

member of the Board of Admiralty, and the representative of Greenwich, stand forth openly and boldly to carry the vote of the Commons of the 8th of April, 1850, on the motion of Captain Boldero, for providing each naval assistant-surgeon with ward-room privileges unconditionally—a cabin, a servant, a seat at the lieutenant's table, and equal insignia with their army comrades—two epaulettes? This question admits of no qualifying reply, but of—yes or no.

Admiral Stewart will be prepared to tell the medical gentlemen of Greenwich that not long since he was necessitated *privately* to hunt up candidates for the naval medical service. Such a fact, of course, he cannot omit to mention; and coming from high authority, it will carry weight with it elsewhere. The following in *The United Service Gazette* let me direct your attention to:—"We must not also lose the opportunity now afforded us of stating that the medical men, in and out of practice, form no influential section in the constituency; and we now tell Admiral Stewart, as we would inform any other candidate, that these gentlemen will be much disappointed if he be not prepared to inform them that he will at once exert himself in the most strenuous manner to see that the resolution carried in the House of last session, on the motion of Captain Boldero, to ameliorate the position of their brethren serving in the royal navy, be carried into effect without that miserable quibbling which we have lately witnessed, and which, in our opinion, would be more becoming to a set of *nisi prius* lawyers than to statesmen entrusted with the charge of the naval administration of this country."

I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your obedient servant,  
AN ASSISTANT-SURGEON, Royal Navy.

Portsmouth, 1851.

#### ALLOPATHY AND HOMŒOPATHY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET of December 20, I see an editorial article referring to a letter of Dr. Rutherford Russell's in the *Edinburgh News*. As your statement of the case is not quite correct, and as any slight inaccuracy will be greedily seized on by the homœopaths to serve them as a text to draw off attention from the real merits of the case, permit me, as the surgeon principally concerned, to state the circumstances as they really occurred. But first let me say that your error consists in speaking of Dr. Russell as the homœopathist who consulted me in the case. Dr. Russell never saw the patient, as far as I know, and had no concern with the case, or pretext for interference, beyond what a naturally meddlesome temper and a morbid desire for notoriety could give him.

The facts of the case are simply as follow:—About four A.M., on Saturday, November 22nd, Dr. Laurie, of Rankellor-street, (who has lately adopted the homœopathic system,) called on me to visit a case of hernia which had resisted his efforts at reduction, and which he considered would require an operation for its relief. As I was putting up my instruments, I said, "Dr. Laurie, you know that as you now profess homœopathy, I cannot meet you professionally, as heretofore." Upon that, he replied that he would not interfere in any way with my treatment, in which case he supposed there would be no difficulty. I said no; he must retire altogether from the case during my attendance, as I held that to be the meaning of the resolutions of my college; and however unpleasant to be so circumstanced with one whom I had long known, and for whom I had so frequently acted in surgical cases, I could go on no other terms. As Dr. Laurie seemed to think I was overstraining the college resolutions, and stated that other members of the college had met him when he refrained from treating the case homœopathically, I said I had no objection to refer to Professor Goodsir, as to whether I was not correct in my views of the resolution, and that then he could retire, or try to get some one else to operate.

Professor Goodsir expressed precisely the same opinion as I had done; and then Dr. Laurie agreed to retire. We then drove to the patient's house, where, in the presence of Mr. Goodsir, I reduced the hernia by the operation of taxis, and then left the patient.

On Saturday, the 29th, there appeared a letter in the *Edinburgh News* (No. 1 of the enclosed correspondence), to which I briefly replied (No. 2). That reply produced two letters, one from Dr. Laurie (who had formerly pretended regret at Dr. Russell's unauthorized interference), and another from Dr. Russell (Nos. 3 and 4); whilst in the same paper there appeared the editorial article (No. 5), in which the correspondence was alluded to, and some of the views of my opponents supported, and my position inferentially attacked.

After some consideration as to whether it was worth the trouble, I determined to answer them; and when doing so, I

thought I might as well put the "inhumanity" in its true light before the public. This I did in the letter of which I enclose a copy, marked No. 6. The letter was necessarily rather long, as it contained an answer to the two letters of Drs. Laurie and Russell, and also a refutation of the charge of inhumanity conveyed in the editorial heading under which the correspondence appeared.

This letter the editor of the *News* positively refused to insert unless I would condense it to an equal space of letter-press with Drs. Laurie's and Russell's, in the preceding paper, expressing, at the same time, a desire to do equal justice to both parties. To this I replied that I could not so condense it, nor yet could I admit that an equal amount of letter-press meant equal justice; and that as he had admitted an attack on my professional character under an offensive and libellous heading, I thought the least I was entitled to was the most ample space for refuting the charge. To this I received an answer (No. 7), on which I make no further comment than that I cannot divine on what grounds an editor should claim immunity from censure for his own opinions, or why he should designate my remarks on the general question of "the inhumanity" as a *covert* attack on his article. It is also rather odd, that whilst he at first made the length of my letter the ground of its exclusion, he should allow a very large space to Dr. Russell, to open up a new discussion regarding a correspondence which had never appeared in the *News*.

I forward you this statement and the enclosed documents, to allow you to form your own judgment of the case, and make any comments on it you may think fit.

I remain yours, &c.,

Dublin-street, Dec. 1851.

JAMES SPENCE, F.R.C.S. Ed.

#### THE "TIMES" AND HOMŒOPATHY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having frequently seen articles in your journal, on the subject of obscene and improper advertisements in the pages of the *Times* and other papers, I think you will perhaps be interested to hear how marvellously fastidious the authorities in Printing-house-square have lately become. On the 22nd Nov., I forwarded you a copy of a resolution on the subject of homœopathy, unanimously passed at a meeting of the Islington Medical Society; this you were good enough to publish the following week. At a subsequent meeting it was determined that it would be well for the purpose of warning the public, and our own patients and neighbours in particular, that this resolution should be advertised in the daily *Times*. I accordingly went with a copy duly signed by myself as Hon. Sec., on behalf of the meeting, to the office, and was told by the clerk that the price of insertion would be sixteen shillings; I tendered him a sovereign, but before he gave me the change, he gave the paper to another clerk, who immediately came forward, and rather roughly informed me, that "it was quite impossible they could insert such an advertisement." On my inquiring why? he replied, "this matter is *merely* a difference of opinion among the faculty, and we cannot consent to accuse those who practice homœopathy of *ignorance*; and, again, we are not justified, neither are you, in calling that form of practice *quackery*." I did not attempt to argue the matter further, supposing, as doubtless was the case, that the man only acted under orders; I think, however, you, sir, will agree with me that it is a most arbitrary assumption of power to refuse such an advertisement, *being signed*, and therefore of course throwing all responsibility, as to the opinions contained in it, upon those who thought fit to make it public; and this too from a paper which daily admits the puffs, and often invectives against legitimate medicine, from Messrs. Culverwell, Morison, Holloway, and Co.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant

NATHANIEL HENRY CLIFTON.

Cross-street, Islington, Dec., 1851.

\*\* Is it not a fact that one of the chief clerks in the counting-house of the *Times* is a supporter of homœopathy?—Ed. L.

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH AND ITS PROFESSORS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having seen in THE LANCET of Dec. 27, another leading article on the expulsion of the homœopathic professor from the University of Edinburgh, I am induced to say a few words to correct what is, to some extent, an erroneous opinion on the subject.