THE LANCET.

London, Saturday, October 6, 1838.

WE have already referred to the extraordinary attempt made by Sir ANTHONY CARLISLE to consign THOMAS HOLMES to imprisonment in a lunatic asylum, and recur a second time to this painful subject from a conviction, that no duty in the medical profession requires more caution and discretion than the granting of certificates of insanity. The certificates of two medical men, according to 2 and 3 William IV., c. 107, will deprive an Englishman of his liberty, tear him from his friends, and lodge him, amongst madmen, in the hands of people who are interested in prolonging his confinement to the latest period. Before certifying to an individual's insanity a conscientious surgeon would, therefore, examine the state of the patient, and the history of the case, with the utmost care; and the result of the decision would evince more clearly than anything else the soundness or imbecility of his judgment. The public—the governors of hospitals—can estimate acts of this kind, and hence they become doubly important, for in thousands of other cases the data of an accurate judgment are beyond their possession, and the rashness and errors of the medical officers lie concealed in the sufferer's grave; but where a surgeon attempts to hurry a poor man, with an injured, inflamed wrist-joint, who is delirious for a few days, to a lunatic asylum, the governors can have no hesitation in pronouncing him to be utterly unequal to his duties, and they incur a fearful responsibility by permitting him to trifle with the diseases of the sick poor. Was it that Sir ANTHONY CARLISLE may treat the unfortunate patients of the Westminster Hospital as he attempted to treat THOMAS HOLMES, that the public contributed so liberally at the Musical Festival? Are the thousands of pounds which were then collected to be misused through the reckless folly of antiquated surgical Merry Andrews? Let the Governors of the

Westminster Hospital look to this; the public attention is directed to their movements, and let us express a hope that they will not shrink from the discharge of their duty.

We must briefly recapitulate this case that our readers may draw their own inferences from the facts:—

THOMAS HOLMES, æt. 53, had been sixteen years a labourer at the gas works. He was admitted into the Westminster Hospital, under Sir ANTHONY CARLISLE, August 22nd, for a severe injury to the wrist-joint, having fallen while carrying a sack of coals, and pitched upon his left wrist. During the first three days he was treated by Mr. THOMSON and the house-surgeon, and on the fourth day after his admission Sir A. CARLISLE saw him and prescribed ammonia. After the second dose of ammonia constitutional irritation, from the excessive inflammation of the wrist-joint, came on, which ended in delirium tremens. The house-surgeon instantly omitted Sir A. C.'s prescription, and gave opium in large quantities. During the Sunday and Monday the delirium was very severe, but on Monday night the patient fell into a profound sleep, and on Tuesday morning awoke quite recovered. Not a single symptom of delirium remained. On this day Sir A. CARLISLE, not having seen him or prescribed *in the interval*, and *without any examination of the house-surgeon*, went to the Board, and urged the Governors present to send the man to a lunatic asylum, and wrote an order to empower the Secretary to eject him from the hospital. Sir ANTHONY told the Board, that the case might “by some be called delirium tremens, or any other gibberish,” but he declared the man to be “mad.” An order was consequently issued by the Board, that the patient should be immediately removed to a madhouse; but, upon the interference of the assistant-surgeon and one of the Governors, the order of the Board was suspended, and before the next board-day the man was up, and quite convalescent. Sir ANTHONY, however, on the following Saturday visited the patient, and on seeing

him sitting on the side of his bed, with his arm in a sling, exclaimed, "Well, how is my maniac?" upon which the house-surgeon replied, "He is very well."

The following is the certificate—the warrant—which so nearly decided the fate of poor HOLMES:—

"Westminster Hospital, Aug. 28, 1838.

"This is to certify that THOMAS HOLMES hath been, from August 22nd instant, under my professional care, labouring under a high state of nervous and mental irritation, for which the usual treatment has been adopted, but during the time of his abode in the hospital he has shown decided marks of *insanity*, and has been so violent as to require bodily restraint by a straitwaistcoat, and been an incessant disturber of the rest and comfort of the other patients, by night and by day. I, the undersigned, for the above reasons, consider THOMAS HOLMES to be wholly unfit to remain in the hospital, and recommend that he be consigned to some lunatic asylum, or other receptacle for insane persons.

(Signed) "ANTHONY CARLISLE,
"Surgeon."

