

In a second letter, Mr. Fletcher writes: "The plant I have, was given me early in the winter, and it not only has supplied me with several young plants for friends, but vinegar enough to last me for years."

### ADULTERATION OF COFFEE.

ON August 24th, the Commissioners of Inland Revenue gave notice that, in pursuance of the order of the Lords of the Treasury, the mixture of chicory with coffee by dealers in that article would no longer be permitted; and further, that loose chicory would no longer be suffered to be deposited in places used for the sale or stowage of coffee. Dealers in coffee, however, are to be allowed to sell chicory in closed packages, containing not less than two ounces, each package to bear the name and address of the seller. The penalties for the admixture of chicory or other substances with coffee, are not to be enforced till the 3rd of November next.

### Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

### INADEQUATE REMUNERATION OF MEDICAL MEN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your advocacy, in THE LANCET, since its commencement, of the rights and privileges of the medical profession, demands our warmest thanks, more especially when we consider that your pen is still powerfully endeavouring to maintain its status, by showing that its labours generally should no longer go unrequited. Though, in many instances, there is an attempt to remunerate medical men, this almost always falls short of what they are justly entitled to. We ought certainly to appreciate the benefit of the Medical Witnesses Act, for this was a great step in the right direction, but the payment for poor-law and vaccination services, &c., is still meagre in the extreme. The pages of your journal have often contained the amount per case under the poor-law, and though the fee for vaccination in some unions has improved the salary, yet in others it is so small, that there is no wonder at vaccination being neglected, and, as a consequence, the present epidemic small-pox. In some unions, the fee for vaccination is only a paltry ninepence per case. In this extensive county, the payment of a medical witness at the assizes was, till within the last few years, two guineas a day; this has been reduced to one guinea. To be put frequently to great inconvenience and loss of practice in attending assizes, many have seriously felt the results, and some effort ought to be at once commenced to remedy this great *injustice*. Look at the paltry fee granted at the Court of Requests, where you may be detained for hours for 7s. 6d.; and if things of this character had not already reached their climax, the Government, in the Militia Bill recently passed, have not only a clause to include medical men in its provisions, but likewise empower them to grant for 2s. 6d. a certificate whereby others may become defenders of their native land. Indeed, Sir, I am afraid, in all ranks and conditions of life, the disposition to do justice to our profession is at a very low ebb. The rights we have already attained have not been won easily, and if we are to procure others, the press and the profession must determinately unite. Gratuitous services have too long been in the ascendancy; let us, then, advocate by every means the reasonable remuneration for our services.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
T. B. OLDFIELD, M.R.C.S., &c.

Heckmondwike, Yorkshire, 1852.

### SUPPOSED OCCLUSION OF THE OS UTERI.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Under the title of "A Contribution to Clinical Midwifery," appearing in the pages of your last week's journal, communicated by N. J. Highmore, M.D., of Bradford, my attention has been arrested by the leading features of the case—viz., continuous parturient pains; subsidence of the uterus, presenting itself as an unusual smooth and globular mass, without development of the os tincæ, and thus occasioning apprehensions of its agglutination.

I might stop here to ask if we are justified in suspecting agglutination of the os tincæ, merely because it or the cervix cannot be discovered in situation? I think not. Cases similar in the several relations particularized are only rare, and to the inexperienced

especially must prove perplexing. I can call to mind one only out of some 2000 and upwards of all kinds, and which happened at eight months of pregnancy, accompanied by quick and active pains, and with subsidence of the uterus to such an extraordinary degree as to rest fully upon the perinæum, giving rise to immediate apprehensions of expulsion; and without, yet, the possibility of being able to discover "the slightest trace of the uterine orifice," or "cervix uteri." The globular surface was remarkably smooth and glossy to the touch; extremely attenuated, so as to induce the impression of a foetal head, merely covered by the membranes, with deficient liquor amnii. After an anxious and protracted attendance of some thirty-six hours, with repeated full doses of opiates, the symptoms at length entirely subsided; the patient went on to her full time, or another month, at the expiration of which labour was terminated with that rapidity instanced in Dr. Highmore's case, and ultimately mended rapidly, with the single interruption of strong and horrifying puerperal convulsions, taking place about thirty-six hours after delivery, and yielding effectually to a copious and prompt venesection.

It is somewhat singular, that about the same period I attended a brother of the above patient under a severe seizure of tic douloureux; the shocks were severe and well marked, as though resulting from a powerful electric or galvanic battery, pervading a great extent of the system, to a degree as to almost throw the patient from off his chair, and which symptoms were also as quickly subdued by a single copious venesection. The two cases might tend to show some peculiar nervous temperament incidental to the family, only requiring some particular condition or state for the development of anomalous functions.

The female I have understood to have since died under some parturient relations of a subsequent gestation.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,  
Hull, August, 1852. WILLIAM HENDRY, M.R.C.S., &c.

### MEDICAL REGISTRARS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your remarks in THE LANCET of last week, on the case of Mr. Jones and the Strand Union, call my attention to the unfair advantages which some surgeons (who are not over scrupulous of the manner in which they obtain practice) may take of their office as registrars of births, deaths, &c., of introducing themselves to the favourable notice of the patients of fellow-practitioners. I should not have entertained suspicions of this nature, had I not been informed that a surgeon in this vicinity, who is also the registrar, has acknowledged that he accepted the office of registrar from the motive of its leading on to practice. If such be the object of many surgeons holding this office, the sooner such a system is done away with the better will it be for the credit and welfare of our profession. I do not see why the office of registrar should not be generally held by the relieving officer of the district, which is the case in many places, as it would be an important addition to the salary of such a person, and would not give him a great deal of trouble, whereas to a surgeon in practice the salary can scarcely be an object.

If you, Sir, would only take the subject in hand, I am sure you would soon bring it to a satisfactory termination, provided you consider it worthy of your attention.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
Billinghurst, August, 1852. JUNIUS.

P.S.—I have enclosed my name and address.

### WHO INVENTED URETHROTOMY ON A GROOVED STAFF AS A CURE FOR STRICTURE?

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In a lecture by Mr. Coulson, published in THE LANCET of the 19th of June, the credit of the operation of cutting stricture on a grooved staff is given to the older French surgeons, and a statement to the same effect had previously appeared in your columns. Mr. Syme claims this invention, and his friends are indignant with those who dispute the claim.

Now, there can be no doubt, judging from the passages quoted from Desault or Bichat, that one or more of the older French surgeons performed *bouttonnière* on a grooved sound, for the relief of retention of urine caused by stricture; and it can hardly be doubted that, when this operation was performed, it was performed, not only for the purpose of relieving the existing retention, but in order to prevent future retentions—in other words, to remove the stricture causing retention. The older French surgeons were not idiots: had the relief of the existing retention