

other classical authors, including Juvenal, Euripides, Sophocles, &c.

The medical examinations comprise every branch of medical science, and, to my certain knowledge, are inferior to those of no university or medical board of the United Kingdom. The degree of M.D. is granted to no student who has not previously graduated in arts. I now, Sir, leave your readers to judge for themselves respecting the value of the diplomas of Trinity College, and beg to remain, your very obedient servant,

Maidstone, May, 1846.

J. T. T.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The old regulation restricting the Fellowship of the College of Physicians as a matter of right to the graduates of Oxford, Cambridge, and Trinity College, (Dublin,) was repealed in 1835, after which time, all candidates were declared to be admissible as licentiates only, from which class a certain number are to be annually elected Fellows.

The advantages derived by English and Irish graduates are, that they are eligible a year after they have been licensed, the Scotch graduate being M.A. or B.A. five years later. If the latter does not possess a degree in Arts, his eligibility does not take place until after the lapse of seven years.

Can anything be more unjust than the above regulations? The education of the insulted graduates of the Scotch universities is acknowledged to be far superior, in a medical point of view, to that of the favoured ones of Oxford or Cambridge. In Dublin, it cannot be denied there is every facility for the acquirement of medical and surgical skill, but that the examinations there are superior to those of other universities, I deny. Hoping that you will direct attention to this subject in the pages of THE LANCET,

I remain, your obedient servant,

York, May 19th, 1840.

A LICENTIATE.

THE BOTANIC GARDEN, CHELSEA.

A CORRESPONDENT has directed our attention "to the manner in which the Chelsea Botanic Garden is conducted during the Summer Medical Session. Medical students," he says, "are invited there by half-past 8 A.M. to the botanical lecture, with the privilege of remaining in the garden until 11 o'clock. This," he continues, "is certainly a great advantage, where there are so many plants, the botanical character of which it is of the utmost importance to know. But how do things stand? Thus. In consequence of there being no catalogues to be had, through which the student may become familiar with the respective names of plants, according to their numbers, the students, of course, make their way homewards, remarking to one another on the absurdity of going so far to a lecture which every teacher of botany must define to his own class. And, in fact, since the commencement of this course, the number of students has decreased, I am sure, to one half, if not less. Formerly, catalogues could be obtained from the different booksellers, but the only one that I know of now is in the possession of Mr. Anderson, and he takes very good care to keep it to himself."

What is the result of all this? The anxiety the student feels to ascertain the character of one plant, the distinction between it and another of the same natural order, and from another order, which very much resembles it in the eye of the young botanist, (although quite different in their medical properties, one being a *notorious poison*, the other *inert*;) compels him, as it were, to have recourse to what we call *cribbing*;—in other words, the taking the leaves of one plant, the root of another, and so on, until we have satisfied ourselves, and have their nature ascertained by our teachers. Well, this must do a great deal of mischief, and all in consequence of the catalogues being out of print, and of the laziness of those who ought to complete another.

In justice to all parties, I must say that Dr. Lindley had at one time selected one portion of the ground, arranged the plants in rotation, and numbered them accordingly, in his "Elements of Botany;" but really they are now so irregular, and the numbers are so soiled, that I have seen many an one take his pocket-handkerchief to clean off the dirt, and then, most frequently, be disappointed, from the paint being washed away: and not only this, but the numbers do not correspond. One day I saw the number 26, which represents, in his "Elements" *heleborus foetidus*, attached to the *petroselinum sativum*,

to which No. 73 ought to be attached; the former being a *deadly poison*, the other a *carminative*; and fig. 97, by which *ferrula assafoetida* ought to be planted, has nothing, while the *assafoetida* is quite in another part of the garden, without a name or mark of any kind. Rather than mislead the young beginner, which might tend to *fatal* results, it would be better to have the garden closed at once.

In conclusion, allow me to say a few words as to the *lookers-on*, of whom there are three; one, a robust, ill-tempered-looking fellow, who thinks himself the king of the place. One day, while a number of students were waiting the arrival of the professor, a young boy, about eleven years of age, who attends the class, and was anxious to know the name of a plant that was placed on the desk, took it up and asked his senior what it was; but immediately this gentleman seized him by the arm and said he had no business with it, for which he was hissed out of the lecture-room. The second evinces much the same character, when an opportunity occurs. The third is a little fellow, who hides himself among the trees in different parts of the garden, and if he sees any of the students even *touching* a plant, he calls out. Students are not allowed to go to the hot-house to see any of the tropical plants; and the reason they give for that is, that some flowers received an injury last summer. The result is, that when the student gets an opportunity, he rushes in and takes away all he can.

I would suggest (adds our correspondent) that these persons employed as lookers-on be occupied in arranging and keeping the garden in proper order, and that a catalogue be published, as some remedy for these evils.

