which he suggested an easy and effectual mode of relief, by dividing the annular ligament.

Mr. Syme has also published two letters upon the subject of medical reform, addressed respectively to Sir James Graham, Bart., and the Lord-Advocate of Scotland. In these publications he has endeavoured to show the inexpediency and impracticability of classifying the medical profession by legislative enactments, and the propriety of allowing all its members to obtain the right of practice on an equal amount of education.

Enough has been stated to prove that Mr. Syme has not obtained his present exalted and distinguished position, as the first surgeon in Scotland, without having sedulously devoted the untiring energies of a powerful and cultivated mind to the arduous duties and responsibilities of the important public offices he has so long and so honourably occupied.

ROYAL ORTHOPÆDIC HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—“Audi alteram partem” is an old and a very good proverb, and the British public has ever been found ready to pay deference to it, and before deciding any question under discussion to hear both sides of the argument.

Dr. Little, not satisfied with circulating his most extraordinary statement, every paragraph of which, nearly, teems with false statements and misrepresentations, has thought proper to send it to you for insertion in your columns. The reply I have under preparation will shortly be completed, but rather old and voluminous documents are necessary to the refutation of Dr. Little’s omniferous and grandiloquent claims to the foundership of the Royal Orthopædic Hospital, namely, in a financial, legislative, executive, medical, and general point of view, and first as sole founder, and then as a partner in the firm of Adams, Harris, and Little. My present object is to request the favour of the governors of the Hospital, the medical and surgical profession, and the public, to suspend their judgment, and to afford me the necessary time for effecting that which I feel no doubt whatever of effecting, namely, of depriving Dr. Little of all his borrowed plumes, and of reducing him to his original littleness.

I beg you will do me the common justice to insert this letter in your columns, you having stated, on what authority you do not say, and I do not care, (for be it what or whose it may it is entirely false,) that Dr. Little founded the Hospital; and that when my reply is ready, you will also give it insertion in THE LANCET, that all who peruse your journal may have an opportunity of judging for themselves to whom the disputed title actually belongs, and in what senses of the term.

I have the honour to be, in the meantime, and until some claimant can be found to have a more secure title to it, Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

QUARLES HARRIS,
Founder of the Royal Orthopædic Hospital.

** We are under the necessity of requesting that Mr. Harris will compress his statements into as brief a space as possible, otherwise it may be impossible for us to find room for his communication.—ED. L.

THE POOR-LAW BOARD AND THE LIVERPOOL MEDICO-ETHICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I take leave to transmit you the enclosed copy of a memorial addressed to the Poor-Law Board, together with the reply, and to request their insertion in your journal.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN HARRICKS,
Liverpool, Jan. 15, 1851. Hon. Sec. Liverpool Medico-Ethical Society.

To the Honourable the Poor-Law Board.

The council of the Liverpool Medico-Ethical Society having had their notice directed to the complaints and the existing state of the poor-law medical officers of England, desire to request your attention to the same, believing that your honourable board possess the means of remedy, either by the exercise of your present jurisdiction or by your official application to parliament for the requisite authority.

The council do not deem it necessary at present to enter into the particulars of individual cases of hardship, from a conviction that the records of your own office must furnish the most con-

clusive mass of evidence that the present system is fraught with general injustice and frequent degradation to the medical practitioners employed under the provisions of the poor law; they would therefore merely refer to the following more or less recent cases—viz., those of Mr. Tatham and Huddersfield board; Mr. Hyett and Cheltenham board; Mr. Allen and Chorlton board; acts of boards of guardians in Manchester, Liverpool, Leighton-Buzzard, St. Pancras, Weymouth, Dorchester, &c.

The points that become most prominent, on a review of the foregoing instances, are—oppressive and insulting conduct on the part of boards of guardians towards their medical officers; inadequacy of remuneration; opposition to the spirit of the poor law, and neglect of the poor by their being “farmed out,” or by the suspension of the “medical order;” guardians constituted judges of the nature of medical or surgical cases; collision of medical with relieving officers; unwillingness and incompetence of guardians to estimate the nature or risks of medical services, whilst they are at the same time trusted with undue power over, and that their interests are totally opposed to, their medical staff; and the anomalous position in which the profession is placed, by having a large and important section of it placed under the control of a body in which it has not a representative, which is often from motives of expediency opposed to it, and whose constitution and tendencies cannot therefore be received as likely to permit the exercise of strict impartiality towards it.

From these and other considerations the council are led to the opinion that the fundamental changes sought for by the poor-law surgeons themselves are both just and necessary, and that they alone will go far to remove the evils and anomalies complained of. They are, responsibility to medical authority, permanence of office, and proportionate payment; by the adoption of these the council believe that you will improve and tend to exalt in public opinion your medical staff; and they desire earnestly to impress this their opinion upon your honourable board, and respectfully to hope that you will feel it your duty, with the least possible delay, to apply to parliament for the power requisite to carry the proposed measures into effect.

RICHD. FORMBY, President.
THOS. BLACKBURN, } Vice-Presidents.
ROBT. BICKERSTETH, }
JOHN HARRICKS, Hon. Secretary.

Poor Law Board, Somerset House,
2nd January, 1851.

SIR,—I am directed by the poor-law board to acknowledge the receipt of the memorial addressed to them by the council of the Liverpool Medico-Ethical Society, and signed by the president and vice-presidents of the Society, in which they draw the attention of the board to the existing state of the poor-law medical officers of England, and suggest that measures should be taken to remedy the grievances of which they complain. I am directed to state that the memorial will receive the careful consideration of the board.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
W. J. LUMLEY, Assist. Secretary.

To the Secretary of the Liverpool Medico-Ethical Society.

OBITUARY.—Died, on Tuesday, January 21st, at his residence in Piccadilly, Manchester, R. Thorpe, Esq., F.R.C.S., long one of the most eminent surgeons in that city. He was the son of Mr. John Thorpe, an eminent surgeon, who resided in Manchester for a number of years. The deceased was educated at the Manchester Free Grammar School. He then became a pupil of his father, and commenced that career which in future life was destined highly to distinguish him. Having passed through the usual course of instruction in London, he returned to Manchester, and commenced the practice of his profession. He became connected with the Manchester Royal Infirmary in 1812, and continued to perform the duties which devolved upon him with untiring assiduity until 1849, when he resigned the office of surgeon. He was elected the same day one of the consulting surgeons to the institution, and held that honourable position at his death, in conjunction with his old schoolfellow and attached friend through life, Mr. J. Ainsworth. Mr. Thorpe was distinguished both for professional skill and the benevolence of his character, and unostentatious manner. Able and enthusiastic as he was in the pursuit of his profession, we do not hear that he published anything upon any department of medical science; and though he was possessed of literary tastes, his public appearances as a man of letters were very few indeed. His funeral was to take place on Wednesday last, at Blackley, where the family possess a grave.—*From the Manchester Examiner.*