

large, there can be no doubt but that these committees would co-operate. To such, then, it is my opinion we should forward the results of our experience in the treatment of this awful disease. A store-house would soon be found where the now scattered grains could be deposited, so to be dealt with that we may all be benefited by the gathering together. The wheat could be separated from the chaff, the latter be scattered to the winds. The young practitioner would thus know where to apply for good seed, which, by careful cultivation, may even in time become improved.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,  
August, 1853. CONGREGATIO.

#### THE ROYAL MATERNITY CHARITY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to assure you it is a matter of perfect indifference to me what invective you may be pleased to direct against me *individually*, because I can say that my opinions are fully participated in by the committee of the Royal Maternity Charity. In the first place, Sir, I deny *in toto* any indisposition on my part to remunerate the profession for what they really do, and for every case to which they are called by the midwives, in a fair and liberal spirit, consistently with an equitable and just appropriation of the funds of a common charity; but I most distinctly object to their taking sums of money out of it which their services do not merit, and which sums are intended for the deserving portion of our poorer fellow-creatures. You have had a statistical statement sent you on a former occasion, detailing the duties performed by the medical staff for several years; and by way of refreshing your memory I will give the services of the three physicians in 1850, to which you have made allusion in your article indirectly. During the six months from February 5 to August 5, 1850, these gentlemen attended or visited eight cases, for which professional services they took out of the funds of the charity no less a sum than £90, and I cannot but think you must admit the fee very much too large to be paid for such meagre assistance, and their duties are and will be less than ever; and, Sir, allow me to ask, whether under such circumstances it was just that an encroachment should have been attempted upon the funds of the institution for an increased remuneration? The amount of funded property, no doubt, dazzles the eyes of these physicians, and gives them a hankering after all they can filch from it, however undeservedly; but the wealth of the charity forms no argument or pretence to make disbursements out of it for unmerited purposes, or to pay large sums of money to men who are not entitled to it by any services actually performed; and though you, Sir, have dressed up their pecuniary claims very plausibly, and have most dexterously put them before your readers, (as it would appear somewhat at my expense,) I don't think they will be appreciated out of their own circle. If, Sir, your declamation and invective, unsparingly put forth against me, be pleasing to yourself, as it is doubtless gratifying to the professionals interested in it, I am perfectly satisfied. My only crime is, the advocacy of a just and equitable distribution of the funds of a public and valuable charity to their *legitimate* objects—namely, to the poor who seek relief from it, and not to dispense them to (literally speaking) professional sinecurists. I dispute entirely your inference as to the cause of reduction of the salaries of the physicians, (so-called by courtesy, two of them at least, if not all, not being known at the Royal College of Physicians of London;) but the cause was the inefficient services performed for the money paid them, whereby a large number of the poor were deprived of the benefit of the charity. You say the body of governors at the general meeting nobly resolved to rescue the charity from the "opprobrium under which it had fallen." If indeed the word "opprobrium" applies at all, it rests upon the heads of the majority at the meeting. Your statement as to the number at the meeting is very incorrect, inasmuch as there was not a large body of governors present at all, (not even a third of the committee,) excepting indeed the twelve newly-manufactured governors made expressly for the occasion by the medical officers. It is equally inconsistent with fact to say "there was an overwhelming majority." The reverse is the truth. Perhaps I may be allowed to say that the time of myself, as well as that of the committee generally, has been and is frequently taken up for hours together in doing all they can to further the benevolent intention of the charity, and in extending it to the fullest amount of good possible. Their time and services are gratuitously given, and are *not paid for*, though they have done more essential service to the institution than all the paid and non-paid medical men at present associated with it. Your fraternity, it appears, are seeking for power to dictate and control the functions of the committee. This untoward influence very much preponderated

when I first began to take an active part in the affairs of the charity, and I found through its instrumentality that dissensions, quarrels, and other incongruous proceedings, had involved it in a large debt, and in much difficulty. This power I trust the governors will never again give to the medical staff, if they wish the institution to prosper, and true principles of benevolence to be carried out connected with it. At the time I speak of these medical gentlemen took from the dilapidated funds of the charity from £300 to £400 annually, and for what? I ask you, Sir? I have never discovered any services performed by them scarcely meriting a tithe of the amount.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,  
August, 1853. JAMES BAMFORD.

\*\* We beg Mr. Bamford to believe that, although his name was especially referred to by us in the article which has so roused his indignation, he was not *individually* attacked. In exposing the errors and prejudices of a class, it is desirable to point to a particular instance. We used Mr. Bamford as a very fair type of the class who cannot be made to understand that the time, labour, and skill of the physician are as much his capital, and as much entitled to remuneration, as the similar capital of the lawyer. We shall probably be excused for stating that the *arguments* against paying the medical officers advanced by Mr. Bamford do not call for any serious remark. The man who fancies his own services on the Committee so much more important to parturient women than the services of the physicians must be in a hopeless state of mind. With reference to his sneer at the qualifications of the physicians, which savours strongly of personal animosity, we may remark that it is a vulgar error to suppose that the stamp of the College of Physicians is necessary to make a physician.—  
ED. L.

#### FENNELL v. ADAMS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Several of my professional friends have appealed to me to know who my friend "Amicus" is, who has addressed you on the subject of the testimonial proposed to be presented to me, in consequence of the heavy expense which I have suffered in the action which I brought against the Rev. Richard Leonard Adams for slander in the Court of Queen's Bench. Will "Amicus" do me the favour to reveal himself, that his plan of operations may be known to these friends? Of course it is my anxiety to encourage such testimony—on the strength of your leading article of the 23rd ult., and (in your last number) your reiterated "emphatic opinion, that Mr. Fennell has rendered an eminent service to the profession by his spirited conduct."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
Winbledon, Aug. 1853. EDWIN FENNELL.

#### THE ADVICE GRATIS SYSTEM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The infatuation of the present generation of medical practitioners, whether they profess surgery, medicine, or midwifery, for giving gratuitous advice is so great, that I question whether any very material change can be effected unless the injured members of a liberal body come forward, and determine the extent to which the public shall victimize both them and us. I have paid very great attention to this subject, and I am in a position to prove that those who are giving gratuitous advice are themselves the greatest enemies to the profession and the public also. When any professional brother goes into the out-patients' room, he sees scores and scores prescribed for by the hour by the attendant surgeon. Here comes a case of iritis. "Go home," says the surgeon, "put on some of this lotion, and take the pills, and come *this day week*." The patient comes, but the eye has been irretrievably lost during this eventful period. A physician orders some soothing medicine for a cough, attended with slight pain in the side. In his hurry and bustle—for there is always hurry and bustle in these slaughter places—he takes out no stethoscope, he applies no ear; all he says, is, "do this," and she doeth it. On an admission day we find this young woman brought in exhausted. She is ordered to bed; she dies. And what do we find? Sudden and active effusion into the pleura, which might and would have been avoided had she had that attention which these noble institutions held out to the gazing multitude. I hold that the hospitals, with their present inefficient staffs, destroy the prospects of every youth who goes for education, by depriving him of the patients which ought to fall to his share when he has