

beyond writing the first three cases. My letter says that I neither wrote nor approved of that Report—to this I still adhere—as also to my expressions of regret for having signed it.

When Dr. Protheroe Smith showed me the Report in manuscript, I objected most decidedly to a number of quotations from Scripture with which he had interlarded it, considering such an unseasonable use of them to be the worst species of profanity. I did not interfere with his description of his own cases, although they did contain that remarkable discovery which he states his patient to have made. (*See THE LANCET*, June 8.) But Dr. Protheroe Smith knows full well, and has known me long enough to be quite aware of it, that I *conceded*, and did not approve of such expressions; and therefore do I again repeat that I “sincerely regret having appended my name to a Report which, with the exception of the first three briefly-detailed cases, I neither wrote nor approved of.”

You also charge me with still allowing my name to remain associated with the hospital. I cannot exactly agree either with the justice or the truth of your remark, seeing that my resignation has been sent in nearly three weeks ago!

Your obedient servant,

Berkeley-square, July, 1850.

EDWARD RIGBY.

* * Dr. Rigby has only himself to blame for any remarks which we have made respecting his attachment to the Hospital for Women. It was surely worth while to make the fact of his resignation public. It certainly would have been to his credit.—Ed. L.

ON THE TREATMENT OF TYPHOID FEVER.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—You kindly inserted in your journal of the 2nd of March my remarks on the treatment of continued fever by mercury, in reference to an article which had previously appeared in the previous number of your journal, on mercury in typhoid fever. At the same time that I contended for the beneficial results of the mercurial treatment of that disease in its later stages, I also alluded to my treatment of it in its earlier stages by emetics, immediately followed by stimulants and bark. It is upon this practice, from the continued success I experience in its adoption, that I am induced again to trespass upon your columns, believing it to be worthy the attention of the profession, and being desirous that a treatment which seems, so far as I have the opportunity of testing it, almost infallible, should have a fair trial in fields where scope can be given to obtain results upon a large number of cases. Should the result prove upon an extended scale to be what from the trial I have been enabled to give it I have every reason to anticipate, the large returns of deaths weekly registered to typhus, could be very considerably reduced, and the lingering illness, which is almost entirely confined to the poorer classes, whose means and circumstances are ill fitted to contend with it, could be cut short in a few hours, and the patient be enabled at once to return to his daily labour. Should my anticipations, I repeat, be realized upon an extended trial, it would tend as much to lessen the mortality and the sufferings of the poorer classes of the metropolis as any of the sanitary measures at present under consideration.

I believe I am correct in stating that at the Fever Hospital the treatment adopted is simply palliative, and the annual returns of mortality at that institution are very considerable. Could a fair trial of this treatment be made at such an institution, satisfactory results might soon be obtained.

I will recapitulate briefly the treatment I adopt, and to which I referred in my former letter.

To an adult patient applying to me, with the symptoms of incipient continued fever, also in the second stage, (and frequently even in the third, previous to the commencement of the mercurial treatment,) I immediately administer an emetic powder, containing one grain of tartar-emetic and one scruple of ipecacuanha powder, and desire the patient to commence taking the following mixture as soon as the vomiting ceases:—aromatic spirits of ammonia, three drachms; spirits of nitric æther, one ounce; decoction of Cinchona bark, seven ounces; one ounce of which I order to be taken every three hours. The dose, both of the emetic and the mixture, I of course diminish, according to the age of the patient, down to the infant in arms. The purging which is frequently present, even in the incipient stage, together with the other symptoms, immediately yields, but if, on the contrary, there be constipation, I administer an active purge, either as soon as the effects of the emetic have subsided, or, which I rather prefer, about two hours after the first dose of the stimulant and bark. Should the symptoms return, as is sometimes the case, (more

especially where the patient continues under the influence of the contagion or miasma,) I repeat the emetic a second and a third time, immediately on the recurrence of the symptoms, and follow it, as before, by the stimulant and bark. I lay great stress upon its being thus immediately followed by the stimulant, &c., because I find emetics without this to be of no avail; and the result in my dispensary practice is, that I now do not know such a thing as a case of typhus on my visiting list, whereas, before I adopted this treatment, I used to have almost entire streets under my care by the month together.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

JOHN DENNY,
Resident Medical Officer, Dispensary,
Stoke Newington.

July 9, 1850.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND ASSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—In your columns have been recently recorded several instances of the recognition, by assurance companies, of the just claims of medical men to remuneration for their professional opinions. This is as it should be. Our profession is styled a self-denying one—well has it earned this appellation, any many are the claims upon that philanthropy which is one of its bright characteristics; but that public companies (many of them wealthy and influential) should require the gratuitous services of that profession, is surely an extension of the *sic vos non vobis* principle, rather beyond its legitimate limits. A brighter era, however, appears to be dawning, in which our hitherto unacknowledged rights are gradually forcing themselves upon the conviction of the public. I beg permission, in a very brief manner, to adduce another instance of the admission of our claims by an office of respectability, which act of justice, although rendered tardily, is creditable to the judgment and good taste of the directors.

