

Banting, myself, and our daughters into the alleged mismanagement of the Royal Hospital for Incurables. In this article you say "their report appears in the *Athenæum* of Saturday last." A sense of justice to ourselves, and of equity to the institution, compel us to repudiate the partial statement contained in the *Athenæum* of the 2nd instant. We sent to that journal a full statement of the results of our investigation into nearly all the charges; and we deem it to be unfair to the public at large, who are watchful observers of this discussion, deceiving to the large constituency who support the institution, and cruel to the helpless sufferers who are the recipients of its blessings, to cull from our report that which might give the semblance of a justification for the *Athenæum's* original charges, but carefully to eliminate those portions which contradict the majority of them. Our report ought to have been either adopted or rejected. It was unjust to all parties that it should have been mutilated; and especially was it insulting to us, who had given so much time and care to the subject, that the result of our investigation should be treated so cavalierly. Any other journal might have exercised its volition in accepting or rejecting our report; but the *Athenæum*, having initiated the charges, was morally bound by the rules of equity and of honourable journalism to admit it. By rejecting the evidence of four unbiased witnesses, the managers of that journal have made themselves partisans in the matters at issue, and have sacrificed the interests of charity at the shrine of prejudice. If our statements had been manifestly one-sided there would have been justification for rejecting them; but to suppress the truth simply because it militated against preconceptions, is to use the power of the press for purposes other than those of the public weal. It is true we made the suggestions to which you refer; but we also stated in the suppressed portion of our report that the original complainant had based many of his accusations on insufficient evidence, arising from superficial observation. Several of these are quite contrary to fact—to wit, those about there being no lift, insufficiency of bedroom furniture, want of Bath chairs, defective ventilation and warming, &c. Had our information been fully given to the supporters of the institution, we feel confident it would have satisfied them that the executive is earnestly bent upon rectifying any proved error of management, and of making the charity subservient to all those beneficent purposes for which it was instituted.

Your concluding remarks clearly show that the course the *Athenæum* has chosen to adopt has placed us in a false position. You say that by our report "*much of the original complaint is proved.*" But had we been allowed to speak fully, you would have seen also how much of the original complaint was *disproved*. If the aim of the *Athenæum* be remedial, it has overshoot its mark; and, judging by the act of which we complain, it is evidently unwilling to withdraw those accusations which we have proved to be untrue.

On the 29th instant, the thirteenth annual meeting of this charity will be holden at the London Tavern, at eleven o'clock, when it is devoutly to be wished that those who have propagated the charges in question will meet the constituency for the purpose either of proving these charges or of retracting them, as the evidence may decide.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Totteridge-park, Herts, Nov. 13th, 1867. ROBERT WILKINSON.

\* \* If Mr. Wilkinson will refer to our motto, he will see that, had he thought fit to forward a copy of his report to THE LANCET, it would have received due attention.

## ON THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE SPINAL COLUMN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—While begging of you space for this short answer to Mr. Adams's letter of last week, allow me, like him, to disclaim any desire for controversy.

I am very sorry that Mr. Wm. Adams should think he has cause to complain that my quotations from his work on the Spine are fragmentary, but fail to perceive how, in a short paper, quotations from a large book can be otherwise. I have again carefully read the chapters from which the quotations were taken, and, with the utmost liberality of interpretation, in the new light which Mr. Wm. Adams's letter provides, cannot force upon the phrases any sense other than that which I have already given them. Indeed, when a writer, describing "horizontal rotation-movement of the spinal column" says, "the extremely limited extent of this movement" (p. 39);

when he quotes and agrees with another author who says that the "oblique processes" of the lumbar vertebræ "prevent any twisting or spiral movement whatever of the trunk upon the axis" (p. 40); and when, throughout the chapter, the author constantly refers mobility to the head, hips, and lumbo-sacral joints, rather than to the spine,—I say, when an author writes thus, he must expect those of his readers who understand the meaning of language to conclude that he considers the spine very immobile. I do not at all understand how Mr. William Adams can imagine that I, in saying so, have misinterpreted the meaning of the chapter to which he refers.

Besides misrepresentation, Mr. Adams charges me with a graver fault—namely, that I have accused him of "unworthy motives" in that he justifies his practice by his theory. Sir, I believe that all practitioners prescribe medicines or appliances with reference to physiological or pathological doctrines formed by themselves or taught in the schools. I hope we all justify or endeavour to justify practice by theory. I may—indeed I do—differ widely from the practice and theory of Mr. Adams, and of the Orthopædic Hospital generally. Nevertheless, I have never written a single word reflecting on the honour of its officers. It is not I, but Mr. Adams himself, who suggests that "unworthy motives" are required to justify the application of steel supports to the vertebral column.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

RICHARD BARWELL.

George-street, Hanover-square, Nov. 12th, 1867.

## EDINBURGH.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE University again shows indications of vitality, the gateways being busy with the ingress and egress of students, its class rooms well filled, and the reading-room well occupied by studious youths. The number of students up to this time is about the average, and the medical students, I understand, are somewhat above it; but many generally enter up to the close of the second week of this month. There was no formal opening of the University Session, but introductory addresses were delivered to the various classes: that of most interest to medical readers will, no doubt, be Professor Turner's. The attendance upon this popular lecturer was very large, and the chemistry class-room was selected to give accommodation to his many admiring friends. He was accompanied to the platform by several of the professors, the president of the College of Physicians, and others. He was received in a most enthusiastic manner, which amply testified to the gratification the students felt in the selection of this gentleman for the chair of anatomy. In commencing his address he touched on anatomy generally, its scope, its relations, and its affinities to other sciences. He dwelt on its importance in medical education, and the part it had filled in the University of Edinburgh. He then considered the extent and nature of the anatomical instruction afforded by his predecessors in the chair, which was founded in 1705, and was, therefore, amongst the oldest chairs of anatomy in the country; and that it presented this remarkable feature, that from the appointment of Alexander Monro *primus* in the year 1720, to the death of his immediate predecessor—that is, for the space of 147 years—it had been held by only four incumbents, each of whom, prior to his election to the chair, had filled, for a period, the office of assistant to his predecessor. There had, therefore, been transmitted a tradition of teaching which had given to the method of instruction adopted a unity and consistency such as had, undoubtedly, contributed in no small degree to the efficiency of the chair, and added largely to its reputation. Regarding Prof. Goodsir, he observed that for many years the general attendance in his class averaged between 300 and 400 students. "To the value of his method of instruction, to the truly scientific spirit which pervaded his whole teaching, to the influence which his straightforward, manly character exercised on those who came into permanent relations with him, and the example which he set of true work done in no self-seeking spirit, I may be permitted to bear testimony." "An ardent student of organic science, of unflagging industry, he devoted himself to the duties of his chair with untiring energy. Gifted with a genius for anatomical research, he very early in life commenced the investigation of animal structure, and by the assiduous cultivation of his time and talents he was able to grasp the subject in all its bearings—to discover new facts, and to enunciate new principles." After paying some other well-merited tributes to