

of those offices that do allow a just fee. I was applied to a short time since, by the Secretary of the Star Life Office, respecting the health of Mr L—, a patient and friend of mine, who had made a proposal for insuring his life in that office. I replied to the secretary, that conceiving the direct benefit of any information I could afford would be more to the interest of the office than the assuring, I must beg to decline answering any queries, unless the office transmitted with their letter of queries the regular professional fee. By return of post I had a polite note, enclosing the fee. The queries were answered, the proposal was accepted, and all parties were satisfied.

I am, Sir, your very humble servant,
Bovey-Tracy, Devon, Feb. 5, 1849. N. J. HAYDON.

THE Clerical, Medical, and General Life Assurance Society's circular, after setting forth the usual questions, contains the following notification:—

“N.B.—In every proposal that is made to the Office, it is required that the proposer do furnish the directors, at his own expense, with evidence of the life proposed being eligible for assurance. This notification becomes necessary, since several medical practitioners in the country have declined answering the queries sent to them by the Office until a fee has been paid to them; and in order to prevent delay and disappointment to the proposer, it is recommended that he do in the first instance arrange this matter of charge with the medical referee.”

TEST FOR THE PURITY OF COD-LIVER OIL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The genuineness of oil expressed from the fresh liver of the cod fish may be best ascertained by dropping a few minims of strong sulphuric acid upon an equivalent quantity of the oil. The result will be a cloudy appearance, of a beautiful violet or iodine colour, partly blue, yet not distinctly defined. Specimens of doubtful purity, on application of the same test, will merely be turned reddish-brown, or to a somewhat faded black. Of course, this much depends upon the strength of the acid.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
OLIVER YORKE.

ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL.—ALLEGED NEGLECT OF THE DEMONSTRATORS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—A statement having been inserted in your periodical of last week, relative to the management of the dissecting-room at the St. George's Hospital School, a meeting of the students at that school was convened on Tuesday last, and it was agreed finally, that a committee should be formed, for the purpose of considering the best method of answering that statement, and conveying the sense of that meeting relating thereto. The committee therefore beg the Editor of THE LANCET to insert the following resolutions. It was resolved—

“1. That the charge contained in that statement, though having some slight foundation, is a most gross exaggeration of the facts, and tending to convey a wrong impression to the public; any occasional irregularity in attendance having been fully explained by ill-health, and, in one instance, by a dissection wound.

2. That the students do hereby testify their strong disapprobation of the means pursued by the writer of the above statement in expressing his grievance, for they feel most certain, that had Mr. Hewitt and the authorities been apprized of any sense of dissatisfaction, the cause for it would immediately have been removed.

3. On the contrary, it was resolved that they should embrace this opportunity of bearing testimony to the universal kind courtesy and unremitting attention at all times experienced by the students at the hands of Mr. Hewitt and his colleagues.

Signed by the committee—

O. S. EVANS. GEORGE KING.
HARRY FOLKARD. JOHN W. OYLE.
THOMAS K. HORNIDGE. WILLIAM F. WRATISLAW.
RICHARD D. KIDD.

St. George's Hospital, Feb. 7, 1849.

MR. GAY AND HIS REVIEWER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the late number of the *Medico-Chirurgical Review* there is an article on my work on “Femoral Rupture,” which contains, according to my opinion, and that of my friends, an imputation on my character. Soon after its appearance, I wrote to

the publishers, and subsequently to the editor of the journal, requesting the name of the author of the article, that I might be in a position to demand an explanation of what was personally offensive. As both publishers and editor have declined acceding to my request, may I beg, through the medium of your journal, to invite the author to come forward, and either explain or defend the alleged affront. Whatever the publishers and editor may think of it, I think I am only asking a simple act of justice at the hands of the author; and I now leave to him the choice, either of acting in accordance with the principles of courtesy and honour, or of being branded as an anonymous and dastardly slanderer.

But, Sir, allow me to call your attention to the course which the editor of this rickety journal has thought proper to pursue on this occasion. On the 5th of January, the editor wrote a letter to Mr. Highley, in reference to my request, first made to him, as one of the publishers, stating that “the author [of the review] is a gentleman of large hospital experience; and that the editor, in his anxiety to avoid injustice to Mr. Gay, sent the article, with Mr. Gay's volume, to a London hospital surgeon distinguished for his acquaintance with the subject, (hernia,) requesting his opinion thereon,—which was to the effect, that the review, though severe, was perfectly just.” A few days after this, the editor, in a letter to myself, stated that “the author of the review is a surgeon in the public service.” These descriptions of the author, like so many aliases, are not incompatible; still they are curiously vague, and leave me as much in the dark as if they had been altogether withheld. The same remark, however, does not apply to the allusion to the gentleman to whom the editor sought to transfer the odium, as well as the onus, of the review. The expressions, “A London hospital surgeon distinguished for his acquaintance with the subject, (hernia,)” could not be misunderstood.

