

acts which confer privileges and exemptions upon the members of the College, and to transfer these advantages to a proposed new college of so-called general practitioners. And in return for this handsome sacrifice, the College of General Practitioners will kindly condescend to afford its good will and patronage to the College of Surgeons, and allow the latter some share in the examinations of its members.

Such, when divested of a load of verbiage, are the terms of this harmonious compact—this precious job—got up between two parties, the president and other officers of the College of Surgeons, who are sworn to maintain its dignity, and Messrs. Bird and Ancell, the representatives of a Society formed for the express purpose, as stated in its prospectus, of forming a college quite unconnected with the College of Surgeons, or any other, and “containing within itself the whole range of medical and surgical knowledge”!

I have said that the legal privileges of the members of the College of Surgeons are to be taken from them and transferred to the new corporation. And such is the fact, for they will continue to be enjoyed only by those whose names appear in a projected “Register,” and for the registration of the members of the College of Surgeons no provision is made in the “Outline of a Bill,” drawn up and recommended to the legislature by the above-mentioned parties, unless the members of the College shall consent to enrol themselves as members of the new institution.

I beg leave to insist upon this point, because I have reason to believe that much misapprehension prevails with regard to it. In one of your late numbers there is a letter from a Mr. Lucas, (I wish I could see more letters written in the same spirit—I should have more hope for the profession,) which clearly shows that he is under the common mistake. He imagines that, by getting rid of his Apothecaries’ Hall certificate, he will be no longer obliged to join the new college, whereas the licence conferred by the Apothecaries’ Company is a thing of which he cannot divest himself, if he would, and if he could, his doing so would not alter his position in the least. He professes a determination not to “join the throng” of general practitioners, in their *facilis descensus averni* into the new and “inferior college,” but he does not seem to be aware, that if he does not, and if the proposed Bill should become law, he will be liable to serve on inquests and parish offices; he will be unable to sign any certificate; to give medical evidence in law, or hold any medical appointment; and if he persists in the practice of his profession, or calls himself a surgeon, he will be liable to be taken up and punished by summary process; or if he shall accept any medical office, he will be fined £20 for every such offence! Such would be his position, and that of every member of the College, should the plan succeed.

I am quite aware that the Report says it is very wicked to say such things, or insinuate that the members of the College are at all aggrieved—I mean in intention. I am quite aware that Mr. Bird told the Medical Registration Committee that there was no intention to make the measure retrospective in its operation; but if this is not retrospective legislation, will that gentleman be good enough to inform us what is?

I now come to the point. Among the by-laws of the College of Surgeons, I find one, (sect. 18,) headed “Rights of Members,” and it runs thus:—“The College will at all times protect and defend every member who may be disturbed in the exercise and enjoyment of the rights, privileges, exemptions, and immunities acquired by him as a member thereof.”

Now, Sir, I ask Mr. Guthrie and his colleagues; I ask the President and Council of the College, whether this by-law has ever yet been abrogated, and its abrogation duly ratified and approved by the judges of the land as required by law? If not, then I ask by what authority the (ex)president and other officers of the college have taken upon themselves to offer to barter away those privileges which belong to me as a member of the college?

I am one of those who believe, in common with all those members of the profession whom I have ever conversed with upon the subject, that the proposal of a new College of General Practitioners is one fraught with great evil, and that if carried out, it would be incalculably injurious both to the respectability of the profession and the well-being of the public; and no consideration whatever shall induce me to have anything to do with it.

Still less will I pay ten pounds for the “Fellowship.” Under these circumstances I cannot register under the proposed Bill; but I certainly do not intend to relinquish the practice of my profession, and if I find myself in any way molested or disturbed in the exercise of that liberty which I have paid for, and enjoyed for nearly twenty years, I shall be reduced

to the unfilial and disagreeable necessity of bringing an action for damages against my *alma mater*.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Cheltenham, 1849.

G. FORD COPELAND.

### A STAY FOR A TRUSS.

A CORRESPONDENT has forwarded us a sketch of a stay, acting as a lever, to retain the truss in one position, “it being impossible (he says) with this simple belt or stay attached, to slip out of place. Two flat slips lay up the back, and are adjusted to two studs, about six inches asunder, attached to the back of the truss. A rounded pad is applied on the perinæum, and a flat slip is attached to the truss-pad by a stud fastened on it. The above article may be made of India-rubber or any soft linen. It will enable the wearer to ride on horseback without danger, and enjoy the hunting season. In most cases, if applied with a truss in a recent one, a cure is very probable, even without submitting to inconvenience from horizontal refreshment. This, however, should always be resorted to for at least three weeks, when a cure is nearly certain, with common attention. I speak from experience in my own person as well as in some others.”

