

9. Quite easy, no hæmorrhage; removed the tent, and ordered an aperient mixture.

10. The bowels have been freely evacuated; the first stool was mixed with blood, the rest quite natural. From this time the man went on well; he got up on the fifth day after the operation; the bowels were kept open by taking a dose of the aperient occasionally, and on the thirteenth day he resumed his work with, to use his own expression, "comfort and pleasure." The case shows the necessity of attending to hæmorrhage in the removal of hæmorrhoidal excrescences.

Worksop, May 10, 1829.

HYDROCEPHALUS CURED BY PUNCTURE.

Communicated by HENRY GREAIWOOD, Esq., M.R.C.S.

HENRY COWD, son of a cabinet-maker, was observed, soon after birth, to have an unusually large head; the circumstance excited little notice, until it began to increase, and had acquired a great magnitude. Symptoms of pressure on the brain then appeared, the child becoming drowsy, and losing the use of its limbs. At the age of fifteen months, he fell and struck his head against the floor; on taking him up, a short thick nail was observed sticking in the cap, which was wet and bloody. A surgeon was sent for, who, on his arrival, extracted the nail, (which he said had pierced the dura mater at the upper third of the lambdoidal suture on the left side,) and introduced a probe, on the removal of which, a jet of water issued from the puncture. A poultice was applied, and fluid continued to ooze from the opening for four days, amounting in quantity, as the parents suppose, to full three pints. At the end of that time the wound healed, without the occurrence of any bad symptom; the child regained the use of its limbs and rapidly recovered. He is now four years and a half old, and as strong and healthy as any boy of his age in the village.

Budleigh Salterton, Devon,

April 29th, 1829.

SINGULAR PASSAGE OF A FOREIGN BODY.

By GEORGE BOTTOMLEY, Esq., M.R.C.S.

JAMES TODD, aged seven years, swallowed a piece of wild rye, Aug. 30, 1812. On the 6th of September, he complained of severe pain about two inches from the navel, on the right side, which was attended with a considerable degree of fever. The pain continued violent till the 13th, when it moved to his back, about three inches below the scapula, an inch and a half

from the spine; his bowels were open, and his motions proper. At first there was neither swelling nor discoloration of the skin. On the 15th the part began to enlarge, I applied a plaster, with empl. galb. comp. On the 22d, the pain being more severe, the swelling increased, and considerably inflamed around the edge of the plaster, which I then removed; and, upon examination, found an evident fluctuation. Poultices were applied to the tumour. On the evening of the 25th, a small dark point projected from the prominent part of the tumour; to which, applying a pair of forceps, I drew forth a piece of wild rye, which the child had swallowed near four weeks before, and which had not undergone the least alteration; after its removal there followed, in a full stream, about a pint of pus; the boy slept well that night; the next day he came down stairs, and, in the course of a few days more, was completely recovered, and has remained perfectly well ever since.

Croydon, May, 1829.

ANATOMY BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having perused the Bill which is now in progress through the Honourable House, for the better regulation of Schools of Anatomy, the abolition of the resurrectionist, and the more plentiful supply of subjects for the purposes of dissection, I am induced, from the tendency of some of its requisitions, to make a few remarks upon its provisions before it pass, and become "part and parcel of the law" of these realms.

The Bill provides that the "first disinterment of bodies shall bring upon the offender an imprisonment of six months, and for the second offence, two years." Whether this will be sufficient to meet the exigences of the case, is very questionable; for my own part I think not, as the men who are engaged in this traffic are of reckless character, and heed not imprisonment, however long it may be; and, as to the fine of 50*l.*, which this Bill imposes for *removing a body* without license, it cannot be imagined that they will regard it, for where there is nothing to lose, nothing can be lost. "Seven Commissioners are to be annually appointed, the majority of whom is not to consist of professional men." This, from the acquaintance we have with medical legislation, and from the character of the by-laws enacted from time to time by medical and surgical bodies corporate, we shall have no cause to regret; I think it would

