veying knowledge by actual experiment, and gave his explanation with a clear and penetrating tone of voice, in well chosen periods, and without too much fire or any hesitation. He loved to teach and guide the pupils, and thus drew around himself numerous and attentive hearers during the four years he lectured on forensic medicine, and the twenty-nine which he devoted to medical chemistry. This success is the more flattering, as pupils are not bound to attend the lectures of any professors, and that the latter have a fixed salary, independent of the number of students who may attend them.

The fame of Orfila was now daily spreading, and his works and teaching on toxicology, forensic medicine, and chemistry testify to his immense labours; but he seemed to direct his whole energy to the detection of poisons. He looked upon the science of toxicology as composed of two principal divisions—one comprising the symptoms of poisoning, the consequent lesion of texture, and the medical treatment; the other, more exclusively chemical, embracing the detection of the poison either with a view of the discovery of an antidote, or for guiding the verdict of a jury. Both these branches were so highly cultivated by Orfila, that he became the oracle in the courts of law, and the dread of those who contemplated the treacherous administration of deadly substances.

In 1820, the Academy of Medicine, as now constituted, was founded by Louis XVIII., and the original members were seventy in number. Orfila was one of them, and, strange to say, the youngest of all. He distinguished himself for the next thirty-three years as a fluent and able speaker, always defended the Academy in the contests which that learned body had to sustain, and when chairman acted with great tact and ability. Shortly before Orfila's death, only five of the original seventy members were left, and it was remarked that Orfila was again the youngest amongst them.

The revolution of 1830, which carried Louis Philippe to the throne, became, for Orfila, the beginning of a series of prosperous days, in which wealth, honours, and the most envied appointments were showered upon him. But it may be said to his praise, that he rendered the greatest services, both to the state and to learning, in the several responsible and eminent posts which he successively occupied.

As Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, (in which dignity he succeeded the celebrated Antoine Dubois, father of the present accoucheur, Paul Dubois,) he used his best efforts, for a period of eighteen years, to introduce improvements of great importance in the medical school. Without neglecting toxicology or his professional duties, he begun to root up abuses, and to make regulations which to this day call for the gratitude of the students. Lectures, by his endeavours, were now given with regularity; the pupils were subjected to a wholesome discipline; the miserable building opposite the Faculty was demolished, and a new one, called "Hôpital des Cliniques," erected in its place, where surgery and midwifery are carefully taught; new dissecting-rooms were substituted for the wretched places where anatomy was before cultivated; the Dupuytren museum was founded; a botanical garden opened; and the anatomical and pathological collections of the Faculty so enriched, that Orfila's name was attached to them as a lasting memorial of his wise and paternal government.

But Orfila was now called upon to take an active share in the higher branches of the administration connected with learning and medical science; his influence became immense, but he contrived to make many friends, and to render the greatest services by his great aptitude for public business, his vast experience, quick glance, and mastery of details.

Orfila successively took his seat in the Council General of Hospitals, and at the Board of Public Instruction. The profession gained much by his elevation, for it was through his exertions that the preparatory schools of medicine in various large provincial towns were founded, and it was he who placed the examinations for the degree of Doctor of Medicine upon the present excellent footing.

The subject of this memoir obtained the usual marks of high favour at the hands of Government, and was successively made knight, officer, and commander of the Legion of Honour. He became accustomed to guide and regulate, and when the exalted man was thrust into private life by the destructive revolution of 1848, he felt the blow very acutely, and never recovered the shock.

Among all the claims which M. Orfila has to the gratitude of his countrymen there is one which will certainly be highly prized among us, and will remind our readers of those worthy members of our profession who, in England, have founded societies for the relief of the decayed medical man, his widow, or children. M. Orfila, at the period to which our narrative has arrived, founded a provident association for the benefit of medical men or their families; and for many years he was the

president of the society. He constantly used his best efforts to promote its welfare, and succeeded in establishing it upon a sure and lasting basis. This society was not forgotten in the munificent legacies which M. Orfila made shortly before his death, and to which we shall presently allude.

But human prosperity is fragile: M. Orfila's career of usefulness and benevolence was arrested by the fall of Louis Philippe; he lost all his appointments, (except his professorship, which could not be taken from him,) and it is said that these changes have, to the hour of his dissolution, preyed upon his mind, and even hastened his death.

M. Orfila was not only replaced as Dean of the Faculty, but roughly called to account respecting the improvements and embellishments which had been made during his tenure of office; and the worthy and eminent man was, by envious detractors, sadly worried and taken to task. He endeavoured to find comfort in scientific pursuits, and tried to regain his shattered health by a journey to the Pyrenees, but his friends saw that his powers were gradually failing.

