unnoticed for years. I am convinced that many men are cut off in mid-life from this cause, who might be saved if their true complaint had been discovered, and actively treated.

One eminent Scotsman, I feel convinced, perished from this cause. The severe and anomalous pains which he is represented as having suffered before his death, were exactly similar to those in Mr. B.'s case, and in others that I have seen. The name of that great man the reader must discover for himself, for I cannot bring my mind to the open mention of it in connection with this subject.

Trusting that this case may be a useful warning, I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN COWAN, Surgeon.
2, Roxburgh-street, Edinburgh,
6th December, 1839.

SIR CHARLES BELL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Being a graduate of Edinburgh, and having a diploma from the College of Surgeons there, I take the liberty of addressing you, for the purpose of correcting some statements which appeared in your Number for the 23rd of November, regarding the manner in which the chairs of the Edinburgh University are filled.

No one who is acquainted with the valuable works of a practical nature which have been given to the public by Sir Charles Bell, and with the fact of his having been actively employed as a surgeon to the Middlesex Hospital for a very long period, can reasonably doubt that it was by the reputation gained by those works, and that practice, that the Town Council were guided, and not by his justly great physiological eminence.

As regards your remarks on the falling-off in Sir Charles Bell's class (setting aside, of course, the first year, which, from various causes, always shows the largest numbers), the decrease has not been such as to warrant your using the expression of *fast diminishing*; and the reasons for that decrease, which can be proved to have taken place, are, partly the general decrease of numbers in all the medical classes, and in a far greater degree the regulation passed by the Edinburgh College of Surgeons, by which a course of military surgery, of three lectures weekly, shall be allowed to stand for one of the two prescribed surgical courses. The temptation thus given to students, a great proportion of whom are looking to the army, need not be dwelt upon.

Further, with regard to the students' opinions of merit in a teacher, Edinburgh, I grieve to say, shows too often how they treat

those professors whose lectures they do not value; and I can affirm, that during three sessions that I have attended the medical classes of Edinburgh, that of Sir Charles Bell was, with one exception (that of Dr. Christison), the most distinguished by order and attention on the part of the students.

Trusting that the desire to have justice done to Sir Charles Bell will excuse the trouble I have given you, I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

VERUS.

London, 25th Nov., 1839.

* * We adhere to the opinion that Sir Charles Bell obtained the chair at Edinburgh from the same reputation and kind feeling which procured for him the honour of knighthood—with the additional recommendation that the councillors, in selecting their countryman, elected a titled professor into their University. Nine-tenths of the profession, without derogating from his merits as a surgeon, will coincide in this impression. With regard to the alleged "failure" of his election, as a means of reviving the attractions of the University, our statement is unshaken. The classes have *decreased*. The objectionable system of election shall willingly have the full benefit of our correspondent's reasons for the diminution. If the students of Edinburgh are rude in their demonstrations of dissatisfaction with incompetent teachers, we must regret the circumstance, for politeness is cheap enough; but the same judgment which leads them to pay due respect to the great talents of Sir CHARLES BELL, warns them to be angry at worse appointments.

DISPENSARY FOR THE DISEASES OF THE LUNGS.

MR. GRAY AND DR. SHERRIFFS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—My wit seems to have cruelly afflicted Dr. Sherriffs with the same disorder, for I am not only witty myself, but the cause of wit in others, which your readers will easily perceive without the aid of spectacles. In the reply of Dr. Sherriffs to my letter on his Lung Repertorium, he has advanced a truth in the preceding portion of his reply, establishing my superlative shrewdness and nice discrimination in detecting hypocritical schemes. He says "Oh, no;" but I say "Oh, yes;" for I do walk abroad with my eyes open, and have much excellent vision to boot, also amongst my other varied endowments. I am a capital hand at somnambulism, so that, asleep or awake, my judg-

