

observations have proved the fact that a noise is always caused by the injection of air or liquid into a tube. It should be remembered that by laying the valve open, probably the aorta was quite occluded. That our attention should be turned to the flow of blood into the aorta as a probable partial cause of the first sound, is shown by the interesting case of the child with its heart developed externally, which came under the notice of M. Cruveilhier, and in which instance he invariably heard the first sound loudest at the origin of the aorta, as though proceeding from, and having its rise at that spot. Because the second sound is undoubtedly caused by valvular tension, that therefore the first is so caused also is not a logical sequitur, seeing how the mitral is fixed by muscular bands and surrounded by dense muscular walls, and not free to vibrate as are the sigmoids contained in a hollow tube with elastic walls. As a question merely of sound, for the reason that one might anticipate the sharp second as the result of valvular tension, so would the first appear more in accordance with that produced by a rush of blood than by the closing of a valve. Although I should place Mr. Brakyn's experiment before my own, on account of his many observations, and believe that the tension of the mitral valve did produce a large part of the sound, yet the difficulty of excluding the operation of other causes in my own case would make me rather incredulous whether they might not have some weight even in his, particularly as other observers would show a part of the causes residing elsewhere.

It will be seen I have referred merely to the practical part of the experiment, but there still remains a question of after-reasoning, and which is—What is the value of the experiment? Supposing the sound produced by Mr. Brakyn to have been wholly caused by the tension of the mitral valve, it does not follow that it is the same as the ordinary sound during life, for it is very possible that the sound produced in air, although resembling to the ear the natural one, is really not the effect of exactly the same cause, but equivalent to a valve acting in fluid plus the sounds arising from one or two other sources.

For all these reasons, and particularly the last, I cannot look upon the experiment as conclusive; besides, as I should have before mentioned, other experimenters have shown the sounds to be produced in a living heart when the valve was prevented from acting.

I may remark, in conclusion, that the second sound was certainly well illustrated by this clever experiment, and also many varieties of bruits might be produced by violently forcing the air back through the valves, so as to cause them to vibrate with different degrees of force.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
Camberwell, Jan. 1850. SAMUEL WILKS, M.B.

THE GENTEEL OUT-PATIENT ABUSE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Although I regularly "con" over *THE LANCET*, Mr. Hodgson's letter on the out-patient abuse escaped me till that signed "A Governor" drew my attention to it.

"A Governor" says—"The plan suggested by Mr. Hodgson, that no patient should be admitted to the hospital without a certificate from a clergyman or medical man that the applicant is a proper object for gratuitous relief, would altogether exclude the most destitute class of persons—foreigners, poor Jews, poor Irish, who know nothing of London parsons or doctors."

Why should it be so? There is no rule without an exception; and surely men who can form a tolerably accurate diagnosis of disease can distinguish a foreigner, a Jew, and an Irishman!

I maintain there ought to be some guarantee of good faith on the part of the applicant, always leaving a discretionary power to the physician or surgeon; and I would suggest when there is any doubt that he or she should unhesitatingly be referred to a conveniently-placed poor-box, with the intimation that "they should do to others as they would that others should do to them."

I feel indignant when I reflect how many there are beflooned and bedizened, who take up the really poor man's room, and the physician's time from the poor man, when they are well able to afford first-rate professional advice; and from my position I know many such; although I am aware no observations of mine or others would be of much avail in shaming such when appearing in a medical publication, yet I trespass on your columns, or better still, if you, in your own peculiar way, will suggest to the official professionals that it very much

rests with themselves when imposition is attempted to be practised upon them or their respective institutions. In much haste, I am, yours faithfully,

January, 1850.

A REGULAR ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIBER.

* * Mr. Hodgson has rendered a service to the profession and the public by re-opening the discussion on the scandalous abuses connected with the gratuitous relief afforded to out-patients at many of our public charities. It is an evil of enormous magnitude, and we will see what can be done by the press towards effecting its abolition. We are informed that it is not an uncommon thing for consequential gentlemen and pert ladies, after they have received, for weeks together, advice and medicines gratis at some of our hospitals, to request, on taking their leave of the medical officers whom they have plundered, to render their best assistance to their servants, whom they are about to introduce as new patients. We are positively informed that examples of impudence of this kind are by no means of rare occurrence.—ED. L.

THE ROTHBURY UNION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have only this day received your journal for Dec. 29th. Circumstances occurring, over which I had no control, prevented me from seeing it sooner; otherwise I would have replied, long ere this, to the communication which you state you received relative to the proceedings at the Rothbury Union Workhouse.

