

in THE LANCET of the week previous, or even weeks ago. Is the evidence of Mr. Stafford, M.P., before the Sebastopol Committee to be considered as "news"?—as "the topic of the day"? It was "news" indeed at the commencement of the year; it formed the "topic of the day" last February.

Or take the *Association Journal* of May 19th. Was such a specimen—I appeal to intelligent men—ever seen? "Small by degrees and beautifully less," touching all that is necessary to constitute an enlightened and readable periodical. "Paragraphs from our Portfolio"! Another complaint from a member "that the *Journal* is not conducted in accordance with the spirit and objects of the Association"; "the evidence of Dr. Andrew Smith," and not a fraction of news.

Truly that is a strange infatuation which can make a number of scholars and gentlemen content, in this middle of the nineteenth century, with the lowest intellectual standard in their professional literature, when they might so easily have it otherwise! which can make them submit, in the most imperturbable manner, to receive as "news" to-day, through one channel, what they might have had the benefit of weeks ago, through another. And yet, Sir, I will be bound that the *Association Journal's* weekly expences are as great—not to say greater—than yours, unbacked by a "Reserve Fund of one thousand pounds"!

Would this state of things—this selling of an inferior article at a price for which a superior one might be obtained—be tolerated in the commercial world! Why, then, should it be tolerated in the world of medical literature? Gentlemen of the Association, this will not do; everybody is laughing at you. To put up with the dull and heavy editorial ware—with the "ungifted mediocrity"—which has already swamped one (some persons say *more than one*) Journal, when there is to be found in the ranks of our profession so much intellectual vigour and manly scholarship! To carry this infatuation yet further, and burden with the business of the Society a mind notoriously inadequate to the duties originally imposed upon it, and which knew nothing of the Association's earlier years! What can it mean! How are you to be emancipated from this terrible and brainless stagnation?

Dr. Conolly tells you. Support the motion which he is prepared to submit to you at York. Get a new Secretary, and, yet more, try and find a new Editor. This is your last and only remaining chance of saving your tottering Association. "Opportunity has hair in front, behind she is bald; if you seize her by the forelock you may hold her, but, if suffered to escape, not Jupiter himself can catch her again."

My apologies are due to you, Sir, for having trespassed so long upon your valuable space.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
Enfield, May 20. EDGAR SHEPPARD, M.D.

THE CASE OF MALIGNANT TUMOUR

REPORTED AT PAGE 478.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—My attention has been called to a notice in THE LANCET of the 12th ult., by Mr. Syme, of Edinburgh, of a "Case of Malignant Tumour." The case referred to is that of my son, and I cannot doubt that you will insert this letter.

The purport of Mr. Syme's communication is, that he from the first discovered the dangerous nature of the case, that all his subsequent observation left him no doubt of the correctness of his first impression, and that, instead of giving him credit for his "early and sound discrimination," I allowed my "grief to ferment into resentment," and, in some way or other left unexplained by him, gave occasion and call for his bringing the case before the public.

The facts of the case, (which are not correctly stated by Mr. Syme,) so far as I deem it necessary to notice them, are these:—Mr. Syme saw the boy three times—on Jan. 1st, Feb. 6th, and March 13th. On the first occasion, he gave me to understand that the case was doubtful, and might be very serious, and he prescribed rest and quiet. On the second occasion, he gave me to understand that all ground for anxiety was at an end; that the symptoms were sufficiently manifest to enable him then to pronounce the malady as very simple and innocent, stating that the boy might avail himself, when he chose, of the naval appointment Mr. Syme had been from the first made aware he was expecting; and, in fact, summarily dismissed the case as one he never expected to see again or hear more about. On the third occasion, he stated there was no alternative but amputation. Upon this, in accordance alike with my own judgment and that of private friends whom I consulted, I

sent the boy to London for advice; and afterwards, partly in consequence of inquiries by his ordinary medical attendant, (who had been in consultation with Mr. Syme,) and partly out of courtesy to him, I wrote him in some detail, and, in the course of correspondence, took occasion to observe that it was to be regretted that the opinion formed by Mr. Syme at the second consultation should have led to not following out the course prescribed at the first consultation, and, instead, to leave the boy and his parents in the belief that he might do with his arm very much what he pleased.

Certainly it does not appear to me that this statement, made only to his professional brother, did, in the circumstances, convey any such grave or resentful reflection on Mr. Syme that he should violate, as I think and am advised, both his professional duty and the courtesy usually observed between gentlemen, by dragging the case into print, that he might have an opportunity to compliment himself and censure others. But I believe the head and front of my offending has been that, in a case involving to my son the loss of his right arm, and consequent incapacity to enter the profession of his choice, I presumed not to rest satisfied with Mr. Syme's opinion, but to call in and follow other and London advice. Mr. Syme's representations as to the motive for the course I adopted, are altogether incorrect.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
Royal-terrace, Edinburgh, May, 1855. HENRY CHEYNE.

THE EAST INDIA MEDICAL SERVICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I forward by overland mail a copy of the *Friend of India*—an influential journal,—which contains an article relative to the East India Examining Board for assistant-surgeons, of which appointments the Board may now be said to have the patronage. I am not in the least degree surprised at the remarks which have been made, both by yourself and the editor of the *Friend of India*, regarding the constitution of this examining board, of whose members—except Dr. Parkes—not one is personally acquainted with India, or has ever been connected with the army. The Board, however, is evidently resolved on self-destruction. No stronger evidence of its incapacity can be required than a reference to the questions propounded by its members at the first examination, held, I believe, on the 6th of January last. The Board has evidently no professor of Military Surgery amongst its members. Midwifery has been altogether ignored; and every subject, in short, has been slighted, except Botany and Zoology. I must say the whole examination was a marvellously inappropriate one. I will, however, leave this learned conclave to your energetic and well-merited censure, and proceed to show what I believe to be good reasons for the paucity of candidates for the Indian medical service at the late examination. The advantages of these appointments have been hitherto much overdrawn, and their many disadvantages kept out of view. Medical students now, however, appear to be arriving at a proper estimate of their real value. I will only mention a few particulars to show how we are regarded and treated. The senior medical officers of the three Presidencies have been grossly insulted and overlooked in the very constitution of the Board itself. Not a single medical officer of the three armies was considered worthy of a seat at the Board, though many eminent men might have been found at home both able and willing to accept the duties of the office. To all who would be candidates for assistant-surgeons, I would say, Take warning! you see how the best and ablest men of the three armies are estimated in England. But to return to the service as it is in India. The assistant-surgeon enters upon his duties, say, at the average age of twenty-four. He remains an assistant-surgeon for a period of fourteen or fifteen years—it has been longer, and will be again unless we can effect a thorough reform—on allowances which are very inadequate to meet the wants of a family, except by the exercise of the most painful economy; and if he or his wife or children require change of climate for health's sake, debt in very many cases is the inevitable consequence. Thus are the fourteen or fifteen best years of a man's life frittered away. He cannot increase his income by his own exertions. Energy and activity cannot reward an army surgeon as they do the surgeon in civil life at home. The assistant-surgeon in the East India Company's service can just make both ends meet if he has a family, and that is all. I would therefore say to all those who have any chance of succeeding at home, stay where you are.

At length the rank of surgeon is attained, at the average age of forty and forty-one, and the medical officer can just manage to live comfortably, and meet the expenses of his children at