

each subject of examination shall be exhibited by the candidate, and when, from nervousness or inability to express himself in writing, the replies to the printed questions do not bring him up to the required standard, the greatest pains are taken to discover, by *viva voce* questioning, whether the deficiency originated in ignorance or in the disturbing causes alluded to. Two examiners on one subject are not appointed except where it may involve matters of opinion on which its professors may differ, and then the one is placed as a check upon the other, purposely, lest "whim or caprice" should influence their decision.

Having now endeavoured to remove the false impressions which might have arisen from your correspondent's assertions, I may add that I agree with him in thinking that it would be very proper that authorized witnesses should be present at the examinations; at the written, that ignorant and dishonourable candidates may be prevented communicating with their neighbours, or otherwise assisting themselves surreptitiously by papers &c. concealed upon their persons;—and at the *viva voce*, that the same gentlemen, if subsequently plucked, shall have no excuse for impugning the justice of the sentence. I may inform him also (and if a graduate, he may be pleased to hear it) that this point has received the consideration of the Graduates' Committee, and is one on which I believe much unanimity of opinion prevailed. It was a pretty general sentiment in that body, that a limited number of gentlemen of a certain *status* in the University would be fitly selected for the performance of this important duty; but I imagine, under no circumstances would such supervision, either on their part or on the part of the Graduates' Committee, be presumptuously extended to the subsequent deliberations of the Examiners.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,  
East Retford, Feb. 5, 1850. EDWARD BALLARD, M.D.

#### THE SO-CALLED TANNATE OF ALUMINA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A substance has been for some time sold, and has found its way into many shops, and into the hands of general practitioners, under the designation of "Tannate of Alumina;" and many gentlemen have been induced to prescribe a medicine under so specious a title, supposing it to be a compound of two substances, both of which are so well known as astringents.

A medical friend called my attention to the substance some time since. I then examined it, and gave him the results; but more recently, so many inquiries have been made respecting it, that I deem it advisable to state that it is not tannate of alumina, but merely an inferior alum, containing, indeed, traces of iron, tannin, and a little ammonia, but in such quantities as not in any way to affect its medicinal properties, or to render its action different to ordinary alum, (sulphate of alumina and potash.)

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
Conduit-street, Feb. 12, 1850. LLOYD BULLOCK.

#### A MEDICAL CLUB.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your very interesting number of last week, conjunctively with many other matters, asks the plain question,—“Why should not medical men have a club?” In my humble opinion, this is the most important question you have propounded for many, many years. You refer to the days of Fothergill, Lettsom, &c., in connexion with the Medical Society of London. You refer, also, to the Bolt-court scientific bodies; and, whilst your reasoning is good, your deduction is equally clear—“Why should not medical men have their club?” The question is not a negative, but it is a plain, clear, palpable affirmative of what ought to be, and ought to have been for years since; and to such an establishment I would willingly bear my modicum, £50, of subscription to-morrow.

Why, Sir, look at the plan you have proposed in its enlarged and extended scale! It must, in its working, form the very foundation stone of medical science, comfort, and, as the French call it, “fraternity.”

Your country surgeon appoints to meet his medical brother in London at the club; private matters are discussed at the club, cases are discussed at the club, the well-doing of the whole body is discussed at the club. The colleges, if members, meet in brotherhood, and the profession, becoming an united body, are discussed at the club.

The very thing you have proposed is the very thing so long wanted; for I verily believe that such establishment will concentrate the medical talent of the world.

Pray, Sir, give a vast scope to your own suggestion; tie it not; limit it not; but give full scope.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,  
Farrington-street, Feb. 1850. FRANCIS\* BULLIN.

\* \* The offer of Mr. Bullin does him great credit, and proves that he is animated by orthodox professional feeling. There must be a medical club. If gentlemen who are willing to become the members of a provisional committee will forward their names to us, they shall be duly recorded. ED. L.

[SECOND EDITION.]

#### THE HUNTERIAN ORATION

Was delivered this day, (Thursday,) at three o'clock, by Mr. Skey. Long before the time appointed, the theatre was crowded in every part. About five minutes before three, a gentleman got up in the body of the meeting, and proceeded to address the assembly. He said that this was the only opportunity the members of the College had of meeting the Council, and he trusted the members would not let it pass without an expression of opinion respecting the conduct of the governing body. This sentence was the prelude to a somewhat stormy scene, in which loud cries of “go on,” and two or three expressions of “turn him out,” were the words most easily heard.

The gentleman who was addressing the audience had scarcely commenced his remarks, before Mr. Belfour rushed in at the side-door, in a state of apparent alarm, and proceeding towards the speaker, exclaimed, “What's your name?” The gentleman replied, “Edwin Lee.” Mr. Belfour then retired, and the uproar was repeated. The time having now arrived for the delivery of the Oration, the Council and visitors entered the theatre, amidst a scene of considerable confusion.

With the exception of the President of the College of Physicians, Sir H. Inglis, and Sir C. Lemon, scarcely a visitor of any note was present. The orator commenced his discourse with a high compliment to the genius and labours of Hunter, and then took a rapid view of the labours of the late Mr. Clift. He dwelt for a short time, also, on the merits of the late Mr. Aston Key; and after dismissing Mr. Andrews in a single line, entered at some length into the career of the late Mr. Morton. He paid some high compliments to Mr. Pennington as a sagacious and shrewd practitioner, and said that it was his boast, that at one time he attended every judge on the bench and every cabinet minister. The speaker then took a view of the state of our profession, the position of which he considered to be degraded, and this degradation he attributed mainly to four causes—the want of education, the low state of medical ethics, the mode of remuneration of the general practitioners, and the neglect of medical men by the State, in withholding honours from them. On these several heads he descanted at some length, and complimented the Council on their late rules for the fellowship, but wished that the classic and mathematical examination had been a preliminary one, instead of being required at so late a period. He reprobated strongly the mode of charging for medicine, as tending to lower the dignity of the profession; and in speaking of the ethics of medical men, drew a parallel between medicine and the law, in which he made a fierce attack on the latter. He demanded a more consistent and just appreciation of our profession by the State, and concluded by an appeal to the assembly, to cultivate, in every way, a refined taste, which he declared would have the effect of raising the medical character in every respect.

After the speaker had read his Oration, he disappeared quickly through the side-door, and was speedily followed by

\* Inadvertently printed “JAMES,” in our last number.