

green, from John E. Hyndman, Esq., Agent to the United Kingdom Life Insurance Company, where any communications on this matter will be received and attended to."

We have elsewhere made some remarks on the subject, which is deserving of attentive consideration.

Correspondence.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL.

[LETTER FROM PROFESSOR COOPER.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Two pamphlets have issued from the press, in answer to mine, respecting the circumstances which led to my resignation of the professorship of surgery in University College. A still more important document from Mr. Syme was inserted in your number of the 27th ult., written with admirable candour, and throwing considerable light on the affair. Dr. John Taylor's letter, in *THE LANCET* of this day, being composed apparently when he was in a warm mood, I shall deal with very leniently. I am glad also to find no occasion to make any observations upon the contents of Dr. Sharpey's pamphlet after Mr. Syme's elucidation of the subject, to which I shall presently invite attention.

With reference to the extraordinary delay in filling up the vacant assistant-surgeoncy (above a twelvemonth), the statements in Mr. Quain's pamphlet only confirm the fact, that I did object to such delay; and as for the appropriation of the Eye-Infirmiry to him, what has any resolution in the minutes of the medical committee to do with my objections? which remain the same, and are well founded. Of course, if he had not had some kind of permission to undertake the whole of the duty, he could not have done it, and there would have been no ground for those objections. Now, it seems to me that, as Mr. Quain had no great name for diseases of the eye, instead of making a kind of monopoly of this part of the hospital, he should have gladly availed himself of the co-operation of others; or what would have been still better, the council should have invited gentlemen of high reputation in this branch of surgery to offer themselves as candidates for the office. Would not this have been the surest method of bringing interesting cases, and especially patients for operation, into the establishment, and also the surest way of affording valuable instruction to the students?

Mr. Quain, with an appearance of rigorous attention to dates, as well as to "official acts and documents," about which the world does not care a straw, attaches vast importance to the 9th of August last, as the period of the commencement of my *dissatisfaction*, notwithstanding which (I suppose it is meant to be insinuated as an inconsistency in me) I was yet not unwilling to lecture with him. What will the profession think, when they are reminded, that the 9th of August, 1847, was the memorable and agreeable day when the council renewed their unconditional promise to me of the continuation of the required assistance to me in the surgical lectures? My dissatisfaction, or rather disgust, did not begin until certain transactions relating to the school became known to me after Mr. Liston's death, and then certainly nothing would have induced me to consent to receive Mr. Quain's assistance in the lectures.

I pass over Mr. Quain's calculation of five *medical* professors, as present at the meeting of the senate, held for the invitation of Mr. Syme, my late distinguished colleague, Professor Graham, having been purposely omitted by me, because not deemed a member of the profession. Neither do Mr. Quain's statements, respecting the *rights* of the faculty of medicine, call for any remark, excepting that I spoke of the *custom*, formerly more frequently observed than at present, of references being made to it by the council on important matters concerning the medical school. Were not the questions relating to the choice of Mr. Liston, or of Mr. Baird, and the comparative merits of the candidates for the chair of medicine, on the last election, freely considered by the faculty of medicine, before being brought under the notice of the senate?

Mr. Quain alleges, that no report or written statement was brought to the meeting of the senate held for the invitation of Mr. Syme. I saw on the table a paper before him, from which he read notes, occasionally embellished by very curious verbal additions, such as the surgeons of the United Kingdom would justly laugh at. In order to avoid mistake, I afterwards consulted the minutes of the senate, and found, embodied in the form of a resolution, the very words of the written notes

alluded to. I am very glad that Mr. Quain has been acquitted by the council; but he must remember, that though the support of the latter body is important to him, by enabling him to retain his appointments, the council were not exactly the party to which he should have appealed, inasmuch as they were themselves, to a certain extent, involved in the proposed inquiry.

After Mr. Quain had concurred in the terms of the negotiation with Mr. Syme, of course he must have changed his views with respect to the surgical chair. His wishes to lecture on surgery had been repeatedly expressed to me and others long before Mr. Liston's death.

