

are entitled to practise on the same footing with those who have passed examinations at the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons; they may also proceed to the degrees of Bachelor and Doctor of Medicine."

From the same document I learn that the following are the only fees charged by the University of Durham for the licence in medicine which confers such extraordinary powers—viz.:

	£	s.	d.
Examination fee at end of first year.	0	10	0
Ditto for a licence in medicine	2	0	0
Fee for a licence in medicine	3	0	0

Making a total charge of 5 10 0!!

Surely, in any medical reform bill which may hereafter be proposed, some clauses will be inserted to guard against the evils resulting from the multiplication of universities, otherwise the confusion, rivalry, and discord consequent on the existence of so many licensing bodies will render the union of the profession, and the realization of the hopes based upon it, utterly and for ever impracticable.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Newcastle-on-Tyne, July, 1852. A MEDICAL REFORMER.

PRESERVATION OF VACCINE LYMPH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—After a letter in THE LANCET of July 10, recommending some gutta percha bottles for keeping and conveying vaccine lymph in a fluid state, there is a note, by the Editor, referring to the inquest which was held at Clerkenwell, nearly three years since, on a child who died after being inoculated with some vaccine lymph that had been kept in a glass bottle in shape like these gutta percha ones. The Editor has fallen into two mistakes—one as to the time the lymph had been kept, the other that I promised lymph should not be so sent again from the Small-Pox and Vaccination Hospital, which I did not promise. We ought perhaps, some of us, to have given an account in THE LANCET at the time, without mentioning names, of the mischief that had been done; and, as a warning to others, I thought of doing it, but did not. I stated my objection to these gutta percha bottles, and my reason for objecting to them, at the last meeting of the Epidemiological Society, alluding to these very cases at Clerkenwell. The lymph used in that instance had been kept *eight days* before being used for the one child, and *nine* for the other. The lymph had been doubtless decomposed, just as any other moist animal matter would have been in the same time; and the poor children were, in fact, inoculated with *putrid animal matter*, which produced death in one, and dangerous illness, with erysipelas and the formation of eighteen abscesses, in the other.

These bottles are very convenient in practice if carefully and properly used. As I stated at the Epidemiological Society, the lymph may be safely kept in them for twenty-four hours in summer, and forty-eight hours in winter. If used after being kept longer than this it is apt to cause irritable vesicles, and the person so vaccinated is but imperfectly protected, or probably not protected at all if the lymph has been kept much beyond the time I have specified.

I have thought it right to draw your attention to these points. The correction of the statement in the Editor's note, in THE LANCET, will come better from you than from me. You will remember it was at first attempted to be shown that the lymph used at Clerkenwell had only been kept a short time—a few hours—but the statement was proved to be incorrect, amongst other proofs by the medical man's boy going part of the way home from the hospital, on the day when the lymph was procured, with another boy, from Mr. Complin, of Finsbury-square, and that there had been an interval of eight or nine days between obtaining the lymph and using it—in the warm weather of the autumn of 1849.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
Small-Pox and Vaccination Hospital, J. F. MARSON.
Upper Holloway, July, 1852.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you permit me to occupy a few lines of your space to say how greatly I feel obliged to Mr. Faxon and to Mr. Hendry for their communications upon vaccination, which, through your pages, will be made known as proved means to facilitate the propagation of this innocent prophylactic virus,

a boon which doubtless will be hailed by a large body of the profession with gratitude, on the eve—I might, perhaps, say the advent—of an epidemic small-pox, one of man's most fearful scourges, which, as physicians, political economists, and Christians, we are bound to avert to the extent of our knowledge.

I have seen the tubes of Mr. Faxon, I have read of the use of the eschar, as described by Mr. Hendry; I know that both have failed. By my contrivance I have only been desirous to add one other method to afford the means of success, and I wish only to insist that the lightness and infractility of the tubes I use are by these qualities superior to Mr. Faxon's, and that if liquid vaccine lymph is acknowledged to be more readily absorbed than *dry*, and if it can be shown that such lymph is preserved in cases filled with the vapour of a hydrocarbon, to the exclusion of oxygen, and the prevention of the process of decomposition, (or, as Liebig truly calls it, *eremacausis*;) then I would contend that we have *four* beneficial qualities *together*, hitherto only to be obtained in smaller combinations:—1, Lightness; 2, infractility (for the convenience of carriage); 3, liquidity (for the facility of absorption); 4, immunity from decomposition.

But my original design having been, by means of our increased postal facilities, to transmit rapidly, in this country, *liquid lymph undecomposed*, I beg to claim for my idea, when it shall have been sufficiently tested by others, the merit of having fulfilled its objects. I am sure, at least, Sir, that you will agree that it has not been without some immediate benefit that this discussion has been evoked by

Your obedient servant,
W. M. F. CHATTERLEY, M.R.C.S.E.

Hereford-square, Old Brompton, July, 1852.

MEDICAL ASSISTANTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You have lately lent your valuable aid to the cause of a branch of the profession—viz. "the unpaid medical officers of hospitals," and I doubt not that in this, as in many other cases your efforts will prove in the end successful.

There is another ill-remunerated class which merits, I think, your efforts to raise it from the position in which it is now placed. I allude to medical assistants. Certainly medical men do not by their own liberality to their assistants (on whom the drudgery of the practice falls) establish any claims to the generosity of the public. A young man, after several years' experience in the profession,—during which time, if he have had good opportunities, and made the most of them, he may have acquired considerable knowledge,—seeks a situation for a time with a medical practitioner; he finds, after some years of study, that his means are insufficient to complete his curriculum for qualification. A situation is obtained. Unlike many other vocations, where a certain number of hours are devoted to business, and beyond that period there is no liability of being called on for duty, the medical assistant must be in constant attendance to answer every ring at the door, be it day or night; he may not, under pain of displeasure, be absent *without leave*, and at no period of the day or night can he call five minutes his own. The principal goes his rounds, may-be in his carriage, and on his return his assistant is expected to be in attendance to receive his commands, and to spend his evening, (when all others can enjoy either a pleasant fireside, or an evening ramble,) amongst rhubarb and aloes and pitch-plaster. Well, the public will say, "Mr. So-and-So keeps an assistant, who is worked hard and always must be within call, but no doubt he is paid well; there are some drawbacks in every situation;" and so it is set down that Mr. —'s assistant has a handsome salary, far better than the unfortunate banker's clerk opposite, who is shut up six hours a-day for £100 a year. But no; this liberal gentleman who keeps an assistant, considers the advantage of treating paupers and dispensing black draughts, together with "board and lodging," amply sufficient remuneration, and would think himself a fit subject for a *de lunatico*, &c., were he to pay his factotum a liberal salary. Now it would be a satisfaction to the curious, (as such matters are, I suppose through shame, kept a profound secret,) to know the actual remuneration Mr. —'s assistant has for his services. Suppose Mr. —'s family to consist of from ten to twelve persons, the addition of the assistant may make a difference in the household expenses, of at the most 5s. per week, so that Mr. —'s assistant stands him in the sum of 13l. per annum, and not a farthing of this comes to the unfortunate in the shape of salary.

I would appeal to you, Mr. Editor, and to the public generally, and to some few enlightened and liberal-minded members of the