Only a few weeks ago, M. Orfila resolved to make all his benevolent legacies before his death, a sort of defiance (as justly mentioned by Professor Bérard) which the leveller of all human greatness resented by speedily snatching at his prey. More than £4000 were thus given by M. Orfila; firstly, to the Academy of Medicine, for prizes on medico-legal questions; secondly, to the Faculty of Medicine, for the preservation of the museum; thirdly, to the School of Pharmacy, for prizes; and to the Medical Benevolent Society for its praiseworthy purposes.

A very short time after these munificent gifts were announced, and whilst grateful addresses were being sent from all parts of France, M. Orfila was attacked with pneumonia, soon after his last lecture delivered on the 4th of March. Drs. Chomel, Andral, and Rostan attended him with the greatest solicitude, but it was soon too plain that the illustrious patient must sink. He expired at half-past-seven in the morning, on the 12th of March, and had, thirty-six hours previously, sought the comforts of the Christian religion.

The funeral was as numerous attended as that of Dupuytren and Broussais; all the distinguished men in the arts, sciences, medicine, and the government, as well as crowds of students, accompanied the remains of this great and good man to their last and peaceful abode. The corners of the pall were held by M. Bérard, Inspector of Public Instruction; M. P. Dubois, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine; M. Dubois, (d'Amiens,) Perpetual Secretary of the Academy of Medicine; and M. Bussy, Director of the School of Pharmacy. Orfila is buried close to the tombs of Lisfranc and Barruel, the latter of whom was his first and much revered teacher.

The works left by M. Orfila are the following:—1. On Forensic Medicine, with an Appendix on Legal Exhumations, with twenty-six plates, four vols., fourth edition in 1848; 2. Elements of Medical Chemistry, two vols., eighth edition in 1851; 3. On Toxicology, two vols., fifth edition in 1852; and a great number of papers and reports on Toxicology and Forensic Medicine, which have so largely contributed in placing both sciences on their present improved footing, and have gained for their author an imperishable fame.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE DEPUTATION TO LORD PALMERSTON.

[NOTE FROM DR. WEBSTER.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I perceive, in your last number, in the report of the deputation to Lord Palmerston, it is stated, that "Dr. Webster, as an old reformer, and one supposed to take rather extreme views, begged to express his entire concurrence in the Bill."

Truth, and my own consistency, require that this should be corrected. What I said, in addressing his lordship, was, (in effect,) "that as the oldest reformer present, except Mr. Wakley, holding what some considered rather extreme opinions, and having presided over and acted with a large section of the profession, my presence there with so many other reformers of different shades of opinion, showed a greater degree of unanimity than had prevailed at any former period. That I did not consider the measure which we were met to support as a perfect one; that there were some of its details open to objection, and doubtless there would be some opposition from different quarters; but I trusted his lordship would take charge of the Bill, and that by his well-known

influence, and his enlarged grasp of mind, he would be able to disarm opposition, by reconciling any conflicting interests, and removing any differences of opinion which might still exist.

That though imperfect in some points I would rather accept the Bill (with the improvements it might receive in Parliament) as a very large instalment of what was due to the profession and to the public interests, than see an agitation continued which would be detrimental to both.

Sir, I hope that Lord Palmerston, after due examination of so important a question, will be induced to recommend the Bill to his colleagues as a government measure, and that the College of Surgeons will not show any ungracious opposition to the wishes of a large majority of the profession.

There are details in the Bill which I trust will be still further modified. The most important of these appear to me to be:—

1st.—The composition and election, or appointment, of the general or superintending council.

2nd.—To give power to this council to appoint a body of examiners, independently of the medical corporations, to test candidates for practice in *all departments* of medical science.

3rd.—The age at which surgeons and physicians shall be licensed for general practice.

These points, however, will be duly discussed in meetings of the profession, and of the Association, which will be called together to support the Bill, and I have no doubt they will also receive ample attention in both Houses of Parliament. How far the Bill will realize what you and I, and many others have long contended for—a Faculty of Medicine—time alone will show: at present I beg the attention of the profession to the above points, and remain, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Dulwich, March, 1853.

GEORGE WEBSTER.