I now beg to observe, in reply, that it is my wish to intrude myself as little as possible upon your valuable time. But you will at once perceive, when I tell you that I am the appointed medical officer of the Rothbury Union Workhouse, that I am bound, in justice to myself and friends, to give a faithful explanation of the circumstances which has led to the production of the statements of your correspondent, who, by the way, seems to excite your feelings of sympathy for being exposed to such an annoyance, as I am not sensible of having given the slightest cause for annoyance to any one in connexion with my duties relative to the Rothbury Union.

The Mr. Todd, with whom my name in the article in question is brought in contact, is, I believe, unconnected with any medical body, either in England or in Scotland. All Rothbury, however, can bear testimony to the fact, that I have had to take legal proceedings against him for attacking my dwelling-house, and that he was bound over by the magistrate to keep the peace.

I may also inform you that he was dismissed from the Rothbury Union, and that I had the honour of being appointed in his room, which may partly explain the cause of his hostility.

It will now be my duty to give you a full account of the cases referred to, as they were reported in the medical officer's journal kept at the workhouse.

On Sept. 30th, my attention being called by the master of the house to examine three little girls; I found them suffering from scabies; they were put under treatment, and dismissed as cured, and entered upon my journal on the 12th of October. The disease appeared again on the 23rd of November, upon a little boy, and on examining the other inmates, I found five or six of them slightly affected; they were all put under treatment, and the last case was dismissed from my journal on the 7th of December; and since then it has not appeared. The board of guardians held their usual meeting on the 17th of December, and made the following report in the Visitor's Book:—"The inmates are healthy, the infectious disease prevailing a fortnight ago, and referred to when the committee last visited the house, has disappeared." This was signed by two of the parties who made the former entry—

"Is the medical officer regular in his attendance?—Yes."

I have now given you the facts of the case. The whole affair, from beginning to end, has been nothing but a scheme concocted for the base purpose of injuring my reputation. Whatever may be the results of such unmanly attacks, they shall not disturb the equanimity of an irreproachable conscience. With reference to my qualifications, I beg to say that I have the honour to be a Licentiate of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. I was regularly educated in the University and medical schools of that city.

In conclusion, I beg pardon for trespassing so long upon your time, and can only offer as an excuse that I could not

possibly say less on a subject involving so seriously my reputation. Pray be kind enough to give this letter a nook in your valuable journal, and make it as public as possible.

I remain, Sir, yours obediently,
Rothbury, Northumberland, Jan. 1850. W. FARRAGE.

* * It is right that we should inform Mr. Farrage that not any complaint has been made against him by Mr. Fettinger: that portion of the reply to "Anti-quackery" (THE LANCET, Dec. 29th) which contained the name of Mr. Fettinger, was inserted in that situation by mistake, it had no reference whatever even to Mr. Farrage or to the Rothbury Union.—ED. L.

NAVAL ASSISTANT-SURGEONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I wish to recal to the notice of your readers a letter published in THE LANCET of the 10th of February, which was headed, "Interference with Medical Duties on Board of a Line-of-battle Ship," and signed "B." I also wish to bring forward a case, that may be considered parallel.

Your correspondent imagines the *Bellerophon* to be the ship in which the order was given to keep medical watch at night in the sick-berth. The occurrence took place on board her Majesty's ship *Howe*, whilst lying at Naples, on the 18th of November, 1848, under the following circumstances. The sick-berth had been considerably reduced in size before the departure of the ship for the Mediterranean on the 12th of June, 1848, so much so as to render the use of screens on the deck, outside the sick-berth, a matter of necessity with the ordinary number of patients. This reduction of space for the sick was said to be strictly in accordance with the general plan for fitting ships at the dockyards; but I must observe, that dockyard plans are rarely acted up to—certainly not, when they interfere with the private comforts of the executive officers, or when attention to them would benefit junior officers.

The captain of the *Howe* considered that the usual custom of an assistant-surgeon sleeping in the sick-berth at night was an occupation of space that should be accorded to the sick, and he gave an order that no assistant-surgeon should sleep in the sick-berth. The surgeon informed him that it was necessary for a medical man to sleep in the berth, to attend to casualties, and to anticipate irregularities of any kind.

The watch was kept by the assistant-surgeons on the night of the 18th of November, and next day one of the assistant-surgeons remonstrated with the captain, who was surprised to learn that the assistant-surgeons considered the matter in the light of an indignity. The assistant-surgeon explained, on the part of himself and brother officers, that they were always happy to watch any cases of illness or injury, but to watch like police-officers was decidedly an insult to the medical profession. Notwithstanding the captain's exposition of the subject, the surgeon issued the following order in writing:—

"Mem.—Captain Sir James Stirling has disapproved of any medical officer sleeping within the sick-berth at night, and ordered that a watch or proper surveillance shall be kept over that place, and the sick confined to bed within, that they may have the same protection as before from irregular or improper conduct of any kind, especially in the sick-berth attendant or nurses who may be appointed to attend the sick, and every relief afforded to the patients which may be deemed necessary. I therefore request Mr. — [the senior assistant-surgeon] to comply with Captain Sir James Stirling's order, and arrange with his colleagues watches or periods of time during the night, commencing at seven P.M., for the purpose of visiting the sick occasionally during such watches as circumstances may require, and to prevent, as much as possible, any emergency or casualty likely to happen.

