

members, and, from interested motives, regale them with bread-and-cheese and beer, I am sorry to say that I think he sadly forgets the respect due to himself and to his honourable profession.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
Lincoln, Jan. 16th, 1871. WILLIAM O'NEILL, M.D.

### IMPROVED BLOW-PIPE.

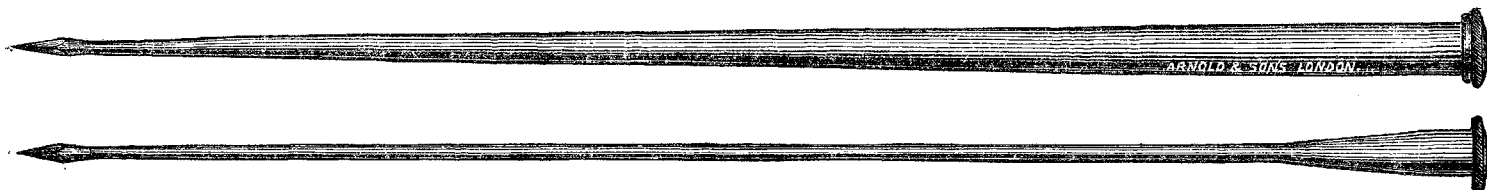
To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to forward you a specimen of an improved blow-pipe, which possesses many advantages over the ordinary dissection one. It consists of a blow-pipe with the addition of a steel stilette, at the end of which is a trocar point. The blow-pipe now in use is continually getting blocked up, in consequence of the necessity of

having to thrust it through animal tissues, and it thus becomes for the time useless to the student. It is obvious that the specimen I forward you overcomes this difficulty. For instance, in inflating the abdomen, the blow-pipe, by means of the trocar-point, which projects beyond the end of the blow-pipe, may be thrust through the umbilicus, and the stilette having been withdrawn, there will be found no difficulty in blowing in the air; and its egress is easily prevented by securing the hole, which is necessarily very small. The blow-pipe may also be used as a trocar and canula, in the many small operations in which that instrument is used.

The instrument was made for me by Messrs. Arnold and Sons, of 35 and 36, West Smithfield.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
H. A. ALFORD NICHOLLS.  
St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Jan. 4th, 1871.



The upper illustration shows the blowpipe and stilette ready for use. The lower illustration represents the stilette, with trocar point, which fits into the blow-pipe.

### Obituary.

#### SIR JOHN FIFE, KNT., F.R.C.S.

OUT of London there were few surgeons who enjoyed a wider reputation than Sir John Fife, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who died on Monday, the 16th inst., at his residence in Reedsmouth, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. Sir John was not only a brilliant surgeon, but one of the leading public characters of the North of England. He was instrumental in procuring the Municipal Reform Act of 1835, and was elected to the council at the first election under that Act. He was made an alderman in 1835, and continued one until he saw fit to resign the office in 1862. During this long period, and in the eventful years immediately preceding, he took an active part in all local and general politics. He was a leader, if not the leader, of the Liberals in that part of England at the time of the passing of Lord Grey's Reform Bill, and gained great influence by his share in the agitation by which that measure was passed into law. Sir John Fife was Mayor of Newcastle on two occasions. The first was in the years 1838-9. It was in 1839 that the great Chartist riots occurred, and it was for his personal bravery and decision in dealing with the rioters—in which duty, by the way, he was assisted by Dr. Headlam, then the leading physician of Newcastle,—that her Majesty conferred on him the order of knighthood. It would have been a pity if Sir John had not been knighted, for, in truth, he was a knight by nature. He was neat and quiet in person, very courteous and gallant in manners, active in the discharge of duty—ready for anything, from speaking at a public meeting to dispersing chartists or operating for stone, and doing all in an elegant and knightly style. He was not only a Knight of the Order of Knights Bachelors, but also a Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. He was a Whig in politics, a devoted member of the Church of England, and up to a very recent period the most conspicuous public man in Newcastle-on-Tyne, as well as its leading surgeon, and, until a very few years ago, did active work punctually as senior surgeon of the infirmary.

As a surgeon Sir John will long be remembered for a certain dash and boldness of operation, and for his imperturbable self-confidence under emergencies. His name was a sort of charm in all surgical cases in Newcastle and its neighbourhood. He was a successful lithotomist, and had a special reputation for skill in ophthalmic cases. He did not contribute materially to surgical literature.

It is often discussed whether a medical man can be distinguished both in his profession and in public life. Some men can accomplish this double reputation; and there are few more creditable instances than Sir John Fife, the

late Dr. Headlam of Newcastle, and the late Dr. Brown of Sunderland. Sir John's energy was rare, and doubtless based on an exceptionally good constitution, which only gave way about a year or two ago, under suffering occasioned by a large stone in the bladder, for which he was operated on by Sir William Fergusson. Our Newcastle correspondent at the time gave some account of this operation. It is remarkable that Sir John should have needed the operation which he had so often brilliantly performed. Sir John suffered severely at the time, and after, but had recovered so far as to move about, and enjoy comparative health, until Sunday last, when he was seized with paralysis, of which he died on Monday. He was the eldest son of the late William Fife, surgeon, of Newcastle.

#### DR. THOMAS MAYO, F.R.S.

ONE of the last of the scholarly physicians of the old school has just been lost to the profession in Dr. Thomas Mayo, who died on the 13th inst. at Corsham, in Wilts. Descended from a highly respectable family which has contributed more than one distinguished name to the practice of medicine, Dr. Mayo was born in London in 1790; received his first education at Westminster School, and thereafter at Oxford, where he became a Fellow of Oriel College, and graduated as Doctor of Medicine in 1818. In 1819 he was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, of which he continued to be one of the most distinguished ornaments till 1857, when he was elected President in room of Dr. Paris, and held the post till 1862, when he was succeeded by Sir Thomas Watson. He was for many years physician to the Marylebone Infirmary, and carried on a consulting practice at once extensive and select. He was an indefatigable contributor to the literature of the profession, particularly in that shadow-land of medical inquiry—the relations of mind and brain. His best known works are entitled "Elements of the Pathology of the Mind," which was published in 1838, "Clinical Facts and Reflections" (1847), "Outlines of Medical Proof Revised" (1850), and a treatise on "Medical Testimony and Evidence in Cases of Lunacy" (1854).

#### MR. ROBERT SPEEDY.

WE regret to record the death of Mr. Robert Speedy, surgeon of the 46th Regt., at Winchester, on the 3rd inst., after a short illness. He was the eldest son of the late Dr. Speedy, of Dublin. Having entered the army in 1853, he served in the 1st West India Regt.; then on the staff at the Cape of Good Hope. He afterwards joined the 45th Regt., which he accompanied to India; and latterly the 44th Regt.