

manner more ingenious than probable. He suggests tartarized antimony as a useful remedy. As I have seen the disease in India, perhaps I may be allowed to make a very few remarks on the subject. In the first place, I would suggest, that the "black blood" spoken of by Dr. Mainwaring is probably caused by the spasm of the diaphragm and other muscles of respiration, preventing the lungs from carrying on their functions, and consequently impeding the process of arterialization; and not by the gas spoken of by him acting chemically upon the blood.

As far as my experience goes, Asiatic cholera is no respecter of persons. I have seen it as frequently attack the most regular livers as any other description of persons; but I think that when the seizure has taken place the previous habits of the patient may influence the character of the disease. I must say that tartarized antimony does not appear to me indicated in a disease, the most prominent symptoms of which are irritability of stomach and collapse; and, for my own part, I should prefer relying on counter-irritation, opium, and stimulants, followed by one or two moderate doses of calomel.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Orchard-st., Portman-sq., March, 1848. G. C. ARMSTRONG, M.D.

### PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE IN BOULOGNE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Allow me to claim the privilege of an old subscriber in begging a place in your columns for the following correspondence. On first settling here in practice, I was informed that the usual and most certain means to obtain immediate success was of a description totally at variance with all my ideas of professional dignity, and which accordingly I could not employ.

The consequence has been, that I have voluntarily submitted to be far outstripped in immediate success by all my competitors, even by one who has been settled here a much shorter time than myself.

I have patiently submitted also to pass over in silence the frequent occurrence of gross breaches of etiquette, and the attempts, often successful, to deprive me of my patients. But the two following instances have occurred so closely after one or two others, that I have determined, reluctantly, not to pass them over any longer without explanation and exposure. The circumstances leading to the first correspondence are so exactly detailed in my letter to Dr. Scott, that no remarks are required.

(COPY.)

12, Grande Rue, Jan. 7th, 1848.

SIR,—I was requested, in the afternoon of Monday, the 27th ultimo, to see Mrs. —, whom I found labouring under the prevailing influenza, exhibiting itself in a severe attack of bronchitis, extending to the smaller tubes, into which the air could scarcely penetrate, the larger ones being also blocked up with mucus.

Mrs. — had been suffering for a week before I was called to her. I visited her again on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday morning I went at the hour appointed, and was surprised to find that you had seen her the evening before, and had prescribed for her without having any communication with me. I was asked to see her, but declined, excepting with you, expressing my readiness to meet you in consultation, or to see her alone if you were unable to visit her.

I heard nothing more of the case till I learnt, with regret, on Monday, Jan. 3rd, that Mrs. — died on Sunday. I have since heard that you called in two other medical men.

Under the disagreeable circumstances, I beg to call upon you for your reasons for treating me in a way so totally inconsistent with the ordinary rules of professional etiquette.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

A. ROSS, M.D., M.R.C.S.E.,

To Dr. George Scott.

Late Physician to the Suffolk General Hospital.

The following is a copy of Dr. Scott's reply:—

January 8th, 1848.

SIR,—The allegation contained in your letter of the 7th instant being unfounded, you will admit that no further explanation is necessary.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

To Dr. Ross.

GEORGE SCOTT.

To show my laconic correspondent that I did not admit either his premises or conclusion, I addressed to him the following note:—

Tuesday, Jan. 11th, 1848.

SIR,—I consider your reply to my letter of the 7th instant as unsatisfactory, and as disgraceful to you as the conduct of which I complained.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

To Dr. George Scott.

A. ROSS, M.D.

And thus, for the present, has closed the correspondence.

The circumstances leading to my correspondence with Dr. Allatt came under my notice immediately after I had written my last note to Dr. Scott, with such certainty to me of their exactitude, that I conceived it my duty to ask for an explanation of them.

The persons whom Dr. Allatt styles "these people" are, I assure you, well known for their integrity, and are respected by all who know them. The husband is the master of the British Free Schools here, which situation he has held for ten or twelve years, and by his uniform good conduct, in his humble sphere, has procured that esteem which wealth and rank cannot always command.

After these preliminary remarks, I believe my letters to Dr. Allatt sufficiently explain the circumstances.

(COPY.)

12, Grande Rue, January 11th, 1848.

SIR,—Mr. and Mrs. S— have respectively reported to me what passed between you and the latter, on the occasion of your strangely-timed visit on Sunday last; and with the former, at the interview he had with you on Monday morning.

If they were not both persons of well-known probity, and also of intelligence, I could not have believed it possible that you should so far have forgotten what was due to the dignity of our common profession.

