

opinion as to the competency of the Court on the point started by Mr. Anderson, but the Court could see no alternative but to depart from the part of the case affecting Duncan, and to direct the jury to find the case, as libelled against him, not proven.

Mr. LOGAN, on behalf of the prisoner Cumming, stated, since the transaction of 1844, he (Cumming) had practised as a surgeon and physician in Edinburgh, and that during these five years he had established himself in business, had maintained a good character, and had now a wife and family to maintain.

The SOLICITOR-GENERAL then adverted to all those points of the evidence bearing against Cumming, and pleaded for a verdict of guilty.

Mr. LOGAN addressed the jury on behalf on Cumming.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK having summed up—

The jury, without retiring, returned a verdict acquitting Duncan, (as directed by the Court,) but found Cumming guilty as libelled.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK, having first severely reprimanded Cumming, and held up his conduct as a warning to young practitioners, sentenced him to be *imprisoned for one year*.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

ELECTION AT THE MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Dr. Webster having said, at the recent anniversary meeting of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, that "any fellow had a legal right to inspect every document belonging to that corporation, as well the minutes of council and of committees, as also all reports made by the referees respecting papers, and the propriety of their publication in the Society's *Transactions*," I hope that gentleman will have the goodness to state, for the information of all concerned, the grounds upon which he founds so important an opinion. Being myself an enemy to secret proceedings in any corporation, and disapproving of the system hitherto pursued, of receiving anonymous reports made by persons who are not only unknown to the Society individually, but even to the members of council, when assembled to decide upon the merits of papers, and their publication, I hope the present method will be altered, as it looks like an inquisition, is inconsistent with the above-board character of Englishmen, who dislike proceedings veiled in darkness, appears inimical to the progress of knowledge, and I fear may even sometimes become the handle of injuring the professional reputation of individuals.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,
AMICUS CURLE.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You will perhaps allow me to correct a mistake, under which you seem to be labouring, in relation to the late disturbance at University College. The affair did not originate from any ill feeling between the students of the two faculties, for, as far as my observation goes, the most friendly relations exist between them.

The circumstances which gave rise to the row are these. Several meetings were held by the students of the faculty of arts, for the purpose of forming a "standing committee," at which several gentlemen of the medical faculty were present. Owing to a little jealousy on the part of some gentlemen of the arts end towards one member who was duly elected on the committee, two very noisy meetings took place, at which the medical gentlemen took the part of the committee-man, who, having been duly elected, they considered was entitled to remain a member of that committee, in spite of the factious opposition raised against him.

After one of these meetings they paid the arts library a visit, to the great annoyance of the librarian, who, by the sudden influx of about sixty gentlemen, had extra work to do. Of course so many coming in at once made some noise, which could not possibly be avoided; and to check this, the librarian sent for the worthy secretary, (not the most popular functionary connected with the college,) whose appearance, instead of commanding perfect silence, was the signal for more noise. After leaving the library, they congregated in the cloisters; and when the secretary passed through them,

on his return to the office, three groans were given, which he resented so much, that three gentlemen, whom he supposed to be the ringleaders, were summoned before the council, and after a lengthened, though partial, examination, two were rusticated, and one was reprimanded. The students, to a man, resented this harsh sentence, and by firm and decided measures, compelled the council to revoke their decision.

It is to be hoped that the council will take warning from this expression of the feelings of the students, and will endeavour now to begin to consult their comforts, as on it depends, not only the prosperity, but the very existence, of the college. No distinction ought to be made between the two faculties, as they are both equally important; and when, instead of partiality and favoritism, justice and equity shall be dominant, we may safely predict brighter days, and University College, both as a school of arts and medicine, will, as a natural result, stand pre-eminently forward.

Hoping you will allow this a place in your valuable journal, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
University College, London, March, 1850.

JUSTITIA ET PAX.

THE FOOT-CASE AT THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It was asserted by a medical man the other day, that Mr. T. H. Wakley's operation, of amputation of the os calcis and astragalus, together with the malleolar processes of the tibia and fibula, had been followed by the death of the patient.

This I believe to be contrary to fact; but on the principle of *sum cuique tribuito*, I ask publicly, and request of you a public answer to the question—"What was the result of the case?"—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Lewisham, March 18, 1850.

C. WILSON STEEL.

* * The medical practitioner has been misinformed. The man who was the subject of the operation is alive and well, and he is particularly well satisfied with the useful limb which he possesses. Many ill-natured reports were circulated on the subject; but it may be truly stated that the operation was completely successful.—ED. L.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THE ASSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following is to me a new manœuvre of the non-fee-paying insurance offices, and as it may be so to some of your readers, I send you an account of it.

I last week received a form from the West of England Office, to fill up respecting the health, habits of life, &c., of a patient of mine, and with an intimation in writing from the agent that my fee would be paid me by the person to be insured.

I saw my patient the same day, and thought it my duty to tell him this was a charge he need not pay, and after informing him of the state of the question between the insurance offices and the medical profession, referred him to the Westminster and General Office, which office regularly pays a fee of one guinea with every form when filled up.

The consequence was, that an insurance was effected with this office; and the West of England, by their parsimony, lost this amount of business.

I this day met the agent of the West of England, and was very energetically informed by him that they would take care and make no reference to me in future. With this determination I told him I could not quarrel; but if they had my opinion, most certainly I should have my fee, and that I should always advise my patients that this was an expense they need not incur.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Bath, March 1850.

W. A. Cox.

BAROMETICAL CHANGES AND DISEASE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The observations made by your correspondent, Mr. Atkinson, on the connexion of barometric changes in the atmosphere with epidemic disease, would be highly interesting, if one could believe them to be trustworthy; but there are certain points upon which those of your readers who are interested in meteorological inquiries will naturally look for some further explanation. Thus, when your correspondent speaks of having discovered, "at the distance of a few yards," and "at the same elevation," a difference in the atmospheric pressure, it is reasonable to seek for some evidence that he has not been led into the ludicrous error of confounding the