first to last, and the patients were convalescent in a few days. I have also employed the catgut ligature on two occasions of very extensive adhesions of the omentum in ovariectomy, and also for sutures in closing the abdominal wound. I think I am only now beginning to realise what Mr. Lister's antiseptic method and his carbolicised animal ligatures are yet to do for surgery.

I cannot think, as Dr. Morton and Dr. Black would have