In the month of April, I received the ordinary series of questions from the “East of England Mutual Life Assurance Society,” relative to the health of Mr. S—, a patient of mine. As these were unaccompanied by a fee, I wrote to the secretary, declining to reply to the queries, unless an *honorarium* were sent, or a promise given of its payment. Receiving no answer from the assurance office, I recommended Mr. S— to another company, which I considered was more entitled to the good will of the profession. In this he effected an assurance. I then wrote to the secretary of the “East of England” office, apprising him of the circumstance, and returning him the unanswered queries. This elicited from him the letter which I now subjoin.

Thanking you for your powerful advocacy of our rights and privileges, I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Maldon, July 8, 1850.

GEO. P. MAY, M.D.

(COPY.)

East of England Mutual Life Assurance Society,
Chelmsford, 6th July, 1850.

SIR,—I am desirous of removing any unfavourable impression you may entertain of this office on the subject of fees to medical men. The directors have from the first recognised the right of the profession to remuneration, but for some time considered the fees ought to be paid by the party proposing the assurance. In the case of Mr. S—, he undertook to pay you a fee if it were required. The directors have since resolved to pay these fees themselves, believing that this course is more in accordance with the wishes of the profession.

* * * * *

Trusting this explanation may be satisfactory to you,

I am, Sir, yours very obediently,

Dr. May.

EDWARD BUTLER, Sec.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE SPECULUM.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—The controversy respecting the speculum reminds one very forcibly of that regarding the suspension of Sunday post-office labour. Those who argue for it, with a solemn bigotry worthy of the old Puritans, admit of no exception; those who attempt to vindicate the necessity of occasional postal delivery, desire nothing so little as the abuse of the Sabbath. Not one man in the medical profession denies the advantages derived from the speculum; but many conscientiously believe that it has often been unnecessarily, injuriously, and uselessly employed. Therefore, how absurd to publish long dissertations on the importance of the speculum in uterine disease as an answer to those who contend that it has been abused. Equally unfair to parade letters written

from gentlemen in the country, in school-boy holiday fashion, to certify that they, as medical practitioners, have lately resorted to the speculum, with surprising results. This has but little to do with the matter in question—In how much is the employment of the speculum an unmistakable abuse?

Two days since, a young unmarried woman applied to me, in great anxiety, suffering from leucorrhœa. She had been treated by the surgeon who attended the family in which she resided as servant, and who had declared to her, after examination with the speculum, that extensive ulceration of the womb existed. She talked very fluently of this matter, but upon examination, conducted in her sister's house, (a small chandler's shop, in a back and narrow street,) I found no ulceration, merely some prolapse.

The experience which Dr. Jones quotes in his explanatory letter is most extensive, and I am anxious to know if any of our most celebrated men will acknowledge to have treated in seventeen years 65,000 patients, or twelve cases of uterine disease daily, not allowing for the accumulating increase of number by acquired reputation. The profession would be happy to hear that an epitome of these cases, or the more important ones, was about to be laid before their notice.

I feel indebted to those gentlemen who were the first to deprecate the growing abuse of the speculum, and many fathers and brothers will thank them too.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
London-road, Southwark, July, 1850. W. M. FAIRBROTHER, M.D.

THE SURGICAL TREATMENT OF THE LATE SIR ROBERT PEEL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you permit me, through the medium of your columns, to ask of either the eminent medical gentlemen who attended the late Sir Robert Peel, the following questions relative to the treatment of his case.

I have the honour to remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
Albany-street, Regent's-park, July 8, 1850. JOHN LANGLEY.

The condition of the late Sir Robert Peel, at the moment he met with his ever-to-be-lamented accident, his plenitude of health, his plethoric habit, his inflammatory, or, as it is absurdly termed, gouty diathesis, together with his previous liberal habits of living, induce me most humbly and respectfully, yet painfully, to ask, why, under the violent circumstances of his accident, producing a comminuted fracture of the left clavicle, concussion of the brain, indicated by stupor and unconsciousness, and also, as was discovered after his decease, a fracture of the fifth rib, no doubt injuring some portion of the thoracic viscera, and all these conditions attended with most agonizing sensations, and gradual progression of the pulse from 90 to 120—why, even if precautionarily only, the most vigorous and copious depletion was not immediately resorted to as the only determinate and probable mode of controlling the circulation, and restraining the inflammatory action which must inevitably ensue, as the natural consequence of such injuries, and which, if unrestrained, and not averted, must, as was herein lamentably realized, terminate fatally. By the report in *Times*, professing to give a synopsis of the medical treatment in this case, it appears that twenty leeches, thirty hours after the accident, were applied to the shoulder of the lamented baronet. What essential benefit could possibly have been anticipated from so effete a measure, I am at a loss to imagine. It is much to be regretted that no inquest was held, or post-mortem examination made, whereby some satisfactory explanation might have been elicited from the medical attendants upon this most important point,—vitally important, as involving, under similar circumstances, the treatment of lives perhaps of equal national importance to that of which the country has now to deplore the irreparable loss.

