

lamina of the vertebra; it produced there spinal concussion, but it does not appear to have depressed or splintered the bone. Therefore it would be concluded that the shot would have induced temporary paralysis by concussion, but that that effect would have passed off. In the statement which Major Murray made, he describes himself as falling paralysed, and presently recovering. The completeness and the vigour of his recovered strength must, however, be considered very remarkable, when the severity of the injury is taken into account.

The injuries inflicted on Mr. Roberts were of an essentially mortal nature. The anterior portion of the temporal bone was literally smashed in, and the membranes of the brain deluged with effused blood. In his case also it must be considered remarkable that injuries so terrible should not have had a more immediately fatal effect. Notwithstanding this frightful destruction of his skull, the effusion of blood, and concussion of the brain, he was conscious and rational from the time of his admission on Friday till the following Tuesday; and Mr. Canton, with justice we think, attributed the absence of early symptoms of compression or meningitis to the large quantity of blood lost from the wounds during the affray, and the absence of effusion or considerable injury at the base of the brain. This patient was past human skill, but nevertheless he received the most minute attention; and it may be worth while to contradict the statements which have been published, to the effect that Major Murray was placed in the same ward with Mr. Roberts, and that Mrs. Roberts was allowed to see Major Murray, and to address to him words of reproach and inquiry. Such proceedings did not occur, and would not have been compatible with the care exercised by the authorities of the hospital.

After a patient and searching inquiry, which terminated on Thursday evening, at half-past six o'clock, the Coroner's jury—without awaiting the summing-up of Mr. Bedford—returned an unanimous verdict of "Justifiable homicide."

NATIVE SURGEONS FOR INDIA.

COLONEL SYKES has appealed to the House of Commons to pronounce an authoritative opinion upon the grievances stated by those Indian native surgeons who were recently excluded from competition for medical appointments in the Army, after having educated themselves at great sacrifice, and in reliance on the continuance of privileges and promises which were valid until lately. The ground of disqualification will be remembered to have been, that since the amalgamation of the Imperial and Indian Armies the appointments were not made for the latter service only, but that all assistant-surgeons were now liable to serve in any part of the world. Very competent authorities have declared that Indians *pur sang* are constitutionally unfit for this service. These gentlemen were therefore unfit, and could not be appointed. The syllogism is perfect—*totus, teres, atque rotundus*; complete in its major and minor propositions, and rigorously logical in its conclusion. Nevertheless, the conclusion is unjust and intolerable. We cannot legislate syllogistically, or from absolute points of view. Grant that Parsees will not bear cold climates—that is no just reason for excluding them from the Indian service. Grant that the Indian and general services are amalgamated—that is still no just reason for excluding them from the Indian service. The promise that they should be so employed was proffered by the Government, and confirmed by Parliamentary assent. It was a just concession to their natural claims as British subjects. The present alleged inability to employ them arises out of an executive arrangement consequent on the amalgamation. Let the executive which is entrusted with carrying out the Imperial pledges devise means which shall admit the Indian candidates to the Indian service without involving the peril of carrying them all over the world. India is not abolished by the amalgamation. It still needs officials; large income is devoted to its adminis-

tration; it is heavily burthened with taxation to support the necessary establishment. The natives have been declared by Act of Parliament entitled to share in the employment thus created, and the rejection of Indian candidates for the medical department on the score of amalgamation is an evasion, deeply unjust, and unworthy of a great nation. The Under Secretary for War pacified the House by undertaking that justice should be done to the particular individuals who had petitioned, and that the Governor-General would find employment for them in India. But the general question is not met by this compromise, for which we long ago saw the necessity. It is to be regretted that a general promise was not exacted that the Government would consider what steps could be taken to redeem the pledges given to the natives of India in respect to the medical service of that country.

THE SURGEONS' COMPANY.

THE College of Surgeons is said to be in treaty for the celebrated picture, in the possession of the Company of Barbers in Monkwell-street, representing the incorporation of the Barber-Surgeons' Company by Henry VIII. The price stated is, we believe, about £3000. The picture is a great work of Holbein; and old Pepys mentions, in his Diary, having offered money for it:—

"And at noon comes, by appointment, Harris to dine with me; and after dinner he and I go to Chyrurgeons' Hall, where they are building it new, very fine, and then to see their theatre, which stood all the fire; and, which was our business, their great picture of Holbein's, thinking to have bought it, by the help of Mr. Pierce, for a little money. I did think to give £200 for it, it being said to be worth £1000; but it is so spoiled that I have no mind to it, and it is not a pleasant, though a good picture."

