

of any one to practise. I was actually told by one of these wise sages that hydrogen and nitrogen were *decomposed* to form ammonia! With two exceptions, the examiners are not all known to the profession, so little have they done to promote medical science; and of the "two," one is the editor of a trashy weekly medical journal; the other has written a grinding-book for students—a sort of *surgery made easy*—and according to one of his reviewers, has "ransacked" every author.

The Company is so antiquated and unaccommodating, that I am sure every student of medicine in London would rejoice to hear of its demolition. Most of the students look upon it as a gigantic nuisance; from their first entrance to the hospitals till they emerge with the redoubtable diploma, they are subjected to all kinds of annoyance. They can never register their attendance on practice and lectures until many days after the session has terminated, thus being kept in London an unnecessary length of time, when they might be recruiting their health in the country. The company professes to have lectures on botany delivered at Chelsea "for the especial benefit of the students," but the hour at which they are delivered is the most inconvenient that could be selected; consequently, few students attend. All the arrangements of the Company, with which students have anything to do, are of much the same inconvenient and annoying description, so that any Act which will annihilate the body will be a great boon to the profession.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

Nov. 1852.

J. H. SHORTHOUSE, M.D.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It must give great satisfaction to many surgeons to find that you are about to make a few remarks on the Amended Draught Bill on Medical Reform.

In the meantime, I hope some of the numerous readers of your valuable journal will offer their opinions upon the subject.

I think clause XXXV., which relates more especially to chemists and druggists, cannot be too rigid in prohibiting such gentlemen from practising medicine and surgery. I am myself a general practitioner, legally qualified, and do assure you that the druggists in all the large towns in the eastern counties, practise medicine and surgery to a great extent, with impunity. I have proof that they open abscesses and buboes; also bleed, cup, and draw teeth, as well as prescribe and supply medicines for nearly all kinds of infantile and adult diseases; such as catarrh, measles, hooping cough, scarlet fever, and croup. In many cases the patients go, or are taken, to the druggist's residence; but for my part I cannot see why such practice is not equally as liable to information and fines, as that of surgeons and others who have not obtained the Apothecaries' license. I really think, Sir, that it is to be regretted that the *Excise officers* have not the power of informing against, and effectually stopping, by fines, such illegal and ignorant practice. You must be well aware that the neighbouring qualified practitioners do not like to become common informers, however much they may feel annoyed and injured by these prescribing druggists, who in the end escape without interruption, and consequently assume the position and right of the legal apothecary.

I contend that the man who prescribes for a case of scarlatina, measles, or any other disease, dispenses and takes the money for the medicines, *practises medicine to all intents and purposes*, as much as the licensed apothecary does when the patient attends at his surgery.

I have often thought about such illegal practice, and have endeavoured to find a cause for it, but never could see any better plan than that of placing the whole thing before, or in the power of, the excise officers, who would, as a matter of duty, without fear, favour, or affection, lodge their information, and bring such usurping practitioners down to their proper standard—that of chemists and vendors of drugs, without giving any advice upon them whatever.

Another great evil has been in the roundabout way in which the Apothecaries' Society have acted, first, by requesting some practitioner to lodge the information against offenders, and then their tardy consideration and execution of it. You may depend upon it, Sir, unless the power of informing is given to the excise officers, the medical profession will always be inundated with illegal and unqualified practitioners, for very few regularly educated medical men would like to appear as informers, and run the risk of being stamped as such, in their own locality. Probably, in the very fashionable towns, the druggists do not prescribe so much, but it is a well-known fact that in all large manufacturing places they do it to a great extent; which evidently injures the junior surgeons, who, in beginning practice, expect to live by

careful attendance upon such patients as now generally go to the prescribing and dispensing druggists.

My experience convinces me that it is bad policy to let druggists dispense prescriptions at any time, for I have often known individuals get a prescription from a physician or surgeon, and make use of it upon all occasions, producing pyalism and other injurious symptoms, which would never occur if they consulted their surgeon-apothecary in the matter. Moreover, I have seen blisters applied when not required, and children dosed almost to death. I have no doubt, Sir, you are quite aware of the degrading position that the general practitioner has often been placed in, from various causes, and hope that your matured judgment will help, if possible, to raise his standing.

Such, Mr. Editor, is a moderate view of a complicated case, which must, more or less, affect every practitioner in the kingdom.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

Nov. 1852.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I fear you must place the Marine Life Office on your list of non-paying societies, as I have received no answer to the subjoined. I remain your obedient servant,

Chislehurst, Nov. 1852.

E. F. FUSSELL.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge your communication. I shall be glad to forward particulars respecting the life of W. E., on receiving the fee of one guinea, which I conclude you forgot to inclose, or you would not ask a stranger to gratuitously oblige your Directors.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

E. F. FUSSELL.

W. C. Morgan, Esq.,
Marine Life and Casualty Mutual Assurance
Society, 137, Leadenhall-street.

THE CASE OF BOURN VERSUS COX.