This certificate requires no commentary; but we must remark that if the name of ANTHONY CARLISLE were substituted for that of THOMAS HOLMES, no surgeon could hesitate, after the circumstances of this case, to affix to it his signature. The transaction shows how thin the partition is between dotting senility and insanity. The safety and lives of human beings are too precious to be entrusted to the shaking hands of second childhood. The Governors of the Westminster Hospital appear to have become distinctly acquainted with the incapacity of their medical officer two years ago, by an event, the particulars of which have been long in our possession, and which we hoped the prudence of the party concerned, or the kindness of his friends, would have rendered it unnecessary to disclose; but the consequences of the suppression have grown fearful, and the case of 1836 shall be no longer withheld:—

JAMES MILLS was admitted into the Westminster Hospital, under the care of Sir ANTHONY CARLISLE, June 8th, 1836. He had received a severe contusion of the hand, and died June 10th of tetanus. The House-Committee of the 14th of June passed the following resolutions:—"That the treatment of JAMES MILLS, deceased in this hospital, be referred to a Committee, to inquire whether the same was prompt and efficient, and such as ought to have been adopted." A Committee of five non-medical Governors was appointed, and met on Wednesday, 15th of June, 1836, to receive evidence. *The House-Surgeon* stated that deceased had been attending the hospital as an out-patient about a week, with one of the fingers of the right hand broken, and a laceration of one of the fingers of the left. The patient was a brewer's drayman, attended very irregularly for a week, and drank freely during that period. On Wednesday, June 8th, he came to the hospital, his hand very much inflamed as high as the centre of the upper arm; a red line also extended to his arm-pit. He was then taken into the hospital, a poultice was applied, and aperient medicine given by the house-surgeon. In the night 30 drops of opium were given by the apothecary. Next morning, when the house-surgeon went round, he found that symptoms of lock-jaw had come on; he made a few incisions into the palms of the hands, and sent for Mr. THOMSON and Sir A. C.; both saw the patient at 1 o'clock, but Sir A. C. took charge of him, ordered him ammonia, and desired his dresser to let him know how the man was next morning; the man gradually got worse, and the next morning, when the dresser went to inform Sir ANTHONY that such was the case, he merely sent word that Dr. ROE was to see the patient, which he did at his usual visiting hour, and found the man dying. When Sir A. C. came, two days after he first took charge of the man, he found him dead. *He considered it to be a medical case*, there being, as he thought, "symptoms in it of a wandering constitutional disease."

After Sir ANTHONY'S explanation, the

Committee reported to the General Board as follows :—"The Committee do not feel themselves competent to enter into the medical treatment of the case of JAMES MILLS after he was taken under the charge of the surgeon of the week ; but they cannot help expressing their regret that, after receiving the patient under his care, and prescribing for him, Sir ANTHONY CARLISLE, upon the report of his pupil, should have given over a case of doubtful and serious character, by a verbal message to the physician, and not taken any further notice of the patient until his decease, which took place on the day after he first saw him. The Committee further regret that although Sir ANTHONY ordered a post-mortem examination he paid no attention to it, but left it to his pupil."

The House-Committee, upon receiving the Report of the Committee of Inquiry, resolved, and entered on their minutes,—“That it appears from the facts transpiring during the investigation of the Committee into the treatment of JAMES MILLS, that due care and attention has not been paid to his case, and that the rules of the hospital have been disregarded ; and this Committee having received the subsequent explanation of Sir A. CARLISLE, regret exceedingly that he did not personally attend on receiving a message expressive of the doubtful and serious state of his patient on Tuesday morning.”

There is another point of view in which this affair must be viewed. Sir ANTHONY CARLISLE has this year been the President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and in the character of an Examiner in that College, he has frequently to determine the competency of surgical candidates. What an Examiner ! What a judge of practical capacity ! He may evidently be guided only by caprice, in a decision of the utmost importance to the public health, and to the young men who go before that inquisitorial tribunal. Who can wonder, when delirium tremens supervening on an accident is distinguished from insanity, and an Examiner of the Royal College of Surgeons calls the diagnosis “ gibberish,” that accomplished

young surgeons should be rejected, and gross, disgraceful ignorance not only pass muster, but receive approbation at the hands of such a judge ? This gentleman stated, in his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on Medical Education, that either HIPPOCRATES or GALEN would be rejected at a College Examination, so dimly would their intellect burn before the throne of ANTHONY BACCHUS-inspired : HIPPOCRATES, and GALEN would be absolutely extinguished by the College effulgence, and directed by Mr. MACE STONE to hide their diminished heads in the surrounding scenery. If the Council of the College of Surgeons had been a *representative body*, elected annually, such an example of rashness would not have had it in his power to expose the profession to general censure, nor been placed at its head to draw down upon its members the lightning of public wrath.

