

In previously discussing this subject, we have maintained that the abuses which at present exist in the practice of medicine in this country have arisen rather from over-legislation than a want of legislation; and the great difficulty now experienced lies in the inducing certain bodies on which the government have conferred privileges, and which they have used for their individual benefit, to give them up for the benefit of the community. The duty of the state, in relation to the practitioners of medicine, is simple enough. We all allow that one of the most important functions of the government is the protection of the life of the community. A very calculable amount of life is annually committed to the skill of those persons who practise the healing art. If they are rash, uneducated men, they will destroy life unnecessarily; if they are educated and intelligent, they will preserve the lives of those committed to their charge. It is on this single ground, we imagine, that the government has a right to interfere in medicine, and no other. It has to protect the public life, by forbidding the ignorant to practise, and by giving its sanction to the intelligent. The attainment of this end would seem simple enough, but, with all our medical institutions and medical legislation, it is an object yet to be gained. We last year advocated Mr. Wakley's Medical Registration Bill, because of all measures we had yet seen it seemed to be the simplest, and that which was most likely to attain the proper ends of legislation on this subject. If the councils and managing committees of our corporations would put a little more faith in their own sincere wishes to improve their profession and benefit the public, and a little less trust in the legal powers which the government has conferred upon them, and which they are so anxious to renew or increase, we are convinced that there are few subjects on which it is more easy to legislate. To cease to encourage quackery, to license ascertained skill and talent, and put down all irregular practice, are the plain duties of the state. To be able to practise in every part of the United Kingdom every department of his profession, after having submitted to the required tests, is the obvious right of the medical man. Yet our medical bodies have each stood out upon their peculiar rights, and for their peculiar practice, till at last the profession has got into a condition in which there is no law, no control—in which the public life is sacrificed, and the medical man is neglected or persecuted by the institutions that were formed for his protection and benefit.

The collective body, however, to which we have alluded, consisting of deputies from the three old London incorporations, and the new National Institute, have put forth a manifesto of the 'Principles on which a Bill for regulating the practice of physic and surgery should be founded.' These 'Principles' are accompanied with the drafts of two charters—a new one for the College of Physicians and another for the members of the National Institute, under the name of the College of General Practitioners. To the charter of the College of Physicians generally we have no objection. It proposes to abolish the present invidious distinction of licentiate *intra urbem* and licentiate *extra urbem*, to institute examinations for the fellowship, and other important changes, which, although they bear marks of a common parentage with the recent charter granted to the College of Surgeons, will probably act less objectionably with a small body like the members of the former college than with a constituency such as that proposed by the latter. The charter to the new College of General Practitioners is to be granted on the condition that the Society of Apothecaries give up the power which they at present possess of examining candidates for a licence to practise every department of the medical profession. We should offer no objection to the transfer of the important functions of the Apothecaries' Society to the new body, but still the question is worth asking as to whether this new college, any more than the Apothecaries' Society, is required. Although the profession is divided into physicians, surgeons, and general practitioners, the distinction is one rather of degree than of kind. All the branches of science that are studied by the one should be cultivated by the other, and the interests of all in relation to the public are the same. Then why should the Colleges of Physicians or Surgeons refuse to examine and testify to the qualifications of general practitioners? Why, the expense and machinery of another college, where those which exist could effect all its objects? There is at least one member of the council of the College of Surgeons, Mr. Guthrie, who thinks that this body ought not to refuse to examine on medicine, midwifery, and pharmacy, so that its diploma might be the guarantee of the fitness of a man to practise as a general practitioner. As to the College of Physicians, it was originally instituted to supply a well-

