

DR. DUFFIN'S REPLY TO DR. SIMPSON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As the reply already published in the last number but one of your journal, in repudiation of the charge of unprofessional conduct on the part of Dr. Robert Lee and myself, by Dr. Simpson, of Edinburgh, is in every respect a faithful and correct statement of facts, it is unnecessary for me to trouble your readers by a second refutation of the same accusations.

I have the honour to remain, Sir, yours respectfully,
Langham-place, Oct. 20, 1851. E. W. DUFFIN.

HOMŒOPATHY AT LEICESTER.

[LETTER FROM DR. FRANCIS HAWKINS.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In a leading article of THE LANCET of last week, I have seen with great, and certainly just, surprise, statements affecting me, some directly, some indirectly, which are either wholly false, or arise altogether out of misconception. Subjects unconnected with one another are mixed up in that article in a strange and almost incomprehensible manner. But they may be referred to two heads: 1st., a suspicion of my having been in some way connected (which I utterly and indignantly deny) “with globulists and irregular practices;” 2ndly, an account of some recent proceedings at the Leicester Infirmary, with which my name has indeed, though somewhat unfairly, been connected; in what manner I shall presently explain.

First, as to the homœopathic charge: I am accused of lending myself to an attempt to “carry” into the Leicester Infirmary, “by the Halford interest, Sydney Hanson, a person possessing a Glasgow degree, and busily engaged in the practice of globulism.” Of the name, existence, and practice of this person I now hear for the first time. It never happened to me before to hear of any practiser of homœopathy at Leicester; and never, if I had happened to hear of such a person, would he have received any assistance from me. But what if Sir Henry Halford, against whom a more direct charge is made, was as ignorant as I was of the existence of Sydney Hanson, even up to the present time? You would seem to commend the part which Sir Henry took at the Leicester Infirmary for its “liberality;” yet is it, *charitably*, imputed to him that “a censurable motive worked behind,” “explained by the accident that the present baronet has become a prey to the homœopaths and their fooleries.”

Hear the deposition of Sir Henry himself upon this matter, as given in a letter which I have just received:—

“Supposing such an imputation to attach to me, it is not apparent how you could be implicated in it. But we shall both be relieved by the flat and absolute denial I am enabled to give to the assertion on which it is founded. So far from being a prey to the homœopaths, I never in my life, either on my own behalf, or that of any one else, consulted or communicated with any of them, nor have I the smallest disposition to confide in their theories. For Sydney Hanson—(I know not what prefix to put to his name)—I have not the slightest acquaintance with him, nor knew there was such a person practising as a physician at Leicester, until yesterday, when I found upon inquiry such was occasionally the case.”

To return to the charge against myself. You infer its plausibility from the fact, “that on more than one occasion” your “correspondents have inquired how it comes that Dr. Hawkins can retain the post of physician to the Duchess of Gloucester, when it is well known that that noble personage is herself a globulist, busily engaged in the patronage and dissemination of this vile form of quackery.” Her Royal Highness has never swallowed a globule in her life, nor, I am confident, ever will, and has never been engaged in the patronage and dissemination of this or any other form of quackery. In what society can your correspondents have picked up such idle gossip, which is absolutely without foundation, as may be learned from any one who has ever had the means of knowing? Sir, you have been altogether misinformed respecting the Duchess of Gloucester; and equally so, it is clear, respecting Sir Henry Halford. For myself, the only connexion which I have ever had with homœopathy has consisted in attempts to denounce its hollowness. Once, when I felt myself called upon to speak of it publicly, I have your own testimony that I dealt against it “some hearty blows.” (*Vide THE LANCET for Aug. 19, 1848, Art. Harveian Oration.*)

But what was the transaction at the Leicester Infirmary which seems to have given birth to a strange progeny of really

monstrous fabrications? It was recently proposed at that institution to substitute for the regulations before existing, as to the eligibility of physicians, the following rule:—

“The physicians shall be graduates in medicine of Oxford or Cambridge; or shall be doctors of medicine of Edinburgh, Dublin, or London, and fellows or licentiates of the Royal College of Physicians, London.”