After much anxiety, I referred the paragraph to the gentleman to whom the description applies, and received from him a direct disavowal of having had anything whatever to do with the article; and I beg publicly to offer to that gentleman my apologies for having, even by a thought, imputed to him an act which he so indignantly disowned, and of which no member of the profession would deem him to be capable.

Now, Sir, in my concluding letter to the editor, I gave him to understand that I should feel myself at liberty to publish our correspondence; and strange to say, the editor's memory (which otherwise might have been “as the dull weed”) quickened, and he remembered that the expression, “A London hospital surgeon &c.,” was “ambiguous;” and on the 14th of January (nine days after the expression was made use of) he wrote to say, that when he spoke of “a London hospital surgeon,” he meant “a surgeon to a London hospital—not a surgeon to the London Hospital.”

Now, I would ask any unprejudiced mind—Is not the expression and its purport too plain to admit of their being explained away by any such jesuitical sophistry? Is not the editor connected with the London Hospital?* and could he make use of such terms without seeing the interpretation which could not but be placed upon them? Did he not mean what he wrote?

But, Sir, I aver, and will prove, that the article was written by a person comparatively as ignorant of the subject as the editor appears to be of the first principles of honour and justice; and therefore that the statement of its having been declared to be “perfectly just” by “a London hospital surgeon,” or, if the editor prefers it, by “a surgeon to a London hospital distinguished for his acquaintance with the subject,” is, on the face of it, a falsehood.

I will select, almost at random, a few passages from the criticism. My critic says, when speaking of the operation for femoral rupture, “The plain, common-sense view of the matter, however, has quite escaped Mr. Gay, and not him alone. What are the parts to be avoided when dividing the stricture of a femoral hernia? Simply the femoral vein,” &c. *The femoral vein!* Again, if the precaution of blunting the knife just before dividing the stricture, by drawing the edge over the back of the forceps, “be adopted, it is of little consequence in what precise direction the knife be carried, except towards the vein,” &c. My reviewer has evidently overlooked the windpipe; but that is a trifle to him. Again: “We hear nothing of the seat of stricture in Mr. Gay's famous dissections, [a falsehood,] nor does he seem to be at all aware of the fact, that whether the ligaments of Hey, Gimbernat, or Poupert (!) be the seat of stricture, a division of the deep crescentic portion of the fascia lata, beneath which the saphenous vein passes, liberates it.” [The italics are mine.] Truly, my know-

* Am I not right in this conjecture? and is not the editor of this Quarterly a well-known book compiler, and popular lecturer? Has not his name figured amongst a list of lecturers, at Sussex Hall, Leadenhall-street, with the following appendage—“Single tickets, to Non-Subscribers, 6d. each.”

ledge never had such pretensions as this; my dissections never discovered the saphenous vein passing beneath "the deep crescentic portion of the fascia lata," nor having anything to do with any of the seats of stricture in cases of femoral rupture.

This is a fair specimen of the article; and now I ask, could, or did, any man, "distinguished for his acquaintance with this subject," give his authority to the publication of such glaring trash, and say that it was "perfectly just"? I challenge the editor to the proof of his assertion. And let me further inquire—what is the probable term of this already dirt-bespattered relic* of two respectable journals, when the editor sacrifices truth and justice in order either to court popularity, or to serve the purposes of a personal animosity or of a disreputable cliquism?

As the reviewer has sought by such means to disparage the efforts which I had been for so long time honestly engaged in, with the view of improving the surgery of femoral hernia, will you do me the favour to allow the insertion of the following letters—one from Mr. Key, prior to the publication of my work, but after I had fully explained to him its object; the other, spontaneously, from Mr. Lawrence: and allow me to thank those gentlemen for the liberality which induced them, for my vindication against the insinuations of my reviewer, to permit me to publish letters which, but for the circumstances I have just detailed, would never have been made public.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
JOHN GAY.

(Extract from Mr. Key's Letter.)

St. Helen's-place, Feb. 30, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,—My memoir on the operation for strangulated hernia without opening the sac, was for the purpose of showing the feasibility of an operation that had lain dormant for a century, and of showing the futility of the objections that were urged against it. . . . At the time of writing it, I had only two or three cases, but enough to demonstrate the principles of the operation. When you next operate will you feel whether the margin of the stricture can be distinguished upwards as well as inwards, so as to avoid the division of Gimbernat's ligament (both layers) which is not necessary for the liberation of the bowel. If the mode of reaching the stricture which you practise admits of the division upwards, it will be of great service, &c.

Yours very obediently,
(Signed,) C. ASTON KEY.

John Gay, Esq.

Whitehall-place, Nov. 8, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,—Accept my best thanks for the present of your book, which does you great credit, clearly showing that you have investigated all parts of the subject, both as regards the normal structure and the changes induced by disease, with industry and success. Your proposed operation rests on rational grounds, and wants only what there can be little doubt of its receiving—the sanction of experience.

If you could have simplified and shortened the anatomical description, I think that you would have added to the utility and popularity of your work. As it stands at present, this is intelligible only to those thoroughly conversant with the anatomy; I fear that to others it will be found puzzling and perplexing.

