opinion "that the child had died from other causes; that the operation of lancing the gum had been necessary, and had been done with due care and caution." The child was then buried. The certificate of the cause of death sent by Mr. Jones, the surgeon, states that the child died from "inflammation, and its consequences!"

These, Sir, are additional facts, separate and apart from the case as a professional report. I again abstain from comment; but I am sure they will be interesting to you, and may serve to show what little importance should be attached to the suggestion of a professional report. Unless the practitioners who gave an opinion are disposed to abandon their conclusions, it will become my painful duty to trouble you on the subject.—I remain, Sir, yours respectfully,

WILLIAM ANDERSON.

THE REFLEX FUNCTION.
To the Editor of The Lancet.

Sir,—Your observations in your late articles relative to the Royal Society, and the researches of Dr. Marshall Hall on the nervous system, have caused many in the profession to wish to know more about them. I have referred to the British and Foreign Medical Review, and to the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, for this information. In the former there are, at least, a dozen articles on Dr. M. Hall and his labours; but they are all plainly written in ill-nature, and are not calculated to lead a stranger to procure the original volumes. In the latter there is, as far as I can discover, no such notice in any number of this Review. There is certainly something rotten in the state of medicine when such things are.

I am sure it would serve the profession if you would give a full and fair account of this investigation in an early number, stating what part of Dr. Hall's works is most essential to the master of the subject.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Liverpool, July, 1846.

Tyro.

** The facts stated by our correspondent are singular. We shall certainly comply with his request, for we believe there are few persons who really know what advances have been made in the knowledge of the nervous system.—Ed. L.

TREATMENT OF UTERINE HEMORRHAGE.
To the Editor of The Lancet.

Sir,—Your correspondent, Dr. Craig, as given in the last number of The Lancet, on the subject of haemorrhage and protracted labour, we think is perfectly justified in attaching very great importance to the judicious administration of opium in the treatment of these cases. For many years past, we have invariably, in our practice, had recourse to this most potent medicine—generally combined with the tinctures of hyoscyamus and digitalis, in camphor mixture or infusion of roses—in all uterine haemorrhages, whether from the impregnated or unimpregnated uterus. As a matter of course, it may be necessary to employ other remedies at the same time, which may be either depletory or stimulant, according to the circumstances of the case. In one instance it may be proper to bleed; in another, we must administer powerful cordials. In both, however, opium will very generally do good. A vast number of cases of menorrhagia are best treated with the following regimen: for a twelvemonth, half an ounce of infusion of opium, thirty minims; tincture of opium, thirty minims; tincture of henbane, a drachm; tincture of foxglove, a drachm. Mix. A sixth part to be taken every six hours. Perfect quietude to be enjoined, and all drinks to be taken cool.

In the course of one, two, or three days, the haemorrhage will almost certainly have ceased, (provided no organic mischief be present;) then recourse must be had to quinina, elixir of vitriol, &c., to restore the strength. Very nearly the same treatment will suit ninety out of every hundred cases of early miscarriage. With respect to the management of protracted labour, and the criticisms of Dr. Craig on the two cases of Dr. Lever, reported (from the Guy's Hospital Reports, we believe) in the Medico-Chirurgical Review for January of the present year, we must leave Dr. L. to reply. We are quite as doubtful as Dr. Craig seems to be, with respect to the propriety of incision of the os uteri, in cases of lingering labour, from rigidity of this part.

July, 1846.

DELTA.

MEDICAL FEES AT ASSURANCE OFFICES.
To the Editor of The Lancet.

Sir,—A medical friend having this moment called my attention to the letter which Dr. A. P. Stewart has published, in the last number of The Lancet, as addressed to me, may I request the favour of the insertion of a few hasty lines in reply to the same, in your next number.

Dr. Stewart, of course, intended his letter to apply to assurance offices in general, and my observations are equally applicable to them. I would request medical gentlemen to present the entire views of this question taken by the directors of life-assurance institutions. I will therefore simply venture to remind Dr. Stewart, that a very high estimate is in the profession attached to the practice of the streets of Edinburgh—has distinctly stated, that he considers the exaction of a fee by medical men, for simply giving their opinion whether a particular patient is or is not of sound constitution, to be a somewhat illiberal assertion of their professional privileges and dues. The case would be widely different if the proposer for assurance, or the assurance office, requested the medical referee to institute a new and special examination. It has appeared to me that the arguments of medical gentlemen have always tended to this assumption; and to the view that directors are consulting them professionally on every case. But, as far as I am aware, the medical referee is only requested to state the impressions which his past attendance on the proposer have left, with reference to the proposer's constitution and prospects of life. Surely it is not too much to expect from the courtesy of the profession a brief and plain answer, often merely monosyllabic, to questions of this nature.

