

jesty's Court. He could not undertake to affirm that this order had occasioned an unpleasant feeling amongst the parties contemplated in it, but he had no doubt that the house at all times would view with considerable jealousy any proceeding which could even by implication have the effect of casting a reflection on any portion of the naval service. The obnoxious order, moreover, had been issued *by a military authority*, the *Secretary to the Lord High Admiral*, who had no right whatever to arrogate to himself any such power as that which he professed to exercise.

Sir JAMES GRAHAM said, that with regard to the Board of Admiralty he conceived that the right hon. gentleman had himself answered his own objection, by stating that it was a military order only, and as such was, of course, binding on full-pay officers alone, over whom the authority thus exercised clearly existed.

Mr. CROKER wished to know whether the right hon. baronet meant to contend that it was fair to forbid an officer on full pay from attending at Court, while those on half-pay were to be permitted, even although the Admiralty might have taken cognizance of ill conduct on the part of officers so excepted. No officer could attend a levee without permission from the Board of Admiralty conveyed through his commanding officer. Now the sense of the board might have been expressed as usual to officers on full pay through their commanding officer, whereas in the present instance the medium of communication was *the navy list*, which was addressed to the half-pay in common with the rest of the navy service.

Sir J. GRAHAM said, that the error noticed by the right hon. gentleman, if one at all, which he would not admit, merely related to a point of order, but *he was prepared to defend the propriety of the regulation*. It had been generally observed, but of course could only bind those over whom the Board had control.

Mr. CROKER observed, that the principle at issue was of importance, and he should probably feel it his duty to make a motion on the question, whether the Board of Admiralty had power over half-pay officers, surgeons or not, but would be happy first to hear from the right hon. baronet whether he was prepared to contend that it had.

Sir J. GRAHAM said, he should state his sentiments on the subject when the right hon. gentleman brought forward his motion. (*Laughter.*)

Mr. CROKER assured the right hon. baronet, that that escape would not serve, and repeated his question.

But Mr. Croker obtained no answer. It probably puzzled Mr. Croker (who, we are informed, is a reader of THE LANCET, and

expressed great satisfaction at the time at the exertions made by it to free the surgeons of the navy from the insult which the "military authority" had thus offered to the whole profession)—it probably puzzled Mr. Croker, as much as it does ourselves, to know how the first Lord of the Admiralty can manage to defend a regulation of so disgraceful a nature, and one which it was thought right to rescind, when the question of its "propriety" was agitated. The circumstance, however, altogether affords a noble example of the influence possessed by an independent press, when it puts forth its strength in a just cause.

#### PATHOLOGY OF FEBRILE DISEASES.

THE measures adopted in the treatment of disease, being necessarily dependent on the pathological views entertained by the practitioner, it behoves him to ascertain that they are correct, consonant with the symptoms manifested during life, and demonstrable by the appearances developed on post-mortem investigation. An ancient dogma long prevailed in the schools of medicine, which taught that almost every febrile disease was dependent on some morbid change in the circulating fluids, and only remediable, according to this theory, by facilitating what was termed concoction, a process in which the morbid agent was eliminated, and afterwards discharged from the body, by the various excretory organs. This doctrine has been deservedly, and almost universally, abandoned; and in our eagerness to avoid the Scylla of the humoral pathologists, we perhaps have fallen into the opposite Charybdis.

Many modern writers have endeavoured to prove, that fevers, whether arising spontaneously or excited by contagion, are universally the consequence of inflammatory action, and that increased action is the Goliath with which we have to contend; that the successful issue of the combat depends on the free use of the lancet—to conquer this gigantic foe, which, in many instances, has no existence, except in their own imaginations. In numerous cases of fever excited by contagion, whether originating primarily from some unknown morbid condition of the atmosphere, or produced by the gaseous fluids diffused and floating in it, evolved from the human body in a state of disease, the degree of danger cannot be estimated by the degree of increased action, but is often in a ratio directly the reverse.