It appears, from Mr. Syme's explanation of the reasons which caused him to resign the offices conferred upon him, that as long ago as November last he had been promised by the college (without my knowledge or consent, be it observed) a certain portion of my fees, on condition of his assisting in the surgical lectures. The council afterwards heard (no doubt through Dr. Sharpey) that I would not agree to the arrangement. This being the case, I became a complete obstacle to the fulfilment of their engagement to Mr. Syme. Thus the true cause is at once seen for the breach of their promise to me, and for the suggestion made by the committee of the council, that I should resign. That the council can justify this infringement of a promise made on the 9th of August by any minute of theirs made on the 20th of November, is quite impossible; and if they expect to be acquitted on this point by the public, they are entirely mistaken; nor can two professors who joined in the clandestine negotiation by which a part of the surgical chair was bartered away without my consent, or even knowledge, be regarded by the profession as free from the imputation of having involved themselves in a meddlesome, underhand transaction—a most unfair proceeding towards a colleague. Dr. John Taylor's letter being, for the most part, a waste of ammunition on undisputed points, I may be brief with him. I never made any general complaint of the college being injudiciously or badly managed by the council; nor any general complaint of the unfitness of the medical appointments within their patronage; but of that body having been of late too much swayed in their proceedings by two professors in the faculty of medicine. Mr. Syme's plain and honest explanation of the negotiation with him tends to confirm this opinion. Dr. Taylor's own case is somewhat analogous to that of Mr. Morton. Both were distinguished students, and both were favoured with the patronage of the council, with this difference, however, that Dr. Taylor—a particular friend of Mr. Quain—was promoted to be physician and clinical professor without any invitation being given to men of longer standing and higher reputation, to present themselves as candidates against him, whilst, on the contrary, though Mr. Morton had served about seven years with distinction, as assistant-surgeon to the hospital, it was not regarded as harsh and unjust to put another surgeon, a stranger, directly above him.

Dr. Taylor, in his warmth, falls into the contradiction of looking upon University College as at present too young to furnish surgeons and professors, and yet of its being old enough to afford a supply of physicians. Indeed, he is so confused as to forget that it is now some years since he himself constituted the needed supply both of a physician and a professor.

In conclusion, I beg to disclaim all hostility to Mr. Syme, whose resignation I never desired after he had come up to London; nor should I have made any remarks on the favouritism of another party, had not that cry been very unfairly employed and insisted upon against me. Retaliation was then warranted, and, indeed, unavoidable.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,
Woburn-place, June, 1848. SAMUEL COOPER.

THE SOMERS TOWN DISPENSARY.

[LETTER FROM MR. HILLES.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—My attention has been directed to some observations contained in your journal of the 13th instant, regarding the Somers Town Self-supporting Dispensary, with which I am connected.

Were it not for the spirit displayed in these observations by your anonymous correspondent, and the heading with which you have been pleased to favour them, I should return you my thanks for thus making the institution more public.

That such an institution should excite the hostility of a certain class of practitioners is highly probable, but that the respectable editor of a public journal should have deemed them worthy of public censure, is indeed surprising, especially

as he is well aware that the principle of self-supporting dispensaries has been long advocated and ably supported by some of the most intelligent and benevolent men of the day, amongst whom Mr. Edwin Chadwick, whose name is associated with so much that is admirable, stands conspicuous.

Whilst I give you full credit for being influenced by the best of motives in thus opposing such valuable institutions, you will, I trust, excuse me if I state that such opposition is neither wise nor benevolent.

There is a large class of persons in society who are too poor to pay for good advice, and too proud to seek the aid of charity, if they could obtain proper assistance on reasonable terms. It is for such, and such only, that the self-supporting dispensaries are established. Remove these, or prevent their formation, to whom do you commit them in the hour of sickness? To the quack, or ignorant pretender to professional knowledge.

As a coroner, you must have seen many instances of such. With great respect, then, allow me to ask, how can you raise your voice against self-supporting dispensaries?

At present, many of the class to whom I have alluded are forced in self-defence to resort to public charities and hospitals for medical aid, where they obtain the assistance they stand in need of at a double expense—one being that of the charity, the other of their time. Any one who has visited our public hospitals must be aware of this fact.

Self-supporting dispensaries, with proper medical attention, will tend to withdraw such persons from seeking charitable aid to the abuse of the charity, will relieve the latter from an attendance which they must feel has never been contemplated by the founders of such institutions, and will not, I feel persuaded, interfere in the least with the respectable practitioner.

Since the letter alluded to, another has appeared from another blank correspondent on the same subject, in part reply to the former, but written in no friendly spirit. I shall leave the reader to judge of the credibility and respectability of correspondents, one of whom feels surprised at my breaking an oath I never took, and another states that I am not a recognised lecturer, although I have lectured at the Westminster Hospital School of Medicine, in conjunction with Mr. Guthrie, (late president of the College,) Mr. Henry Hancock, surgeon to Charing-cross Hospital; at Sydenham College, in conjunction with Mr. Rutherford Alcock, Dr. Marshall Hall, and others; and although my lectures have been and are now received at the college and other medical boards for that part of the course which I delivered at the late Hunterian School, and have been so received since the year 1833.

As I am at present too much engaged to answer the communications of writers "who appeal to their imaginations for their facts," I beg to state that I shall not take notice of any further anonymous communications.