educated body of general practitioners to the community, and that it has not been at their head has arisen from the vulgar attempt of the fellows of the college to confine the privileges of their corporation to the graduates of the non-medical universities of Oxford and Cambridge. If the fellows of the college had any sense of the dignity of their profession, of the importance of its effectual organization, they would seize the present moment for at once putting themselves at the head of the general practitioners, and in the van of the whole profession. But we fear the spirit of exclusiveness is still too strong with both the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons to venture on a movement fraught with so many advantages. We are glad, however, to find Mr. Guthrie speaking out on one point, and that is, the history of the charter of the College of Surgeons for 1843. Never was a more gross injustice done to a body of men than was done to the members of this college by that charter. Out of 10,000 members it created a body of fellows of 300, on whom it devolved the election of the council, and conferred other privileges. However carefully such a body was elected, it was sure to excite jealousy and uneasiness in the minds of those who were passed over; and this has been the case. Had it not been for this imprudent charter, the National Institute would have had no existence. Now this charter, which has sown the seeds of so much discussion in the profession, and is endangering the very existence of the College of Surgeons, with its noble library and incomparable museum—this charter did not originate with, nor was it approved by, the council of the college, but was crammed down their throats by Sir James Graham. The council thought many parts of this charter, especially the confining the number of fellows to 300, might be improved, but not so Sir James Graham; and, says Mr. Guthrie, 'as we had submitted ourselves to his will, a great part of the council thought it right to do exactly as they believed he desired to have done.' It is to be hoped, for the sake of science and humanity, that the college will be allowed to suffer no longer from the injurious action of this infamous charter.

With regard to the 'Principle' by which the two new charters are to be worked, we wish we could wholly commend them; but they recognise the fundamental error of making a legal distinction between physicians, surgeons, and general practitioners. Such distinctions, undoubtedly, exist in practice, as well as still further divisions of the medical profession; but we feel sure that all attempts at preventing, by the arm of the law, the general practitioner from acting as surgeon and physician, the surgeon as physician, or the physician as surgeon, must prove utterly abortive. The registration proposed we approve, and would confine all distinctions to the registry alone. Earnestly would we impress upon the legislature the necessity of regarding the medical profession but as one class, and of repudiating every attempt at giving distinct and legal powers to its various grades."

Correspondence.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL.—THE LATE APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS.

[LETTER FROM DR. J. TAYLOR.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The recent surgical arrangements in University College, and the character and motives of the principal persons concerned in them, have been the subject of much discussion in your journal and elsewhere. The more the college is known, the more I am persuaded it will be regarded, in its constitution,* management, and results, as one of the purest and most useful of the existing medical institutions of the country. We are indebted to University College, to an extent that perhaps few persons have reflected upon, for the greatly improved education of students of medicine, the greater extent and strictness of the examinations for licences to practise, and the consequently increased supply to the public of thoroughly educated medical men, which have notoriously taken place during the last twenty years. Viewed in this light, University College is, in my estimation, an institution of national importance; and now that its means of usefulness are in danger of being impaired, it becomes those who are acquainted with it to say what they can in its support.

* I have one objection to the constitution of the college, which, as it is totally unconnected with the subjects referred to in this letter, I need not at present notice.

Of the matters now in dispute I know no more than I have seen in print; but of the mode of electing the medical officers in the college and hospital, of the principles avowed, and of the practice followed, in those elections, I have had the means of knowing a good deal. Having been during twelve years an officer of the hospital, I have seen many elections, and, as a member, during some years, of the faculty of medicine and of the senate, I have been fully acquainted with all their proceedings. I have now no interest in the college, except the interest which I am bound to feel for an institution to which I am most deeply indebted, and which I believe to be willing to confer upon any one of its members the benefits which it has conferred upon me.

Now, in every election, without exception, which I have witnessed, the only principle avowed, and the only desire manifested, has been to choose the best man. In the case of vacant professorships, the best man was sought, come from where he might; and in minor appointments, the best man among the students, who alone were eligible. I am firmly convinced that there is not in existence any institution, of any kind, in any country, in which the elections are more pure, more removed from private influence, than those of University College. I cannot conceive of any system more admirable, either in theory or in practice, than that upon which the elections in question are conducted. I do not mean to say that the system is infallible—it does not secure the electors from errors of judgment, and therefore does not necessarily insure the election of the best person. But this defect is in the agents, rather than in the plan; and no one has pointed out, nor am I able to perceive, in what particulars the arrangements could be improved.

