

inconceivable amount of injury without death, or indeed any serious amount of inconvenience following. But Dr. Fairbrother makes not a very fair use of this admission. I beg to assure that gentleman that the sense in which I meant to use the words "less as a guide to practice," was, that I did not think it probable that such a case would again occur, or that it would occur to but few; but if any gentleman should unfortunately meet with a similar case, I advise him to operate before he has broken down the nervous system of his patient by fatigue, exhaustion, tartar-emetic, opiates, &c. &c.

I cannot refrain from embracing this opportunity of briefly detailing the history of a case which fell under my notice subsequently to the case which has given rise to the above comments. It is a case remarkable for many reasons, but more especially for exhibiting the resources of nature in labour, and the power of relaxations in diseased uterine structure. At the same time there is a marked and strong contrast between the two cases, and arguments which are good with reference to the one are wholly inadmissible if applied to the other.

A young woman, aged about thirty, was in labour for her third child. She had engaged my friend, Mr. Kay, to attend her, but that gentleman being indisposed my attendance was desired. I visited her in haste, and found what I believed a placenta presentation. There being no urgent symptoms, I left, but returned in two hours. I then examined more minutely, and soon discovered my error. I found a large fungoid growth in the exact position of the cervix uteri. It was, in fact, a fungoid degeneration of the neck of the uterus, and appeared to occupy the brim of the pelvis. On passing my finger into the uterus, I found it pass freely between the membranes and the smooth and healthy uterus. The disease was apparently altogether confined to the neck. The os uteri was then dilated to about the size of half-a-crown, and appeared exactly like a hole of that size in the centre of a large placental mass. Labour not coming on, I left her.

I certainly anticipated some trouble in her labour, but I was mistaken. Her labour did not take place until about a month afterwards, and she was then confined before my friend could reach the house. Nothing particular occurred, but she gradually sank, and died about three months after her labour.

On examination after death, it was found that the malignant tumour had ulcerated or sloughed away; that the uterus was not much larger than the normal organ, but scirrhous; and the posterior coat of the bladder was found to be nearly half an inch thick, from the deposition of cancerous matter.

But to return: I have now to thank Dr. Bennet for his polite and kind communication, and I beg to assure him that his suggestion with reference to the speculum will not be forgotten by me. I will also take the first opportunity that presents itself to examine the woman with that instrument, and will with great pleasure communicate the result to him. With regard to his suggestion, I candidly confess I feel greatly indebted to him; indeed, no one who has not operated on the uterus high up in the pelvis can estimate the difficulty in which this part of the operation was involved, nor, perhaps, estimate the anxiety of cutting through the uterine walls without a guard, or without a director.

I sincerely thank him for his suggestion, of which I will gladly avail myself, should I ever be placed in a similar or analogous position.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

JAMES SHEPPARD, M.D., M.R.C.S.E.,
Justice of the Peace for the County
of Devon.

P.S.—My friend, Dr. Roe, of Plymouth, has informed me that I am in error in considering my case "unique," as he formerly had a case of a similar character; but as he intends publishing the case, I abstain from further observations.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THE LIFE ASSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The usual form of application from the Metropolitan Life Assurance Office was forwarded to me about three weeks since, for the particulars of the health, life, and habits of one of my patients, who had applied to assure his life for £1000.

Understanding the office did not pay the medical referee, I wrote to the secretary, objecting to forward the important information which the directors confidentially demand, for the simple reason of their withholding the just remuneration for the same.

The secretary wrote to inform the patient of my communication, stating that *he* must see me, as it was expressly for his benefit that the medical man forwarded a proper statement of his health: whereupon he requested that I would comply with their demand in answering the numerous queries, for which he would pay me. I did so; they refused to effect his assurance—and, I have strong reason to believe, from the facts connected with his condition of body with which I furnished the directors. My patient is not well pleased with the conviction that he has to pay me for withholding his assurance; he has since married, and is no doubt somewhat relieved of the disappointment; it is almost certain, too, that I cease to be his medical attendant.

Now, Mr. Editor, I have considered for years past, and daily experience proves, that it would be more equitable towards our patients and selves were medical men to decline altogether furnishing insurance offices with their secret yet faithful reports. Let the directors rely upon the tact and scrutiny of their own skilful medical officers.

I am, Sir, yours, obediently,

Mount-place, London Hospital, May 31, 1851.

EMANUEL MAY.

THE MEETING OF LONDON GRADUATES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am not alone in the full belief that the sketch I sent to your journal is not wanting in fidelity. I could easily have completed the picture; it required only a few additional touches still less complimentary to the senate. Granting that we may estimate Dr. Gull's state of feeling by the gentle tone of his commentary on my communication, it will never do to take his word for the sort of "animus" existing elsewhere. But it was never my purpose to question either the "animus" or the "motives" of the committee. If their words or their actions belie their motives, then are they a most misappreciated body of gentlemen; not the less unequal on that account to sustain the cause entrusted to them. It is as well to state that *all*, not two only, who spoke in favour of the scheme of re-election, (it would scarcely be fair, and I do not think they wish it, to regard their opinions so unequivocally expressed in any other light,) in some shape or other strongly condemned the senate.

Having alluded to this learned body, in his opening address, as a set of "men who would do honour to any age, any country, or any university," (I quote a part of Dr. Gull's letter, as I was too late to hear his address), Dr. Gull must have felt his position as president at the meeting rather embarrassing. He may safely assume, however, that the sentiments respecting the senate, prevailing among the 500 out of the 600 of the graduates, from the fact of their having kept away from the meeting, if not quite to the extravagant extent of his eulogy, are not very dissimilar to his own.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY SAVAGE.

Gloucester-place, Portman square, June 2, 1851.

Medical News.

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

Thursday, May 29th, 1851.

AYRTON, FRANCIS, Liverpool.

CLEVELAND, EDWARD SOMERSET, Madras.

EDWARDS, GEORGE HENRY, Royal Navy.

RIDLEY, THOMAS LOWNY, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

ROTHWELL, CHARLES, Bolton-le-Moors.

SMALE, GEORGE EDMUND, Plymouth.

THE ORTHOPÆDIC HOSPITAL.—The annual festival of the supporters of the Royal Orthopædic Hospital was held on Saturday last, at the London Tavern, when above 100 gentlemen sat down to an excellent dinner. Mr. Quarles Harris was in the chair. He invited the company to drink to the success of the hospital, which had now for many years proved a blessing to London as well as to the provinces. In the past year the public interest had manifested itself in subscriptions and donations which far exceeded those of the preceding year, but still the amount was not sufficient for the increased and increasing demands upon the funds of the hospital. It had been found necessary to extend the means of accommodation for in-patients, and a building fund