ment is never at fault; and such a nose for smell, that I can discover filth from my residence as far off as Charlotte-street, Portland-place. Dr. Sherriffs, in his desire to establish my character on the basis of imperishable renown, has, with a happiness of diction and a fine feeling of charitableness toward me, stated that I am glaringly deficient in that article called truth: this is delightful beyond measure. Now, I shall endeavour to dissect Dr. Sherriffs, with the view, if possible, to discover whether that jewel, truth, really exists in him in such size as entitles him to correct the wanderings of my imagination. First, he denies that he ever put forth a pretension to cure consumption in every case. Now for the proofs of my statement. In a fly-leaf annexed to the Prospectus of his Lung Sputum, I find these words:—"In the press, and shortly will be published, 'Consumption Cured; or, a Letter to the British Public on the Mortality, Causes, Successful Treatment, and Prevention of Consumption. By E. B. Sherriffs, M.D., F.R.C.S.E., Consulting Physician in Diseases of the Lungs, formerly Lecturer on Anatomy and Physiology in the College of Edinburgh.'" The medical world was not aware that Dr. Monro had resigned the chair of anatomy and physiology in favour of Dr. Sherriffs; however, this is nuts to crack for Christmas. Now, Sir, he here plainly states that he cures and prevents consumption. What does this amount to? He does not say in certain cases; he asks not for selected ones. Is it not a logical syllogism, that if he cures and prevents consumption, of course he does so in all cases? If he fails to cure and prevent consumption, his boasted puff falls to the ground. If Dr. Sherriffs had, in his Letter to the British Public, said that he had discovered a mode of treatment by which, in certain cases of consumption, a cure would be realised, of necessity I never would have dared to attack him; but to cure and prevent is such an Herculean task that it stifles my imagination, and the attempt to swallow such a huge comfit is so appalling to gullets of small size, such as mine is, that, with all imaginable respect to the worthy proposer, I declined the undertaking, and he finds fault with me for resisting his elephantine bolus. So much for my first lie.

Now for the second. "Mr. John Gray," he says, "continues his veritable relation that Dr. Sherriffs states he is the only physician in London who understands and restricts his attention to consumption." Dr. Sherriffs relates another most palpable falsehood. "I never gave such intimation." Well, there is nothing like facing danger in a bold manner; it shows that you have the warranty of rectitude to back you, or, on the contrary, an awful stock of impudence; this last commodity the Doctor possesses to satiety, which I shall show by the following

abstract from his Lung Elysium:—"From the circumstance of Dr. Sherriffs being the only physician in London who restricts his whole attention to the study and practice of diseases of the lungs, the directors beg to observe that the patients will have the advantage of a more exact study and a more ready discrimination of their cases, than could be so conveniently afforded by physicians engaged in more general practice."!!! What is this tantamount to?—"The only physician—a more exact study—a more ready discrimination, than by other physicians. Is it not equivalent to understanding diseases of the lungs better than any other physician in London? And yet he has the effrontery to deny that he ever gave any such intimation, and to lay to my name the stigma of falsehood. As to his other assertion, that I am utterly unpractised in the conduct of a gentleman—there, indeed, he may be right, for as to the term gentleman, considerable perplexity has enfolded me regarding its proper acceptation. But this I can tell him, since ever I had the honour of being admitted to the fellowship of the medical profession, a conquest which I performed by my own exertions, from poverty having risen to respectability, not by the aid of *ad captandum* puffs and bare-faced assertions of superior skill, but by the steady progress of sound esteem and mutual confidence on the part of those who did me the honour of requesting my aid in their ailments, whether of wind or limb,—I have conducted myself as becomes my calling.

