

Allow me, in conclusion, to express my regret that THE LANCET, which is generally abreast of its contemporaries in furthering objects which tend to advance the best interests of the industrious poor, should view with discouragement these attempts to remodel the much abused system of hospital relief, which otherwise have met with very general approval, and, curiously enough, not least by those whom they more immediately concern.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

Guy's Hospital, Feb. 12th, 1884.

J. C. STEELE, M.D.

\* \* Notwithstanding Dr. Steele's sneer at our virtuous indignation, we still feel justified in maintaining that our endowed hospitals were meant for the gratuitous relief of the poor; that there are poor enough to make such gratuitous relief a prudent and a kind thing; that the offer of all the drugs in Guy's Hospital to out-patients on the condition of paying threepence is more demoralising to the poor and injurious to the profession than the gratuitous relief of fit cases would be. To a working man the problem of living in London is still a hard one. Witness all the bitter cries that we hear from day to day and in every place, from Parliament to the Boards of Guardians. The feeling between the rich and the poor is not so satisfactory that it can dispense with the sweetening influences which Christianity provides in hospitals and in nursing associations. Guy never contemplated that his representatives should part with their own discretion as to the fit recipients of his bounty. And we repeat that if the Charity Organisation Society is to be the almoner of Guy's charity, it should direct its inquiry upon the patients who glibly pay their threepence, and not upon those who do not feel able to comply with the undignified exaction. Dr. Steele takes much credit to Guy's Hospital for its medical educational work. We cheerfully admit that it has been good; but we do not see the bearing of this in favour of his argument. The poor patients have been willing factors in the problem of medical education, and are the more entitled to all that medicine can do for them. Moreover, the hospital has been well paid by its students for their educational privileges. Dr. Steele has not been able to hear any adverse criticism of the new departure at Guy's from medical men of the neighbourhood. We direct his attention to the following letter.—ED. L.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—The thanks of the profession are due to you for your excellent article on the above subject. Now that the portals of Guy's Hospitals are open for patients on payment of £1 per week for bed, board, firing, service, and medical and surgical attendance, and that they can have the opinion and treatment of those eminent members of the profession who constitute the staff of Guy's Hospital, together with the necessary medicines, for the modest charge of threepence per week as out-patients, it would be most interesting to know what is to become of the more humble members of our profession who have not yet attained to such a pinnacle of eminence as to command similar fees?

Not many days ago I heard a medical man in extensive practice propose opening a large dispensary in South London with the following sign-board:—"On the Guy's Hospital principle, medical attendance and medicine, threepence per week!" And so far as out-patients are concerned he clearly saw his way to compete with Guy's Hospital. His chief difficulty, however, lay in his inability to provide the same accommodation for in-patients. "But then, you see," he said, "I could do that if I only had the money which Guy left for the poor and needy." It is a fact patent to all who are practising on the south side of the Thames that the poor do not now regard Guy's Hospital as a charitable institution, for, say they, "Do we not now have to pay for our medicines?" Others go further, and say: "It is much nicer to pay, as you are not beholden in any way." It would be interesting to know who are the patients who are thus contributing to the exchequer of the hospital which is no longer Guy's. Innumerable complaints constantly reach my ears, not from the profession, be it known, but from the public,

of the keen competition now going on in South London, and of the disgraceful manner in which circulars and cards are being left at the houses of respectable members of society, with offers, "on the Guy's principle," of attending them at threepence per week, thus degrading and debasing our noble profession to a condition more deplorable than the meanest trade under the sun. The staff of Guy's Hospital have, by tacitly giving their sanction to this commercial scheme, surely no intention of entering into competition with their former pupils for the sake of mere reputation by such questionable means.

In conclusion, I may add that I write wholly and solely in defence of that profession to which I have the honour to belong, as I am not in any way affected pecuniarily by the disgraceful competition which is now engendered by the recent action of what once was one of our noblest charitable institutions. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Kennington-park, S.E., Feb. 13th, 1884.

GEORGE FOWLER.

## FUNERAL OF THE LATE LORD HERTFORD.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—We are very much surprised you did not take the trouble to ascertain the correctness of the newspaper report of the funeral of the late Lord Hertford before making such remarks as you did in last week's LANCET. The position we took in it was that which professional men, when attending funerals in their professional capacity, most usually, if not invariably, occupy—viz., in front of the hearse—this custom was adhered to in the present case. As to the statement that we walked with the servants, there is no truth in it whatever. The only notice we care to take of your other remarks is to say that they betray an equal ignorance of facts. We must request that this letter may receive insertion in your next issue. We remain, Sir, yours truly,

T. L. SMITH.

C. E. HOBBS.

T. H. SMITH.

G. H. FOSBROKE, Junior.

Alcester, Feb. 14th, 1884.

\* \* As we stated last week, our attention was called to the report in *The Times* newspaper. Nothing turned on its accuracy. It was simply the impression produced and embodied in the report, and commented upon by our correspondent as a member of the profession, which formed the subject of our remarks. If the gentlemen who sign this letter will take the trouble to read the annotation again they will see the matter in this light. It was no part of our business, and altogether beside our immediate purpose, to inquire if the report was true.—ED. L.

## THE LIVERPOOL CHAIR OF MEDICINE.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—From the remarks of your Liverpool correspondent in last week's journal with regard to my resignation of the Chair of Medicine here, it might be inferred that I had filled that chair during the time that the School of Medicine has been connected with the New University College, but not previously. The fact, however, is that I have held the chair since 1872, long before the College was founded. Your correspondent is slightly in error with reference to former appointments held by me. When first connected with the School I lectured on anatomy and physiology, subsequently on physiology, and lastly on medicine.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Liverpool, Feb. 18th, 1884.

A. T. H. WATERS.

## ONE HUNDRED CONSECUTIVE CASES OF SMALL-POX.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—At present Sunderland is under a pretty sharp epidemic of small-pox. The attack must be said to be peculiar in some respects—first, because of the mildness of the malady, many of the patients walking about until they come under medical observation, when this is forbidden, and they are isolated as far as possible. The cases present other peculiarities besides being of a mild type. There is also the absence of vomiting in a good many