The foregoing restrictions were naturally much opposed. Sir H. Halford asked my opinion upon them, which I gave to him orally and in writing, and nearly in the following terms: “You are aware, as well as myself, that there are no *legal* physicians in England and Wales, except the graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, licensed to practise, and the licentiates and extra-licentiates of the College of Physicians. More than half, then, of the physicians to provincial hospitals have no legal title to practise as such in England. But when I consider that many so situated, such as Sir Charles Hastings and others, are men of great eminence, I, for one, am not prepared to recommend a strict enforcement of the law. The public would not tolerate it. But the proposed rule is at once too comprehensive and too exclusive. As now worded, it would exclude all extra-licentiates, though they are legally entitled to practise as physicians in any part of England except the metropolis; or if that be not intended, still it would exclude many licentiates and extra-licentiates who do not happen to be graduates of the specified universities. This the College of Physicians could not tolerate. On the other hand, whilst it excludes some legally constituted physicians of the sister kingdoms, it would admit others who have not in England legally a better title. I cannot see the justice of this. And then I can find no resting-place short of requiring only that no one should be eligible who is not legally qualified to practise as a physician in some part of the United Kingdom. This would exclude effectually those who pretend to be physicians on no other qualification than a piece of parchment, which they may have purchased on the Continent. Those governors of the infirmary who press for closer restrictions, which they will not carry, stand a chance of losing even this advantage. Such is my opinion; but holding an official situation, I cannot publicly recommend that the law should be disregarded. I should be truly glad to see the law obeyed, or rather that it should be such as could be obeyed. But the present law has been disregarded for a long series of years. Help us, if you can, to obtain a better law.”

Sir H. Halford's opinion happening to coincide with mine, he proposed his amendment in the very terms which I had committed to paper—viz., “That no person shall be eligible to the office of physician to this hospital who is not legally qualified to practise as a physician in some part of the United Kingdom.”

The amendment was carried by twenty to one. At a meeting of governors, presided over by the Duke of Rutland, and comprising other names of the highest station and character, it was adopted with, it is said, a single dissentient voice.

Sir H. Halford having communicated the result to me, I wrote to him as follows:—

“The general consent at the meeting shows certainly what the law *ought* to be. That physicians should be considered qualified to practise in one part of the United Kingdom, and not in another, is, at this time of day, absurd and indefensible. Let us have reciprocity of practice, but let us first have, that which we have not now, uniformity of qualification. I hope the profession, and the friends of the profession, will never cease to agitate until they obtain a state of the law more worthy of our age and country.”

Such were the sentiments which I expressed in private, and which I am now compelled, unfairly and inquisitorially as it seems to me, to repeat in public. But I am not ashamed of them, nor at all disposed to retract or modify them.

Would you, Sir, who charge me with that of which, were it true, I should indeed be ashamed—disloyalty to my college; would you desire that the existing law respecting physicians should be strictly enforced in our provincial hospitals? Would you exclude from these hospitals such physicians as the distinguished President and other members of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association? Or would you admit some and exclude others of English, Irish, and Scotch physicians, on no assignable or definite principle? Surely not. Yet, because I was supposed to have had some share in the rejection of a partial, and consequently unfair, plan of this kind, I find myself assailed with imputations equally unjust and unexpected.

I must now subjoin Sir H. Halford's remarks upon these transactions, being the latter part of the letter before cited:—

“I know not who it is from this neighbourhood who has

misled THE LANCET with regard to me, nor have I any desire to retort in the way of censure; but now that I am informed for the first time, of the existence of an obnoxious practitioner at Leicester, by the imputation against myself of an unworthy desire for his admission on the staff of a county hospital, I cannot help suspecting that the proposed rule, superseded by my motion, was framed with a view to the personal exclusion of that individual, and that the displeasure against me has been occasioned by the accidental discomfiture of that design by my intervention.

"I should be indeed grieved, if I thought that anything I have done could have the effect of exposing the poor objects of a most useful medical charity to an eccentric and dangerous mode of practice. I hold it a sacred duty to protect them to the utmost against every species of quackery. But the complaint is not that a homœopathist has been elected, but only that there is such an one left, under a general rule, in the pleonastic phrase of THE LANCET, 'eligible for election.' Now I think general rules for a permanent institution, framed with a personal object, either of exclusion or admission, cannot fail to be mischievous, and must prove ineffectual.

