

from gentlemen in the country, in school-boy holiday fashion, to certify that they, as medical practitioners, have lately resorted to the speculum, with surprising results. This has but little to do with the matter in question—In how much is the employment of the speculum an unmistakable abuse?

Two days since, a young unmarried woman applied to me, in great anxiety, suffering from leucorrhœa. She had been treated by the surgeon who attended the family in which she resided as servant, and who had declared to her, after examination with the speculum, that extensive ulceration of the womb existed. She talked very fluently of this matter, but upon examination, conducted in her sister's house, (a small chandler's shop, in a back and narrow street,) I found no ulceration, merely some prolapse.

The experience which Dr. Jones quotes in his explanatory letter is most extensive, and I am anxious to know if any of our most celebrated men will acknowledge to have treated in seventeen years 65,000 patients, or twelve cases of uterine disease daily, not allowing for the accumulating increase of number by acquired reputation. The profession would be happy to hear that an epitome of these cases, or the more important ones, was about to be laid before their notice.

I feel indebted to those gentlemen who were the first to deprecate the growing abuse of the speculum, and many fathers and brothers will thank them too.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
London-road, Southwark, July, 1850. W. M. FAIRBROTHER, M.D.

THE SURGICAL TREATMENT OF THE LATE SIR ROBERT PEEL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you permit me, through the medium of your columns, to ask of either the eminent medical gentlemen who attended the late Sir Robert Peel, the following questions relative to the treatment of his case.

I have the honour to remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
Albany-street, Regent's-park, July 8, 1850. JOHN LANGLEY.

The condition of the late Sir Robert Peel, at the moment he met with his ever-to-be-lamented accident, his plenitude of health, his plethoric habit, his inflammatory, or, as it is absurdly termed, gouty diathesis, together with his previous liberal habits of living, induce me most humbly and respectfully, yet painfully, to ask, why, under the violent circumstances of his accident, producing a comminuted fracture of the left clavicle, concussion of the brain, indicated by stupor and unconsciousness, and also, as was discovered after his decease, a fracture of the fifth rib, no doubt injuring some portion of the thoracic viscera, and all these conditions attended with most agonizing sensations, and gradual progression of the pulse from 90 to 120—why, even if precautionarily only, the most vigorous and copious depletion was not immediately resorted to as the only determinate and probable mode of controlling the circulation, and restraining the inflammatory action which must inevitably ensue, as the natural consequence of such injuries, and which, if unrestrained, and not averted, must, as was herein lamentably realized, terminate fatally. By the report in *Times*, professing to give a synopsis of the medical treatment in this case, it appears that twenty leeches, thirty hours after the accident, were applied to the shoulder of the lamented baronet. What essential benefit could possibly have been anticipated from so effete a measure, I am at a loss to imagine. It is much to be regretted that no inquest was held, or post-mortem examination made, whereby some satisfactory explanation might have been elicited from the medical attendants upon this most important point,—vitally important, as involving, under similar circumstances, the treatment of lives perhaps of equal national importance to that of which the country has now to deplore the irreparable loss.

ON THE IRREGULAR IMPOSITION OF DUTIES ON POOR-LAW MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is painful to notice the injury and degradation which are brought upon the medical profession, and upon the labouring class of persons, by some of the workings of the new poor-law.

The general practice of sending the labourer to the medical officer for relief when he or any of his family is ill, has had the effect of pauperising the labourer at once, for the spell being broken, all further efforts to live by industry, and to maintain a feeling of honest pride and independence, for ever cease.

This practice prevails now very much in this district. The leading gentry, the rectors and rich clergy, send their labourers

to the parish surgeon, when they or any of their families are ill; and in the agreement with their labourers, a proportionate reduction is made on the wages, because it is implied or expressed that the parish doctor can be had in all cases of illness.

In addition, therefore, to the certain and regular pauper practice, the surgeon has to attend all the labourers in the parish, together with their families. And what does he get for all this?

In the unions of this county, it is common for the parishes to contain between three and five hundred paupers, or persons made paupers when they are ill, and the salaries to the medical officers range between six and ten pounds per annum for each parish, thus affording about fourpence a-head. In many of those appointments the surgeon has to ride from six to nine miles.

It may reasonably be asked—Why is this disgraceful state of things permitted to continue? Why do medical men give their time and knowledge, and take upon themselves such serious responsibilities, for less than nothing? Why do they descend so low as to incur the contempt and ridicule of all parties connected with these transactions?

Is it because there is no code or public standard for the guidance of the profession in provincial districts? no county or district association or arrangement by which a gentlemanly and honourable feeling may be kept up, and the interest of the profession maintained? Or, is it that the great competition which prevails has driven medical men to abandon all sense of self-respect, so as to resort to the most destructive and suicidal course that can be adopted?

I am, Sir, very truly yours,
Launceston, July 1, 1850. HENRY PETHICK.

INTRIGUES IN MEDICAL LITERATURE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some years ago (in an evil moment) I became a subscriber to the *Medical Times*, but soon discovered my mistake; for the principles advocated in that journal were diametrically opposed to all my preconceived notions of medical jurisprudence: however, to entice a continuation of subscriptions, there was interlarded with it periodical portions of a work on Diseases of the Heart; and in my case *the bait took*, because I considered the work original, and in many of its somewhat novel deductions instructive and interesting: as might be expected, the work *remains incomplete*. Against this species of medical newspaper intrigue, allow me to protest; and trusting that this notice of the transaction (in your well-conducted and extensively-circulated journal) may produce some good effect,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Castle Donnington, June 28, 1850. THOS. BROWN.

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL, VIENNA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May I ask the favour of your inserting in the next number of *THE LANCET* the following letter, addressed to one of your correspondents. In doing this you will particularly oblige

Your obedient servant, ISIDOR GLUCK.

To F. D. Fletcher, Esq., House Surgeon, Liverpool Infirmary.

SIR,—Your letter, inserted in *THE LANCET* of the 6th of July, 1850, with the high-sounding title, *General Hospital, Vienna* (accident with the lithotrite,) induces me, as a former pupil of that school, to inquire whether you have no interesting facts to publish regarding the practice of the Vienna Hospital, besides the unlucky accident which you have chosen to single out and lay before the profession.

I venture to hope that you *might* have seen, during your stay at Vienna, many a medical and surgical fact which would be of more interest, and more satisfactory to those who happen to know something of the Medical School of that city. And even were you inclined to lay before the profession, as a sequel to your letter, the more valuable facts which you have witnessed at Vienna, your first epistle, which must needs be looked upon as an introduction to your reports, would ever be considered as extremely unkind. Indeed, it is just as unkind as if I were to use, as an Introduction to my "Diary of the Operative Surgery of the London Hospitals," the unfortunate case of Mr. Cock's policeman, in which circumstance Mr. Cock was as innocent as the Vienna professor, whose lithotrite broke in his patient's bladder.

I am, Sir, yours obediently
I. GLUCK,
Physician to the Western Dispensary
Regent-street, July 9, 1850. of the German Hospital.