

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE LATE TRIAL: RICH AND WIFE
VERSUS PIERPOINT.*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Your columns this week will doubtless contain some particulars of the recent trial in which my neighbour Mr. Pierpoint has been the defendant. Its important bearing upon all engaged in general practice cannot be too highly estimated. That portion of the subject, however, it is not my intention to discuss; it will probably be more ably handled by other of your correspondents. What I wish to urge upon my medical brethren is, that under any circumstances Mr. Pierpoint will be largely out of pocket. This may or may not be of importance to him: I am not sufficiently acquainted with his private affairs to be able to determine. This, however, I know—that the anxiety consequent upon these proceedings has told exceedingly upon him, so much is he altered in health, &c. And as the misfortune which has occurred to him might possibly happen to anyone, I do trust that my medical brethren will enter into a subscription, either to reimburse him his expenses, or in some way to testify to him their sympathy with his unmerited persecution. Should this suggestion meet with approval, I shall be very happy to contribute my mite.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Dean-street, Soho, April, 1862.

JAMES ROGERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In *The Times* of this morning (Tuesday) there is a report of the above trial, which was heard at Kingston on Saturday and Monday.

I do not know Mr. Pierpoint, nor did I ever before hear of his name; but the charges preferred against him having been proved to be so utterly groundless, and being at the same time calculated to do him most irreparable injury, I consider it only a duty on the part of his professional brethren to adopt some measures to record their sympathy with him, and their condemnation of the spirit which actuated the promoters of the proceedings against him.

As Mr. Pierpoint will very likely have to pay his own expenses, I would suggest that a subscription should be entered into to enable him to do so.

I forward my name, and remain, Sir, yours obediently,

April 8th, 1862.

M.D.

THE PRIMARY EXAMINATIONS AT THE
COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—As you are of course aware, the Winter Session at the Schools is just ended, and, therefore, all industrious second-year's men are anxious to present themselves for the Primary or Anatomical Examination at the College of Surgeons, the authorities of which appointed the 5th, 12th, and 26th of April as the days on which it was to be held. Of course there is a great rush for these days, as we all want to get our trials over, and enjoy a little country air with our friends before the Summer Session begins in May; but the College authorities would not allow us to enter our names till the 1st, (All fools' day,) which would have been fair enough if they had kept these days exclusively for second-year's men; instead of which, however, they allowed third-year's men who had been too lazy to go up before, or who had been sent back for three months, to enter their names at any time, and the result is, that the lists were half filled before we had a chance. It is surely too bad that we should be kept waiting till the 26th, or even till the 10th of May, when they might so easily have had an examination at the end of March for third-year's "plucked" men. Besides, it is a great hardship, that when we were all ready, we should have to loiter about the dissecting-room for a month, with no one to help us; for the demonstrators are gone for their holidays.

Another thing I wish to complain of, is the disgraceful way things are managed at the College on the 1st, or day for receiving names. Fancy two hundred medical students (some of whom had been in Lincoln's-Inn fields since half-past six A.M.) shut into a little "black hole," to struggle and fight as much as

they liked in order to reach the window through which Messrs. Trimmer and Stone received the names! Surely the College possesses a room large enough to accommodate us all in an orderly manner; or would it not be better for the authorities of each School to send in a list of the men going up, so as to save this squabbling? I am happy to think that the damage done to the College doors and furniture may, perhaps, incline the authorities to consider this view of the case.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

April, 1862.

A SECOND-YEAR'S MAN.

DR. EDWARD SMITH'S STATISTICS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I venture to say that I by no means stand alone in considering statistics, as a general thing, a bore; and yet I, doubtless also with others of the same creed, continually catch myself, as in the fabled fascination of the humming bird by the snake, rushing into their embrace—nay, actually perpetrating them myself. I think this distaste is for the most part engendered by their being often inappropriately used, their leading to no useful result, and above all to their inaccuracy. In your publication of the 5th inst. I find a long and laborious inquiry by Dr. Edward Smith touching certain conditions relating to persons afflicted with phthisis, embracing 138 queries addressed to 1600 patients, and consequently containing a summary of 138,000 answers; but at the very outset we find so staggering a statement, as to at once establish a great inaccuracy either in the figures of Dr. Smith or of those of your reporter. I allude to the first category, "Parental Conditions." Now it is certain that everyone must be in one of the following predicaments: he must have either lost his father or his mother, or both; or both must be living. And as no two of these conditions can co-exist in relation to the same individual, the sum of the whole, when taken at per-centages, must necessarily amount to 100, and cannot do otherwise. But if we take Dr. Smith's figures, we find them to stand thus:—

	Per Cent.
Lost the father	54
Lost the mother	46
Lost both parents	28
Both parents living	25
	—153

So that we are left to conclude either that 153 is equal to 100, which is absurd; or that Dr. Smith's observations were made on 1530 subjects, and not on 1000, as stated; and this would of course throw all the other figures wrong.

Possibly I may have overlooked some element in the statement, but this would only go to show that others may fall into a similar error; and I trust therefore that Dr. Smith will not object to put me right. The paper contains so many contradictions to preconceived notions which might be supposed to have some foundation in fact, that it seems but reasonable to expect some explanation of an apparent inaccuracy before we should consent to part with principles that have hitherto stood us in good stead.

I am, Sir, your faithful subscriber *ab initio*,

Kensington, April, 1862.

JOHN CHIPPENDALE, F.R.C.S.

THE EDINBURGH COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May I request you to insert the enclosed letter in the next number of *THE LANCET*. I am sorry to trouble you on the subject, and can only ask from you as an act of courtesy what the Editor of the *British Medical Journal* should have done from a sense of justice. The journal in question has systematically misrepresented the acts of this College; but I was scarcely prepared for a refusal to publish a communication written in reply to an interrogation directly addressed to me.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

D. R. HALDANE, M.D.

Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, April, 1862.

"To the Editor of the British Medical Journal."

"SIR,—I was surprised to read in the last number of the *British Medical Journal* the following passage:—

"The Secretary of the Edinburgh College of Physicians has placed us in an awkward position, and we must appeal to him to release us from the same. We have twice denied that the College delivered its licence to candidates without requiring their personal attendance during the year of grace, because we