I am informed, that when allusion was made to my having been in attendance on Mrs. S—, you asked, "Who on earth could have recommended Ross to them?" and that you, moreover, observed, that they would have done much better to have employed you, as you would have cured her in a fortnight, instead of the long period that I had been in attendance.

As I consider that such remarks convey a reflection on my professional character, I feel called upon to ask for an explanation of them.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

To Dr. Allatt.

A. ROSS, M.D.

(COPY.)

Boulogne-sur-mer, Jan. 12th, 1848.

SIR,—I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day. I really feel surprised that the conversation of Mr. and Mrs. S— should justify the honour of my receiving a letter from you, and still more so, at your thinking proper to designate my calling upon them as a "strangely timed visit," which you will allow me to say I consider a very gratuitous observation on your part. I called on Mr. S— to present him my account for attendance during the year 1847. I was not aware that any one was ill in the house, and was surprised to see Mrs. S— in bed. Having attended these people the last seven or eight years, I naturally asked who was attending her, and upon hearing that it was you, I inquired who had recommended her to consult you? Whether I made any exclamation at the interference of busy-bodies, or not, I really cannot say. With respect to your second accusation, that I said if they had employed me I could have cured her in a fortnight, I totally deny it. Whether I attend Mr. and Mrs. S— is a matter of very slight importance to me. I feel disgusted at the system of undermining which is always going on in this place by certain partizans. I have lived too long and too much in the world, Sir, to make use of loose observations to justify my being called upon for explanations, as I have neither time nor inclination to write letters; and perhaps when you next do me the honour of addressing me, you will have something more palpable to handle. Quite at your service, Sir,

I have the honour to be, your very obedient servant,

To Dr. Ross.

R. ALLATT.

(COPY.)

January 14th, 1848.

SIR,—Without making any remarks on the style of yours of the 12th, which I had the honour of receiving yesterday, I leave others to judge whether it is satisfactory or not. I feel called upon, however unwillingly, to intrude upon your notice a few observations, which seem to me to be called for by your letter to me, but which, I trust, may not cause you the trouble of a reply.

You must be aware, that though you say you "had attended these people the last seven or eight years," you had, in reality, more than a year ago, in 1846, refused to attend Mrs.

S—, and that she had been forced to cease to be your patient. The circumstances of this refusal, as related to me by herself, weeks before your visit to her on Sunday last, are the following:—She told me, in accounting for her having been a patient of Dr. Jardons, that as you had attended her in her accouchement before the last, and being unwilling to change, she called on you and told you her position, expressed her wish that you should again attend her, but appealed to your generosity, by begging you to accept 50 francs (£2) as the fee, instead of 80 francs, (£3 4s.) which she had paid you on the former occasion, but which latter sum she felt unable to pay you again. You refused this, she says, so unkindly, that she left you in tears. Her husband, on two occasions, without her knowledge, seeing how uncomfortable she was at the idea of being attended by a stranger, called on you, and begged of you to attend her for 60 francs, (£2 8s.) You still were obdurate. She therefore was obliged to employ another, whose competence was said to be equal to your own, and whose fee was more within reach of their honest though humble means. Such were the reasons for one of "these people" ceasing to be your patient, and which might have prevented you from making any remark, or feeling hurt by my attending her, a duty which was never sought by me, and my accepting which deprived you of nothing.

Forgive the liberty I take of alluding to your claim of 165 francs, (£6 12s.) to present the account for which was the object of your visit on Sunday. I regret extremely that the circumstance of my attending Mrs. S—, or rather, that your not doing so, should have induced you to change your liberal intention of remitting to Mr. S— the balance that remained over the 65 francs (£2 12s.) he had formerly paid you by instalments, for your attendance on himself in 1847, which intention, he says, you expressed to him, saying, at the same time, that if the school committee chose to make you a present, you would accept it.

Another subject touched on in your letter I gladly avail myself of the opportunity of touching on also. You say you "feel disgusted at the system of undermining which is always going on in this place by certain partizans." No one feels more disgust at such a system than I, and no one suffers more from it. During my three years' residence here, I have seen more to disgust me than in all the twenty-two years I have been in practice. For is it not disgraceful to the members of a liberal profession to make use of agents to recommend them in hotels and boarding-houses—to make compacts with and place themselves under obligations to chemists, who distribute, right and left, the cards of their colleague physician or surgeon, and display his name prominently in their windows—to sanction their being recommended by house agents—to encourage the puffs of local newspapers, the editors of which may boast privately that they have made such an income for such a medical man? Such things make one blush for the dignity of our profession; but I have even heard worse than this—that there have been men who have stooped still lower—to share the profits of the undertaker!