I make this statement on the ground of actual and long observation; but it is easy also to see many reasons why the system should work as admirably as it is found to do. The college depends for its prosperity upon the character of the teachers; and the income of the teachers depends upon the number of the students. It is the interest, therefore, of the professors, when a vacancy occurs, to have chosen for a colleague the man who by his ability and reputation is the most likely to attract students; and in the pursuit of this interest they are fettered by no established usages which might limit the choice to any particular class of persons. If one or two professors wished to promote the election of a friend, merely because he was a friend, and not the best candidate, the interests and influence of the remaining professors would outweigh their influence. If the whole faculty of medicine were disposed to elect upon improper grounds, the faculties of arts and of laws could and would oppose them; and the senate (which includes all the faculties) can be checked by the council, which is the supreme body, and that which elects. In the same way, if the members of the council could be biassed by the friends of any candidate, they would meet with an obstacle in the senate; for it would be a strange act on the part of the council, without very plain and strong reasons, to elect in opposition to the written report, which they are obliged to ask for from the senate. I am not acquainted with a single instance in which the council have elected in opposition to a report of the senate. It would be a great mistake, however, from what I have just said, to arrive at the conclusion which you have adopted, that the professors govern the college. From all that I know of the council, I believe them to be upright and able men, of business habits, acquainted with the world, not in the least disposed to abandon their functions, and to adopt without due inquiry, nor very often without a strict scrutiny and discussion of the reasons assigned, any recommendation of the professors. If the council and the professors seldom finally disagree, it is because both bodies feel it to be alike their interest and their duty to promote the true interests of the institution whose welfare and even existence depend upon their united efforts.

I pause here to make a trifling correction in my almost unqualified approval of the elections at University College, and to point out one desideratum in the machinery of these elections. It supplies no means by the operation of which a disappointed candidate may infallibly be made to feel contented when a better man is preferred to himself. Nor does it offer any security against such a person commencing an agitation, the tendency or the intention of which is to shift the discredit (when there really is any) of his defeat from his own shoulders to those of the professors and council of the college. Nor does it afford any protection to individual professors against the vindictive temper of such candidates as think more highly of themselves than the professors, or any one professor, whom they may select as the special object of their dislike, are able to think of them. In short, the power sighed for by the poet

is not created by the electioneering machinery of University College—

“Oh that the gods the gift would give us,
To see ourselves as others see us.”

I do not intend to apply these last remarks to Mr. Morton, but they will furnish a key to various matters referred to in the letters of some of your anonymous correspondents.

If I were not afraid to occupy too much of your space I could cite many instances in support of the opinions which I have advanced above. Let any one look back to the elections which have taken place during some years past, and try if he can understand them upon any other supposition than that the best man has always been sought for. I will content myself with simply naming the election of Professors Graham, Williams, and Walshe, and, with your permission, I will refer to two other elections in more detail. When Dr. Quain resigned Dr. Sharpey was appointed. He was personally unknown to a great majority of the professors. I, and many other persons in London, had not, up to that time, even heard his name; and you, Sir, blamed the council for electing the “unknown Sharpey.” He could owe his election to nothing but his character, known at that time to a comparatively small number of persons. He is now known as one of the very ablest teachers of physiology in the United Kingdom, and has largely contributed to the reputation and prosperity of the college.