With respect to Mr. Ford, the assistant-surgeon to the institution, I have to inform you that amongst a class of pupils distinguished for their diligence and attention, he was one of the most distinguished, and that he has recently passed the College of Surgeons.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
M. W. HILLES,
Lecturer on Anatomy and Physiology.

Bedford-square, May, 1848.

BREACH OF MEDICAL ETIQUETTE AT NEWCASTLE.

[LETTER FROM DR. GLOVER.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I should not have deemed it necessary to trouble you with any remarks concerning a merely personal squabble, but as the subject discussed in THE LANCET by "Spectator" and Mr. Rayne, has some bearings which are not unimportant in a public and professional point of view, I beg to offer some reply to what has been stated by Mr. Rayne, and some remarks also of a more general character.

In the first place I must observe, that although I have had several controversies on scientific subjects, of which the pages of THE LANCET are evidence, I have never yet replied to a personal attack. I shall here first discuss what is personal in this my reply. I certainly do not recollect having used the language which Mr. Rayne imputes to me in my conversation with him, although I think that I can remember very well what took place. I certainly advised him to take care what he was about, or he might get into a "confounded mess;" to which he replied, "I will take care of that." As to Orfila and the ten men in England, Mr. Green, at least,

recollects me saying, when he came to me, that cases of this kind might occur, or become so complicated, as that hardly ten men in England might be able to bring them to a proper issue, which I presume to be a fact. Mr. Green did not understand me in an egotistical sense. I have several valued friends in this neighbourhood who have paid much attention to medical chemistry, as my venerable friend, Dr. Clanny, Mr. Maling, of Sunderland, Mr. Nicholson, of Uxham, Mr. Potter, of this town, and who are all capable of analyzing a stomach either after the "plan of Orfila," or any other "plan" that I know of; but I believe none of those gentlemen will impute any offensive egotism to me.

Having been here lecturer successively on chemistry, toxicology, and materia medica, I have made numerous analyses in medico-legal cases, for which, until very recently, I never received a farthing; although a friend of mine in the south, not having the misfortune to be a medical man, once got thirty-five guineas from the authorities for one analysis in a case of arsenical poisoning. I have made of late a stand upon the subject, and have succeeded in getting the claims of the medico-chemical analyst recognised to some little extent by local authorities hereabout; and I certainly did tell Mr. Rayne that I thought the profession here should consider that I had a claim in such matters; to which he replied, "the profession will do so." I must do Mr. Rayne the justice to say, that before we parted he did complain of the reception he had met with, but, as I thought, in no unfriendly spirit, and we shook hands and parted, I with the impression that the stomach was to be sent to me. It was perfectly clear to me that I could not enter into a partnership with Mr. Rayne, since I had not been asked to do so by Mr. Green; nor did I intend to do so with the latter gentleman; and as the *post-mortem* was already made, I could not see of what use Mr. Rayne was to be in the affair, unless he made the analysis himself.

The Coroner acted under the impression that I required him to guarantee me ten guineas, whereas I only required his authorization to commence operations. I entirely acquit him of blame.

I shall only add one word to this part of my letter. I deny, *in toto*, Mr. Rayne's right to make me in any way responsible for the letter of "Spectator."

Now for the public bearing of the case. The fee of two guineas may be enough for a *post-mortem*, which may only occupy an hour; but it is absurdly insufficient for a chemical analysis which may take three days or a week, and where the mere expense of materials used may swallow up the whole fee. Besides, is it not important that toxicological science should be encouraged—that parties should have some inducement to devote themselves to special studies which so materially concern the public interest? I am happy to say that a judge, in answer to a memorial which I presented, affirmed these principles from the bench.

In the present state of toxicology, it is no disparagement to a general practitioner occupied with many and harassing duties, that he should be unable to undertake cases, which, I repeat, may become so complicated, that there are very few who may not encounter great difficulties. Suppose several poisons have to be sought for? And then comes the bullying of the barristers, who will take unhandsome advantage of the slightest slip or even hesitation.

With the sincere hope that what has occurred may attract attention to the present state of the law with regard to fees at coroners' inquests, I conclude my first and last letter on this disagreeable affair.—Your obedient servant,
Newcastle, June, 1848. ROBERT MORTIMER GLOVER, M.D.

MEDICAL REFORM.

PROPOSED MEETING IN LONDON TO APPOINT MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS TO GIVE EVIDENCE BEFORE THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The surgeons of England require some one to take the lead in carrying out a public meeting, such as you have been endeavouring to arouse them to; they all wish it heart and soul, but no one likes placing himself in the front of the battle. Once a commencement made and a meeting advertised, there would be no doubt of the surgeons of England assembling, and in very large numbers; but they first want to know what they are going to meet about, what they are going to support, and this must be clearly and unequivocally defined.

I apprehend that a chief object of the meeting would be to name some influential members of the college, such as