QUACKERY.—THE "PULMONIC WAFERS" AND "COCKLE'S PILLS."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I think it my duty to send you the following example in practice, of injury from the use of those things called "Dr. Locock's pulmonic wafers" and "Cockle's pills:"—

A few days ago, I was called to attend a lady, whom I found suffering from very severe headach, accompanied with nausea, great feeling of lassitude, and complete loss of sleep. On inquiring as to the origin of these symptoms, I learned that this lady had, three days previously, complained of slight sore throat and cough, for which she had taken some of the "wafers" and a "Cockle pill." The headach, which she described as intense, came on soon after, and continued incessantly, with the other symptoms; and suspecting that the quack medicines had produced them, I inquired whether she had ever taken opium. She replied no; for once, being stung by a wasp, some laudanum was applied to the part repeatedly, and, to use her own expression, "she was driven almost mad with headach," and other distressing feelings of a kind similar to those now complained of. I confess myself rather puzzled how to treat such a case; for beyond a slight sore throat, there were no symptoms but those produced undoubtedly by the nostrums; and I shall be glad to learn what are the best antidotes to these abominations, when they have been unfortunately swallowed, either singly or in combination, as above related.—I am, Sir, yours most obediently,

Golden square, May, 1846.

GEO. REDFORD.

LETTER FROM A NON-QUALIFIED ASSISTANT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In my weekly perusal of your journal, among its many epistolary contributors, I find one signing himself "Scalpel," pouring out a jealous invective against "non-qualified visiting assistants," awarding to them no higher designations than "quacks," "intra-professional nuisances,"—complimentary terms, certainly, which appellations, perhaps, would have been, at one time, applicable to this "Scalpel" himself. It much reminds me of the amusing expression of the kettle calling its fellow "smut." Peradventure, this sapient scribe was never one of those "quacks," "intra-professional nuisances," as he opprobriously designates them; or, a "non-qualified visiting assistant," glad to avail himself of practical, as well as theoretical knowledge. Circumstances, perhaps, never stood in the way to prevent him, immediately after his pupilage, from attaining to his qualifications; or again, perhaps he was never so unfortunate as to have pecuniary disappointments or drawbacks,—having his professional indentures, but not the substance to proceed. I cannot but view with disgust this perfidious maliciousness, evidently displayed in envy, to rob the non-qualified assistant of minor privileges and advan-

tages; the writer, perhaps, with snake-like apathy in his mind, grovelling and preying upon a selfish idea, in hopes of satisfying some sordid desire. I believe no general practitioner of any judgment or standing would engage an assistant to attend "unions, or elsewhere," unless he had a just conception of the acquirements and abilities of such an one. I really consider it a gross insult on the highly intellectual body qualified, to put forth such an assertion, that they should, for the mere sake of sordid gain, employ an incompetent assistant, to the mischief of their patients. Doubtless, many of the "non-qualified," were they brought to the test, could put this pedant to the blush of ignorance, though now, through circumstances (the barrier of all us mortals), obliged to await the laudable and honourable gradation of making themselves members of the profession. Trusting you will pardon my intrusion in these remarks, which, perhaps, are not quite so brief as they ought to be, I conclude, adding, with another of your correspondents, in your own words, that "in all the common affairs of life there is the right to appeal against injustice." I must most unwillingly at present subscribe myself, your obedient servant,

June, 1846.

A NON-QUALIFIED ASSISTANT.

ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CLASS-PRIZES IN THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—With all due deference to the judgment of the scientific professors of the above-named excellent institution of learning, I am of opinion that the system which prevails of awarding the prizes by the votes of the students of each class, is fraught with great unfairness, and frequently entirely perverts the result intended by them to accrue; namely, to reward those students who have shown themselves to be the most industrious and deserving of that mark of distinction, which it has been their aim to obtain. I shall briefly endeavour to point out the objection to the present system, and submit for consideration what would, in my humble opinion, be a means by which the industrious and deserving student would meet with the reward which he justly merits. There are weekly examinations held in each class on the subjects that have been introduced to the students in the lectures delivered in the course of such week: thus far the plan is good, and perfectly unobjectionable; but no mark is made by the professor as to the student who most distinguishes himself at such examination, so that he who makes himself the most popular amongst his fellows, is frequently enabled, at the end of the session, by a system of canvassing, to carry off the prize; which, instead of being a reward of merit and industry from the professor to the student, is converted into a species of retribution to one who has gained from his companions the *honourable and praiseworthy* distinction of being a "good fellow;" while he who has worked hard in the hope of being rewarded for his industry, and of giving proof to his anxious friends of his assiduity, is disappointed and disheartened. I have this week, in more than one instance, witnessed this result; and from remarks that have fallen from some of the professors, and from the caution and exhortation to impartiality which they think it necessary to make previous to the voting, I cannot imagine that they are entirely blind to the evil. But such is the system; and so long as it is sanctioned by them, they have not the power of influencing the result; and thus their liberality, in giving the "freedom of election" to the students, (evidently for the purpose of freeing themselves from any imputation of favour on their part,) is imposed upon.