I select the next example because it bears upon Mr. Cooper's statement, that two of the professors, Dr. Sharpey and Mr. Quain, exercise a “dictatorial sway” in the medical department of the college. I do not believe that it is, or ever has been, in the power of any two individuals to exercise such a sway. I believe that the two gentlemen in question have great influence with the faculty of medicine, but it is a perfectly legitimate influence; it is the influence necessarily exercised in all such bodies by men of ability, sound judgment, long experience in office, and who devote much time to the business which devolves upon the body to which they belong. It is not possible, nor is it desirable, to exclude influence of this kind from committees formed out of any body of men, and for any kind of business whatever. But I proceed to the case itself. At the last election to the chair of midwifery, the senate, in their report to the council upon the qualifications of the candidates, selected two of the number as possessing the highest and equal claims. One of the two had delivered the portion of the course of lectures which Dr. Davis had been unable to finish—he had given great satisfaction to the students, who were anxious for his election—he was the medical attendant of the family of a gentleman who is now, and I believe was at that time, an influential member of the council, and he had been for many years the private friend of Mr. Quain. The other gentleman, the present professor, resided in Dublin, had no friends that I am aware of among the professors, and was known only by his writings, and other testimonials which he adduced. He could therefore be recommended upon none but public grounds. These, and other facts connected with this election, which, if I felt at liberty to state them, would show how jealous the members of the senate are of even a single observation, however proper in itself, which has a tendency to place in a just light the claims of the speaker's friend, and also how little “dictatorial sway” Mr. Quain would have been able to exercise, had he wished to do so in the case in question. I have the means of knowing that Mr. Quain felt a decided interest in his friend's success, believing that he would make a useful and a popular teacher; and, also, that from that time he forfeited the confidence of the gentleman referred to, for no other reason, I believe, than because the latter thought that Mr. Quain had not exerted all the interest which he might have done in the election.

I have already stated that I know nothing of the recent election but what I have learnt from the public prints; but I have met with nothing in the statements made which is calculated, in the smallest degree, to alter the opinion I have expressed respecting the purity of the motives and conduct of the persons concerned.

1. What is there in the election of Mr. Syme that is opposed to the principle, always acted upon, of choosing the best qualified person, come from where he may? The great eminence of Mr. Liston was surely an additional reason in this instance for seeking a worthy successor. If such a successor could be found, was he to be rejected merely because he was a Scotchman, and the friend of Dr. Sharpey?

2. It is asserted that the just claims of the old students, and of Mr. Morton in particular, have been overlooked. Those who maintain this opinion, must believe that there are

surgeons who were educated at the college, and Mr. Morton particularly, whose qualifications at least, if not their reputation, are equal to those of Mr. Syme. But although this opinion is distinctly implied in the charge, I have not observed that any one has ventured expressly to state it. From all that I have seen, it is my conviction that the council and professors would elect gentlemen educated at the college to vacant professorships, in preference to all others in every instance, in which there were not other candidates possessing decidedly superior professional claims.

3. It has been said that the college has condemned itself in proclaiming, by implication, that none of its members are fit to succeed Mr. Liston. I believe that the college has educated as many able surgeons as any other school of the same standing, but those gentlemen are not yet old enough to have attained the reputation which Mr. Liston did, or which Mr. Syme does, deservedly enjoy.

I would be the last person to speak disparagingly of the character of Mr. Morton; and in the fact that a man so respectable, so popular with the students, already one of the assistant-surgeons to the hospital, and the son-in-law of one of the oldest and most popular of the professors, was not appointed to succeed Mr. Liston, I see only an additional proof that the authorities of the college will suffer no private considerations, however strong, to weigh with them in the discharge of a public duty. I have a lively recollection of the charge you formerly urged against the managers of the older hospitals in London—that they would appoint no one to the office of surgeon who had not been the apprentice of some former surgeon to the same hospital. Suppose that Mr. Syme and Mr. Morton had been competitors for the professorship of clinical surgery, and the council had appointed Mr. Morton: would not the profession, and would not you, Sir, have charged the council with nepotism? It does not alter the merits of the case, that neither of these gentlemen appear literally to have been candidates. It is enough that the council knew they might obtain the services of either of them.

4. Perhaps, however, those who are dissatisfied with the appointment of Mr. Syme would have the vacant professorships filled by gentlemen educated at the college, whether other and better qualified men could be found or not. Would they take *qualified* men educated in the college, rather than the *best qualified* men from any place? If so, the principle should be plainly and boldly stated, that it may receive due discussion. Such a principle will not meet with much favour from the profession at large, nor from those journals which are the organs of public opinion. Nor ought it to do. There are all degrees of fitness and unfitness, and the line is not clearly defined between the fit and the unfit. Elections conducted upon such a principle would often issue in the appointment of very commonplace, and perhaps of very unfit men, and in the rejection of men of the highest capacity, with a manifest disregard of their just claims, and of their capability of promoting the interests of the school, of the pupils, of their own branch of science, and of mankind at large. But there is no danger in the principle acted upon. If the best man be always sought, a fit man is sure to be found. No one has a right to complain, and it is the only way in which the council can discharge their duty, with a proper regard to the individuals, and to the interests to which I have just adverted.