The picture here mentioned still adorns the Court-room at Barber-Surgeons' Hall. It represents Henry VIII. in the act of delivering their charter to the Barber-Surgeons and Surgeons' Companies, which were united in the thirty-second year of that King. The painting, which contains eighteen figures, is considered to be one of Holbein's best works, and is in good preservation, though it may have been damaged by the Great Fire, when the Hall suffered so much as to require repair. A fine print from the picture was made by B. Baron in 1736, and it has again been engraved for Mr. Charles Knight. The names of the persons represented by Holbein will be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April, 1759.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

HOMŒOPATHIC CONSULTATIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having read the letter from Professor Fergusson in your journal of last week, I cannot refrain from requesting the insertion of the following narrative:—

Early in the year 1853 I was attending a gentleman (an old patient and much-valued friend) who had, on several occasions, passed renal calculi, and had those symptoms indicating malignant disease about the lesser curvature of the stomach which induced me to give an unfavourable prognosis, when friends strongly urged him to try homœopathy. In a short time he frankly told me that he had no faith in homœopathy, but to please his friends, as I could not promise him permanent benefit, he had determined to place himself under the treatment of Dr. Bell (the same homœopathic practitioner, I believe, that Mr. Fergusson is said to have accompanied to Stamford) for a time; and when he heard that I could not conscientiously meet Dr. Bell, requested me occasionally to visit him (the patient) as a friend, and if I at any time observed symptoms needing more decided measures, kindly to inform him. On the 6th of April I was summoned to this gentleman, and found it necessary to

unload a rectum which had been unrelieved for nine days; renal symptoms were also present. I advised the adoption of other remedies, and urged the policy of not being guided by my opinion, but to have the combined opinions of two or three physicians of reputation; and on the 14th of April, a consultation was arranged at the residence of the late Dr. R. Bright. Drs. Bright, Addison, Bence Jones, and myself, were present. At that time the patient was clearly told that his urgent symptoms depended upon one or more calculi in the renal passages, and were, most probably, remediable; but that disease of a more serious character was going on in the vicinity of the stomach. When I next saw the patient, he expressed great satisfaction at the careful examination made, and the candour of the opinions expressed, but added that he had not taken the medicines prescribed, as his friends, who thought him looking better, had advised him "to give Bell another month." I still occasionally called. Diarrhoea occurred; the urine became turbid with mucus, pus, blood-corpuscles, and calcareous matter. Horse exercise was recommended, (not by me,) and bloody urine followed. I was now requested to meet Dr. Bell, and was informed that Dr. Bell would be happy to meet me; but I firmly declined, and strongly urged the patient to consult some surgical authority, as his symptoms indicated the presence of stone in the bladder. He told me that he should talk the matter over with Bell, and would have the opinion of Sir B. Brodie or Mr. Hilton. At my next visit, the patient informed me that he had mentioned what I had said to Dr. Bell, who replied, "I will bring down my friend Fergusson, who is the authority in these matters," and added, "Fergusson and I are like brothers," and led the patient to understand that they were in frequent consultation. I mentioned that Professor Fergusson had lately (May 8th) published a letter stating that he did not consult with homœopaths, and expressed doubts as to his coming down with Dr. Bell. However, when I next called I was greeted with, "Well, Bell brought down Fergusson" (on Tuesday, June 15th). I expressed surprise, and inquired if there had been a consultation. He replied, "Yes, what I should call a consultation. Mr. Fergusson came down with Bell—examined my bladder twice with him in this room; they retired into my library, and returned to tell me the result of their conference, Mr. Fergusson informing me that he could not feel the stone so readily as he could wish, and adding that he should be very happy to come down again in ten days or a fortnight if I wished it, and that I could not do better than continue under Dr. Bell's care." (I believe I am accurately reporting the words employed by the patient to me.) In after-conversation this gentleman remarked "that it appeared to him very strange," and inquired "how he was to understand that Mr. Fergusson, who, he believed, occupied a high position in his profession, *could* meet Dr. Bell in consultation, and I *could not*?" My reply was to the effect that I could not explain it, but that I felt it would have been neither honest nor honourable for me to have done so, and added that I thought it would be equally inconsistent if a Roman Catholic or Protestant minister assisted in services peculiar to the other.

