

THE LAWLESS COMMITTEE'S "ADDITIONAL DONATIONS."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As my name was rather conspicuously mentioned in the last LANCET, in reference to a subscription to the National Association, I trust you will publish the following brief statement. Seeing so large and respectable a list of names of gentlemen uniting for the express purpose (as I understood) of opposing the objectionable parts of Sir James Graham's Physic-and-Surgery Bill, and also for obtaining our just rights as members of the College of Surgeons, I called at the Committee Room, in Hanover Square, on the 19th of February last, and, meeting a member of the committee (I believe Mr. Peregrine) in the room, I told that gentleman, that, in registering my name, I *protested* most decidedly against being a party, in any way, to a new incorporation establishing an inferior grade, and that I trusted that so large a body co-operating together could not fail to effect a satisfactory alteration in the Charter of the College of Surgeons. Mr. Peregrine said he had no doubt that such would be the case. I afterwards received several letters and weekly reports from the Committee, postage free; and, in consequence, on the 21st of April, I called at the office in Regent-street, and paid there a subscription of one guinea, as advertised in their "Transactions" of June 2nd. I must confess that, like yourself and hundreds more, I have been all along deceived by the committee, for had I known what Mr. Ansell, the hon. secretary, so explicitly stated at the last general meeting, "that the *first and only* object of that committee was to form a new incorporation of general practitioners," I should most certainly never have joined the Association in any way.—I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

WILLIAM HUGHES, M.R.C.S.E.

High Holborn, June 10th, 1845.

P.S. I shall instantly withdraw my name from the books of the Association, and regret that I cannot recall my misapplied subscription. W. H.

ENFRANCHISEMENT IN THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

MR. DENHAM, of Hereford, says, that "the number of signatures to the following petition might have been increased to a hundred or more, if longer time could have been devoted to obtaining them; but (he adds) the country practitioners are often many miles removed from each other, and there is great risk of not finding them at home. There was only one refusal, and that was from an old apothecary about retiring from practice. Every gentleman who could be met with at home, was with us heart and soul. THE COLLEGE, and that alone, was the cry, and nothing more, and we will not have less. You will not find the name of more than one gentleman to the petition who has been connected with the profession less than twenty years: several of them have been in practice longer than that time.

"My good and indefatigable friend, Samuel Millard, is a host to us. I wrote to him on the subject of inertness, and the next night found him at my door. We agreed to devote the following day, at all hazards, to the cause, and to him, as he was forced to go home, that day's ride was a journey of more than fifty miles. One such spirit in each town would ensure success to any cause."

The following is a copy of the petition:—

To the Honourable the Commons, &c.

The humble Petition of Members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, &c. in the County of Hereford, humbly sheweth—

That your petitioners are utterly opposed to the Medical Bill now before Parliament, and earnestly pray for its immediate rejection, because it proposes to deprive the members of the College of Surgeons of England of their vested rights.

That your petitioners cannot and will not be satisfied with anything short of a full and perfect recognition of those rights which, as members of the Royal College of Surgeons, they have by their oath of admission to the College sworn to maintain.

THE RIGHTS OF STUDENTS UNDER THE NEW BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me, through the medium of your influential journal, to address a few remarks to those gentlemen who are justly protesting against the intended alterations in medical affairs, which will seriously militate against them as students. The anticipated change may, it is true, prove beneficial in

maintaining the dignity of the profession, but still I consider it reasonable to expect that a retrospective view should not be taken as regards gentlemen now attending lectures, compelling them to submit to the new regulations. I have known it said, that if the ensuing Bill was not (when in force) to embrace all those who had not passed their examination, hundreds or more would enter their names and claim to be exempt, as having attended lectures. However, the most reasonable plan would be, to ascertain the names of those gentlemen who have registered at the Hall or College as late as the commencement of the last winter session, and I consider it an act of great injustice if a retrospective power is to be granted, which will, I know, most seriously militate against those students who are now studying under the regulations authorized by the College of Surgeons.

I think, Sir, your own ideas on the subject are in accordance with mine, and I sincerely trust that further notice on this subject will be taken by those gentlemen who are interested in the welfare of the present class of young medical men. I am rather astonished that many of our schools of medicine have not followed the example set them, and protested against the injustice of an act of this kind.

A meeting of all the students in medicine, who have been, even during the last session, studying in this metropolis, should be convened, and arrangements entered into to protest against this clause to those gentlemen in whom this power may be vested, and I have not the least doubt, when it is known how seriously this Act will operate against many, as regards their medical studies, attention will be paid to it; all those who have registered their studies as late as October last ought to be exempted.

I sincerely trust that the injustice of this Act will be farther noticed by those who are interested in it, and at present I leave it to those more competent than myself to expatiate on this anxious point. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A MEMBER OF THE PROFESSION.

Little St. Thomas Apostle-court, Queen-street, Cheapside.

THE THEORY OF VISION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—When the eye is extracted by the anatomist from an animal recently killed, and an object is placed before it, and a sheet of white paper behind, the image of the object is found, as we know, depicted upon the paper in an inverse position. As the paper for this purpose performs the office of the retina, it is evident that all objects are painted (if I may so use the expression) upon the retina in a position the reverse of that in which they in reality exist.

It has been concluded from this, and physiologists have laid it down, that we see objects upside-down, and that it is only by education—that is, by experience, and the exercise of our judgment,—that we are enabled to see correctly, and to place the different objects in their proper point of view; and this doctrine I heard Mr. Arago, the distinguished astronomer, forcibly insist upon at a public lecture which that learned professor gave in Paris, in the month of March last.

When we consider the unquestionable omnipotence of the Creator, which cannot be more beautifully and convincingly exemplified than in the wonderful organization of the human body, it is not a little surprising that scientific men should so hastily have inferred that the impression upon the human mind must necessarily correspond with the position of the image upon the retina, and that the Deity should be wanting in a contrivance to do that which is effected by man in the camera obscura—namely, restoring the objects to their right position.

To suppose that the Creator should have allowed so important an organ as the eye to furnish an erroneous sensation, and lead the mind into a delusion, which the experience and fallible judgment of man is left to correct, is a notion so unphilosophical that it is extraordinary how it should have entered into the human imagination, and, still more so, that it should remain to the present day as an undisputed proposition.

That the mind, however, (notwithstanding what philosophers may think proper to assert,) is not left to wander in error until education shall have taught us the fallacy of our vision, and that the Deity has found the means (however undiscoverable we may find the process) of presenting objects to the mind in the situation in which they actually exist, will be found to be unquestionable, when we examine the subject with a little critical acumen.

For example:—Take a piece of polished steel wire, of two inches in length, with one of the ends painted red, and place this object before the eye. Or, again, instead of one of the ends being coloured red, let it receive a mark so minute as not to be distinguished without the aid of a lens, and let this object be