

wishes to throw on others' shoulders. From a passage, indeed, which occurs in his address, deservedly or not, Prof. Huxley would appear to have had the credit of having played something more than a passive part, for he admits that he "had at one time a bad reputation amongst students for setting up a very high standard of acquirement." Now that his examinership is at an end, he is at some pains to explain that what he really wanted was simply a knowledge of fundamental principles. I can fancy many a past student wishing that such information had been conveyed to him before, and that he would have been safe in shaping his course in accordance with that.

I do not wish it to be understood that I for a moment contend that our teaching of physiology is all perfection. I hope, however, for my own part, that I may appeal with confidence to the many who, during the last fourteen years, have listened to me, to deny that the knowledge I have imparted to them has been bookish and unreal. At all events, it has always been my aim to deal with physiology as a practical and experimental science, and I have treated it accordingly in my lectures. Although susceptible of practical and experimental teaching, physiology, however, will always stand in a somewhat exceptional position. As far as chemical and physical experiments, illustrative of some of the phenomena occurring in living beings, are concerned, we are under no restricting influence; but there are actions which can only be illustrated by experimenting upon the living subject, and, for reasons which are sufficiently apparent, the extent is here limited to which it would be justifiable to proceed in our practical teaching. Even here, however, with anæsthetics at our command, there is much that is achievable and permissible.

I say, with Professor Huxley, by all means let the physiology which is acquired by medical students be such as will prove useful to them in the exercise of their profession. But, instead of making a wholesale attack on the method of teaching, let Professor Huxley, if he has found reason to complain in the manner he has done of the kind of knowledge displayed before him in his capacity as examiner at the University of London, trace the cause to its fountain head, and he will find that it is brought close home to the department with which he has been himself associated.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Grosvenor-street, June 8th, 1870.

F. W. PAVY.

THE LATE DISCUSSION OF AMALGAMATION AT THE PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—At the close of the debate at the general meeting of the Pathological Society the other day, the President, as you report, "warmly repudiated the statement [attributed to me] that the Pathological Society had failed in its objects in any way." Now, as I certainly never meant to convey any such impression, and am anxious to defend myself from casting such an aspersion upon a Society in which I have been for many years very deeply interested, perhaps you will allow me space to remark that what I said was, not that the Society, had failed in its objects, but that those objects would not be so limited as they are if the Society were a branch of a great institution which could cover the whole field of medical investigation. It is clear in itself, and is notorious to those acquainted with the foundation of the Pathological Society, that the jealous care with which its objects have been narrowed to little more than the pursuit of morbid anatomy was the result of a well-grounded apprehension of awakening the opposition of rival societies by any appearance of trenching upon their domain. No pathologist would deny the paramount importance of the pursuit of morbid anatomy; but although it is the basis of pathology, it is not the whole of that science, nor can pathology, the science of disease, be completely studied by an association from which therapeutics is rigidly excluded. Without therefore questioning in any degree the judiciousness of the rules which were drawn up at the foundation of the Society, without denying the great success with which the Society has followed up its objects, or the great value of the researches to which the President alluded, and which are now on foot, I think myself justified in saying that if all the societies were under the guidance of a common

Council, in which they would all be equally represented, and which would be equally interested in the due prosecution of the objects of each, these restrictions, which were imposed on the Pathological Society by rivalry and jealousy at its foundation, would be relaxed, and the Society called to a sphere of even larger usefulness.

But, in order that this may be so, we must guard ourselves against importing into the future the same ill-feeling which unfortunately prevailed in the past. If the Pathological Society believes that it is invited to join with friends and colleagues equally interested with itself in the promotion of all branches of medical science, and equally ready to spend the common property, and to use the influence of the joint society in promoting in all fair ways the advancement of pathology, I cannot doubt that it would do well to join. But if the scheme is regarded as a trap to betray the Society into the hands of rivals and enemies (as really would appear from the speeches of some of the opponents of union), the better plan would be to abstain altogether from any share in it. No discussion of details, such as is proposed at the meeting of next Monday, could make us safe in such a case; and it would be well, if the forms of the Society admit of it, for those who are opposed to union to attend at that meeting, and endeavour to rescind the vote of last Tuesday. The matter is not a trifling one—it involves the whole future of a Society which has been eminently prosperous, and which everyone allows to have been eminently successful in carrying out its objects—even though I believe there are many who, with me, would desire to see those objects somewhat less restricted.

In any case I think it should be understood that the offer has been made by the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society in all good faith and friendliness, with a sincere desire to advance every branch of medical science, pathology as well as others. For my own part I am confident that, whether the offer be ultimately accepted or declined, the action of that Society will be regulated by the same principles.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Clarges-street, June 13th, 1870. T. HOLMES.

QUACK ADVERTISEMENTS AND THE PRESS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I send you a country newspaper, and have marked in it no less than five advertisements of, to every well-regulated mind, a most objectionable character. For the sake of the local news usually contained in it I have been in the habit of reading the paper; but on these disgusting paragraphs being inserted week after week, I wrote to the editor to say if they were continued I should, for one, forbid the paper entering my house, and I would also induce all my friends who thought with me to do the same.

If the country medical men would themselves cease to subscribe to papers which allow such advertisements to defile their pages, and use their influence with their patients to do the same, I rather think a great blow would be struck at the system. It is from the remote country districts that the advertising quack draws his best hauls, and frequently patients come under my care who, from reading these advertisements, have been induced to go to such men, and have returned after being "done" to such an extent that they have been unwilling to say to what amount they have had to pay.

Londoners as a rule know to whom and where to go; cut away the country supply of victims to these harpies, and you will diminish their numbers greatly.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
June, 1870. A COUNTRYMAN.

PARIS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

AGITATION IN FAVOUR OF THE "FREE" TEACHING OF MEDICINE.

A FEW days ago I had the pleasure of attending one of the private meetings organised at Dr. Rambaud's, for the promotion of the free teaching of medicine. Among the persons present I noticed M. Delasiauve, physician to the