WRONGS OF MILITIA SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your valuable journal I observed, a few weeks since, that there was a petition in the course of signature from the medical officers of the militia: I should feel obliged by being informed of its nature. I was told most graciously by one of very high rank and authority that an amended Bill would soon be brought before the House, or new clauses introduced especially relating to the medical department. Having, some weeks since, expressed to my colonel the necessity of temporary hospital accommodation, and he entirely agreeing with me, most kindly wrote immediately on the subject; the result is the promise to which I allude. There are also several other points which require attention—viz., that the horses of mounted officers in the militia should be free from tax, like those in the yeomanry; that surgeons of militia regiments, who are almost all necessarily in private practice, should (as they are liable to be called out for a considerable time) be placed upon the permanent staff as formerly; that during the time of enrolling they should be allowed the same fees for inspecting volunteers as civil practitioners receive, for, independently of the loss of practice during their absence, the absolute expenses at an hotel must necessarily far exceed the present allowance; that assistant-surgeons should receive the same pay *during training* that army assistant-surgeons do. I have merely mentioned what alterations strike me as being very necessary, at the same time deprecating the expression of these views in any manner but in the most respectful, temperate, and gentleman-like language. That widely-circulated periodical, the *United Service Journal*, has most kindly given us the advantage of its powerful influence.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

AN OFFICER OF MILITIA AND CONSTANT READER.

March, 1853.

THE NORFOLK COUNTY ASYLUM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—During the last year you have considered the lunatic asylums of England worthy your attention; you have produced various leading articles most interesting to the medical profession, and of the greatest advantage to the public; you stated, in June last, that the “new law provided for an organized and systematic supervision of all the asylums in England and Wales, defective indeed and often illusory, as we have shown, was still capable of useful application.”

From what has lately happened at Bethlehem and the Bedford County Asylum, it would appear that our public

asylums should be placed under more direct supervision from the Commissioners in Lunacy than they are at the present time.

According to the present law of lunacy, the county magistrates have the power of appointing one of their officers as superintendant; as a rule they wisely appoint a medical officer, but are we not to a certain extent startled when we find that at the Norfolk County Asylum the *steward is the superintendant*, and the medical officer is a nonentity as far as the patients are concerned, except those who are considered by the steward to be sick; the latter has, among other duties, to “be responsible for the management and condition of the establishment, and shall have the *general treatment of the patients*,” in addition, he has to keep a journal, in which he must state “the name of every *patient fit for discharge*,” and all such other facts, observations, or suggestions, as he shall deem important relative to the condition or management of the asylum or the patients therein.

After the late disclosures at Bethlehem, does it not appear strange to think that the Commissioners in Lunacy allow such a system to go on where the mortality is very high, and the proportion of cures smaller than in any asylum in England, and which has not been visited by any Commissioner in Lunacy for *eighteen months*.

It would appear that the Commissioners are too small in number, and that they have not sufficient power.

I trust then that your powerful pen will uphold the rights of the profession, by inserting this letter, and expressing an opinion, when you consider that a medical officer has charge of 300 insane patients, with a salary only of £100 per annum.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

March, 1853.

JUSTITIA.

HULL MEDICAL PROTECTION SOCIETY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having observed in your columns, through the medium of your correspondents, some very stringent remarks relative to the Hull Medical Protection Association, which appear to me so perfectly uncalled-for and irrelevant, I feel myself disposed, with some reluctance, to offer a remark or two upon them. It is generally well known throughout this kingdom that the only legally-qualified medical practitioner recognised by its laws is compelled to possess the diploma of the Apothecaries' Company, and, in order to obtain it, must, at a great expense of labour, time, and money, thoroughly have completed their extended curriculum of medical investigations and studies, extending over many collateral sciences; and then, before receiving it, have submitted to a rigid and scrutinizing ordeal before the Court of Examiners. Why, therefore, should the laws of these realms enforce all this if totally unnecessary?—and unnecessary it must be, if any one, without any such qualification, be fully enabled and entitled to practise. But if necessary, and which I think every unprejudiced mind must unhesitatingly confirm, then to what and to whom must the legally-qualified practitioner look up for support and protection but to those laws which enforce it, and to those legislators who frame them? All must agree that the mere surgeon is no apothecary, and consequently can have no right to practise as such; he is therefore infringing upon the rights and privileges of his more fully-qualified medical brother, and surely, then, can have no just ground of complaint, should he ensconce himself behind his alma mater, and appeal to it and its laws for protection and retribution.

The Hull Medical Protection Association, therefore, in requiring the Apothecaries' diploma, is pursuing the only course consistent with right and justice, in upholding and maintaining the honour and the dignity of our noble profession, and without which procedure its name would be a misnomer.

Should you feel disposed to find a place in your valuable journal for the above remarks, I shall feel obliged, and am

Yours truly,

Enfield, March, 1853.

GEORGE KITCHING, M.D.

HOSPITAL FOR CONSUMPTION, BROMPTON.—The portion of the building completed affords accommodation for 90 in-door patients, and also has every convenience for out-door sick, of whom 100 are daily prescribed for. The new wing is covered in, and when finished will increase the beds to 230. There are at present no less than 176 patients suffering acutely from pulmonary disease waiting for admission. The Marquis of Westminster has consented to preside at the evening festival in June.