"But there is still one item of charge remaining, which, as far as I am concerned, I feel bound to notice. 'It was hardly seemly,' it is said, 'for the son of the late president of the College of Physicians to make an indirect attack on a body who, in the person of the late Sir Henry Halford, conferred the chief honour of which his family can boast.' I fully acknowledge the grateful feelings with which on this account I am bound to regard the College. Apart from these feelings, I recognise in that College a body who have done much to promote and maintain the respectability of the profession of physic in this country, who have rendered important public services, and might be made capable, by an improvement of their constitution and extension of their powers and jurisdiction, of rendering much more. But, with these sentiments, I am under no obligation to an implicit veneration of a charter which, in common with themselves, I know to be obsolete and imperfect, and the amendment of which, in a manner acceptable to the public and the profession, they have used every effort to procure. Can I be called on to pay them so ill a compliment as to abjure all 'liberality,' on account of my association and connexion with them?

"I believe, at the same time, in common with yourself, that there are few things more imperatively required, in the way of legislation, than a reform in the chaos of our medical laws and institutions. I heartily wish the obstacles in the way of such reform may be shortly removed. But in the mean time, I can feel no regret that I resisted a proposal which I think would have introduced an element of discord and confusion into an establishment in which the warm interest that I feel has descended to me from my father and grandfather.

"I am, my dear Hawkins, yours very truly,
"H. HALFORD."

All the statements of your Leicester correspondents having been thus easily refuted or explained, I think I am entitled to complain of the haste and manner in which they have been published. Had the letters of your correspondents been printed, the value of their statements, though made anonymously, would, I doubt not, have been sufficiently plain, and I might or might not, as I saw fit, have answered them. But it is otherwise with statements admitted into a leading article, concerning which an editor is usually supposed to possess at least some knowledge. And when you say, "our columns are open to Dr. Hawkins," it should not be forgotten that personal attacks in popular journals are read and relished (for personalities are *piquant*) by many who may never see, or care to see, their refutation.

I cannot think that on such evidence as you possessed you were justified in arraigning me, in your editorial capacity, before the bar of professional opinion. May I not complain therefore of something like an illegal arrest and false imprisonment?

Can it tend to conciliate respect to our profession that any members of it should be so ready, as some of your correspondents have shown themselves, to assail the characters of their brethren on grounds so slight as mere suspicion? Or can it tend to increase our favour with the public, that we should be in haste to stigmatize, as patrons of quacks, persons of rank and character, on no authority but that of lying rumours destitute of a particle—even an *infinitesimal* particle of truth? Shall we not be more likely thus to give the quacks a triumph, and to increase the favour with which quackery is regarded?

Surely, if there be one thing which more than any other lowers our profession in the eyes of the public, which causes

the public to think meanly of us, to hold us cheap and treat us ill, which indisposes the legislature and the government to listen to our complaints, and renders it almost impossible for them to help us in our difficulties, adjust our differences, and arrange our polity, it is the proverbial frequency of professional squabbles and jealousies—it is the tendency too often manifested amongst us to assail and revile one another, and to impute unworthy motives on insufficient grounds.

I submit that this tendency is increased by giving ready insertion into popular journals, much more editorial sanction, to personal attacks and injurious statements, without inquiry as to the justice of the one or the truth of the other.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

18, Bolton-street, Oct. 22, 1851.

FRANCIS HAWKINS.

* * With unaffected pleasure we place the letter of Dr. Hawkins before the profession. It was with sincere pain, and only from a sense of what appeared to be a public duty, that we mentioned his name in connexion with the circumstances he has now explained with such perfect fulness. Of the matter in dispute, we personally did and could know nothing; but it was represented to us, some time since, by parties high in the College of Physicians of London, and who must have been under some great misapprehension, that the transaction at the Leicester Infirmary had been precisely what we stated it to be. The representations were reiterated by more than one or two parties connected with the College, in such a manner, that we could not, as public journalists, refuse to notice them.

Dr. Hawkins complains of the "haste" with which we have proceeded, and the absence of "inquiry," and wishes that the letters of our correspondents had themselves been published. In self-defence, we publish the contents of a document which was placed in our hands in the month of September. It is part of the evidence submitted to us, and consists of a letter from a licentiate of the College of Physicians and graduate of Cambridge to one of the most distinguished fellows of the College of Physicians. It contains intrinsic evidence that we were in no "haste" to refer to Dr. Hawkins, and that inquiry had been made. The italics are in the original.

—, 19th Sept. 1851.

"MY DEAR DR. —, I thought it best to inquire further of — before writing to you. He says he has no objection to his name being known if you should be asked about it. The proposition was that the physicians should be legally qualified to practise—viz., that they should be doctors or licentiates of Oxford or Cambridge, or graduates of other Universities and Fellows and Licentiates of the College of Physicians of London.