be an improvement, were medical men *entirely excluded* from the commission; for, although they do not constitute the majority, they may obtain an *undue influence* over their non-professional brethren, who may, from a belief of their better knowledge on some points, be inclined to defer to their opinions, to the prejudice of obnoxious applicants for licenses to keep schools of anatomy. "The Commissioners are empowered to license schools of anatomy, and to make rules for their regulation." The College of Surgeons, it will be recollected, a few days ago, caused a petition to be presented against the licensing system, which the Home Secretary supported. The expediency of this system is, at best, questionable; at any rate, if it really be considered indispensable to the measure, I think the power of granting licenses had much better be vested in the commission than in the College. Though I do not wish to attribute sinister motives to any who deserve them not, yet such is the tendency of individuals or bodies of men, that if called upon to legislate upon affairs touching their private interests, the public good is generally sacrificed; I suspect, therefore, that the motives of the College in petitioning against the licensing system, are not perfectly pure. Few persons, if any, act without motives; may we not, therefore, inquire *what are the motives of the College?* Is it not that by thus vesting the power of granting licences in the commission, it is deprived of the power of refusing certificates of anatomical lectures by whomsoever they are delivered, so that they are but licensed according to the provisions of the Act? Is it not that any by-law enacted by the Council, disqualifying persons from teaching anatomy, is nullified by this Bill, should it pass into a law? And, with respect to medical men in the commission, have we not to fear that College influence will cause such to be elected into the minority, who will exert their power to withhold licenses from those applicants who may be offensive to the Council? May we not inquire, are not these then the motives?

Eight weeks' notice, previous to a quarterly meeting, is to be given before a license can be obtained; and the license, when obtained, is to continue in force only thirteen calendar months, and 5*l.* is to be paid on receiving it. Visitors, or inspectors of schools, may be appointed by the Home Secretary; a non-compliance with the injunctions of the Commissioners, is attended with a fine of 5*l.*; and bodies bequeathed for dissection may legally be delivered up for the purpose, by the administrators or executors of the deceased.

Much has been said as to the necessity of

subduing popular prejudice, before any thing *effectual* can be enforced to afford anatomical facilities; and very various have been the expedients proposed, to accomplish this certainly desirable object. By some it has been thought that dissection as a punishment for crime should be abolished, by others that the practice of professional men bequeathing their mortalities would, by its example, have a tendency to overcome it; but the framers of this Bill, it appears to me, have thought otherwise, as they require that bodies be decently buried after dissection, under a penalty of 50*l.* for its omission. This, I presume, is a clause to propitiate vulgar prejudices, and one certainly which cannot but exceedingly inconvenience the anatomical lecturer. I see no reason why his convenience should be sacrificed to superstitious feeling; if this feeling must be satisfied, and this is determined to be the only mode of doing so, it ought, I think, to be enacted, "That persons should be appointed by the Commissioners, whose office should be, on the application of the heads of schools, to convey from their several dissecting rooms the remains of such as have been dissected, to some public ground duly consecrated, (to meet prejudice,) where they should be deposited, according to the forms and ceremonies ordinarily adopted on similar occasions." These persons should be in the pay of the Commission, which would relieve the lecturers of much expense, and they would, by the arrangement, be spared much unnecessary trouble.

The Bill further provides, as a means of supply, "That all persons dying in prisons, hospitals or workhouses, if not claimed within 72 hours, are to be given up to licensed teachers." Now two questions arise out of this provision: *first*, will the supply be adequate to the demand; and, *secondly*, will such supply be equally and *fairly* distributed among the licensed teachers, whether public or private? In answer to the first, I think it questionable, because the proportion which those bear who die in these places, is small, compared with those who, during their life-time escape the prison, never enter an hospital, and despise the workhouse; I think, therefore, it would be an amendment were it enacted, "That all persons dying not claimed within 72 hours, shall be given up to the officer of the district, and by him forwarded immediately to the metropolitan establishment; from thence to be distributed to the various applicants for subjects *in the order of their application.*" It has been objected, that the unoffending poor are made the scapegoats for the rich; this objection, I conceive, would, were my amendment adopted, be removed, for the phrase "*all persons dying,*" includes all