I would have alluded more at length to a system which has lately sprung up here, of extorting exorbitant fees, but I have already intruded too much upon your patience; and although it is a subject which, as an honest man, I feel warmly indignant at, it must, before long, cure itself, or the public, who are sufferers by it, will have themselves to blame.

In conclusion: you say you have lived too long in, and seen too much of the world, to use loose expressions. I have lived nearly as long, but may not have seen so much. I have, however, lived long enough to see men older than either of us, in a moment of mistaken irritation, use expressions which they would afterwards, in their cooler moments, regret, and wish to be forgotten.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

A. Ross.

To Dr. Allatt.

It might naturally be supposed, from the style in which my letters both to Drs. Allatt and Scott are answered, that they had each some old cause of offence against me; but I call upon both to state, if on any one occasion I ever failed in any one point of the most delicate etiquette in professional intercourse I may have had with them? and I have passed over in silence, till now, the complaints I might have made against them.

I feel bound to make an exception from my general complaint of the doings of some English practitioners here, in favour of my professional brother, Mr. Cookesley. More than three years' frequent intercourse with him have satisfied me that his professional probity is in every respect to be depended on, and that there is at least one man in the pro-

fession here with whom I am safe. Such is the state of things here, that it is difficult, in many cases, to say, when you have a patient to-day, whether you may not find, at your visit to-morrow, that you are supplanted by another.—I am, Sir, your obliged servant,

A. Ross.

Boulogne, Jan. 1848.

#### FATAL SPASMS PRECEDED BY GASTRALGIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In answer to your correspondent who signs himself "A Provincial Surgeon," and who asks for the opinion of his brethren on a "Fatal Instance of Spasm preceded by Gastralgia," given in your valuable journal for March 18th, I beg to state, that the case appears to me to be easily explained. The age of the patient, the sex, the sudden invasion of the attack, the resistance to all treatment, the rapidity with which death ensued, and the preceding gastralgia, all show that the case was one where rupture of the stomach took place—a case by no means uncommon.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

A DUBLIN PHYSICIAN AND CONSTANT READER.

#### POOR-LAW MEDICAL RELIEF.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was recently requested by a corporal of the Sappers and Miners, engaged in the Ordnance survey, to attend the wife of one of the party, who was ill. He showed me a paper, to be filled up with the number of mixtures, lotions, pills, visits, &c., for each of which a specified, and I consider a liberal, allowance was made. The bill, after being *viséd* by the officer, was punctually paid. Would not such a plan, if adopted in poor-law practice, insure the best attention to the sick paupers; and if they were permitted to apply to any duly qualified practitioner they thought proper, would it not be his interest, as well as his duty, to attend to them faithfully as to any other class of patients?—I remain, Sir, yours respectfully,

Bradford, March, 1848.

MARK.

#### CONTAGION OF CHOLERA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Dr. Ogier Ward is in error in supposing that the remarkable conclusion arrived at by the sanitary commissioners—viz., "that cholera is not contagious," had not attracted the attention of the profession. In the paper of mine, in THE LANCET, some time since, I alluded to the subject, and I am inclined to think that the reason the sanitary report has not been more noticed by the profession is the low degree of estimation in which such reports are held by us, the sanitary enthusiasm of the commissioners necessarily causing them to be one-sided in their views.

With respect to the sanitary measures propounded by the commissioners, no doubt can be entertained of the great benefit which would result from them, if properly carried out, yet I should prescribe a good dinner daily for the poor, in preference to any sanitary measure, and have more confidence in its power of preventing the development of fever.

With respect to contagion, I think that as our knowledge of disease increases we shall find that it plays a far higher part in the production of it than our official returns would make appear.

It is, unfortunately, too much the fashion in the present day to decry contagion, and Dr. Ogier Ward deserves the thanks of the profession for calling its attention to this matter by his excellent paper on the subject, it being so necessary to arrive at a more definite opinion as to the influence of contagion, not only in relation to cholera, but also with regard to fevers, erysipelas, dysentery, &c.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

Hyde, March, 1848.

SAMUEL BEECROFT.

#### POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I perceive, in THE LANCET of Feb. 26th, a letter from the Isle of Man, signed "L. S.," in which the writer complains, and justly, that army and navy surgeons, who are members of the Collège of Surgeons, without being physicians or apothecaries, would not be deemed fit, as to qualification, to attend upon the poor—according to the wisdom about to be submitted to the House of Commons by Lord Ashley. The writer concludes by hoping that members of the Collège of Surgeons, having "served in the army for five years, may be included in the fifth resolution as competent persons."

Now this writer, when he took the trouble of attempting to