### ON THE TREATMENT OF THE INSANE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—We have had much legislation on the subject of mad-houses, both public and private; we have model establishments of every kind, in which men are confined under one pretence or another. One half of society, for private interests, is engaged in the destruction of the other half, by direct or indirect means, to save men from themselves and from their friends! Private and public asylums for the insane were constructed and licensed by Government. Formerly the patients were incarcerated in dungeons, and chains were used to restrain the violent. These things are matters of history, and we have to thank France and a Frenchman that these barbarities are no longer used, “to our knowledge,” in this country. But yet, Sir, it is doubtful if the state of society, in the present day, would not allow of some alterations in the prisons and mad-houses of England, and we ask ourselves—Should not the nature and treatment of insanity be taught in our schools of medicine by competent persons? We ask, is it consonant with reason and sense, that the owners of private mad-houses should have a pecuniary interest in the patients? Is it right that asylums for the insane should be kept as a speculation, oftentimes by those who are quite ignorant of the nature of insanity? I think none but medical men should have the management of houses for the insane, because insanity depends on physical causes, and these are only to be removed by proper medical treatment. Moral causes can only affect the insane by the induction of physical disease, and as physical diseases can be cured in every stage by medical men, perhaps in time we may be enabled to cure the insane without incarcerating them in an asylum. To enable us to arrive at this desired result, the nature of the disorder, in all its varieties, must be known, and taught in our schools of medicine. With regard to prisons and prisoners, I have this to remark, that it is my firm belief that prisons and asylums produce the diseases they are meant to cure. The mere fact of locking a man within four walls tends to produce insanity; but with much greater certainty will this result follow when the patients are confined separately, and silence enforced. We can only hope to do good by following the rules of sense, and we must take into our consideration the fact, that the end to be kept in view should be the ultimate cure of the patients, and their return into society. Crime, Sir, is a moral disease in the same sense as we speak of a mental disorder; they are both states depending on physical disorders, and these physical disorders are produced oftentimes by means of that very society, which afterwards presumes to punish, would that I could say to reform, the offender. I would have our prisons used as temporary habitations for criminals, where their physical and moral health should be attended to, and at the expiration of a certain period the prisoners should be received into the army; this would prevent second and third crimes, which often occur under the present system. To understand insanity, we must remember that the excess of action in one part of the body—the excitation of function—is always at the expense of the activity of other actions and functions. Thus, when the functions of the whole brain are excited, there is less activity in the circulation of the extremities, and hence the frequency of ulcers of the legs in the insane: these are too often healed up, and react on the circulation of the brain. In the treatment of the in-

sane, revulsion to the extremities is of the greatest consequence, and the tartar-emetic ointment is the best means to effect this object; and calomel, with opium and quinine, are the best remedies for the cure of insanity. This disorder often alternates with gout, and this secondary disease is the least dangerous of the two. Where ulcers or skin diseases have been cured, they should be reproduced. I cannot sufficiently dwell on the value of the pediluvium; with mustard the effect is oftentimes immediate. Stimulants which draw the blood towards the head are most injurious: thus, heated rooms, and wine, beer, or spirits of any kind, are always hurtful, sometimes produce death. No restraint can in any case be necessary, provided you well understand and cure the excitement of the brain which exists in the insane, and which is kept up in asylums. You cannot cure insanity without proper medical treatment, and were this efficient we should not have our madhouses so crowded as they are at present; nor our prisons, nor our workhouses. When the diet of the insane is too liquid, purging kills many patients; where the diet is too plentiful, reaction takes place, and the patients become excited—thence the necessity for straight-waistcoats and padded rooms in badly-managed lunatic asylums. The best diet is that used in the Dover prison, and as the object should be the cure of the patients, nothing more luxurious should be allowed. The free access of cold air is of great benefit, but only when the extremities are kept warm. Working in the open air, with the head exposed, is hurtful, and the damp cold earth often produces revulsion to the brain, but this might be avoided were the feet kept properly covered, and the head protected. The tepid bath is of the greatest value, but only so when cold water is applied to the head at the same time; then it produces a gentle glow on the surface, and a natural increase of the appetite, and mid-day is the best time for its use.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Upper Seymour-street West, 1849.

ROBERT BRANDON.

#### ON THE PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, AND THE MARCH OF QUACKERY IN THE METROPOLIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Permit me to correct an error published in a late number of THE LANCET, in a letter, signed "A Fellow," and which goes to state that any person might presume to practise surgery in England, without the diploma of the College of Surgeons. That many do so, (to the disgrace of the authorities at the College,) the public, to their cost, too late find out; but it is at variance with fact to promulgate that no prohibitory law exists by which such parties could be reached. The law is very explicit on the subject, and inflicts a penalty of £5 a month on any person daring to exercise the profession of a surgeon without first being admitted, after examination, a member of the body.

Our privileges are too much in abeyance; but let some person exist to protest against their wholesale destruction. The Acts in sustinment of my propositions are the 3rd of Henry VIII. cap. 11; the 32nd of Henry VIII. cap. 42; and the 18th of George II.