There is but one remaining subject which, after the space I have already occupied, I can venture to notice. Mr. Cooper states that Mr. Quain is anxious to become the professor of surgery, and he gives expression to a "suspicion" which he says is prevalent in the profession—namely, "that in the face of the strongly expressed and indignant feelings of the surgical class, at the treatment which I (Mr. Cooper) have experienced, the professor of practical anatomy (Mr. Quain) will not now venture to offer himself for the surgical chair." I know not, any more than any other of your readers, whether Mr. Quain wishes or intends to become a candidate for the chair of surgery, but I protest against the use of any expressions the tendency of which would be to prevent Mr. Quain from offering himself, or the council from electing him, as professor of surgery. If Mr. Cooper's charges have been fairly refuted,—as I believe they have,—there is no valid reason why they should stand in the way of Mr. Quain's application or election; but there is the strongest reason why they should not be suffered to do so. Mr. Quain is one of the oldest professors of the college, and there are few, if any, who have done more to advance its interests. If such a man desire the chair of surgery, and be as well qualified for its duties as any other applicant, then he is clearly entitled to be preferred to every other person, on the ground of his past services. It would be an act of the greatest injustice to rob him of such a

reward merely because charges have been brought against him which the council believe to be so obviously unfounded as not to deserve their investigation.—(See Mr. Quain's Reply to Mr. Cooper's Pamphlet, pp. 15 & 16.) In filling up the chair of surgery, as well as every other chair, upon this occasion, as upon every other, I trust the council will be unmoved by the fear or the favour of any man or body of men, and elect, as I believe they have ever done, the man whom they believe to be best qualified to maintain the reputation of the college, and to discharge the important duties which will devolve upon him.—I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

JOHN TAYLOR, M.D.,

Huddersfield, May 27, 1848.

Late Professor of Clinical Medicine in University College.

P.S.—In your editorial remarks in *THE LANCET* of this day, you ascribe the advertisement issued by the council for candidates for the vacant surgical chairs, to the influence of public opinion. I may therefore be permitted to remind you that the council have in this instance only followed the established usage in such cases. This usage has been departed from only under very particular circumstances; and chiefly, I believe, when they had the power of securing the services of some distinguished man, who might not like to become a competitor for a chair, and who was believed to be able at the same time to fill it with greater advantage to the college than any competitor whom a public advertisement was likely to call forth. The only instances in which I remember the usual practice to have been departed from in the faculty of medicine, are that of the late Mr. Liston and the recent one of Mr. Syme. The eminence of both these gentlemen fully vindicates the motives of the council. At the same time it is right to admit that these examples ought to be followed only when the interest of the college absolutely demand that course.

I have read, likewise, with much sympathy, in the same number of *THE LANCET*, the statement of Mr. Syme respecting the causes of his resignation. I would be no party to an attempt to screen any professor from the merited odium which might follow any conduct unbecoming his position; but the proceedings which took place at the distribution of prizes could be justified, if at all, by nothing less than the clearest knowledge, on the part of the students, of all the facts of the case, and the most unequivocal conviction of the guilt of the professors. In the present instance those proceedings must have been the means of giving great pain to two most able and most useful teachers, who, instead of eontumely, deserved the credit which is due to men who undertake a disagreeable duty; they have contributed to deprive the college of the services of Mr. Syme, and to cause that gentleman the inconvenience and unpleasantness of again changing the field of his labour: and they may hereafter encourage disappointed candidates to make appeals to the feelings of the students, which may be productive of mischief for a time, but which, if students were always as well informed as they are generous, would meet from the first with the fate that ultimately awaits them. I cannot help using the liberty which my old, and always agreeable, connexion with them gives me, by suggesting to those students who concur in the views expressed in this letter, that it would only be a becoming act of justice, on their parts, to make a suitable acknowledgment to Professors Quain and Sharpey of the injury which they have, I am sure unintentionally, done them.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—Allow me, as a student of University College, to correct a statement in the last number of *THE LANCET*, which appears calculated to convey a wrong impression. You state that "the students have spoken at the annual meeting for the distribution of prizes." If the hideous noises and disreputable conduct with which Messrs. Quain and Sharpey were then received, proceeded from the body of the students assembled, such a reception could only be regarded as most disgraceful to the parties who could make such a display of their vocal powers. But I have reason to know that this movement did not originate with that body, who feel the greatest regard and respect for their insulted professors; it rather emanated with those who have no connexion whatever with the medical school.