"The amendment was in the *hand-writing* of Dr. Hawkins, the Registrar of the College, and was proposed by Sir Henry Halford, to the effect that they should be qualified to practise as physicians in some part or other of the three kingdoms, which is tantamount to a man's being M.D. at all, no matter where; and as I mentioned, the only other person in Leicester, just now professing to practise as a physician, who could become a candidate in the event of a vacancy, is a homœopath. Any other M.D.'s are in general practice. He possesses a Glasgow degree, and his name is Hanson. I do think that Sir Henry and the Registrar are much to blame.

"Yours very faithfully,
— — —"

We cannot but suppose that the gentlemen by whom we have been misled, and who must, it would appear, have been themselves mistaken, will furnish the profession with some explanation. In the mean time we can only at present regret that Dr. Hawkins should have been pained by what has taken place; but considering that the statements we put forth rested on the authority of several parties of his own profession, we conceive he must be rejoiced at having had an opportunity of offering so full a refutation as that which he has given. The only thing which strikes us now as singular in the matter, is that such a motion as that of Sir Henry Halford should have been made at all in an institution like the Leicester Infirmary, which is now fully officered, the physicians being—the senior, M.D. Cantab., and F.R.C.P. of London; the second, M.B. Cantab.; and the third, M.D. Edin., and

L.R.C.P. of London. Any of these gentlemen might well conceive it offensive on the part of Sir Henry Halford to attempt to lower the qualification for the office of physician in the Infirmary. This may possibly have led to the misapprehension; but we have no doubt the matter will be satisfactorily explained.

With respect to the Duchess of Gloucester, and the connexion of her grace with homœopathic quackery, we have been again and again informed, that at her residence near London, she has employed herself very energetically, in connexion with the clergyman of the parish, in the spread of globulism; and we have further been assured that her name has appeared in some of the homœopathic advertisements.—
ED. L.

THE LATE SIR H. HALFORD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In last week's LANCET (Oct. 18th) it is stated that, "it is well known that the late Sir Henry Halford, when Dr. Vaughan, practised in Leicester." This is a mistake. He originally settled in London, where he got rapidly into practice, and rose to much eminence before the decease of his father.

His father, Dr. Vaughan, of Leicester, was a physician of great talent and of much celebrity in that district, where he held the leading practice for many years, and until his death.

Yours obediently,

AN OCTOGENARIAN.

Amphill, October, 1851.

MEDICAL ASSISTANTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It has been well observed, that any crime, however bad, may in some degree be palliated, and so it appears may anything improper or unreasonable. Mr. Spong's observations on the letter of "A. T. C." and my own clearly manifest the weakness of the position he has assumed in defending a system so replete with evil, and which is pursued in nine cases out of ten by general practitioners to their junior brethren. I leave it to any sensible and disinterested party to decide conscientiously if thirty or forty pounds a year is a fair and reasonable remuneration to offer an assistant for the arduous duties he has to undertake, and the fatigue both of mind and body which their performance inflict on him? Night and day, Sunday and all hours, must the medical assistant be at his post; and, hear it all you young men who are attending hospitals and entering this laborious calling, all for the sake of thirty or forty pounds a year and the bit you eat! Some of you may be fortunate enough not to be obliged to depend for support on such situations, but those who will be must expect to get this as a reward for their toils. Mr. Spong, according to his note of the 11th inst., must be a hater of filthy lucre, as he appears to be much astonished at so humble an individual as an assistant presuming to ask for a fair day's wages for a fair day's work; and he also labours to make the innocent believe that general practitioners cannot, as a rule, afford to give more money; and as he observes emphatically, "as long as the practice of medicine and surgery in this country holds together in its present form, the salaries, as a general rule, will not be more abundant." His wish, no doubt, is father to the thought; and I say, as long as there exists in the profession a class of ignorant fellows, so long will Mr. Spong's prayer be heard. It is not true, as stated by him, that the majority of practices cannot admit of higher salaries. I have myself assisted men whose receipts amounted to £2000, £1200, £800, and £600 annually, and who could well afford to increase the pay, and who would not break the infamous rule of not doing so. Mr. Spong and his cohorts may depend on it, as long as they persist in so great an injustice, they will gain nothing by it; but Mr. Spong tells us money is the root of all evil,—*ergo*, a general practitioner takes good care not to tempt his assistant by giving him much of it. This is a new dodge to get rid of the justice of a cause, and reminds me of the plan adopted by a certain lawyer on whose brief was written, "No case;—abuse the witnesses!" But it seems that our complaints have no real basis; in fact, Mr. Spong tells us we are dreamers and "dyspeptic grumblers." Perhaps it is so, and that the last few days of pain and sleepless nights at midwifery have so benumbed the intellect as to give vent to