ON THE IRREGULAR IMPOSITION OF DUTIES ON POOR-LAW MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is painful to notice the injury and degradation which are brought upon the medical profession, and upon the labouring class of persons, by some of the workings of the new poor-law.

The general practice of sending the labourer to the medical officer for relief when he or any of his family is ill, has had the effect of pauperising the labourer at once, for the spell being broken, all further efforts to live by industry, and to maintain a feeling of honest pride and independence, for ever cease.

This practice prevails now very much in this district. The leading gentry, the rectors and rich clergy, send their labourers

to the parish surgeon, when they or any of their families are ill; and in the agreement with their labourers, a proportionate reduction is made on the wages, because it is implied or expressed that the parish doctor can be had in all cases of illness.

In addition, therefore, to the certain and regular pauper practice, the surgeon has to attend all the labourers in the parish, together with their families. And what does he get for all this?

In the unions of this county, it is common for the parishes to contain between three and five hundred paupers, or persons made paupers when they are ill, and the salaries to the medical officers range between six and ten pounds per annum for each parish, thus affording about fourpence a-head. In many of those appointments the surgeon has to ride from six to nine miles.

It may reasonably be asked—Why is this disgraceful state of things permitted to continue? Why do medical men give their time and knowledge, and take upon themselves such serious responsibilities, for less than nothing? Why do they descend so low as to incur the contempt and ridicule of all parties connected with these transactions?

Is it because there is no code or public standard for the guidance of the profession in provincial districts? no county or district association or arrangement by which a gentlemanly and honourable feeling may be kept up, and the interest of the profession maintained? Or, is it that the great competition which prevails has driven medical men to abandon all sense of self-respect, so as to resort to the most destructive and suicidal course that can be adopted?

I am, Sir, very truly yours,
Launceston, July 1, 1850. HENRY PETHICK.

INTRIGUES IN MEDICAL LITERATURE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some years ago (in an evil moment) I became a subscriber to the *Medical Times*, but soon discovered my mistake; for the principles advocated in that journal were diametrically opposed to all my preconceived notions of medical jurisprudence: however, to entice a continuation of subscriptions, there was interlarded with it periodical portions of a work on Diseases of the Heart; and in my case *the bait took*, because I considered the work original, and in many of its somewhat novel deductions instructive and interesting: as might be expected, the work *remains incomplete*. Against this species of medical newspaper intrigue, allow me to protest; and trusting that this notice of the transaction (in your well-conducted and extensively-circulated journal) may produce some good effect,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Castle Donnington, June 28, 1850. THOS. BROWN.

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL, VIENNA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May I ask the favour of your inserting in the next number of THE LANCET the following letter, addressed to one of your correspondents. In doing this you will particularly oblige
Your obedient servant, ISIDOR GLUCK.

To F. D. Fletcher, Esq., House Surgeon, Liverpool Infirmary.

SIR,—Your letter, inserted in THE LANCET of the 6th of July, 1850, with the high-sounding title, *General Hospital, Vienna* (accident with the lithotrite,) induces me, as a former pupil of that school, to inquire whether you have no interesting facts to publish regarding the practice of the Vienna Hospital, besides the unlucky accident which you have chosen to single out and lay before the profession.

I venture to hope that you *might* have seen, during your stay at Vienna, many a medical and surgical fact which would be of more interest, and more satisfactory to those who happen to know something of the Medical School of that city. And even were you inclined to lay before the profession, as a sequel to your letter, the more valuable facts which you have witnessed at Vienna, your first epistle, which must needs be looked upon as an introduction to your reports, would ever be considered as extremely unkind. Indeed, it is just as unkind as if I were to use, as an Introduction to my "Diary of the Operative Surgery of the London Hospitals," the unfortunate case of Mr. Cock's policeman, in which circumstance Mr. Cock was as innocent as the Vienna professor, whose lithotrite broke in his patient's bladder.

I am, Sir, yours obediently
I. GLUCK,
Physician to the Western Dispensary
of the German Hospital,
Regent-street, July 9, 1850.