"Naples, Nov. 23, 1848."

[Signature of the Surgeon.]

This order is still extant. The captain only orders a watch to be kept when the surgeon considers it necessary. The surgeon thinks proper to make the assistant-surgeons night nurses and police-officers.

I have dwelt at length on the night watches, as the matter has not been detailed, and, in my humble opinion, it is one of great importance in regard to the general treatment of medical officers. About a year since, an attempt was made in another ship to make assistant-surgeons keep watches. The ship was at Portsmouth, and the Admiralty were appealed to. Their sentence was an immediate order to discontinue the practice. But in the *Howe's* case, what can be said when the

surgeon does not possess a sympathy with other members of his profession?

The circumstance I am about to mention occurred during the late commission of H.M.S. *Vanguard*. The exact particulars I do not know; the general facts I can vouch for. The officer in command of the ship ordered a noisy drunken man to be gagged, and ordered an assistant-surgeon to superintend the process. The surgeon kept out of the way, and would not interfere to resist this indignity to the profession! The *Vanguard* has earned some notoriety, surely—stomach-pump and gagging; but oh! how different was the course pursued by the medical officers in these cases respectively.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

H.M.S. *Howe*, Bay of Naples, 1849.

F. J. B.

Medical News.

COUNCIL OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The Council held a meeting on Thursday last, which lasted three hours; the Shropshire and Manchester Memorials were received and read; but no resolution was passed by the council, except one for an adjournment. Considering the tardy proceedings of the council, and the length of time which has elapsed since the resolution for an amended charter was passed, but which has not yet reached its destination, it looks as though the meeting of parliament would arrive before the council has put itself in communication with Sir George Grey.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.—At the last meeting of the *Comitia Majora*, the following gentlemen were admitted Licentiates of the College:—

BABINGTON, C. M., M.A., Chester-street, Belgrave-square.

BRINTON, WILLIAM, M.D., Bloomsbury-street.

FRERE, —, M.D., Queen-street, May-fair.

GOODFELLOW, STEPHEN JENNINGS, M.D., Bloomsbury-square.

HUE, CLEMENT, M.A., Bedford-square.

STEWART, ALEXANDER PATRICK, M.D., Grosvenor-street, Grosvenor-square.

GOODMAN, J., M.D., of Manchester, was elected an Extra Licentiate.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The following gentlemen having undergone the necessary examinations for the diploma, were admitted members of the college at the last meeting of the Court of Examiners:—

COLLINS, HENRY, Birmingham.

LOCOCK, HENRY SMYTH, Lee Park, Blackheath.

SPRATT, HENRY THOMAS, Bridge-street, Southwark.

STOCKER, JOHN SHERWOOD, Baker-street, Portman-square.

We understand eight candidates for the diploma were rejected at the above meeting of the Board.

APOTHECARIES' HALL.—Names of gentlemen who passed their examination in the science and practice of medicine, and received certificates to practise, on

Thursday, Jan. 10th, 1850.

ARTHUR, WALTER, Liverpool.

JOHNSON, HENRY SCHOLFIELD, Liverpool.

HUNTERIAN ORATION.—The Council of the Royal College of Surgeons have just announced that the Oration annually delivered in the theatre of the institution, in memory of the immortal Hunter, will be given, as usual, on the 14th inst., by Mr. Frederick Carpenter Skey, one of the surgeons of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

PHYSICIAN TO THE MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL.—We believe the vacancy caused in the medical staff of this hospital by the retirement of Dr. G. M. Latham, will be filled by the appointment of Dr. A. P. Stewart.

WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.—It is reported that arrangements are on the tapis by which this School will shortly be recognised by the Council of the College of Surgeons.

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, PADDINGTON.—Many members of the profession are somewhat surprised that, as yet, no appointments have been made public of the officers of this institution. It is to be hoped that no hole-and-corner appointments will be made.

NEW AND OLD SECRETARIES.—Dr. C. F. Routh has been appointed one of the secretaries of the Westminster Medical Society, in the room of Mr. Greenhalgh, resigned. We regret that Dr. W. J. Bowie, one of the secretaries to the Medical Society of London, and assistant-physician to the Hospital for Consumption,