In reading over the prospectus which has been issued by Dr. S., I find these words:—"But it is a melancholy truism, that in London 13,399 lives are annually sacrificed (never more nor less) to this heavy affliction to humanity." Underneath is this note:—"It is fair to observe, that the report of the Registrar-General, a report based on information generally derived from the most ignorant of the population, or from persons wholly unacquainted with the nature of disease, consequently, a report of no value as relating to the causes of death, gives the annual mortality in London, from consumption and decline, at the rate of 7,754 per annum." This is a sample of elegant composition that none but Dr. Sherriffs could have accomplished. Ye medical men of London, here is a dose for you, gratis!—you that give in reports of all the causes of death where you have attended. Dulcet words! Most ignorant—wholly unacquainted with the nature of disease—consequently your statements are of no value! For how can they be when this transcendent genius contrives to multiply 7,754, like Falstaff's men in buckram, into 13,399? Where he got the fractional 5,645, to make up his sum-total of 13,399, I cannot divine; but he is no common man, and that is a truism too. As I proceed, I find that there

is at present, incredible as it may appear, no institution in London for the medical treatment of diseases of the lungs. None, indeed! I recollect one in Union-street, Bishopgate; I happen to know something of that too, for I used to dole out the wash of physic to the poor creatures who came for relief. May God forgive me for being accessory to the fact! He allows of one in Artillery-place, for asthma; I believe that has something to do with the lungs. Besides, does not every hospital and dispensary in London administer advice and medicine to every one who applies, with lungs or no lungs at all? No, no, Doctor; don't attempt to fly before you are fully fledged; you aim too high; besides, who do you think can afford to give you five pounds per annum to become subscriber? It is, by far, too much. What think you of coming down in your price—say five shillings per annum? You will be able out of that to stuff yourself occasionally with a capital haggis or a singed sheep's head. I have no ill-feeling towards you, believe me, for all my banter; but I am determined, whenever an opportunity exists, of attacking false principles; and on the least semblance or bare approach to quackery, in the regular and well-educated medical man, I shall, at all hazard, do so. I now conclude, with this short intimation to "Old Subscriber," that I know more of the Lisson-grove Asylum than he seems to know. I happen to have a very curious thing in my possession that did the Asylum a world of good, when in existence. At present I beg to remain your humble servant,

JOHN GRAY.

7, Upper George-street,
Bryanstone-square, Dec. 14th, 1839.

THE LANCET.

London, Saturday, December 21, 1839.

It is difficult, in the present day, to keep pace with the progress of Medical Reform. Every week we have to announce the formation of an association, the appearance of a letter, the publication of a pamphlet, or the accession of a convert to the cause, all more or less favourable to the establishment of liberal principles upon the ruins of the self-elective corporations. The day of action is come. Medical practitioners have a clear idea of their rights; and they now demand, with an ardour which cannot be suppressed, a controul over their funds, the right of self-government which has been conceded to the

municipal corporations, and the guarantee of privileges which have hitherto been but a delusive mockery. To sit tamely down under the TWENTY-ONE self-elective Councillors of Lincoln's-Inn-fields, the Blackfriars Company, or the insolent Fellows of Pall-mall, is felt to be an indelible disgrace. Helotism is no longer held to be honourable. Even top-apothecaries no longer hug their chains. Physicians, surgeons, general practitioners—call them what you will—see that it is just that every well-educated man in the profession should enjoy the titles and honours to which his talents and industry entitle him; that whether living in London or in the Country, the highest offices should be thrown open to every honourable ambition; that nephews and noodles should no longer thrust aside the ablest practitioners in the kingdom; and that instead of nineteen feeble, isolated, conflicting, irresponsible Examining Boards, the profession should be organised in one representative Faculty, which would shelter the profession from oppression, break down monopolies, and, at the same time, protect the public from the impositions of impudence, ignorance, and quackery. Honours and rewards they are convinced should be heaped upon the men who serve the public by the free suffrages of their brethren, and be the marks of talent and virtue, instead of wreathing the brows of imbecility, or glittering upon the breasts of apostacy. In promoting the science of medicine, in securing the diffusion of its advantages among all classes of the community, the poor as well as the rich,—in upholding the rights of its professors, and in doing justice to those who have deserved well, who will not join? In the glorious cause of Medical Reform, who can remain neutral and guiltless? Let that man hold up his recreant hand and secure the derision of mankind.

Mr. RICHARD JONES, of Leamington, has recently penned a small volume of *Observations on Medical Education, with a View to Legislative Interference*,* which he has dedi-

* Murray: 1839.