Sir ANTHONY CARLISLE puts £140 a year into his pocket at the Westminster Hospital, by hook or by crook ; and does not, we understand, consider his ribald jokes dear at that sum. This is exceedingly natural, for, as Mr. HUME long ago remarked, few people ever consider themselves too highly paid. The question is, however, reduced within a narrow compass by the confession of this surgical JOSEPH MILLER, that his stories and facetiæ, put into circulation in the wards, are the only articles of value in which he deals ; for the jokes are now all grown weary, stale, and unprofitable, by “damnable iteration.” The Sir ANTHONY of Westminster, we believe reminds, his straggling auditors of Saint ANTHONY in the wilderness, in more respects than one. The *Saint* was troubled by a flock of monsters in all forms, from the frog astride the bat, and the fish flying, and the crane-legged giant, and the snarling dog and wild beast, to the savory dish and deceitful virgin ; while the *Sir* of Westminster is beset with crude and monstrous jokes, wild sallies, and practical extravagancies, but which he has not the virtue, like St. ANTHONY, to resist, or they would fly from him. On the

contrary, he gives them utterance and effect, on the most inappropriate occasions,—in wards where the pupil is waiting for instruction, or where the sick man is dying. It would little surprise us to hear that he considers a certificate which was opportunely prevented from consigning a wounded man to the society of madmen, a joke worthy of repetition; or to discover that he places the transaction of 1836, and the proceedings of the Governors of the Hospital, in the same category.

Unhappily, surgery, inflamed wrists, strait-waistcoats, and madhouses, are no joking matters; and it will look as little wise in Sir ANTHONY CARLISLE to disregard this serious proof of his incapacity to fill any longer the office of surgeon to the Westminster Hospital, as it would become Mr. MYERS to smile if he had granted a certificate to consign Pow, who also had *delirium tremens* at Westminster Hospital, to the mercies of a lunatic asylum, and the nightly yells of madmen.

Analytical Tables, adapted to the Purposes of General and Forensic Chemistry, with Directions for Preparing the various Tests, and a Description of the Means of ascertaining their Purity. Translated from the French of M. DEVERGIE, by MARTIN H. LYNCH, M.D., &c. &c. Longman and Co. London, 1838.

It is impossible to have comprised a greater quantity of useful matter within a confined space, than Dr. Lynch has done in the two tables now before us.

The first part of table 1 contains descriptions of the modes of preparing the various tests and substances used in analysis, and the means of ascertaining their purity. This portion is not contained in the original tables of Devergie, but has been compiled by Dr. Lynch from another part of the French author's work, with the intention of enabling the student to practise analytical chemistry with pure tests, although he may live at a distance from the large cities, in which alone they are generally to be obtained. The substances which it may be necessary to subject to analysis are divided into two principal classes,—those which are in-

soluble in water, and those which are *soluble* in water; and the mode of employing the different tests is succinctly described in a manner which is calculated to facilitate, in a high degree, a knowledge of this difficult branch of chemistry. We feel much pleasure in being able to recommend strongly the tables of Dr. Lynch, not only to students, but to those who are more advanced in the science of general and forensic chemistry.

Practical Surgery; with one hundred and thirty engravings on wood. By ROBERT LISTON. Second edition. London, 1838. Churchill; Renshaw. 8vo. pp. 529.

WHEN the first edition of Mr. Liston's work on *Practical Surgery* was published in the month of October, 1837, although fully impressed with a sense of its value, we could scarcely have anticipated that a second edition would have been called for within the brief space of twelve months. We are, however, rejoiced to find that the desire of the medical public to possess a work of first rate practical importance has exceeded our anticipation, and thus given to Mr. Liston an opportunity of again presenting to us his *Treatise*, enriched with the facts and observations which he has accumulated during the past year.

The extended notice which Mr. Liston's work has already received in the pages of this Journal, renders it unnecessary for us to do more, on the present occasion, than to mention that the second edition has been revised and corrected with care. A few typographical errors, which had been overlooked in the former edition, are, we perceive, corrected in this one; fifty additional pages of matter have been added; and whenever the subject-matter seemed to require the illustration of a woodcut, the latter has been supplied with the same fidelity and elegance of execution which distinguished the engravings contained in the first edition. The index has also been enlarged, and rendered more complete.

It had been our intention to have taken this opportunity of noticing "A System of Practical Surgery," which has recently been published by Professor John Lizars, of Edinburgh, but we are compelled, from want of space, to defer the task for the present. It will be at once curious and instructive to compare together two treatises on "Practical Surgery," emanating from the pens of Liston and Lizars.