

spite of his three columns of attack) to prove that the wet nurse, be her soul as black as night, can influence, in the most remote degree, the future moral character of her foster-child. And this being the case, surely is it not more manly, more generous, more Christian-like, if you will, to stand up for and aid in the reclamation, as far as feasible, of the class which we, men, have ourselves debased. Let him who has no stain on his conscience, or who has no conscience to have a stain on, be the first to cast the stone, if he be so minded. At all events, it shall never be,

Sir, your obedient, humble servant,

June, 1859.

PRO RE NATA.

## THE GOLD MEDALS AT THE LONDON HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Several years have now elapsed since the topic which constitutes the basis of this communication was originally obtruded before your readers, at which period I was *in statu pupillari*; when the method of awarding the medals offered by the governors of the hospital was frequently condemned, in the strongest language, by the majority of my contemporary students. The medals were “given on the recommendation of the physicians and surgeons to those students of the hospital who most (?) distinguished themselves for their zeal and humanity to the patients,” without any competitive examination.

You permitted to be inserted two letters, of which I fearlessly avow myself the author. From my first communication I transcribe the following passage:—“That these medals are required to goad us to humanity, let us disallow! Let it no more be rumoured abroad that such a spur to humanity is demanded at the London Hospital. The utility of these medals is questionable—moreover, they are calculated to create strife and discontent. All we ask is competition.....I suggest that the medals be offered—the one for the best essay, or reports of cases, on some medical disease; the other, for the best essay, or reports of cases, on some surgical disease, such as the physicians and surgeons may respectively decide upon.” When I returned to the hospital, after the vacation, I was gratified to observe that a notice adorned its wall requiring candidates for the governors’ medals to report six cases, medical or surgical respectively.

If by a wise decision the other prizes have been expunged, let these medals survive to cherish clinical proficiency in the hospital which gave birth to clinical instruction, conceived therein by, and in the vigorous life of, Billing. The corporations are urging its necessity, abridging the number of lectures to facilitate its acquirement. Surely the schools will not adopt a retrograde course, and withhold pre-existing incentives to its cultivation.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Mill-end-road, June, 1859.

HENRY HANKS, M.R.C.S.

[LETTER FROM MR. BRIDE.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I must ask you to allow me once more, and for the last time, to intrude upon your pages. “L.S.A.” says I am not a *bona fide* student of the hospital. Now, if having entered to the medical and surgical practice, and to the medical, anatomical, and surgical lectures, does not constitute me a student of the hospital, I should be glad to know what does. As to my not having performed the duties for which the medal is awarded, I must ask him how he arrived at such a conclusion, which is certainly not in accordance with the fact. The adjudication of the prize, however, I take to be a sufficient answer to this part of his letter, the physicians being necessarily the best judges of the attendance given by the pupils, and of the manner in which they perform their duties. As to the mode in which the award of the medal was decided, that, I believe, is always left to the discretion of the physicians, and accordingly something more than zeal and humanity, however good in themselves, has always been required at the hands of those who would gain the prize. The test heretofore has been a certain number of written cases. This year, however, at the special request of some of the students (of whom, by the way, “L.S.A.” may have been one), a practical examination at the bed-side was added. In this latter the physicians merely acceded to the wishes of the pupils. To quarrel, therefore, with an examination which was specially sought seems to me by no means courteous to the physicians, to say nothing of the inconsistency of the matter.

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I regret that “L.S.A.” should have thought it necessary to wind up his letter with a personality addressed to myself. A certain remark of mine he characterizes as illogical and gratuitously insulting. Now, I should have thought that to one possessed of less acuteness than even “L.S.A.” my meaning would have been sufficiently obvious. Perhaps, Sir, you will allow me, for his especial enlightenment, to say that I merely intended to point out the absurdity of the notion, which supposes that a man who has merely lounged through the wards, provided he has done so for three years, has a better right, on that ground alone, to the medal than one who may have worked hard for six months. As to having gratuitously insulted the students, I most emphatically disclaim any such intention; nothing could have been further from my thoughts. For the London Hospital, its teachers and professors, I entertain the highest respect, and for the students I have a feeling far different from that which would lead me to offer them a gratuitous insult. Nothing but wilful misapprehension, or the spirit of perversion, could have so twisted the remark from its evident meaning. I am reminded that I must not consider myself a student of the London Hospital. I cannot indeed say—

“Mihi Romæ contigit doceri.”

This, however, I regard as by no means an irreparable loss, and can assure “L.S.A.” that I am perfectly satisfied with my humble provincial origin.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

Saxmundham, Suffolk, June, 1859.

JOHN BRIDE, M.R.C.S.

\* \* Here this controversy must end.—ED. L.

## ON THE MODIFICATION OF PIROGOFF'S OPERATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Dr. Eben Watson, in his paper on Pirogoff's operation, says, with regard to the modification he suggests, “Many surgeons in this country and on the Continent have suggested variations in its performance, and I only ask that the above method of operating *without disarticulating*, which is its sole distinctive feature, may be carefully considered, as I have no doubt the other proposals may have been.”

Now, Sir, I beg to state that I witnessed Professor Pirrie, of Marischal College, Aberdeen, perform Pirogoff's operation “without disarticulating” more than two years ago; and I know that for many years Professor Pirrie has been accustomed to perform Professor Syme's amputation at the ankle-joint with this modification. At page 754 of his “Principles and Practice of Surgery,” published in 1852, he says, in reference to Professor Syme's mode of amputation,—“In performing this operation, I have followed the above directions, with the exception of those contained in the last sentence. Instead of disarticulating the foot (as Syme directs), and then sawing off the malleolar processes, and a thin slice of the tibia connecting them with each other, I have, after making a clearance for the saw by sending the knife round the bones, sawn off the malleolar processes and a very thin slice of the tibia *without effecting disarticulation*; this shortens the proceeding; and whenever I have performed this operation, nothing could be more satisfactory than its results.”

I can testify, from observation, to the great improvement Dr. Pirrie's modification is over the mode proposed by Pirogoff and Syme in their respective operations. I saw a surgeon in a provincial hospital, on one occasion, where the ankle-joint was much diseased, nearly twenty minutes trying to effect disarticulation, and the patient all but *in articulo mortis*; the operator had been a pupil of Mr. Syme, and strove to perform each step of the operation according to the directions of his master, but at last he was obliged to abandon the attempt at disarticulating—he amputated without it.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

Warrington, June, 1859.

ROBERT MARTIN, M.D.

## THE LICENCE OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If your correspondent of last week, who “is anxious to enrol himself” as a licentiate of the Edinburgh College of Physicians, will comply with the preliminaries required to do so, he will find the portal of entrance not quite so wide, or so easy of access, as he seems to imagine. He, in common with some few others, appears to think that a gentleman holding a *surgical* diploma only has no right to any *medical* dis-