The students, Sir, have spoken. Where, and when? They first spoke in the unanimously-adopted address to Mr. Syme, on his appointment; more recently they have spoken at a numerously attended meeting, at which a resolution, expressive of confidence in the council of the college, was passed without a dissentient voice: more than this, they speak daily in the undeviating courtesy with

which Mr. Quain is received. It might, as you observe, have been better had the competition been thrown open; still, it requires that we should be placed in the position of the council to enable us to give a correct opinion.

The feelings of the students towards Mr. Morton cannot be over-rated—he is an universal favourite; still the kind and urbane manners of Mr. Quain, the elucidations which he offers at the bed-side, and the unceasing attention he devotes to the interest of his class, have won from the great bulk of the University men that regard which virtue and genius will ever secure.

Enough, however, has been said and written on the subject; still as the assertion you have made implicates the students of University College, I consider it due to them, and to the interests of the college, to endeavour to correct any false impression which might arise.

Trusting you will allow these few lines a space in your columns, and begging forgiveness in trespassing so far on your valuable time, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Camden Town, May, 1848.

AN UNIVERSITY MAN.

DELAYS OF PROMISED MEDICAL WORKS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Knowing that through the medium of your excellent publication many evils have been removed, and grievances alleviated, I beg the insertion of the following remarks in THE LANCET:—

Last year, I believe in the commencement of it, other editions of Pereira's "Materia Medica" and of Watson's "Lectures on Medicine" were advertised to appear shortly. Students wishing to get them waited some time, but on their not appearing, have been obliged either to buy other works, borrow old editions, or wait still longer. Here is the last week in May, and the publishers tell me that Pereira's work (at least) will not be out for some time yet, and the old edition cannot be obtained.

Ellis's "Demonstrations" are out of print, and I understand he is going to send out another edition. It is to be hoped that this invaluable and unsurpassed work (at least in the dissecting-room) will appear before October, in order that students may have the opportunity of purchasing this, instead of another work. With these observations, which I trust by your help will do good, I beg to remain, yours,

A CONSTANT READER.

BREACH OF MEDICAL ETIQUETTE AT NEWCASTLE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—An attack having been made by an anonymous writer, in your journal of the 18th inst., upon my professional character, charging me with a breach of etiquette, I beg to give you the following statement of facts, with regard to the case of Isabella Crooks.

Mr. Green having given his evidence with respect to the post-mortem appearances observed in the body, positively refused, before the coroner and jury, at the adjourned inquest, to undertake the responsibility of the chemical analysis, or to proceed any further with the case, as he felt himself unequal to the duties of a subsequent inquiry in a higher court of law; though, be it remarked, at the previous inquest, this "able and experienced" surgeon* had spoken of the chemical investigation as a very light and trivial matter.