Whilst I am writing, I cannot resist the opportunity of calling your attention to one of those disreputable establishments which degrade the character of medicine, deceive the public, and bring ineffable disgrace on the proprietors thereof. I did consider that the "nuisances" of Lambeth (not yet abated) were beyond comparison—viz., the shop for combs and hair-brushes, and the Lower-Marsh qualified vendor of "Perry's Purifying Specific;" but, my conscience! there is, or lately was, a nook at 20A, Paddington-street, Marylebone, that beats them all hollow, and bangs Banagher and Ballinasloe.

The window is crowded in the usual style of a low puffing chemist, with "Advice, (rather equivocal,) Midwifery, Cupping," and all the other farrago; but the most inexplicable part of the announcement is a dirty board, of about two feet square, over this "doctor's" door, and printed thereon, "Morrison, Blacking Manufacturer." Black draught and blacking! What a combination! Beneath the shop-window we find, "Mr. Preston's Dispensary, and at 75, Lisson-grove." Whether the establishment in Lisson-grove is more in shape I cannot say; but I recollect some time ago a medicine shop of like abominable character, with "The Poor Man's Penny Club" attached, existed in Bermondsey-street, *sub rosa*, whilst its proprietor, a licentiate of the Hall, was doing the surgeon in Liverpool-street in grand style; but as I believe this nuisance died a natural death, I shall not disturb the repose of its owner by mentioning his name at present. Pillory such

fellows with scorn, and lash them to the common cart-tail, and let there be an inscription on their shameless fronts, written thus:—

"Nigræ lanarum nullum bibunt colorem."

Trusting that respectable practitioners in the different localities will do so, and render an account through your valuable journal, I remain, yours much obliged,

Mount-street, Lambeth, 1849.

M. K. O'SHEA.

#### THE CLAIMS AND DUTIES OF LICENTIATE APOTHECARIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the first number of THE LANCET for the present year, appears an article, headed, "The Apathy of the Profession, with regard to Medical Reform," which induces me to make some brief remarks thereon; for although I coincide with the writer, that, as a body, the medical profession is strangely apathetic, as regards its present and future welfare, I cannot agree with him in that portion which relates to the opinion he entertains of the apothecaries. I am certainly not one of the ninety-nine who would consign his Hall diploma to the flames, but rather the hundredth, who would use his pen, however feebly, in its defence.

I believe that the Act of 1815 has been productive of much good. Who will deny that the several modifications and increased severity of the course of study which the pupil has at various periods been subjected to by the court of examiners, since that Act was passed, have worked as well for his own improvement, as for the benefit and greater security of the public?

It would appear, from various letters &c. published in THE LANCET, that medical men look upon the title apothecary as conveying something derogatory; that they feel half insulted at being thus addressed. A short reflection is sufficient to overcome so erroneous an impression. Does not the apothecary undergo a much more prolonged course of study than the surgeon? Has he not to make himself acquainted with more numerous branches—namely, chemistry, materia medica, botany, anatomy, physiology, the principles and practice of medicine, midwifery, &c., besides mastering Celsus and Gregory,—while the surgeon's chief study is confined to anatomy and surgery? and is he not finally subjected to a much more rigid examination at the Hall than at the College? Is not the degrading process of "grinding" at the latter, when compared with the former, comparatively rare? though I assert, without fear of contradiction, that the system for either examination is quite unnecessary, provided always the student has but given a fair and regular attention to his duties. Any gentleman who has presented himself at both ordeals, for the purpose of becoming qualified, will have no difficulty in answering these questions.

It cannot be denied, however, that both surgeons and apothecaries have degraded and disgraced the profession by keeping a shop, selling their pennyworths of soda and jalap, their ounces of salts, and even lozenges, pepper, and cigars, thereby imitating the druggist and the grocer, and positively injuring both, besides giving the former an excuse to dabble in physic, and even to prescribe and visit patients with whose complaints he can have, at the best, but the most superficial acquaintance, tampering with the disease till it assumes a most threatening aspect, when the unfortunate individual is handed over to the professional man, though, perhaps, too late to restore him to health.

These evils, I say, result, Sir, from men moving out of their proper sphere, (where alone they can be respected,) and are equally to be deprecated in the surgeon and apothecary, as in the druggist, the grocer, or in any other calling in life.

But apart from this, I maintain that the apothecary is as much entitled to the respect and confidence of the public as the surgeon; I repeat that he undergoes a more extended course of professional study, and when in practice, especially provincial practice, five out of every six cases fall to his share; and if he possesses the double diploma, (which your correspondent believes so large a proportion of practitioners hold in disdain,) is surely better qualified, both legally and morally, to treat mixed cases than the mere surgeon.

I admit that the custom of charging for mixtures, pills, powders, and so forth, is open to censure, and leads the public to imagine we expect to be remunerated by the sale of drugs, rather than by our advice and attendance, and I agree with your correspondent that the payment by fees, when in consort with the feelings of the patient, is preferable; but this must generally be left to circumstances, for I know many who judge of the equity of the charge rather by the quantity of medi-