individuals of whatever rank in society. In order, too, that such persons may be given up to the authorities, it should be provided, "That whenever an individual dies unclaimed, notice should be given immediately to the officer of the district, under a penalty of 20*l.* for omitting to do the same." In reply to the second question I should say, that unless all bodies are conveyed to some public receptacle, and from thence distributed, the distribution would not be equally made. For instance, all persons dying unclaimed in our large hospitals, would be conveyed to the dissecting-rooms attached to them; the consequence of which would be, that there would be a glut in one place, and a famine in another; a condition, I presume, never contemplated by those interested in the measure.

The penalties to which teachers of anatomy are liable are, for keeping an unlicensed school, 100*l.*; for neglecting to register certificates, 50*l.*; and for omitting to bury the remains of subjects, 50*l.* Pupils are liable to a fine of 50*l.*, for dissecting at unlicensed places. Persons feeling aggrieved, must appeal to the quarter sessions within four months. The act commences on the 1st of July, and does not extend to Ireland.

Such are the provisions of this Bill, which will shortly pass into a law, and which are most interesting to the anatomist, and consequently to the whole body of the profession. The student has long groaned under the weight of disabilities imposed on him by one cause and another, and has had to encounter grievous obstacles which have incessantly opposed him; it is refreshing, therefore, to his wearied and anxious mind, to see but the prospect of relief, however imperfect, and come from whence it may. Though this bill is exceptionable in some of its provisions, still it is better than the existing state of things. What is worth doing at all, however, is worth doing well, and I see no reason why this Bill should not be as perfect in its construction at first, as ten years after its enactment; or that we should hail it as a boon, without examining its demerits. It will, however, it is to be hoped, be as "the morning star" of that reformation, which, though tardy, shall open to the enterprising and the meritorious, irrespective of patronage or court favour, the honourable offices in our highly honourable profession.

I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

JOHN THOMAS,
Demonstrator of Anatomy.

1, Dean Street,
Borough, May 14, 1829.

MEDICAL BENEFIT SOCIETY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

YOUR well-known humanity and zeal for the welfare of our profession, induce me respectfully to request the insertion of this note in an early number of your truly valuable journal.

When we consider the numerous cases of affliction and pecuniary distress that occur among medical men in this large metropolis, I feel surprised that no institution of the nature of a *Medical Benefit Society*, has been established for the purpose of affording relief to its members, (and these, I prophesy, would not be wanting for its formation,) under regulations similar to those with which London and its environs so plentifully abound. I am sure it would be patronised by the heads of the profession and all its friends. I trust the necessity of an institution of this nature will appear to the minds of your numerous readers; as poverty and disease are casualties to which the most eminent and wealthy may fall victims. Permit me to request that you will exercise the influence you possess over a liberal profession, by means of one of the most powerful engines of public opinion, viz. "*an independent press.*" I am sure, in my own mind, that I shall have no opposers to my proposal.

H. W. D.

Lamb's Conduit Street, April 18, 1829.

ABUSES AT ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Aware of your willingness to remove, if possible, every barrier that may be raised against the obtaining of professional knowledge, I beg to direct your attention to one at St. Thomas's Hospital, which must be considered by all, as taking from pupils that advantage for which they pay so exorbitantly. I refer to the exclusion of all the students, except the dresser, from the examination of the "female venereal patients," by the surgeons; it would appear from this, that it is perfectly unnecessary to be acquainted with the effects of syphilis on the female sex. The "Grand Committee" as they are styled, (though, in what their grandeur consists, it would be very difficult to solve,) should exercise their authority to afford pupils all the assistance they can, not to deprive them of that which is their right, for every thing under the head of *surgery*, ought to be free to their inspection; hoping that this may be the means of redressing the grievance of which I complain,

I subscribe myself,

A PUPIL.