The coroner thereupon ordered the stomach and other viscera to be carefully sealed up and delivered to me, as a matter of course, seeing I hold the office of police surgeon under the corporation of this town. This was accordingly done, and I immediately called upon Dr. Charlton, as I found he had been connected with the post-mortem examination, to know why he had not conducted the analysis. He replied that he thought it would have occupied too much time, and have interfered with more important duties. Seeing the importance of the case, I felt it my duty to have the assistance of some able, practical chemist, and I stated to Dr. Charlton my intention of waiting on Dr. Glover, to request his services, when I accidentally met the latter in the street, and addressed him on the subject of my having the stomach in my possession, in virtue of my office; and before I had time to request his co-operation in the inquiry, he abruptly, and in the most ungentlemanly manner, told me, that "I would make a damned fool of myself if I proceeded in the matter; that there were only ten individuals in the kingdom who could properly

conduct such manipulations according to the plan of Orfila—and that HE was the only person in this neighbourhood, who ought to be, or, indeed, who could with safety be entrusted with such matters."

I leave it to you, Sir, to determine whether, as it was in my power to obtain the assistance of Dr. Richardson, a most able and scientific chemist, and, moreover, a perfect gentleman, I should have been justified, after such language, in negotiating with Dr. Glover.

So far for the general history of the case. With regard to several isolated misstatements, scattered up and down in the letter of "Spectator," allow me to observe—First, Dr. Glover was never applied to by the coroner to undertake the case. Secondly, The inquiry was not put into my hands, because I was the coroner's medical attendant—for such I neither was nor am. And, thirdly, The case was not entrusted to me, because I agreed to do it for a less sum than Dr. Glover; for I distinctly told the coroner, on his sending it to me, that the inquiry could not be entered into for the usual fee; and my charge to the corporation was nine guineas, which they have paid me in the most handsome manner. With regard to the remarks on the coroner, they seem to be the product of the same splenetic feeling, as the other reckless accusations in the letter of "Spectator," and I shall only state that his election was a deliberate and unbiassed act on the part of the town council.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Newcastle-on-Tyne, May, 1848.

S. W. RAYNE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You mention, in a note appended to my letter, in reference to Mr. S. Rayne's treatment of his professional brethren, that the law allowed the coroner no option but to offer the chemical analyst the fee of two guineas.

You are quite right in your statement. Such is the legal fee, and as a minimum one it may be enough; and had this amount been the only reward to be obtained, I venture to say that Mr. Rayne would not have shown so much anxiety to be entrusted with the investigation. It was after some inquiries made by Mr. Rayne that he, finding that a larger amount would be forthcoming, divided the onus of the analysis betwixt himself and Mr. Richardson, and has, I expect, also divided the £9 9s. which he has received for his labours in a manner equally fair and equitable.

I am decidedly of opinion that the fee of £9 9s., paid to Mr. Rayne in this instance, was too much, and that had Dr. Glover or Dr. Charlton been entrusted with the analysis,—a plain and straightforward case of poisoning by arsenious acid,—neither could have charged more than two or three guineas. And if £9 9s. is to be earned by an elaborate and complicated analysis, I, for one, not meaning to reflect unjustly on Mr. Rayne, and observing that he solicited extra professional assistance, to accomplish the requirements of the coroner, should hesitate in believing that he was a labourer worthy of such hire.

Mr. Green is the party who has the greatest reason to complain. He left the inquiry as soon as medicine and surgery ceased to be the subjects of examination, being unwilling to give evidence which might affect life itself, when the facts upon which that evidence required to be based were not homely and familiar, and within the sphere of his daily observation. Mr. Rayne, when spoken to on the matter by the coroner, should have felt and acted in the same manner. Thus

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread;"

and perhaps this is all that can be said either in vindication or extenuation of his offence against medical decorum.

If Mr. Rayne be a chemist fit to arbitrate on life and death, let him be rewarded for his acquirements. If not,—"Ne sutor ultra crepidam."—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Newcastle, May, 1848.

SPECTATOR.

THE MEDICAL CORPORATIONS AND THE REGISTRATION BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Although I have been a subscriber to the LANCET nearly ten years, I have but once obtruded myself on the pages of your truly valuable journal.

I have watched with no common interest the present medical crisis. I view, I must confess, with much suspicion, the movement of the corporate institutions for an amicable and final settlement of the long agitated medical question. I fear there is nothing sound in any of their plans. Monopoly and

* Who is not in the College list of surgeons in 1842.