

LETTER FROM THE LATELY RESIDENT PHYSICIAN OF THE LUNATIC ASYLUM AT DUNSTON LODGE, GATESHEAD-ON-TYNE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As the article in THE LANCET of the 7th inst., headed "Experience in a Private Lunatic Asylum," must, unless refuted, cast a slur on every private lunatic asylum in or about Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I beg to inform you, that the assertions of your anonymous correspondent are false, in so far as the asylum at Dunston Lodge, Gateshead-on-Tyne, is concerned, and in particular to state—

1st. That so far from "those prudent, judicious, and rational means, which ought to be adopted for the recovery of the patients, being there entirely and designedly neglected," every means are adopted for their cure. The pauper patients are employed, under the eye of attendants, in the cultivation of a farm of 100 acres, in tailoring, carpenters' work, washing, cooking, cleaning the galleries, and such like; the private patients walk into the country, or drive, as the case may require; read, sew, dance, &c.; in fact, every measure capable of contributing to the cure or alleviation of their malady is adopted.

2nd. That no means are resorted to for the purpose of confirming the complaint.

3rd. That no patient admitted twelve months ago (or at any other period) "was knocked about for five weeks, and refused to see his friends, because of his face having been cut, eyes swollen up, and thoroughly blackened."

4th. That no patient ever wanted the medical treatment I considered requisite for his case.

5th. That far "from making things ready against the day appointed for the magistrates' visit," I never knew, directly or indirectly, of their intention, until the moment of their arrival.

6th. That no one of sane mind is confined in that asylum, and in particular, none in any way answering to the case of Robert —.

7th. That I never interdicted any patient about to be discharged from using means to procure the liberation of any other patient; nor ever held the conversation on this subject detailed by your correspondent.

If the accusations I have now touched upon be true of any institution—and I have reason to fear they may be so—none would rejoice more than myself at their exposure and punishment, (as provided for by Lord Ashley's Bill, enforced by her Majesty's Commissioners in Lunacy.) As, however, this cannot in any way be advanced by a sweeping, anonymous charge, including, from its very nature, alike the innocent and the guilty, I feel it due, both to my own reputation and that of the proprietor, thus publicly, in every particular, to contradict the statements of the article in question, in so far as the asylum at Dunston Lodge is concerned.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

C. LOCKHART ROBERTSON, M.D.,

Assistant-Surgeon to the Forces, and lately
Resident Physician in the asylum at Dunston Lodge, Gateshead-on-Tyne.

General Hospital, Fort Pitt,
Nov. 14th, 1846.

MEDICAL NEWS,

FACTS, NOTICES, AND REMARKS.

HEWSONI OPERA OMNIA, 1795.—To the Editor:

Sir,—A correspondent in THE LANCET of Oct. 10th, asks for a clue to the book mentioned above. Amongst others who will, no doubt, supply the necessary information, I beg to direct his eye to a catalogue of W. Baynes and Son, Paternoster-row, 1821, (I believe,) page 406, No. 9640—"Hewson, Opera Omnia, 2 vols., sewed, 6s., 1795," amongst the octavos. Again; the catalogue of the late J. Bohn, Henrietta-street, 1823, page 705, No. 10,271—"Hewsoni Opera Omnia, (Descrip. Syst. Lymphat., Disq. de Sang. Nat., &c.) Lat. vertit et notas addidit Wynpersse, 3 vols. 8vo, plates, sewed, 9s., Lugd. Batav., 1796." Those who are conversant with bibliography know that a portion of the same edition often appears with a different title, to promote the circulation of a book; and this may account for the two dates, 1795 and 1796. Whether it is so in this case I cannot affirm. But these extracts, perhaps, prove that Mr. Gulliver is fully borne out in his statement. I could say something about the edition of Aretæus in question, which your correspondent rightly calls "Editio princeps," but forgot to give us the date and size; but the student will find the book registered in "Maittairei Annales Typographici," tom. tert. (pars posterior), page 635; or in the old edition of

"Fabricii Bibliotheca Græca," 4to, Hamburg, 1708, tom. iii., page 101, where Fabricius prides himself on possessing a copy of the same edition, with the MS. notes of some scholar—a memorable book, as having originated a quarrel between Morel, the learned printer, (but not of this book, which was printed by Turnebus,) and Gonpylus, the editor of the book we are talking about, of whom Morel complained very bitterly.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
S. H. B.
North-Audley-street, Oct. 1846.

