granted) the pelvis and abdomen may be considered as together forming a cylinder, in which the viscera, so far as their attachments allow, act as a piston descending by gravity towards the diaphragm, and by its descent removing all atmospheric pressure from that side of the vagina, or, in other words, leaving it in vacuo.

I do not think his words can be taken to express less than this, but I will quote them to guard against misrepresentation. They are these:—"The pelvic and abdominal viscera all gravitate towards the epigastric region, the atmosphere enters the vagina, and then pressing with a weight of fourteen pounds upon the square inch, soon stretches this canal out to its utmost limits." (THE LANCET, Oct. 8th, p. 414.) That is to say, Dr. Sims asserts a *working* pressure of fourteen pounds per inch on the side of the septum, and we all know that he can only obtain that by the removal of the *whole* fourteen pounds per inch from the other side. Of course the impossibility of this is self-evident, since it pre-supposes a cylinder of *rigid* walls capable of withstanding this enormous pressure without collapse, and a piston whose weight exceeds fourteen pounds per square inch of transverse section, which, on the area of the female pelvic brim, would amount to about two hundred and fifty pounds. No doubt the gravitation of the viscera tends to separate the vaginal walls, and certainly the admission of air is necessary before such separation can take place; but that the atmospheric column exerts the active distending force ascribed to it by Dr. Marion Sims I am still compelled to deny.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Weston-super-mare, Nov. 1864. EDWARD MARTIN, M.R.C.S.

A MEDICAL CORONER FOR EAST SUSSEX.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—By the death of the late coroner, Mr. Gell, there is a vacancy in the coronership of this district.

The county treasurer, who has to audit the coroner's accounts, oddly enough, offers himself. So also does a well-known local archæologist, "on the ground of considerable study of the ancient and responsible office of coroner, though not a member of either the legal or medical profession." A third candidate, clerk to one of the county benches, considers the sifting of evidence in petty thefts, &c., on which he has for ten years been engaged, has given him "experience in the discharge of duties very analogous to those of a coroner."

A fourth candidate is Dr. Beard, assistant-physician to the Sussex County Hospital, a graduate of Cambridge, and a physician who enjoys the esteem and confidence of the profession in Brighton and in the county. He is also a Sussex man, and is, moreover, a man of sound sense and conciliatory manners. I trust the profession will unite to secure his return, and I ask your powerful aid to this end. The election rests with the freeholders of both divisions of the county—East and West Sussex.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

C. L. ROBERTSON, M.D. Cantab.

Sussex Lunatic Asylum, Hayward's Heath,
November 8th, 1864.

THE METROPOLITAN CLUB.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your correspondent "M.D." opens up a very comprehensive plan for the foundation of an institution which shall in itself comprise a club, a museum, a library, and a hall for scientific meetings. In the course of time it may be that the Metropolitan Club will thus expand itself, if it be generally supported by the medical profession; but it is better that it should grow up to this point gradually rather than that our efforts should fail altogether because we attempt too much. At present it is not proposed to build a club-house, but to begin our operations in suitable premises in the neighbourhood of the west-end clubs. We shall thus not encumber ourselves with a large debt at starting which may be difficult to be got rid of, yet we shall be able to afford every ordinary comfort and advantage which clubs usually offer. The Metropolitan Club will not be confined solely to members of the medical profession. Already a number of noblemen and gentlemen interested in

philanthropic endeavours have joined it, and in this combination of interests the chief usefulness of the club will consist.

It is not for me here to enter into details, nor to enumerate the names already upon our list. I shall be happy to furnish particulars to any who may write to me for them. With many thanks for your kind support,

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

HERBERT FRY,

Secretary pro tem.

Cecil-street, Nov. 1864.

MR. ERASMUS WILSON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Whilst the discussion on the formation and downfall of St. John's Hospital is still proceeding, it would be satisfactory to the profession if Mr. Erasmus Wilson would state how he became connected with that institution. At the same time, he might explain his association with the *London Journal* as "Medical Editor," in which capacity he gave gratuitous advice on diseases of the skin in the columns of that periodical to any person who addressed him. The friends of Mr. Erasmus Wilson have also regretted to observe his name on the labels of certain vendors of hairwashes and pomades.

I trust that Mr. Wilson will be able to give a satisfactory account of these matters.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

November, 1864.

AMICUS.

** We will willingly open our columns to any explanation Mr. Erasmus Wilson may think it right to offer.—ED. L.

CORPULENCE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A few words to prevent the impending evils of Bantingism may serve to aid your laudable endeavours to set bounds to a folly, which it is likely will have many followers to their fatal cost. We are too well aware of the dangers arising from a restricted dietary not to desire to guard persons against its adoption. The vast variety of viands supplied by a bountiful Providence seems essential to the perfect development of the faculties of mind and body: under a restricted diet, either one or the other becomes impaired. The question in cases of obesity is a question rather of *quantity* than of *quality*. Keep your mouth shut and your eyes open; or, in other words, eat, drink, and sleep less, and use more exercise as the ability for exertion increases, soon a reduction of fat will be effected. In confirmation of Bantingism, I may mention the case of a former Irish M.P., one of the fattest, most unwieldy patients I ever had, whose only beverage was toast-water sweetened to a syrup; but he was most self-indulgent in every other respect; and of a very fat lady, who sucked sweets almost night and day, "wherein was excess:" *ne quid nimis*.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Nov. 1864.

M.D.

PARISIAN MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE Medical Congress at Lyons, after twelve sittings laboriously and actively employed, has terminated its operations. Previous to breaking up, the administrative committee submitted to the members the necessity of an annual meeting. This proposal met with unanimous consent. M. Barrier, the president, then closed the session with a short complimentary discourse. It would be useless to expatiate on the advantages which may be derived from medical congresses in general, and to quote the familiar saying that truth proceeds from the conflict of opinions. I will only mention that the late Congress, to which more than three hundred members had sent in their adhesion, and during which some of the most important questions in medicine were submitted to debate, has been perfectly successful. The sittings were all brilliantly attended, and the discussions proved most interesting and instructive. In my last communication I gave a short sketch of one of its sittings;