SULPHURIC ACID IN DIARRHOEA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Allow me to add my testimony in favour of the dilute sulphuric acid treatment in diarrhoea. I had for a long time under my care a case of phlyctenular ophthalmia, accompanied with constant purging. I tried almost all the usual remedies with very little effect, including a starch enema, with tincture of opium and catechu. The solution of the pernitrate of iron I found useful, but not by any means as beneficial as the dilute sulphuric acid in simple diarrhoea. The case referred to presented no other feature worth detailing. As I conceive your journal intended for publishing additions to, not refutations of, medical facts, I hope ere long to be able to furnish you with some original matter.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS WESTROPP,
Surgeon to the Birkenhead Eye and Ear
Dispensary.

Feb. 1854.

THE LATE TRIAL FOR MALAPRAXIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—My attention has only to-day been directed to the case of Seward versus Housley, and I take the liberty of writing to you who have so often come forward in defence of the persecuted to express my astonishment at the monstrous verdict brought in by the jury on the occasion.

I am altogether unknown to Mr. Housley, and therefore have less hesitation in urging him to move at once for a new trial, feeling quite confident that his professional brethren will assist him with the sinews of war, and I beg to offer my own guinea for this object.—I am, &c.

Feb. 1854.

A CONSTANT READER.

THE ROYAL MATERNITY CHARITY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am very glad to find that Dr. T. L. Blundell intends to appeal to the Committee for protection against those who, in his opinion, have placed the matter of the Royal Maternity Charity regarding his unprofessional conduct “before the public in a false point of view,” and who have done so by “deliberate misrepresentations,” “solely to gratify personal spite.” For my own part, being no doubt one of those alluded to by Dr. T. L. Blundell in his note, I am exceedingly anxious for a full and searching inquiry into the truth or falsehood of of the very grave charge in question. I have therefore written to the Committee, requesting it to take the subject under its consideration at once; and have sent a copy of Dr. Blundell's note (vide THE LANCET, Feb. 18th), in which he has stated his resolution “to meet manfully and unhesitatingly the result of the most rigid inquiry into all the circumstances involved.”

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Kingsland-road, Feb. 1854.

P. L. BURCHELL, M.B. Lond.

THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.

ON the 17th inst. a General Meeting of the Medical Practitioners of Brighton and the neighbourhood, convened by the committee of the Brighton and Sussex Medico-Chirurgical Society, was held in the Board Room, at the Dispensary, “for the purpose of taking into consideration the dismissal of Mr. Gay from the office of surgeon to the Royal Free Hospital.”

Dr. ORMEROD, President of the Society, occupied the chair, and their were also present—Mr. Lowdell and Mr. Oldham (Hon. Secs.), Mr. Brenchley, Dr. Wilson, Mr. J. King, Dr. Bayes, Mr. Jas. Dixon, Mr. Jos. Dixon, Mr. Cridland, Mr. Dade, Mr. Tatham, Mr. Winter, Dr. Holman, Mr. Smith, Dr. Allen, Mr. Hollis, Mr. W. Verrall, Mr. G. Browne, Dr. Branfoot, Mr. Whately, Mr. Fuller, Dr. Carter, Dr. Dill, Mr. Fenfold, Mr. Seabrook, Mr. Horne, and Mr. F. Martin.

The notice convening the meeting having been read by Mr. Lowdell,

The CHAIRMAN said,—Gentlemen, this meeting has been called on account of the dismissal of Mr. Gay. The circumstances seemed to require that the deliberation and the expression of feeling, if any, should come from us all, and not merely from the members of the society. You are all, probably, acquainted with the facts of the case as recorded in the journals. My office is rather to limit your consideration to a few of those

facts, than to give you the whole history, much of which is irrelevant to our purpose in meeting here. Mr. Gay, in March last, allowed his biography to appear, containing passages certainly somewhat offensive to the hospital with which he was connected, and laudatory of himself. I should remark that Mr. Gay acknowledges having contributed certain information as to his birth and parentage to the editor of the journal; but he denies having written this article himself, and Mr. A. Ross confesses to having written it. In December the committee of the Free Hospital dismissed Mr. Gay from his post, alleging this biography as the grounds for their act. You are to consider how far the grounds justified the act. I cannot pretend to unravel the whole of what has been written on both sides; the statements are so positive and so contradictory. Only let me disabuse your minds of one idea. The General court of Governors have been made to appear to have approved this decision of the committee, but the fact is that that decision has not been fairly laid before them. I would wish not to express my own feelings in any way to prejudice yours, but I must ask your attention to this point also, whether the conduct of the committee has been such as to accredit their decision? And lastly, I think that we owe it to ourselves to express our feelings as to that vain-glorious system of puffing biographies out of which this occurrence has grown. (Hear, hear.) These seem to me to be the chief points to be considered and resolved upon. I need scarcely add a request that notwithstanding the very personal character which this discussion has taken elsewhere, you will separate all such feelings from your minds, and discuss the question solely on its own merits. (Hear.)

Mr. HOLLIS felt proud at having been selected to propose the first resolution. He wished it to be understood most distinctly that he did not in any way give his countenance to the practice of puffing biographies. (Hear.) They were what he called a sort of advertising quackeries, which ought to be repudiated by every honourable man in the profession. (Applause.) He did not think the committee had anything whatever to do with the biography of Mr. Gay; they had gone altogether beyond their powers in the present case. This question was not one for their cognizance at all; but he thought that although Mr. Gay did not write the biography there could be little doubt that he had seen a proof impression of it, and under such circumstances he (Mr. Hollis) thought that Mr. Gay ought to have expunged those parts which, though reflecting honour upon himself, indirectly reflected a censure upon his colleagues. He could not, therefore, hold Mr. Gay altogether blameless. However, that did not justify the conduct of the committee, which he hoped would be discountenanced by the unanimous voice of the meeting. He moved, “That in the opinion of this meeting the dismissal of Mr. Gay from the office of surgeon to the Royal Free Hospital, upon the grounds alleged, was uncalled for, and that, considering he had faithfully discharged the duties of his office for seventeen years, such treatment was both unjust and unmerited.” (Hear, hear.)

Dr. HOLMAN seconded.

The motion was carried *nem. dis.*

Dr. JENKS said he had great pleasure in proposing the resolution put into his hands, because he thought it would meet the approbation of the meeting, and because also he thought it went at once to the root of all the evil and bad feeling which had been engendered by the expulsion of Mr. Gay from the Royal Free Hospital; he meant interference of the governing bodies of hospitals and public institutions of a similar nature in matters which did not strictly come under their jurisdiction. (Hear.) He thought that they, as professional men, ought to resist all persecution and undue influence to the best of their ability, otherwise, he thought, they would lose the position they now held as a profession, and they would have further resistance to make hereafter. (Hear.) He really believed that the exercise of undue power on the part of the Poor-law Board, had led to a great deal of evil in connexion with the profession. (Hear, hear.) That had been followed by the exercise of the same sort of contemptuous conduct on the part of the Board of Admiralty towards the naval assistant surgeons (hear), and finally, the Government themselves had taken up the matter, and the last Vaccination Act and Lunacy Act, had treated the profession with the greatest possible indignity. (Applause.) Under these circumstances he thought that they ought strongly to express their opinion upon this matter, and doing so he thought it would become this meeting to avoid all personality, and restrict themselves entirely to the question so far as it affected the interests of the medical profession. He had no doubt there were many gentlemen present who entertained strong opinions upon the subject, and they were per-