

have followed in the wake of other compilers, and have acted on the avowed maxim that all scientific matter once published becomes the property of the public, to be used by it with or without acknowledgment, as may best suit its purposes. We deem such conduct to be most ungracious and unfair, on the part of many writers, and consider that when they find it useful or necessary to avail themselves of the writings and investigations of others, they should at least render to those to whom they are so much indebted full and fair acknowledgment, and that approbation which too frequently constitutes the sole reward and encouragement of original investigators. In Dr. Carpenter's "Principles of Human Physiology" we find this practice of appropriation to which we have referred carried so far, that in the explanation of the figures, (nearly the whole of which are copied from the works of others,) the name only of the author is mentioned, the reader being left to find out the title of the work, from which the figures so extracted have been obtained, as best he may; by this proceeding he is actually frequently cut off from consulting the original sources from which the information proceeded, and made to put up with a mere compilation.

We have bestowed this long notice upon Dr. Carpenter's Essay, first, because we think it right that every work treating of an important subject should be judged according to its merits; and, secondly, because Dr. Carpenter is now the editor of a medical periodical, remarkable for the extreme partiality and injustice of its reviews. It therefore becomes an act of simple justice that Dr. Carpenter should himself be made to pass through an ordeal of some severity, but one infinitely more just than that to which he so frequently subjects abler and better men than himself, hence his own doings as a writer and as a man of science should be somewhat closely examined. Through this ordeal we have caused the Essay before us to pass; and whether we have done so in the spirit of truth and fairness the reader is himself in a position to judge, for he will perceive that we have seldom made any comments without previously quoting the author's own words as the text of those comments and strictures; we have adopted this course, at the sacrifice of some space, purposely, in order that the reader should be put in possession of the facts necessary to form a correct and independent judgment.

In conclusion, we feel bound to observe that this work is wanting in everything which is necessary to stamp it as the production of superior knowledge or talent: thus it is not an original work; its physiology is often bad, and its practice execrable and quackish, and on this account, it is offensive and insulting to the profession at large. The same want of originality extends through all the writings of this author, and we would advise Dr. Carpenter, that if he be really desirous of taking his stand amongst scientific men, not to rest satisfied with a mere scissors and pen-and-ink reputation, but to write less, think more, and to seek out sources of original investigation and inquiry.

New Inventions AND MEDICINAL PREPARATIONS.

Ferri Iodidi Saccharatum. J. F. DAVENPORT, Operative Chemist, Great Russell-street.

A SPECIMEN of this beautiful preparation has been forwarded to us by Mr. Davenport. In its new dress it has a very inviting appearance. We may mention that, hitherto, this salt, which is a most valuable therapeutic agent, has not been obtained in a neutral state. It has always been very deliquescent, spontaneous decomposition constantly taking place. The saccharated iodide, the preparation now before us, possesses qualities which obviate these objections. Several of our leading professors of materia medica acknowledge that this preparation is the most perfect specimen of its kind. It is likely, as now prepared, to become very popular with the profession.

THE HUNTERIAN MANUSCRIPTS AND SIR EVERARD HOME.

[IMPORTANT LETTER FROM SIR B. C. BRODIE, BART., F.R.S.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In a memoir of myself contained in the last number of your journal, (of which I can only say, that it gives me much more credit than I feel to be my due,) it is mentioned that the late Sir Everard Home had published a case of a person poisoned by arsenic, taken from Mr. Hunter's papers, without acknowledging the source from whence it was derived. In this there must be some mistake. I am not aware that Sir Everard Home ever published a case of the kind; but in my second paper on the Effects Produced by Poisons on the Animal System, at page 209 of the *Transactions of the Royal Society for 1812*, there is the following passage:—

"Mr. Home informed me of an experiment made by Mr. Hunter and himself, in which arsenic was applied to a wound in a dog. The animal died in twenty-four hours, and the stomach was found to be considerably inflamed."

Having this opportunity of doing so, I trust that you will excuse me, if I trouble you with some further remarks, explaining what I believe to be the real state of the case respecting Sir Everard Home and the Hunterian manuscripts.

During a period of about ten years that I was in the habit, conjointly with Mr. Clift, of assisting Sir Everard in his dissections in comparative anatomy, and in his other inquiries, and when I also assisted him in revising his papers, I do not remember a single instance, in which I had reason to believe that he appropriated to himself any of Mr. Hunter's observations. He referred occasionally to Mr. Hunter's manuscripts, but they contained little relating to the particular subjects on which he was himself engaged; and if ever he did make use of them, I am satisfied that he always acknowledged the having done so. Indeed, it seemed to me that he was especially anxious to do justice to Mr. Hunter's reputation. In making this statement I feel that I am but performing a duty towards one from whom I received much kindness in the early part of my professional life.

In his latter years I am afraid that he certainly did commit the very great error of publishing some of Mr. Hunter's observations, as if they had been his own. That he should have done so is the more inconceivable, as I believe that I am correct in saying that the facts thus recorded were comparatively unimportant, and could add little or nothing to the well-deserved reputation which he had acquired from his earlier investigations. I can only explain the circumstance by supposing that his judgment had become impaired as he advanced in life.

That he should have destroyed the Hunterian manuscripts was certainly a most calamitous circumstance for the Hunterian Collection, and not less so for himself. They would have very considerably assisted Mr. Owen in his arduous task of completing the Catalogue of the Museum of the College of Surgeons. On the other hand, they contained very little that could any how have been available for the original researches in which he was himself engaged,—at the same time that the destruction of them could not fail to produce, on the minds of others, a very strong impression that he had used them, for his own purposes, to a much greater extent than was really the case.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Savile-row, May 6, 1850.

B. C. BRODIE.

DRS. BIGOT and MIRAULT, physicians to the hospital of Angers, and Dr. Goult, surgeon to the 11th Regiment of Light Infantry, received lately, from the hands of the President of the French Republic, the Cross of the Legion of Honour, as a reward of their exertions at the late catastrophe, which caused the death of more than 200 men of the above regiment, by the breaking of the chains of a suspension-bridge at Angers, on the 16th of April last.