[LETTER FROM MR. COX.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—When you first attacked me, you brought forward as facts what were merely the allegation of the opposing counsel, much of which had been absolutely disproved on the trial.

Instead of acknowledging that you had been misled, which justice to me required of you, you now assert that the facts had gone the round of the newspapers uncontradicted, and were repeated at the meeting of the Branch of the Association which lately met at Bristol. I deny the correctness of your statement.

You now endeavour to prejudice the mind of the profession against me by asserting that I shrank from the trial by resigning. You ought to have stated what that trial was to be. You ought to have stated that it was not to be in open daylight, but one carried on in secrecy, where witnesses, whose interested feelings were opposed to me, were to be allowed to talk me down *unsworn*.

I have not shrunk from *fair public investigation*. It was only necessary for me to have paid into court the money claimed of me by the plaintiff, and the public would have heard nothing of the case *Bourn versus Cox*. But because I would not shrink from public investigation, I allowed the case to go to trial.

Again, it would have been easy for me to have resigned immediately I heard that it was likely the case would be brought before the Provincial Medical Association, and I heard this soon after the trial; but because I would not shrink from investigation I continued a member. Nay, I myself virtually mooted the question, by forwarding to each member a pamphlet containing an account of the case, and also by reading a paper on the scientific question.

When the subject was brought before the branch at a special meeting, I might again have avoided the public inquiry by taking advantage of a law of the Society, but I waived my right to do this, and courted investigation, so long as it was fair and public. This law would have given me two months at least, during which time I could have resigned; but that would have been shrinking from inquiry, and that I would not do. When it was proposed to refer the subject to the council, even those opposed to me declared it unnecessary, and claimed that the meeting could and should then decide.

Nobody at that meeting intimated that the council would take the course subsequently proposed to them; and when I was officially informed of the course contemplated, I determined that

I would not submit to it. I had not shrunk from public investigation—I had courted it; but I would not allow malevolence under the protection of secrecy to utter its falsehoods against me unchecked, by the fear of the danger which publicity involves.

I now tax you with being an advocate, whilst you claim to be an impartial judge; and in the attack you have allowed yourself to make on another medical journal, which it seems has defended me, you render it evident that even selfish motives may have prompted you to this attack on me.

You may talk loudly of defending the profession, but such conduct as yours really lowers it in the public estimation.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Bath, Nov. 30, 1852.

W. A. Cox.

* * The foregoing letter leaves all the *facts* of the case as they were. Mr. Cox cannot deny the verdict of the jury, and the sworn evidence of the plaintiff's witnesses is still uncontradicted.

—SUB.-ED. L.

Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The following gentlemen having undergone the necessary examinations for the diploma, were admitted Members of the College at the meeting of the Court of Examiners, on the 26th ult.:—

DIAMOND, JOHN ROSS, London.
FLUDER, CHARLES, Lymington, Hants.
HANBURY, RICHARD SAVILL, Mirfield, Yorkshire.
HAYMAN, PHILIP CHARLES, Axminster, Devon.
JOHNSON, DAVID, Peterborough, Northamptonshire.
MOORE, YORK JAMES, Mount-street, Grosvenor-square.
ROBERTS, ELIAS JONES, Bangor, Carnarvonshire.
SANGER, THOMAS FREDERICK, Alfriston, Sussex.
SHAW, EDMUND, Thatcham, Berks.

THE MIDWIFERY BOARD.—This Board, of which a notice appeared in *THE LANCET* a few weeks since, consisting of Mr. Luke, Senior Vice-President, (Chairman,) and Drs. Arthur Farre, Henry Oldham, and James Reid, met for the first time on Wednesday last, when the following gentlemen having undergone the necessary examinations, were admitted Licentiates in Midwifery of the Royal College of Surgeons:—

ARMSTRONG, JOHN, Manchester.
BORHAM, WILLIAM HENRY, Cambridge-terrace, Hyde-park.
COCKERILL, ROBERT WILLIAM, Symond's-inn.
CUPISS, FRANCIS PHILIP, Eltham.
EARLE, GEORGE, Beverley.
HALL, FRANCIS RUSSELL, Fulbourn.
MORRIS, GEORGE SELVYN, Sydenham-park.
SMITH, SAMUEL M. C. ANDERSON, Kilburn.
WILLING, GEORGE FREDERICK BRUTON, Hampstead.

We understand, from the number of names entered for this distinction, that there will be another examination a fortnight hence.