the ideal. Medical assistants, should you ever be afflicted with this peculiar sort of dyspepsia, read Mr. Spong's letters of the 13th September and 11th October, and rest assured they will act as an immediate antacid! You will then for the first time see how happy you are circumstanced in life—no care, anxiety, toil, sleepless nights, &c.; all joy, plenty to eat, drink, and be merry, and a horse kept *for your use*; and how well paid for your services! Finally, let me prevail on all assistants to subscribe, and erect a monument to manifest their gratitude to Mr. Spong for his advocacy of their rights, and render his name immortal in the town of Faversham and elsewhere, as a thorough-going medical reformer.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

Oct. 1851.

EXPERIENTIA.

MEETINGS OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETIES IN LONDON DURING THE ENSUING WEEK.

NOTE.—When the day of the month is not specified, no meetings take place.

| Societies. | — | Days of Meeting. |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Epidemiological | Mon. 8½ P.M. | |
| Chemical, 142, Strand..... | Mon. 8 P.M. | |
| Medico-Botanical, 32, Sackville-st. | Tuesday. | |
| Medico-Chirurgical, 53, Berners-st. | Tues. 8½ P.M. | |
| Pathological, 33, George-street, | Tues. 8 P.M. | |
| Hanover-square..... | | |
| Hunterian, 4, Bloomfield-street, | Wed. 8 P.M. | |
| Finsbury..... | | |
| Pharmaceutical, 17, Bloomsbury-sq. | Wed. 9 P.M. | |
| Harveian, 64, Edgware-road | Thurs. 8 P.M. | |
| South London Medical, Borough ... | Thurs. 8 P.M. | |
| Western Medical and Surgical, | Fri. 8 P.M. | |
| 44, Sloane-street | | |
| Medical Society of London, 32A, | Sat. 8 P.M. | Nov. 1 |
| George-street, Hanover-square } | | |

Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The Council have just announced that the next examination of candidates for the Fellowship of the College will take place in the first week in November, in classics, mathematics, and French; and the professional examination will be held on the 2nd and 4th of December. The microscopic demonstrations by Mr. Quekett will be commenced on Wednesday the 29th inst., at three o'clock. It is stated that the extensive alterations in the Museum, for the carrying out of which the Council obtained a grant of £15,000 in the last session of Parliament, will be commenced immediately. It may save our young friends some trouble and inconvenience if we inform them that the registration has commenced, and will close on Friday the 31st inst.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION AT APOTHECARIES' HALL.—The preliminary examination in classics and mathematics commenced on Saturday last, the 18th inst., and was continued on the succeeding Monday and Tuesday. The first day's examination consisted in writing answers to printed questions; on the two succeeding days the examination was altogether oral. Ninety-three gentlemen presented themselves for this examination. Although the candidates were not required to construe Xenophon, about forty preferred doing so.

The following are the names of gentlemen who have passed the preliminary examination at Apothecaries' Hall, Oct. 18th 20th, and 21st, 1851:—

ADAMS, RICHARD, St. Bartholomew's Hospital.
 ALDERSEY, WILLIAM HUGH, Guy's Hospital.
 BAKEWELL, R. HALE, Middlesex Hospital.
 BALDING, CHARLES CULLEDGE, Barkway, Herts.
 BALDING, DANIEL BARLEY, Middlesex Hospital.
 BARTMAN, ROBERT HENRY, Guy's Hospital.
 BELLEW, HENRY WALTER, St. George's Hospital.
 BELLEW, PATRICK F., St. George's Hospital.
 BOTT, THOMAS B., Manchester.
 BROWN, T. E. BURTON, London.
 BULLMORE, WILLIAM KING, Falmouth.
 BULTEEL, CHRISTOPHER, St. George's Hospital.
 BUSH, FRANCIS A., Whetstone.
 CARVER, CHARLES HANDASYDE, Beccles.