The remedy I would suggest for this evil is, that each professor, at the end of each weekly examination, should make known to the class the name of the student who, in his most capable opinion, shall have given the greatest satisfaction; should make a note of the same at the time, and at the end of the session, and should himself award the prizes to those who have undergone the greatest number of *creditable* examinations.

By this means all popularity, favour, and canvassing, would be done away with, a fresh spirit of competition would spring up, and the competitors would be sure that, according as was their proficiency, so would be their reward.

I am confident that the majority of students would join with me in objecting to the present system. Of the value or practicability of the suggestion I have made I leave to the professors, in their superior judgment, to decide. My desire to see justice done to the hard-working students, (in which

desire I well know they participate,) must be my apology to the professors for this public avowal of my opinion; and I flatter myself that the well-known zeal of the editor of THE LANCET for the rights of the profession in all its grades—from the physician to the student—will induce him to give insertion to these remarks, and to accept my apology for this intrusion upon his valuable columns.

Glasgow, April, 1846.

STUDENS.

MEDICAL NEWS,

FACTS, NOTICES, AND REMARKS.

THE COLD-WATER DEATH.—INQUEST ON THE BODY OF A PATIENT.—On Friday, June 5th, an inquest was held before Mr. Payne, coroner for the city of London, at the King's Head, Eastcheap, on the body of Mr. Richard Dresser, of No. 9, in the same street, who, it had been reported, had died owing to treatment received at the "hydropathic" establishment of Dr. Ellis, at Sudbrooke Park, near Petersham. Dr. Ellis was present, attended by his solicitor.

The jury having been sworn, one or two witnesses were called, who testified that the deceased had complained recently of rheumatism and of jaundice; and that he had, only on the Sunday before, placed himself under Dr. Ellis's "care," at Sudbrooke Park.

W. D. DRESSER, of No. 11, Rotherfield-street, Islington, cousin to deceased, stated, that beside the jaundice, he had complained of severe pain about the hip, which he called rheumatism, and that he had had a similar attack four or five years ago, when he was laid up for three months. On Tuesday morning, June 2nd, he learned that Mr. Dresser was dead, when he accompanied Mrs. Dresser to Richmond. When he now saw deceased, his body was lying on a bed in room No. 4. They had seen Dr. Ellis previous to their examining the corpse; when, after asking the doctor the cause of death, he placed a paper in his hands, which contained the diagnosis. This paper was as follows:—

"Mr. Richard Dresser came here on Friday last, to seek relief from what he termed rheumatism in the hip (properly sciatica), giving no other particulars; the case was thought admissible. But it soon appeared that he had been suffering from hepatitis of the sub-acute character, giving rise to suppuration, occasioning exudations of lymph and a rapid extension of the disease to the adjoining viscera. The symptoms were, tympanitis, total inaction of the bowels, and sluggishness of the urinary organs, very severe pain in the left leg from the groin along the thigh to the ankle, coldness of the extremities, and loss of power. He was treated as is usual to subdue the symptoms; the pain was soon suspended; the bowels, though stubborn, acted freely, after the means had been tried, and continued to do so; and the urine either passed of itself, or was drawn off. The appetite allowed of his taking a little farinaceous nourishment, but disease proceeded insidiously; sub-acute inflammation advanced gradually, though there was no sign of active progress; the organ became generally the seat of suppuration, the pulse became quicker and softer, with much perspiration; the countenance became pale and sallow. There was tumefaction of the liver, with a doughy, œdematous, or boggy feel of the hepatic region generally. The enlargement, or bulging, was very great about the false ribs. Oppression, with dyspnoea, or short breathing, immediately preceded his decease, which took place at twenty minutes before eight o'clock this morning, June 2, without either a sigh or a struggle.

"In three or four hours after his decease the fluids filled the chest and throat, and oozed copiously out of the ears, nose, and mouth. "J. E."

The witness continued.—Having asked the doctor the cause of death, he said it was not rheumatism but hepatitis, and that, had he known he was labouring under that complaint, he would not have admitted him into the establishment.

Mrs. DRESSER, widow of the deceased, saw her husband at the establishment on Sunday afternoon last, when she understood that he had been placed in some warm baths, and he said that his pain had left him. He was sitting up in bed, covered with blankets, and with wet wrappers around him. She took tea, and wished him to take some, but he refused, because he said that it was not allowed. Dr. Ellis came home in the evening, when she told the doctor that she thought her husband was very bad, because he was so very cold. The doctor then took a large cloth, placed it in a wash-hand basin containing water, and then put it on her husband's stomach, because, he said, he was afraid of inflammation, which he wished to stop. Deceased was shortly