

he has already more or less obtained. It is to the junior members, to the students of the profession, that the injury is done. Upon them the burden lies, and it is for them to take those measures which shall be likely to remove it. The present period is particularly suited for action. The brief stillness in the political world allows voices to be heard which at another time would be drowned in its bustle. Perhaps if this chance be let pass another may never occur."

I hope that "LiB" will act on the last sentence I have quoted at once, and with his friends take immediate steps for a general meeting of students, or perhaps I may be allowed to suggest to him that it would be better to have a first deputation chosen from every school to meet and discuss the subject. But if he thinks that a general meeting would first be more likely to effect the purpose he has in view, deputies may be afterwards chosen to carry out its plans. I doubt not that he will be well supported which ever course is adopted. I have the honour to remain, Sir, your most obedient,

A MEDICAL STUDENT.

London, Dec. 13, 1841.

HUSBANDS AT ACCOUCHEMENTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent in this week's LANCET, I beg to observe that I think a medical man steps very far beyond his province when he endeavours to prevent a husband being present at the accouchement of his wife. Man and wife are one, and it is a matter between themselves with which we have nothing whatever to do. I wish, indeed, that the practice were far more general, as then a husband would be able to appreciate the delicacy and decorum with which the proceedings are conducted on the part of surgeons, and thus dissipate prejudices which are, not unnaturally, sometimes entertained upon this subject. However, either from unwillingness to witness the sufferings of his wife (sometimes from indifference to them), her own objection that he should, the tittle-tattle of the women who are with her, or the black looks to which your correspondent alludes, it happens that the husband is very seldom present; but, when he desires to be so, I would caution the practitioner against joining the nurse and her coterie in wishing to throw an unnecessary mystery around the proceedings of the lying-in room. Whether the practice be, as the country surgeon states, an exclusively London practice, I know not; but, if so, I doubt not, eventually, by reason of the example given by the most exalted and most exemplary married couple of the realm, that it will soon spread, together with the various other improvements emanating from the metropolis,

even into the most remote provincial districts. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN CHATTO.

Great Coram-street, Dec. 11, 1841.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In reply to a letter in THE LANCET of the 11th inst., from a gentleman signing himself "A COUNTRY DOCTOR," I beg to say that how fashionably soever the practice he mentions may be in the practice of London midwifery, it is not countenanced among the lower classes as among the higher. As to the question of delicacy or propriety, I see no reason why the accoucheur should not sanction the presence of the husband at any time during the parturient process. The manner in which everything is conducted at the present time in the lying-in room, need not offend the delicacy of the most refined or fastidious. Moreover, the husband's presence is not unfrequently urgently desired by the wife at the climax of her sufferings, and, in my own practice, this has been rarely objected to by the female friends or attendants; and I am quite sure that the presence of the husband might be more generally acquiesced in to the advantage of the accoucheur, as it would tend to disabuse the husband's mind of any false or erroneous notions that he might have entertained relative to the lying-in room, and mitigate that reserve which is sometimes felt towards the accoucheur in his future visits to the family, of which I am confident many of my professional brethren have often had cause to complain. I have the honour to remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN BRYANT, M.D.

50, Edgware-road, Dec. 15, 1841.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—"A COUNTRY DOCTOR," in your Publication of last week, wishes to take the sense of practitioners at large, as to the propriety of husbands visiting at intervals, or staying with their wives during the process of parturition: I certainly cannot mention, having had only two instances of husbands there intruding, after thirty years' experience, as my own practice within the last thirty days has developed more than that number, and I must confess that not in one instance have I given them notice to quit. I do not mean to advocate the propriety of husbands remaining in the apartment, as if they were the accoucheur or aged matrons to attend to the little stranger when born, but I do think that when the wife is suffering the pains of labour, and the fear and dread which are attendant upon that moment of severe trial, it is unnatural not to allow her partner in life to enter the room, and whisper words of comfort and solace. In the cases that have fallen under my care, the husband, naturally feeling for the safety of his wife, has respectfully solicited permission to enter

the apartment, and give cheering hopes and assurances that all will end well and speedily, from which I think beneficial effects have been produced, particularly when the patient is of a desponding nature; and where is the heart that can censure this? I should like to ask your correspondent whether he is a married man (which I doubt), and whether, if his lady were many hours or days in suffering, he would like to be forbidden to see her on the score of delicacy. If so, what a fine sensibility he must possess, and how easily it can be shocked. Again, it often occurs that the accoucheur and nurse are the only attendants, and these may be strangers; and perhaps the doctor, honest man, may be incapable of officiating, from ignorance or other circumstances: in this case, I presume the patient is to be lost, without being able to see her husband, and state to him her fears. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

B. H. W. H.

December 15, 1841.

QUALIFIED, HALF-QUALIFIED,
AND
UNQUALIFIED GENERAL PRACTITIONERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A paragraph in some of the provincial papers states, that the poor-law commissioners have ordered that all medical attendants on the poor shall in future be either surgeons and apothecaries, or surgeons and physicians, and that the plan of remuneration will be greatly altered. Can you inform me if the statement be true: it would make great alteration in this district. At present there are two practitioners in the town in which I reside, besides myself. One of them passed the Apothecaries' Hall in 1828, but never obtained his diploma at the College of Surgeons, nor ever attended a surgical lecture, or the surgical practice of an hospital; nor, indeed, ever saw any surgical operation excepting those performed behind the counter of a drug-shop—yet he calls himself a "surgeon," has "SURGEON" on his street door, and holds the appointment of a medical and surgical attendant on the poor in this district. Is it legal for him to place "SURGEON" on his door? Or was it conformable with the provisions of the Poor-law Act to appoint such an unqualified man to the office he fills? If such a person be allowed to practise surgery, what are the rights of a member of the college? For the 18th section of the by-laws of the college says, "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." Would the council of the college in this case consider me "dis-

turbed" in the exercise of my rights, &c.? The other practitioner, without having even attempted to qualify himself, either as an apothecary or as a surgeon, freely practises in both capacities, and combines with the former to cross my path by every stratagem they can devise—what course ought I to pursue in such a case? I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A COUNTRY SUBSCRIBER.

Cornwall, Dec. 2, 1841.

* * We believe that some new regulations, such as our correspondent refers to in the first part of his letter, will be enforced by the poor-law commissioners. There is no law to prevent any person from practising surgery in this country. The restrictions which are sometimes imposed on candidates for offices in public institutions, frequently operate with advantage to the community.

UNION MEDICAL OFFICERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If the surgeon who complains of being shut out of the King's-Norton union, on account of not being a member of the college, will refer to "The First Report of the Poor-law Commissioners," he will find it there decided by the triumviri of Somerset House, that a licentiate of Apothecaries' Hall is as much qualified for holding such an appointment as any other gentleman, let his education have been what it may. The author of the letter, dated "City-road," in your last Number, on this subject, perhaps forgets that every one has not the power to "spend both time and money to become duly qualified." I am, Sir, &c.

A LICENTIAE.

December 4, 1841.

P.S.—If your correspondent, Mr. Wansbrough, possess the secret he mentions, what can be said of his humanity in withholding the publication of it in your pages?

CHARGES FOR MEDICAL AID.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you be kind enough, when next answering your correspondents, to state what are the exact legal rights or powers of general practitioners in making their charges to patients. Can they charge both for medicines and for attendance? And how far may *distance* regulate the amount of charge? Have those who are only members of the college, or who are only licentiates of the hall, a diminished right by reason of their possessing only one diploma or licence? I am aware that the law on this matter has often been decided by juries, but I know not