I remain, my dear Sir, yours very faithfully,

To J. Gay, Esq. (Signed,) W. LAWRENCE.

REMARKS ON A RECENT COMMUNICATION FROM MR. GREAM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—With feelings of profound regret I concluded the perusal of an article published in your journal lately, from the pen of Mr. Gream. I consider that as surgeon to Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital, that gentleman stands connected with his less prominent medical brethren by important obligations, which he totally lost sight of when he wrote the article in question.

Mr. Gream is to some extent known by his virulent opposition to the introduction of the speculum and chloroform into the practice of uterine affections and obstetrics. Until lately he has never been accused of inconsistency; if his hostility was not rational, it at least appeared to arise from delicacy. The speculum, says Mr. Gream, is an "indecent" instrument; it is an "un-English" instrument; the practice of using it is "un-English." His fastidiousness, moreover, concerning the dealings between the man-midwife and the softer sex has been shown on every possible occasion in a most marked degree. He quarrels with chloroform principally because certain ladies have given utterance

* See the abject and humiliating series of apologies to Mr. Neil, of Liverpool, in the last number of this Review.

to expressions of very doubtful propriety when under its influence. There are many inclined to give these ladies credit for knowing a trifle more than they pretended to know before they were submitted to the process of inhalation; but Mr. Gream disposes of the nice metaphysical question involved in the circumstance, by stamping such and similar ideas corresponding to the expressions which excited in him so strong a feeling of disgust as original, a nova febris, post ignem aetheria domo subductum. Conceive then if you can, Mr. Editor, my astonishment at finding Mr. Gream recommending a young victim of the heartless speculations of a worthless mother, who induced her to marry a man old enough to be her grandfather, to grease her vagina, and offer the reverse of opposition to his flaccid importunities. "I suggested (says the delicate-minded writer) that she should sit over the steam of hot water, that she should use an unctuous application externally to herself, and offer the contrary to resistance," &c. . . . "The patient's health was soon restored, promising a fine child at birth, now at hand." A fine child propagated by such a father! By another case, told with minute attention to circumstance, we are informed that a gentleman, who never entertained a strong affection for his wife, nor she for him, refrained from exercising his physique to overcome difficulties, which, although in all probability rather above the average, would have yielded in the usual way had this "physique" been applied in a becoming manner. The marital oblations took place *hors de chez elle*, or, in Mr. Gream's words, "his emissions occurred externally." A metallic bougie, two inches in diameter, was at last introduced by Mr. Gream, who is "confidently looking forward to a result similar to that which followed his treatment in the former case."

When there exists so little scope for practical deduction, it is not surprising that Mr. Gream's commentaries on the "medical questions" involved in his cases are on a par with the cases themselves. *E. g.*,

"The presence of the hymen, in a medico-legal point of view, offers a strong evidence in favour of legitimacy, if the parentage of the child is doubted!"

"When the husband is advanced in years, and is married to a young wife, pregnancy may be deferred, owing to the absence of the physical process," &c.

To allude more especially to the indelicacies in Mr. Gream's communication, is to copy it entirely. Had Mr. Gream shown himself a less violent advocate in support of that decency which never before was so outraged as by the publication of this one of his "selections," they would, in all probability, have found their way to their proper place in our literature with the éclat befitting their real worth.

Mr. Gream evidently misunderstands the medical mind of the present day. It is neither so dull nor so gross as to require what he may wish to say about the consequences of physical impotency, set forth with every minute detail, and in a style of language too unblushingly plain to be tolerated by the least punctilious. Is it his desire to enlist our services in helping to consummate that odious moral crime of uniting a young blooming girl to an impotent old man?—a crime as injurious against society as it is inimical to the welfare of the rising generation. Whatever be his motives, I beg leave to enter my remonstrance against your occupying your pages by another selection from that note-book which has already yielded up a chosen portion of its contents in the shape of a most discreditable communication.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
February, 1849. A LONDON GRADUATE.

THE LONDON AND PROVINCIAL MEDICAL DIRECTORY, AND THE HOMŒOPATHISTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Amongst the improvements in the *London and Provincial Medical Directory* for the present year which are spoken of in terms of general approbation in the last number of THE LANCET, I nevertheless do not observe any mention of an alteration of what appears to me to be the chief objection to the publication—I allude to the admission by the side of the regular practitioner of the names of those members of the profession who, from whatever motives, disseminate and practise the homœopathic heresy.

Whilst making every indulgent allowance, as regards errors of omission, for the difficulties which the compilers of the *Directory* may have had to encounter, there appears, at least so far as I can discern, no valid plea for the insertion of names of those notoriously engaged in a pursuit which is condemned and repudiated by nearly the whole profession; nor can I readily acquiesce with the publishers in regarding a work in which the eye passes at once from the respected name of "Partridge, Richard, Surgeon to King's College Hospital, Professor of Anatomy, F.R.S." &c., to that of "Partridge, Sam. Thomas, M.D. Marischal College, Aber-