thus sacrificed. Yet this gentleman I have alluded to, is made an exception to this Somerset House rule, and is permitted, not only to enjoy private practice, but also that of a hospital (the Samaritan), unmolested. This, Sir, I think savours somewhat strongly of undue and unfair favouritism.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
March, 1855. C. N. W.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The medical profession, or at least such members of it as are convinced of what is due to their own sense of dignity and position, cannot fail to have been gratified by the proceedings at the great meeting of medical students at St. Martin's Hall on the 16th instant. The unanimity there displayed, the common-sense arguments adduced, and the good feeling which prevailed throughout, must not only excite the attention of Parliament, but, backed by the voice of public opinion, must at last force the Admiralty to place assistant-surgeons of the navy in their proper position on board ship.

This question has a far wider range even than this, as indirectly it affects the whole profession. Is it to be tolerated that two or three men in authority, because they individually entertain unworthy prejudices, are to ride rough-shod over the decisions of Parliament, and the wishes of a large and influential body of the community? Above all, is it to be believed that in the time of war and sudden emergency this great country will permit her brave sailors and marines to suffer, because two or three men in office hold certain opinions totally indefensible? Is the medical profession generally, and of the public service in particular, to be lowered and degraded much longer by the Admiralty appointing first- and second-year's students to dresserships in the navy, since they cannot obtain the services of a single well-educated surgeon, simply because the board do not choose to give way?

Surely the evidence of the Director-General of the Army and Ordnance Medical Department, frank and straightforward as it was, (notwithstanding the malice and strange obliquity of vision with which *The Times* regarded it,) must have convinced the Sebastopol Committee of the mal-administration of that branch of Her Majesty's service; not, as you justly remark, because the surgeons of the army were to blame, but because "the best-desired measures of the Director-General have been systematically frustrated by the senseless obstructions interposed by the Ordnance, the War Office, and the Commissariat."

Now, then, is the time, while this fact is before us, and at the commencement of what may be a long and severe struggle in the Baltic and Black Seas, for the profession and the public to take this most important matter into their own hands, and to insist on an immediate change. Let the wives and mothers, the fathers and sisters of those on active service think for one moment of their husbands and sons, their brothers, their nephews, or other relatives, exposed to the more imminent trials of life and health, with the additional danger arising from the absence of proper medical aid! If they are not already aware how short-handed in this respect so many of Her Majesty's ships are, the sooner they learn it, and aid in applying the remedy, the better. This remedy is to be obtained only by complete unanimity in the profession itself, by agitation out of doors, and by immediate petitioning of Parliament. The naval assistant-surgeons have, as I need hardly tell you, the best wishes of the medical officers of the army for their success. Their public position, however, prohibits them taking any active steps in the matter, otherwise they would long ago have done something for their naval brethren.

I cannot close these few lines without expressing my gratification at the excellent address of Mr. J. F. Clarke before the Medical Society of London on the 8th instant, in which the various points affecting the profession generally, and the defects in their social and political position, are admirably given.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
A REGIMENTAL SURGEON OF NEARLY
SEVENTEEN YEARS' SERVICE.

Manchester, March, 1855.

DR. ANDREW SMITH'S EVIDENCE.—IS CHLOROFORM A DEPRESSING AGENT?

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I cannot allow the following evidence of Dr. A. Smith before the Sebastopol Committee to pass unnoticed:—

"In cases where men, having received gunshot wounds which rendered immediate amputation necessary, were treated

differently, the *depressing* effects of chloroform would render recovery of the man less probable than that of a man who underwent the operation without the chloroform."

Having used and paid as much attention to the administration of chloroform and ether as most surgeons in this country, my experience confirms me in stating, when chloroform has been given in diseases requiring operation after great depression of the system or sudden accident, such as hernia, gunshot wounds, or laceration from machinery, I have invariably found it to have the most beneficial effect upon the patient, and instead of depressing him, it overcomes that extraordinary nervous exhaustion which a painful operation always entails. Having been one of the first to publish upon the effects of ether and chloroform in surgical operations, I am sorry to see the heads of the Army Medical Department continue their antiquated notions, and I trust the Crimea regimental surgeons will follow out their own opinions of this painless remedy, irrespective of the dictum of Drs. Smith and Hall.

I conclude, from the evidence of Dr. Smith may be traced the reason why the medicine chests lately supplied to the militia contain no chloroform.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
WM. PHILPOT BROOKES, M.D., F.R.C.S.
Cheltenham, March, 1855.

HISTORY OF THE EXCISION OF JOINTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The historical portion of Professor Syme's Clinical Lecture on "Excision of the Elbow-joint," reported in *THE LANCET* of March 3rd, is, for one so well informed, less perfect than could have been wished.

Previous to Mr. Park's cases of excision of the knee-joint, and his suggestions as to excision at the elbow-joint, (1782, translated and published in France, 1784,) the latter operation (excision of the lower end of the humerus) had been performed by Mr. Wainman, of Shripton, in 1760; and again, twenty years subsequently, Mr. Justamond, of London, removed the head of the ulna. Moreau came on the stage in 1786, and here Mr. Syme commences his history.

I remain, Sir, yours &c.,
March, 1855. D. R. RANKIN.

MEDICAL ETIQUETTE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Mr. Hatton's letter of the 12th inst. contains many inaccuracies, erroneous suggestions, and *false* inferences, the whole of which are capable of easy correction. I consider, however, that the fact of Mr. Hatton having declined my proposal to submit the matter in dispute between us to arbitration, *after having publicly stated his willingness "to refer the case to any professional friend,"* is a sufficient and significant answer to any statements he may make.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Manchester, March 20th, 1855. JOHN AIKENHEAD, M.D.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A letter from Mr. Hatton having appeared in your columns, in which he has unjustifiably imputed to me conduct unbecoming a gentleman, I beg the favour of your inserting a few explanatory remarks.

Undoubtedly, as you yourself suggested, a friendly arbitration would have been the right proceeding in a case of this kind. Mr. Hatton, however, declined this method of settling the dispute when honourably proposed by Dr. Aikenhead.

The following are the facts of the case as far as I am concerned:—Within a day or two of the occurrence which led to his dispute with Dr. Aikenhead, I received a communication from him, through a friend, imputing unprofessional conduct to Dr. Aikenhead, and impugning the character of the Medico-Ethical Association. I regarded this communication as a rudeness to me, in the position of founder of that institution. Afterwards, I learned with astonishment that Mr. Hatton had industriously circulated a statement to the prejudice of Dr. Aikenhead's professional character, at the same time vituperating the Association, without having first complained to Dr. Aikenhead personally, or having afforded that gentleman an opportunity of explaining.

Conduct like this, in any of the relations of life, is, in my opinion, most unpardonable.

I now come to the charge that I retailed a *private conversation*, and that I improperly interfered in the dispute.

Mr. Hatton introduced this subject in the presence of four