

here with the manner in which it is given in the French Hospitals, we ought to blush.

The *remedy* for this evil is simple enough. Our physicians and surgeons must never allow private engagements to interfere with their hospital duties. If they willingly accept these public posts, they are bound to perform the duties attached to them, at any sacrifice of private practice; not to neglect these duties and use the appointment merely as a stepping-stone to help them into private practice.

I enclose my card, and remain, Sir, yours, &c.,
July, 1856. BARTHOLOMEWENSIS.

THE TREATMENT OF HOOPING-COUGH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having received more than one communication from medical gentlemen, remarking upon the strength of the dose of the tincture of *lyttæ* ordered in the paper which you did me the honour of publishing in THE LANCET of the 19th inst., “On the Abortive Treatment of Hooping-Cough,” I wish to correct a *very serious error* which has crept into that paper, and which might lead to alarming results. The formula in Barker and Montgomery’s Pharmacopœia is as follows:—

R. Tinct. cinchonæ, ℥iv.
,, cantharidis, ℥ijj.
,, opii camphorat., ℥ss.
Sumat cochleare parvum ex cochleare magno
infusi lini. ter in dies.

Your readers will observe that only half an ounce of tincture of cinchonæ, four drachms instead of four ounces, is mentioned in the paper alluded to. I may also add that the tincture of cantharides of the Dublin Pharmacopœia is considerably weaker than that of London, and is made as follows:—

R. Tinct. lyttæ, ℥ii.
Spirit tenu., Oiss.
Macera per dies septem, dein fola.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,
Nottingham, July, 1856. P. J. HYNES, M.D., M.R.C.S.E.

ON POISONING BY STRYCHNIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As so much has been written and said about poisoning with strychnia, I should not have thought it advisable to relate a case which happened in my practice nearly twenty years ago, had not a letter in your number of the 12th inst., from Dr. Glover, thrown some doubt whether strychnia was the instrument of death employed by Palmer in Cook’s case. What I am about to relate happened soon after the discovery of strychnia, and the only knowledge I possessed at the time was from reading an article on the subject published in THE LANCET of that day, in which the symptoms produced by an overdose were described.

Mrs. W—, a lady about forty-five years of age, of a very excitable temperament, had been suffering for some time from scrofulous enlargements of the joints, for which she had been under my care.

One evening I received an urgent message to attend immediately. I found her sitting in a chair, herself, her daughter, and attendants being in great alarm. Before I could ask any question, she screamed, “My dear Doctor, do something for me.” In an instant the eyes appeared to be starting from their sockets; the head was forcibly drawn round, the arms and legs horribly convulsed, she being conscious at the same time. This lasted about a minute or two, when she became calm. I had no knowledge that she had applied to any other medical man, or that she had taken any medicine excepting what she had received from me; but it flashed across my mind that it was the effect of strychnia. I said to the daughter, “Good God! your mother is poisoned; she has taken strychnine!” She now confessed that her mother had consulted the late Mr. Shorland, of Ilchester, and that he had given her some small pills, one to take twice a day; that she thought they were so small they did her no good, and therefore had taken two pills at one time. I gave her a dose of castor oil; afterwards a mixture with camphor, ether, and opium. The spasms gradually subsided, and the next day she was pretty well. On Mr. Shorland’s arrival he acknowledged that the pills contained one-eighth of a grain of strychnia. She had therefore taken one quarter of a grain. I think there is no doubt twice the quantity would have killed her.

I mention this case to show that the symptoms were so striking and so different from those produced by any other disease as to carry conviction to the mind at once, and confirms the opinion you gave in an excellent article in THE LANCET immediately after the trial—that the physiological evidence in this case is of more importance than the chemical; in which opinion I fully concur, and were I a jurymen, in a case of life and death, I should hesitate before I gave a verdict on the evidence of a person, be he ever so scientific, who asserted he had discovered the 50,000th part of a grain of poison in the dead body.

I consider Dr. Hall’s frog test a physiological one, and the most valuable in chemistry.

A friend and neighbour of mine, a few years ago, had a number of pigs poisoned. The contents of the stomach of one was taken to him, but he failed to discover the cause of death, although it could not be doubted the pigs were poisoned.

I am, Sir your obedient servant,
Martock, July 14th, 1856. R. W. MARTYN.

WHAT IS AN M.D. OF A BRITISH UNIVERSITY?

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You would, of course, reply to my query that he is one who holds the highest academical degree in Medicine. But is he a physician, surgeon, or apothecary? I have just had this matter solved, although not quite to my satisfaction. I met a friend—who I am often in the habit of meeting—a fellow of the London College of Physicians. After writing the prescription and signing his initials, he asked my Christian name, and said, “As you are not connected with the College of Physicians, although you hold the degree of Doctor of Medicine, I must write your surname, and style you as surgeon.” Thus, Sir, my recognised title was ignored, as M.D. was omitted after my name. What think you of that? I was quite aware that the College of Physicians could not grant the title of Doctor, and I have yet to learn that its fellows or licentiates can disavow this degree. I am aware that the College most unwarrantably styles *all* its licentiates *Doctors*, when some hold no degree in medicine, and that such call themselves Doctor without any right to do so. Let graduates in medicine not connected with the London College look to this, and for the future call persons by their right names—*e. g.*, licentiates, not M.D.’s, *Mr.*, and not *Dr.* If this is to be the manner of showing honour to whom honour is due, let them seek more for consultations amongst their *own* class than amongst those who are capable of such illiberal and unfair behaviour. I have yet, too, to learn that *only* those connected with the London College have the *right* to sign their initials to their prescriptions.

All graduates in medicine must now know that they are surgeons. But if a man only holds the degree of Doctor of Medicine, and possesses no diploma, what is he? Pray, Mr. Editor, tell me. Such cases exist. Before the recent Act of Parliament, M.D.’s of the University of London were either surgeons, apothecaries, or—? but not physicians. According to a matter of dry law, M.D.’s of Dublin, Edinburgh, and elsewhere, are not physicians until these universities obtain similar privileges; and yet forsooth the London College has wisely and liberally offered, by way of medical reform, to admit M.D.’s of any British University to the privileges of their College, provided it obtains the advantages it desired!

But, Sir, the London College is a monopoly too expensive for some to join in, whilst others, who could afford to pay for its diploma, could not afford to be connected with it on account of the restrictions which it enjoins. Thus talent alone is not its portal. Whilst the majority of its fellows are men of skill, are none to be found not up to the present state of knowledge, and whose knowledge, too, of auscultation, &c., is inferior to that of a modern apothecary?

The London College, were it to enforce its legal powers of a bygone time, would not be tolerated, and, like its more humble neighbour, the Society of Apothecaries, must act with a similar liberality, though less in degree. For most men who obtain the degree of Doctor of Medicine have undergone an examination in no way inferior to the London College, whilst those who practise medicine merely with the diploma of the College of Surgeons of England have undergone no examination in medicine whatever.

In concluding, I would desire to give a hint to some of the *modern* members of the College of Physicians. Not unfrequently some of them, on meeting an M.D. surgeon or apothecary, write a prescription and hand it to the gentleman met