SPECIMEN OF THE AID GIVEN BY NEWSPAPERS TO THE QUACKS.—To the Editor: SIR,—Underneath I send you a copy of an advertisement inserted in the Gloucester Journal of this week. One of the same kind generally makes its appearance weekly. I should imagine the eyes of the most credulous would be opened by such a sheer piece of humbug.—Your obedient servant,
W. P. B. (Cheltenham.)

"PUBLIC THANKS TO THE BARON SPOLASCO, M.D., A.M., &c. &c., 2, College-green, Gloucester, for having, in fifteen minutes, to the great astonishment of all acquainted with the case, made sound the broken arm of Mr. C. Miller, wire-drawer, St. John's-lane, Gloucester, and at once, and for ever, cast off the splints and bandages in which this broken arm had been set but three days before by a surgeon in this city.—N.B. Dr. Spolasco may be consulted every Thursday at Essex Villa, Cheltenham, and the remainder of the week at Gloucester."

MAGICAL EFFECTS OF A PORTMANTEAU KEY.—In the October number of the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, Mr. BRAID, of Manchester, in a long paper "On the Power of the Mind over the Body," (in which he shows us proof of how readily those who are inattentive to facts may "misapprehend what they see,") gives the following illustration:—When in London lately, he says, he called on a physician, who is in the habit of using mesmerism in his practice, just as he uses any other remedy. "He spoke," says Mr. Braid, "of the extraordinary effects which he had experienced from the use of magnets applied during the mesmeric state, and kindly offered to illustrate the fact on a patient who had been asleep all the time I was in the room, during which I felt assured she could overhear every word of our conversation. He told me, that when he put the magnet into her hands, it would produce catalepsy of the hands and arms, and such was the result. He wafted the hands, and the catalepsy ceased. He said that a mere touch of the magnet on a limb would stiffen it, and such he proved to be the fact." Thus far Mr. BRAID would seem to have been as soft as the "physician;" but he then proceeds thus:—"I now told him that I had got a little instrument in my pocket, which, although far less than his, I felt assured would prove quite as powerful, and I offered to prove this by operating on the same patient, whom I had never seen before, and who was in the mesmeric state when I entered the room. My instrument was about three inches long, the thickness of a quill, with a ring attached to the end of it. I told him that, when put into her hands, he would find it catalepsy both hands and arms as his had done, and such was the result. Having reduced this by wafting, I took my instrument from her, and again returned it, in another position, and told him it would now have the very reverse effect—that she would not be able to hold it, and that although I closed her hands on it, they would open, and that it would drop out of them, and such was the case,—to the great surprise of my worthy friend, who now desired to be informed what I had done to the instrument to invest it with this new and opposite power. This I declined doing for the present; but I promised to do so when he had seen some further proofs of its remarkable powers. I now told him that a touch with it on either extremity would cause the extremity to rise and become cataleptic, and such was the result; that a second touch on the same point would reduce the rigidity, and cause it to fall, and such again was proved to be the fact. After a variety of other experiments, every one of which proved precisely as I had predicted, she was aroused. I now applied the ring of my instrument on the third finger of the right hand, from which it was suspended, and told the doctor, that when it was so suspended, it would send her to sleep. To this he replied, 'It never will;' but I again told him that I felt confident that it would send her to sleep. We then were silent, and very speedily she was once more asleep. Having aroused her, I put the instrument on the second finger of her left hand, and told the doctor that it would be found she could not go to sleep when it was placed there. He said he thought she would, and he sat steadily gazing at her; but I said firmly and confidently that she would not. After a considerable time the doctor asked her if she did not see