

their present advanced state, and even now chiefly cultivated by the members of our profession, one would naturally suppose that eminent scientific medical gentlemen had a considerable share in its government.

The machinery by which it is governed gives ample opportunity for such arrangement. The trustees are forty-eight in number; one portion being *ex officio* members of the board, and consisting chiefly of the law officers (!) of the crown, whilst the others are elected by these. And who are elected? One looks in vain among this number for Faraday, Grant, Owen, or Marshall Hall.

To the shame of the country, and to the great disadvantage of the institution, be it said, the elected are almost as unfit for the office as the electors—men eminent, no doubt, for rank and station, but whose engagements of a political and civil nature must prevent their attending to their duties, even if fitted for them.

If, Sir, you would use your extensive influence in bringing this subject before the public, you would be conferring a still further benefit on the profession.

Your obedient servant,
MEDICUS.

THE ETIQUETTE OF THE PROFESSION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There will exist but few of your readers whose attention, ere this, has not been drawn to a letter in your last number from Mr. Beecroft, of Hyde, the merits of which, if correct, (and there is little reason to doubt it,) will speak for themselves. I cannot refrain from expressing the opinion, that were those members of our profession who had, in like manner, suffered from the unprofessional conduct of their brethren to possess a column in your journal, wherein their grievances would find insertion, the effect of a few examples would be salutary indeed, and produce more real good than any new legislative enactment, much as it may be required. The axe must be applied to the root of the present evils, which, I contend, do not owe their existence to the laws regulating the practice of medicine or surgery, though much, by alteration, may be done, as a help to general improvement.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
A SURGEON.
Taunton, March, 1846.

THE SYDENHAM SOCIETY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As the 1st of May is now coming on, will you permit me, through your columns, to call the attention of the Council of the Sydenham Society to your review of their last annual report.

Surely, Sir, if even in the report of such a Society we may not look for "high literary" character, we ought to have something like common sense; if we may not expect good writing, we may hope for good grammar; if modesty is too much, method may surely be attempted; if the council cannot exhibit good taste, we may trust they will show good temper.

I hope the council will take in good part the hints you have given them, and that this year's report will be both readable and worth reading.

I remain, your obedient servant,
A SUBSCRIBER TO THE SYDENHAM SOCIETY.

P.S.—As I am a novice in such matters, perhaps you will kindly inform me whether it is the more usual for officers of societies to read their reports sitting, or standing? Also whether it is usual to write reports on the backs of notes and such-like scraps of paper? And whether such societies provide stationery for their officers?

CORN CUTTING AT BATH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having failed to get inserted in your periodical a paragraph that I forwarded to you (some fortnight ago) in consequence of its having been written anonymously, I will now, with your kind permission, embody the same in a different form, trusting that it will prove efficient for the purpose intended. On a former occasion, then, after having commended you for the able part you had taken in defence of our profession, by so admirably venting your just indignation on empirics, I begged to assure you, that honour towards the medical profession, and hatred towards every species of

quackery, were the only incentives to this production; also that there were parties in several towns which had taken the prefix of doctor! to their names, and purposed to cut corns, &c., (of this I had a knowledge from the conspicuousness of their huge zinc plates sported upon their doors, with Dr. —, Chiropodist, written thereon, and never was the title more prostituted)—that to these unworthy, self-dubbed doctors, the resident medical men lent themselves, from the fact of their names and signatures occurring in newspapers, to the effect, that Doctor so or so has attended me, and he is extremely clever; that this version of mine was to have been considered an epitome—but that all the advertisements tended, more or less, to demonstrate to the gullible public, the unworthy doctorate's scientific qualities in the art of cutting corns "without loss of a drop of blood!" Here I must fain ask, what are the motives of the medical gentry in question? Do they wish to see their names in print, so as to inform the invalids who arrive where they (notorious men!) live!—or do the very unworthy corn-snappers introduce them to their patients, as one good turn might deserve another? I have, for my own part, read the most valuable books on surgery, and I cannot for a moment conceive what mystery there is in doctoring a corn,—I should suppose a medical man might ease his own corn,—indeed, the whole of it is empirical fuddle.

Further, I should like to know at what college or university in Europe the degree of M.D. is conferred upon candidates for cutting corns, bunions, and defective nails?

Let all persons be respectable in the sphere of life in which they move; this, I think, will apply both to the *corn graduates* and other parties; and I do sincerely hope that before any of the *medical men* (resident in any town whatsoever, and being connected in the manner previously specified) present petitions in London, praying that their honourable college will endeavour to do this, that, or the other, that they individually take into consideration the honourable example they present to their College, by lending their names to prostituted titles and quackery. Taking my leave of them whom the cap fits, with the quotation,—

"Hic murus aheneus esto
Nil consine tibi nulla palescere culpa,"

I remain, Sir, yours very respectfully,
Bath, March, 1846. SAMUEL SAMPSON FAULKES.

CORN CUTTING AT HULL.

A correspondent has thus addressed us:—Allow me to intrude upon your notice an old copy of the *Hull Advertiser*, containing the advertisement of a "corn doctor" who honoured this town with his professional services for a period of three months, or more, towards the conclusion of last year, when, during his stay, an advertisement (similar to the one in the newspaper that I send) appeared every week, with letters from the first medical men in the town. The consequence was, that the public were completely deceived, and the "corn doctor" reaped a golden harvest. I understand, from good authority, that he was in the habit of receiving nearly ten guineas a day for extracting corns! Such things must give the public a very poor opinion of our profession.—I authenticate my note, and am, your obedient servant,

Hull, Feb. 1846. AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.

DR. LAYCOCK ON THE REFLEX FUNCTION OF THE BRAIN, IN REPLY TO "VINDEK."

I ATTEMPTED to maintain a very plain and intelligible proposition in the correspondence on the reflex function of the brain, from which "Vindex" has made the extract that he advertises on in THE LANCET of April 4. The proposition was this:—that the cerebral nerves of special sense are "incident excitator" nerves, and that the portion of the encephalon situate above the tubercula quadrigemina is subject to the laws of reflex action. The terms "brain" and "cerebral ganglia" were used by me, in the passage he quotes, to designate this upper portion of the encephalon, and to distinguish it from that lower portion which forms a part of the "true spinal system." Now I think I could not say, with any degree of propriety, that the common lumbricus had an optic, auditory, and olfactory apparatus, or was endowed with hemispherical ganglia. In the sense the term brain was used by me, the earthworm, I again assert, has no brain.

No useful analogy can be drawn between the supra-oesophageal ganglion of the lowest articulata and the cephalic ganglion of the highest. In my humble judgment, they are as widely removed from each other as the highest from the lowest ver-