

long-continued observation, that industry and ability were of no immediate advantage in our department, and that the man most eminent for ability must take an equal chance of promotion with the most careless and indifferent, destroyed all emulation; the habit of application was lost; my spirits were desponding, my health delicate, the temptation at hand, and—I am here.

“And now, in conclusion, let me beg of you, gentlemen, to give this heartfelt and painful confession a full and dispassionate consideration. Do not look upon it with the prejudiced eyes of a privileged class. Remember that my future fate, if not my life, and the bread of those who depend upon me, is in your hands; and if you give but another trial to resolutions which needed but this severe ordeal to render effective, I need not say that my whole future existence shall be one continued effort to prove that your kindness has not been misplaced, and the “blessing of the fatherless and the widow” shall fall upon your heads. If, on the other hand, you determine to execute the most stern commands of rigid justice, let my misfortunes be a warning to those in authority not to subject those to whom they look for safety and comfort in disease to similar temptations; let them encourage the worthy, and assist the studious; let them reflect upon their great responsibility; and then, in the rise of my class upon my fall—in the improvement of the body of which I was an unworthy member—in its elevation upon my ruin—I shall at least know that my sufferings have not been in vain.”

MEDICAL FEES AT ASSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—However willing medical practitioners may be to work in behalf of their fellow creatures without remuneration, I do really think that when our time is taken up answering queries for the satisfaction of public bodies, such as insurance companies, we ought to insist upon remuneration. I append an observation, or rather the answer to No. 10 of a series of questions sent to me from the Globe Insurance Company, dated Oct. 7, 1848.

10. Question: “Do you know any other circumstances which ought to be communicated to the directors?”

Answer: “Certainly—viz., that the directors of an insurance company professing to be liberal, ought not to expect any professional man (upon the pretence of its being for the benefit of the insurer, when all the time it is for better and safer information than their own medical attendant can possibly afford) to write the above information, without sending him his fee; and I for one, as well as at least 3000 of my professional brethren, will never recommend this or any other office that does not act with greater justice. You have not even sent a stamp for this same letter to be re-posted, and yet if this gentleman (referring to the insurer) is recommended to you by a solicitor or agent, you will give them 5 per cent. every year the insurance money is paid.”

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Chester-street, Grosvenor-place. W. VESALIUS PETTIGREW.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As a testimony to the honourable dealing of the “Engineers”, Masonic, and Universal Mutual Life Assurance Society,” 345, Strand, permit me to state, for the further satisfaction of the profession, that their secretary, Fred. Lawrence, Esq., has just sent me a fee of one guinea, by post-office order, for information lately given, relative to the health of a clergyman. By inserting this in your next number, you will much oblige, Sir, yours truly,
October 6, 1848. M. D. P., M. D. G.

P.S.—I inclose my name and address.

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE, AS IT IS OBSERVED IN BERMONDSEY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In forwarding the enclosed correspondence to you, I am actuated by no other feeling than a sincere desire to uphold the dignity and character of the profession to which I have the honour to belong. In addressing myself to you, I apply to a source from whence those who have sought and deserved it have never failed to receive justice. The efforts you have made to give a healthy tone to the moral constitution of that profession, and to cast over all my brethren an ægis at once powerful and imperishable, embolden me to hope that you will not fail to deprecate conduct which is calculated

to frustrate those efforts, and to excite feelings of ill-will and acerbity where the interests of humanity and the requisitions of society demand forbearance, charity, and friendly co-operation. In no other profession would proceedings of the nature which is disclosed in this correspondence be permitted to take place; and it would be really a stigma on that class of men whose exertions are most entitled to public sympathy and consideration, if among its members alone were to be tolerated with impunity the stabbing in the dark which robs a professional brother of his good name.

With these few lines, I leave the letters for your consideration, merely observing that if Mr. Parker, in common courtesy, not to say in professional and gentlemanly feelings, had replied to my last communication, or had expressed the least regret for the conduct which called forth my first letter to him, I should have forgiven and forgotten all, and never have obtruded myself on your notice. As it is, I leave it to you and the public, over whose judgment you exercise so just a control, to judge between him and me.

The circumstances leading to the correspondence are so exactly detailed in my letters, that I shall not encroach further on your valuable space, by adding another remark.

(COPY.)

Great George-street, Bermondsey, July 18th, 1848.

SIR,—I am at present in attendance upon Mr. —, and I think it right to inform you, that when I visited him last night, he, as well as Mrs. —, told me you had been there in my absence, and had stated that my treatment of his case was wrong, and that it should be discontinued. I shall at present forbear making any comment on so unusual a course, but merely ask you if such has been the case, and if so, upon what grounds you have attributed to me maltreatment of his case.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

— Parker, Esq.

H. CUOLAHAN.

Having waited several hours, and received no reply, I wrote again as follows:—

(COPY.)

July 18th, 1848.

SIR,—As you have not yet favoured me with an answer to my note of this morning, and as I always feel peculiarly sensitive when I think there is an invasion of professional etiquette, and an infringement on my rights, I must hope you will excuse my haste in soliciting from you an explanation of the course you have thought proper to adopt towards me respecting my treatment of Mr. —, the history of whose case you have not in the usual way availed yourself of becoming acquainted with through me, his medical attendant; and consequently you cannot possibly know anything of the treatment he has been subjected to *ab initio*. Awaiting your answer, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

To — Parker, Esq.

H. CUOLAHAN.

In a short time after I had sent this note, I received the following reply to my first note:—

(COPY.)

10, Duke-street, Boro', Tuesday.

SIR,—I called upon Mr. —, in my capacity as surgeon to a society of which he is a member, and found him labouring under delirium tremens in a very aggravated form; and from the account of Mrs. —, nothing medically had been done for him, save the exhibition of an effervescent saline.

I certainly did state to Mrs. — what I repeat now—that more active measures should be adopted, as valuable time might be lost. It was my intention to have called at your surgery, and consulted with you about the case, but my engagements prevented me.

Mrs. — has no doubt unintentionally mis-stated my observations. I did not say that your treatment of his disease was wrong, and should be discontinued: on the contrary, I have no possible objection to its continuance. I regret that any misunderstanding should have arisen, as I am the first to deprecate the same conduct in others, and would much rather uphold the dignity of our profession than detract therefrom by such conduct as you imputed to me.

Yours obediently,

JOHN PARKER.

To H. Cuolahan, Esq.

If the conciliatory tone of this note had harmonized with the facts of the case, I should be very punctilious indeed to have been dissatisfied with it. I would have endeavoured to reconcile its glaring discrepancy, if the writer had adopted that course which professional etiquette and the usages of society should have taught him is due to a member of the profession and a gentleman. I waited four days for some satisfactory explanation, and then wrote as follows:—