

the friends, that I was at the pains to verify the statement by a separate inquiry from three witnesses. Nothing obviously was now left for me to do, but to insist, in my own defence, on the views of treatment suggested by me, and to express to Mr. Howard, jun., who joined me at my request, my sentiments respecting behaviour as entirely new as it was disagreeable to me.

The next morning brought the letter in which my well-intentioned return to the patient's bed-side is termed an "intrusion," and which, Sir, you will I think admit, was not calculated to mollify the impressions of the previous day.

It thus appears that my *unprofessional* conduct amounts simply to this: that while waiting for my carriage, I, after Mr. Howard's departure, entered the sick-room, and witnessed the effect of treatment commenced at my suggestion, and *agreed* to—an act which few but Mr. Howard would, I imagine, have misconstrued at any time, but which, in the present instance, was purely accidental, and would not have taken place at all, had my conveyance appeared five minutes earlier. I also incidentally stated, that *we* did not consider inunction important, this appearing to me a natural conclusion, as we had decided that ptyalism was not desirable, and had ordered calomel at longer intervals. Whether this merits the accusation made against me, I leave you and your readers to decide, as I do to form your own estimate of Mr. Howard's part in the proceedings, which consisted in repudiating in the evening what he had acceded to in the morning, in coarsely commenting on my judgment, and in informing the friends that they "might as well have thrown their money into the gutter." The motive for such treatment of an entire stranger to him, I do not pretend to fathom; if—the only possible explanation which occurs to me—it arose out of annoyance that his own choice of a consultant was not acceded to, it was a most sorry exhibition indeed.

I now quit the subject, and beg to apologize for thus occupying your valuable space. Such instances of medical disagreements are painful individually, as they are injurious to the profession at large.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Norwich, April 3, 1852.

W. H. RANKING, M.D.

### SOURCES OF INJURY TO THE PROFESSION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Amongst the many grievances with which our unfortunate profession is afflicted, there is one, I think, hitherto comparatively unnoticed, but which, in my opinion, very materially adds to the degradation, disgrace, and impoverishment of the legitimate practitioner.

I allude to the not uncommon habit pursued by many medical men, who, rather than obtain a proper pupil, or spare a paltry 30*l.* or 40*l.* per annum as the pittance of the qualified assistant, will put the errand-boy behind the counter, teach him to dispense, and gradually leave that department to his sole management (he at the same time in the receipt of a salary). From little to more this personage grows, until having obtained a tolerable knowledge of pharmacy and medical practice, he resigns his former situation, and merges into the assistant.

Continuing in this capacity some years, at a salary of probably 25*l.* per annum, he is enabled to save a little money, and perhaps borrowing a little more, quits his employer, adjourns into some by-street, takes some dirty, disreputable little shop, surrounded on one side by tallow-chandlers, on the other by greengrocers; he adorns the window with "Coloured saucers," "Best worm-cakes," "Camomile flowers," gives "advice gratis," and undertakes "midwifery" at any "reasonable offer," and in innumerable conspicuous places does not forget to paint in large letters "surgeon and accoucheur."

He now, having a pretty good income, fired with ambition, and not liking the idea of being unqualified, enters at the nearest hospital for the lectures and surgical practice necessary for the College of Surgeons, well knowing that the Society of Apothecaries will not prosecute (and, in his turn, puts another boy behind the counter, who goes and does likewise); at the end of about three years obtains its diploma, issues handbills, and after his name, in large letters, puts Member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. The public believe this title to be a sure guarantee of ability, practice comes rolling in, and this man eventually will be able to retire; while the more honourable one, in the private house close by, who can probably boast of the titles M.D., M.R.C.S.E.,

and L.S.A., is either lean and "an hungred," or literally starving.

"Omnes in me meosque redundant ex fonte illo dolores."

Cic., pro Milone, xxxvii.

Now, sir, can we for a moment wonder at the degraded condition of the profession, the number of unqualified practitioners, the poverty which we see surrounding us, or the little estimation in which we are held by the public, as long as this state of things continue; can we wonder, sir, I say, at the A. K. Matchams "et hoc genus omne," who lately figured in THE LANCET.

The remedy appears to me to be simple—"remove the cause, and the effect will cease;" and I think we shall do more to promote the respectability of the profession, and lessen the poverty amongst its members, than either acts of parliament or new charters.

I will, in conclusion, add that I have been in practice some years, and although it would save me 40*l.* per annum, I would scorn the very idea of such a thing.

Would you, sir, but use your powerful pen in the destruction of this grievance, you would confer another lasting obligation on us, and on

Your obedient servant,

March, 1852.

HONOR.

### MOVABLE ARTIFICIAL EYES.

MR. GROSSMITH'S REPLY TO M. BOISSONNEAU.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—M. Boissonneau's assertions in last week's LANCET, respecting my Artificial Eyes, being entirely devoid of truth, I must earnestly solicit your indulgence for a few lines.

I did not *call myself* the author of improvements which *he* has introduced. I deny that he has ever made any improvements. The hemispherical capsule, and every other modification of form, would naturally be suggested to the mind of any proficient artist who possessed the slightest mechanical idea. M. B. admits that I may have seen these eyes in 1843: then why describe them in THE LANCET in 1852 as a new discovery? He must not fancy himself an *inventor* simply because he deposits a few models and manuscripts with some scientific bodies for the purpose of obtaining popularity. A collection of eyes, made by my own hands, was deposited in the Geological Society of London in 1844, not with a view to obtain notoriety on my part, but because I was *paid* for them—the best proof of their merits.

The assertions that I am only a *dealer* in artificial eyes, and that those I exhibited in the Crystal Palace were made by the late M. Desjardin, are wholly untrue.

M. Boissonneau's letters will not be noticed further by me; my house has maintained its celebrity for *ninety years* without publishing a pamphlet or even a circular; my predecessors amassed ample fortunes by their labours, and I hope to follow their example by the same fair and honest means.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

Fleet-street, April, 1852.

W. R. GROSSMITH.

\* \* We cannot insert any more letters on this subject.—ED. L.

### UNIVERSAL VACCINATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In this part of Scotland, and, I believe, the same may be said of the greater part of the country, very few cases of the non-vaccination of children occur; and as there seems to be a great difficulty in England in realizing the same state of matters, it may naturally be asked how vaccination happens to be so complete? The reason may be this. The medical attendant vaccinates at a suitable age, without additional charge, every child whose mother he has attended in her confinement. The vaccination of the child is, in fact, considered, as it were, a part of the confinement, and included in the confinement fee. The practitioner thus, on the one hand, considers himself in honour bound to complete his engagement; and the mother, on the other, expects its fulfilment by the vaccination of the child. So fully recognized is this tacit law, that in the case of removal to another district before the vaccination of a child, the attendant, if acquainted with the practitioner of that other district, usually gives a note to the mother, requesting his brother practitioner to vaccinate the child in his stead and behalf.

Were this plan adopted in England, I believe vaccination would soon become all but universal, as it is in Scotland—at least that part of the country where the practice prevails.

JOHN LYELL, M.D., L.R.C.S. ED.

Newburgh, Fifeshire, 1852.