Those cases of typhus, scarlatina, and

puerperal fever, on which we have reason to look with the greatest apprehension, are not usually characterised by such symptoms of high vascular excitement as would justify our attributing their fatality to this cause alone. The question of contagion has been decided by the almost-universally concurrent experience of practitioners in ancient and modern times; but the precise nature of the morbid agent, and the mode of its action on the living body, by which disease is excited, and a similar miasma, equally contagious, evolved, is probably beyond all human research. At present, notwithstanding that it has engaged the attention of some of the ablest physiologists and pathologists, we know little of contagion except from its effects. When there are symptoms of high vascular action, excited by inflammation, bleeding, both local and general, is proved, by daily experience, to be the most efficacious means we can adopt; but in fevers of the low and typhoid character, resulting from contagion or otherwise, the only effect we can anticipate from the measure is to exhaust the powers of the system and prevent the recovery of the patient. We may be told, that in these intractable cases, there is inflammation existing in a masked form; that it is situated in the brain, in the medulla spinalis, or the peritoneum, and that the successful treatment must be a system of active depletion, the salutary influence of which will be commensurate with the quantity of blood drawn; but if we find that those cases of typhus, or puerperal fever most fatal to our patients, are unattended by those distinct and universally-recognised symptoms, which result from excessive inflammation, we must be allowed to consider the assumption (however plausibly supported by the sophistry of ingenious men, who possess a talent for generalising) to be contrary to truth, destitute of the solid basis of experience; unsupported by the symptoms of those diseases during life, and proved, on examination after death, to be utterly void of foundation.

I have repeatedly witnessed cases wherein the lancet has been employed unnecessarily, and even injuriously, though it is, in judicious hands, one of our most valuable remedies, and shall be fully compensated by knowing, that in any one instance, I have been instrumental in preventing its abuse in such cases as I have before alluded to, convinced that its incautious employment, to the extent sometimes practised by those who see no danger but what arises from inflammation, is usually quite unnecessary, and frequently highly prejudicial.

CHARLES SEVERN.

Jewin Street, June 1831.

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## CONCEALMENT OF DISCOVERIES IN MEDICINE.

THERE are certain ill-defined terms of opprobrious import, which malice, indolence, and ignorance, make use of as the only means by which they can assail those who are in any way offensive to them. A man of temperance, strict moral conduct, and religious habits, is "a methodist;" a man who will not support every despotic measure is "a radical;" a medical man who conceals any of the results of his patient, laborious, and expensive investigations, is "a quack." Now this last term deserves some consideration, because it has been applied very indiscriminately and injuriously. "A quack" is an uneducated man whose boasting and puffing attract the notice of the public, by promising salutary results to those who make use of his secret remedies. As he has not the information requisite to guide him in the adaptation of remedial agents to the cure of diseases, being ignorant of the nature of remedies, and of the healthy structure, functions, and morbid phenomena of the animal system, he may be justly denounced as a quack and impostor; his being right by chance is no ground for approving him; intelligent design, and not random chance, merits approbation. The term quack is industriously employed with intent to injure, by the medical neighbours of every medical man who is suspected of possessing more than ordinary knowledge in any particular disease, or in the use or mode of preparing any particular medicine—whether of the orthodox *materia medica* or not. This has a baneful influence upon science, it aims directly to prevent the advancement of knowledge, and the scientific observer has no way of escape from the diabolical fangs of the malignant spirits who surround him. One gentleman, to avoid the possibility of the imputation of quackery, called forth torrents of calumny, and was dubbed a rank quack; he, simple soul, a man devoted to investigation, laid all his results before the public, his neighbours took the opportunity of abusing them as futile and absurd, ran them down, and pronounced the discoverer a quack. By concealment only he expected he might be exposed to censure, but his experience proved the reverse to be the case. I therefore consider it is not unlawful for a medical man to keep concealed the methods he may have discovered by which preparations may be improved, or the discovery of new remedies, until they shall have received the full approbation of long experience. "Arcana revelata foetent," is too true, but in many cases the factor is imparted by extrinsic causes. I have known a good pre-