The sanction given directly or indirectly to homœopathy by Professor Fergusson or his representative (after the Professor's letter I think I am justified in inferring that he must have been personated), I need scarcely add was prejudicial to myself, and as the patient had very numerous friends, a wide-spread injury may have been inflicted on rational medicine and its practitioners. I may add, that I found this gentleman under the influence of opium, and under the impression that he was improving; and I was shown a prescription, written by Dr. Bell, for medicines which he had not brought with him. (Dec. uva ursi, a dessertspoonful to be taken twice a day; ext. opii, gr. viii., to be divided into six equal pills: one to be taken every night.) The patient believed the pills to be homœopathic because they were so small (I possess tolerable evidence that forty grains of opium at least were administered); and when Dr. Bell was informed of my remark, "that each pill contained as large a dose of opium as I should prescribe," I was told he replied, "that he was a regularly educated medical man, and did not despise the more active remedies when needed." The condition of this gentleman's urine never improved; diarrhoea continued, emaciation &c. progressed, and death occurred in October, 1858. The certificate of the cause of death given by Dr. Bell may be found recorded—"Inflammation of the mucous membrane generally, but of the kidneys in particular."

For three years I certainly have had the strongest possible impression that a consultation had been held, and that Mr. Fergusson had permitted himself to be made the professional tool of a known *professed* disciple of Hahnemann, at Dulwich, on June 15th, 1858. The patient and his immediate friends

were also impressed that a consultation was held with Mr. Fergusson, and that Mr. Fergusson did not disapprove of homœopathic practice; and I feel that it ought *now* to be a matter of greater moment to Mr. Fergusson (as a member of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons) than to myself that such impressions should be effectually removed.

I cannot avoid adding a line or two more. The impression left upon my mind after reading Mr. Fergusson's last letter is, that he admits the disposition to nibble at the bait, but tries to avoid the hook. I would recommend him (and others) thoughtfully to digest the leading article in THE LANCET of May 15th, 1858, from which I now quote only a few words:—"Quackery of any kind is folly, falsehood, or scoundrelism. In its mildest form it can never be harmless. There must be no dallying with it. Truth is white; falsehood is black. Let every man choose between them."

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Dulwich, July, 1861.

EDWARD RAY, F.R.C.S.E.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The opinion and intention of Professor Fergusson expressed in his letter in last week's LANCET appear to me highly unsatisfactory, and I have no doubt but that it must cause the same feeling in the profession generally. I hope, if such is the case, that his statement will not be allowed to pass without a general expression of disapproval. It appears to me that to meet a homœopath, to hear his history of a case, and to give opinion and advice, is to give him that position, importance, and encouragement which he desires; and not all the sophistry in the world could do away with the impression which the patient and his friends must have, that the homœopath is sanctioned and encouraged by the leading men of the profession. Although the homœopath may not be acknowledged verbally, he cannot be anything but a homœopath. The man who could shut his eyes and thrust his hands into his neighbour's pocket and extract thence the contents, would find it very difficult to persuade the judge that as he (the criminal) did not see the proceeding, therefore he was acting quite legally.

As I consider homœopathy to be the most ridiculous quackery, and encouragement of it in any way to be most criminal, I shall never, with such an opinion, feel myself justified in consulting with those who give it their countenance.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Great Wakering, Essex, July, 1861.

JAMES ADAMS, M.D.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET of the 20th inst., I observed an exultatory letter from Professor Fergusson of an accusation levelled against him as a supporter of homœopathy. I appeal to those who know him, and beg to ask them whether he is a man who would descend from the high pedestal he occupies to uphold a rotten and a profligate system. The under-current is too apparent to require comment. But I could not pass over the opportunity thus afforded to express my surprise at the necessity for this repudiation and explanation of a charge from which the profession and the public have long since absolved him, and to which his courteous, generous, and manly conduct is daily giving the lie.

Yours obediently,

Pentonville, July, 1861.

WM. SETH GILL, M.R.C.S.

INJURIES CAUSED BY LIGHTNING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I enclose the following particulars of the case to which Mr. Brent directed the attention of your readers in THE LANCET of the 13th instant:—

About twelve o'clock on Wednesday, the 5th ult., William Taylor (the companion of the unfortunate man who was killed) was admitted into the Royal Free Hospital, suffering from injuries produced by lightning. Externally there was a burn upon the nape of the neck, where the metallic watch-guard rested; and from the point where the current of electricity left the chain, the skin was vesicated in a straight line down to the feet, scorching the hair of the pubis in its course. His intellect was confused, and his general condition that of collapse. With the aid of stimulants he became sufficiently restored to communicate his feelings to me. There was paralysis of the lower extremities, with anæsthesia, and retention of urine. He was deaf, and complained of a noise in his ears like thunder; he had difficulty in articulating, and pain in swallowing, with a