MEDICAL REFORM AND THE CHEMISTS AND DRUGGISTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In connexion with a letter in your last number, entitled, "A Chemist's Opinion on Medical Reform," allow me to call the attention of your readers to the editorial article of the "Pharmaceutical Journal" for the present month, which I believe to represent the feeling of the most respectable part of the chemists and druggists, who, far from being pleased with the unrestrained licence given them by the present government measure, consider it, to use the language of the journal, "no compliment or advantage to be permitted by law to act without restraint as medical practitioners;" and in another part, the opinion is expressed, that "we should gain nothing by becoming to all intents and purposes medical practitioners; on the contrary, this would divert us from our legitimate office; in proportion as we gained ground in this department, we should lose it in our own."

These extracts, and the whole tenour of the article, go to shew, that the body of which the "Pharmaceutical Journal" is the organ, are not satisfied with the proposed bill; that chemists and druggists are in favour of restrictions, even as applied to themselves, and only wish to be placed upon a proper footing in their own department.

Knowing that the medical profession generally think that this measure is received by chemists as a boon, I wish to correct such an impression, and to suggest whether it would not be to the interest of both parties to come to some understanding with each other, by which their efforts may be united to obtain a system of medical legislation, satisfactory to themselves, and of real benefit to the public.

I am, sir, yours, &c.,

A CHEMIST.

City, Oct. 16th, 1844.

THE "PURE" COUNCIL OF THE COLLEGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

MR. EDITOR,—I see that a correspondent of yours, under the signature of "Detur Digniori," has cruelly gibbeted the "Council of the College," in the persons of two of its members, Messrs. Lawrence and Stanley, "arcades ambo," and has placed that singularly anomalous body of self-elected incapables upon the horns of the following most unpleasant dilemma: either that two of them have violated an agreement which they, in conjunction with the rest of the council, had come to in respect to not interfering personally at the late election of councillors, or else that two of them have deliberately asserted that which is false. It is a very pretty quarrel as it stands, and I leave Messrs. Lawrence and Stanley to settle it with your correspondent.

I am, Mr. Editor, yours, &c.,

UBI DOLOR, IBI DIGITUS,

October 14th, 1844.

THE BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.—PROFESSOR TILLEY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If I understand right, THE LANCET advocates the cause of the provincial schools. If so, you would do well to keep a sharp eye on some of them, in order that they may not, by folly or misdeed, disgrace your advocacy.

The Birmingham School has lately sent out two printed documents, to which I would call your attention.

The one is an advertisement of a school of chemistry. The first paragraph runs as follows:—

"The great advantages of chemical knowledge are universally admitted, and the want of all opportunities of acquiring such knowledge in this country is universally felt."

With what conscience can PROFESSOR TILLEY put forth this statement in a country where Graham, Faraday, Brande, Daniell, Kane, Gregory, Apjohn, Johnson, and a host of others, equal, at least, to the Birmingham professor in reputation, are public teachers of chemistry?

Perhaps Mr. Tilley founds his belief in the superiority of the Birmingham school on the fact of there being two professors of chemistry in it.

The other is a printed catalogue of the museum of the Birmingham College, forty-two pages long, and thrice as many years behind the present state of science.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

MEDICUS.

London, Oct. 18th.

THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.

NOTE FROM MR. ECCLES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg leave to trouble you with a few remarks on some points of Dr. Costello's letter, which appeared in your last number; premising that, eschewing personality, I will confine myself as much as possible to matters of fact; and I hope I shall not have occasion to address you again on the subject.

Dr. Costello says, that "after mature deliberation," there were "entrusted to his charge such of the hospital patients as might be afflicted with stone." Now, this is not a correct statement; the facts of the case are these:—As a matter of courtesy and friendly feeling towards Dr. Costello, permission was given him to make use of two beds for such patients as he might choose to bring into the hospital; and had Dr. Costello contented himself with this arrangement, instead of assuming a position to which he had no right, he would have met with every politeness and co-operation from all connected with the institution.

In accordance with this privilege, two patients were admitted during the first week of September: these were not the legitimate patients of the hospital, but were sought after and sent in by Dr. Costello himself; and on Saturday, the 7th of September, one of them was operated on. Now this is the case and the operation to which Mr. Sherwood's note has reference, and for the confirmation of whose contents Dr. Costello refers to Dr. Weatherhead.

As I am mentioned by name in Mr. Sherwood's note, I assume the right of making, to use his own words,—"on that performance a few observations." Mr. Sherwood, in alluding to the operation, states—1. that when the crash was heard, I remarked on the circumstance;—2. that, on the patient expressing a wish to make water, my colleagues and I were called from another part of the ward, and that, in our presence, fragments of stone were voided;—3. that "Dr. Weatherhead timed the operation, which took exactly thirty seconds."

Now, without wishing for a moment to impugn Mr. Sherwood's veracity, I beg leave—1. to deny that I either heard the crash, or remarked on the circumstance;—2. to deny that fragments of stone were voided in our presence; for, when we were recalled, we were not in another part of the ward, but had crossed the court-yard of the hospital, on our way to another ward, and before we could return across the court and upstairs to the bedside of the patient, he had already voided the water which had been injected before the operation, and with it a very small portion of the detritus of a fragment; for (and this circumstance was carefully withheld in the report of the operation) the stone had been broken down a few days before the patient entered the hospital, while in private lodgings, and the man was slightly remonstrated with for not having brought with him the pieces of stone he had already passed;—3. to deny that Dr. Weatherhead was present; and therefore he could not have timed the operation. My recollection on this point is accurate, and I am borne out by the notes of the porter of the hospital, whose duty it is to put down the names of all who visit the institution, whether medical officers or others; and on the 7th of September, amongst other names in the porter's book, appear those of "Dr. Costello and Friend," but there is no "Dr. Weatherhead."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM ECCLES.

Old Broad-street, Oct. 28, 1844.

NOTE FROM MR. GAY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you kindly permit me a space in your valuable pages, for the following remarks upon Dr. Costello and his letter of last week?

Dr. Costello terms the dispute between him and myself and colleagues, "a personal squabble of great insignificance;" and yet treats this very frivolous matter with as much importance as though something of the utmost consequence to himself were staked upon its issue. And, Sir, I think in accordance with his practical view of the matter; because its decision may tend either very considerably to raise or lessen the value which any who feel an interest in the Doctor's professional statements may for the future place in them.

Many months since, Dr. Marsden intimated to me that Dr. Costello, who was presumed to be a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, would be permitted the use of two beds in a ward of the Royal Free Hospital, "for the reception of his poor or houseless patients afflicted with stone." These were the terms written by myself, from Dr. Marsden's dictation, in the presence of Mr. Eccles, within the last three weeks. Now, Sir, it remains to be seen, what use Dr. Costello made of this act of courtesy; and whether, when authorizing and making public the statements in reference