ROYAL WESTMINSTER OPHTHALMIC HOSPITAL.—A special meeting of governors was held Tuesday, November 23rd, for the purpose of electing a president in place of the late Duke of Wellington; and other important business. There were present the Duke of Richmond, Lord Dynevor, the Dean of Hereford, Colonel Wood, Mr. Guthrie; the vicar of St. Martin's, and other friends of the charity. The Chairman, Colonel Wood, paid a tribute to the Great Duke, and at once proceeded to the business of the meeting. On the motion of Lord Dynevor, seconded by the Rev. Henry Mackenzie, the Duke of Richmond was unanimously elected president of the hospital; and Mr. Mackenzie read a narrative of the history and position of the hospital, which we briefly reproduce. It appears the hospital was founded in 1816, by Mr. Guthrie, under the auspices of Lord Lynedoch, there being no institution in the west of London in which students of surgery, and particularly officers of the public service, could obtain instruction in diseases of the eye, and great numbers of pensioners of the army and navy applying to him for relief from ophthalmic diseases. The hospital received the support of George IV., and his royal brothers; and George IV. and William IV. personally promised that ground should be given by the crown to build a hospital upon, which promise was confirmed by four prime ministers; and a site was once offered in Dean-street, and subsequently in Great Windmill-street, neither of which was considered eligible. It was thought best to wait for the formation of the new streets at Charing-cross, and the present site was built upon; but now the Officer of Woods and Forests disco-

vered that although the crown had formerly the right to grant ground for such a purpose, this right had recently ceased, nor could the commissioners grant a lease for less than its full value. A nominal rent, therefore, of £120 a year was fixed, but never enforced. Four years since, Lord Besborough used his influence with the Lords of the Treasury, and in consequence of the public value of the hospital ordered that £50 of the rent should be paid by the Admiralty, and £50 by the War Office. By a series of evaded promises and official shufflings, every pledge of kings, prime ministers, and public officers, has been broken, and now the Lords of the Treasury demand £3060 purchase money, or £120 a year rent, for the site upon which the hospital stands. No doubt this public injustice will be visited upon the military and naval professions in the shape of ophthalmic epidemics, occurring under medical officers not practically conversant with eye disease. It is lamentable that discouragement should be given to the study of such an important branch of surgery. The expense of £120 a year ought to be as nothing compared with the value of such an institution open to the relief of the army and navy, and to the medical officers of the public service. The Rev. H. Mackenzie and the Dean of Hereford kindly volunteered to preach sermons on behalf of the charity; and a member of the corporation of London promised to bring its claims before the Common Council.

MUNIFICENT DONATIONS.—£363 have been presented anonymously by S. C. A. L., through Messrs. Masterman and Co., London, towards the extinction of the debt on the building fund of the Kent County Ophthalmic Hospital.—Miss Mary Hill, of Newcourt, near Exeter, has bequeathed £1000 to each of the following institutions:—The Deaf and Dumb Institution, the Blind Institution, the Exeter Dispensary, the Exeter Eye Infirmary; all free of legacy duty.

We perceive that M. BOURJEAUD, whose elastic apparatuses are so well known in this country, lately presented his new bandage and air-pad for hernia to the Academy of Medicine of Paris. This ingenious contrivance was described in this journal a little time back. (See *THE LANCET*, vol. i. 1852, p. 43.) The academy listened to the paper read by M. Bourjeaud with great attention, and has appointed a committee composed of Messrs. Hervez, Gerdy, and Huguier, to report upon the apparatus.

AN INDEFATIGABLE LIBRARIAN.—Mr. Panizzi, hearing some gentlemen make allusions to "the Book of Nature," goes rushing wildly about town, making inquiries who is the publisher, in order that he may serve him with a summons to the police-court for not having sent a copy of the Book of Nature to the British Museum.—*Punch*.

TESTIMONIAL TO DR. BUTLER LANE, OF EWELL.—It is always with pleasure that we record an instance of the public appreciation of professional services. An elegant silver ink-stand, with a suitable inscription, was last week presented to Dr. Butler Lane, of Ewell, Surrey, previous to his quitting the neighbourhood, he being obliged to relinquish practice by ill health.

ROYAL SEA-BATHING INFIRMARY, MARGATE.—**DISGRACEFUL SCENE.**—At the quarterly court of governors held last week at the London Tavern, the Rev. J. Hodgson in the chair, the report stated that measles had broken out among the children last season, and that the stability of the excellent institution was threatened by the dissensions and squabbles of the medical and other officers, and through the distribution of partisan and personal placards and handbills in and about the town of Margate. Mr. Waddington, one of the consulting surgeons, quarrelled with the house-surgeon, the latter with the superintendent and matron, and the dispenser and head nurse had their squabbles, so that the house was in a state of rebellion. The report further stated that a committee had been appointed to investigate the cause of those dissensions, and that they deemed the placards disgraceful, and recommended the dismissal of any officer subsequently found in any way connected with them. The report having been adopted, Mr. Waddington acknowledged that he was the author of some of the placards in vindication of his own character; and he was about charging some of the other medical officers with having issued anonymous placards, but was stopped by the meeting. After a very acrimonious discussion, Mr. Lingham moved, and Mr. Desborough seconded, a resolution, stating the danger to which the charity was exposed by such dissensions, and appointing a committee of inquiry to report thereon at the next court. Upon the nomination of the committee a very disgraceful scene ensued, during which the chairman was frequently insulted, and several offensive personalities were freely bandied about. The stormy proceedings were terminated by a vote of thanks to the chairman, after which the court broke up.