

MEDICINAL USE OF ELDERBERRY WINE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—One or two articles, extracted from foreign journals, having recently appeared in THE LANCET on the medicinal agency of certain products of the alder, I trust you will not consider the fact unworthy of notice that, in our rural district, a decoction of the flowers, either fresh or dried, is constantly used by the country people under the name of elder-flower tea, in various chronic cases of sub-acute inflammation; and the wine, as it is termed, prepared from the berry, is also in great repute for sanatory purposes. As generally managed, however, the latter is too highly spiced; for the hectic invalid it should merely have its flavour improved by adding a little infusion of ginger; and when warmed, the alcohol, originally requisite for its preservation, can easily be *burned out* by applying a bit of lighted paper to the surface, before the ebullition has subsided. In this way I think it probable it would sometimes, with a little dry toast or a biscuit, prove a grateful addition, at supper time, to the dietary of the consumptive subject, who at once requires his strength to be sustained and inflammatory action of the system to be kept under control. If found palatable, it would certainly be persevered in with much more cheerful diligence than any remedy solely medicinal.

So much, not only of a patient's comfort and hopes of recovery, but of the responsibility and repute of his professional adviser, must depend on a well-regulated regimen, that such apparent trifles often deserve more consideration than they, at first, would seem to merit. Of this, at least, I am fully satisfied, that strong ale and porter, and meat and oyster suppers, although sometimes advantageous, frequently prove very injurious, by overloading weak stomachs, and thus at once deranging the functions of the chylipoietic viscera, and disturbing that sleep which is tired nature's best and most balmy restorer. To an illiterate Negro we are said to be indebted for our knowledge of quassia; to an ignorant savage, for our acquaintance with the Peruvian bark; and to a dreaming alchemist for our discovery of the virtues of calomel. And with all their countless mistakes and misapprehensions, the peasantry of our own and other countries are still not wholly undeserving of the notice of practical men, as, by whatsoever means acquired, they often possess a practical acquaintance with familiar objects around them not always to be gained from books. The dew-berry of Shakspeare, which has utterly confounded so many learned critics and commentators, is still as well known, by the very same appellation, to the Warwickshire rustic as in those days when the Bard of Avon de-

scribed the fairy revels of his "Midsummer Night's Dream." I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. A. WALKER, Lieut. H.P.,
34th Regt.

Cliff House, Torquay,
July 5, 1843.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM.

To the Editor.—Sir: Will you oblige the council of the Queen's College, Birmingham, by the insertion of the following paragraphs in THE LANCET? Your's obediently,

WILLIAM SANDS COX.

Temple-row, Birmingham,
July 23, 1843.

Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to grant a royal charter of incorporation to the School of Medicine and Surgery at Birmingham, with the privileges, immunities, rank, and title of the "Queen's College, Birmingham." Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to nominate—

The Rev. Samuel Wilson Warneford, of Bourton-on-the-Hill, Gloucestershire, the first visitor.

Dr. Edward Johnstone, of Edgbaston-hall, Warwickshire, first principal of the said society.

The Rev. James Thomas Law, chancellor of the diocese of Lichfield, the first vice-principal.

John Edwards Piercy, Esq., justice of the peace, Staffordshire, treasurer.

William Sands Cox, F.R.S.L., senior surgeon of the Queen's Hospital, dean of the faculty.

Who, together with the following gentlemen, are appointed to form the first council, viz.:—William Penn Curzon Howe, Earl Howe; George William Lyttleton, Lord Lyttleton; John Kaye Booth, M.D., hon. physician of the Queen's Hospital; Edward Townsend Cox, senior surgeon of the Town Infirmary; the Rev. Egerton Bagot; the Rev. Vaughan Thomas, clerk, of Corpus Christi College, Oxford; James Taylor, Esq., Worcestershire; Joseph Webster, Esq., Warwickshire; Richard Wood, senior surgeon of the General Hospital, Birmingham; Thomas Upple, Esq., merchant; Dr. James Johnstone, senior physician of the General Hospital, Birmingham, professor of materia medica; and Dr. John Birt Davies, senior physician of the Queen's Hospital, Birmingham, professor of forensic medicine.

* * We suppose it is useless to inquire whether the charter contains any provisions or directions which are calculated to secure a sound mode of election in the future appointments to the offices of tuition in the new college; for, without express ordinances to that effect, the institution may very soon become distinguished as a theatre of the rankest jobs in medical professorships.