I will only further allude to the fact, that the proposer himself is obviously bound to furnish the office with satisfactory proofs of his good health; and that if any charges ought to be incurred in obtaining these proofs, they rest, in all equity, upon the proposer himself.

One word only as to the confidential character of the replies to offices, as noticed in the letter of Mr. Candlen, in the same number. But I am at all doubts convinced, that all documents generally are, considered strictly confidential, with reference to all other parties than the directors and officials.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most humble servant,

THE SECRETARY OF THE SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION.

London, July, 1846.

** It is scarcely necessary to remark, that we entirely dissent from the views of our correspondent.—Ed. L.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY—ANATOMY OF THE DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS.—(PLATYPUS ANATINUS.)
To the Editor of The Lancet.

Sir,—Having lately observed in The Lancet certain complaints against the Royal Society, relative to the papers laid before it, I am induced to send for your perusal a statement of what occurred to myself some years since, which, if you think it at all bears upon the subject, is quite at your service for insertion.

In the year 1832, I received, as honorary secretary to the Norfolk and Norwich Museum, two specimens of the duck-billed animal (platypus anatinus) from Van Diemen's Land, preserved in spirits. On examination they were found unfit for stuffing; I therefore determined to make skeletons of them for the institution, previously to which I examined their internal structure, as far as their semi-putrid state would permit. I read the results of this investigation at a committee meeting of the museum, offered to read the paper before the Royal Society. To this I acceded with much pleasure; and I had coloured drawings made of all the parts, if I am not mistaken, was then President of the Norwich Museum, and was present at the meeting, offered to read the paper before the Royal Society. To this I acceded with much pleasure; and I had coloured drawings made of all the parts, and sent them to the museum; and my discovery, and the names I gave to the various parts of the animal, were inserted in the Philosophical Transactions, and that I should thus be the means of clearing up some of the difficulties that had surrounded the anatomical structure of this curious animal, and the disagreements amongst anatomists as to the different parts of the animal injected and preserved in spirits, and which are still in the collection of that institution.

Mr. Dawson Turner, F.B. & L.S., &c., of Yarmouth, who, if I am not mistaken, was then President of the Norwich Museum, and was present at the meeting, offered to read the paper before the Royal Society. To this I acceded with much pleasure; and I had coloured drawings made of all the parts, and sent them to the museum; and my discovery, and the names I gave to the various parts of the animal, were inserted in the Philosophical Transactions, and that I should thus be the means of clearing up some of the difficulties that had surrounded the anatomical structure of this curious animal, and the disagreements amongst anatomists as to the different parts of the animal injected and preserved in spirits, and which are still in the collection of that institution.

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When, some months after, a paper on the platypus and the kangaroo, by Professor Owen, was read at a meeting of the Society, and published, as it deserved to be, I could not help feeling that my communication, though far inferior to his, was entitled to some notice, the discovery of the mammary glands having been first made and communicated to the Society by myself. I do not assert that the circumstance of Professor Owen being engaged in investigating the same subject was the cause of my paper having been laid aside, though I own it did suggest itself to me as the most probable explanation; for his investigations were on too extensive a scale not to have been known to some members of the Society.

I am, Sir, yours,

Richard Griffin, M.R.C.S.

P.S.—I regret that I have not a duplicate of the paper, and can therefore only lay before you a copy of the rough notes, taken at the time, but the original and drawings are in the possession of the Royal Society. Some are in the library of the Norfolk and Norwich Museum, which are sufficient to authenticate this communication.

Weymouth, June 26th, 1846.

ANATOMY OF THE PLATYPUS ANATINUS.

Having been requested by the Committee of the Norfolk and Norwich Museum to make skeletons of the male and female of the platypus anatinus, I thus enjoyed a rare opportunity of examining their internal structure, and such of my observations as disagree with the scientific description given by Sir Everard Home, in the ninety-second volume of the Philosophical Transactions, I am desirous of communicating to the public.

Having the hair from the abdomen of the female, I discovered two circular portions of skin, separated an inch and a half from each other, and four inches and a half from the verge of the anus, one being on each side of the abdomen. They were perforated by numerous ducts, which, upon removing the skin, I traced to two large mammary glands, covering nearly the whole under surface of the animal. These glands, upon slight examination, might be deemed as portions of fat; indeed, they were considered so by Sir Everard, whose words are—"The size of the body in the female is rendered proportionally larger than that of the male, by a quantity of fat lying everywhere under the skin." But upon dissecting one of them, I readily perceived it to be glandular. Sir Everard, in vol. for 1819, that "the young provide for themselves, the mother not giving suck." He was not aware of the existence of these glands, or he could not have made this assertion: in fact, he says, when speaking of the ornithorynchus hystrix, "when more of this extraordinary tribe of animals, which, although quadrupeds, are not mammalia, shall have been discovered," &c. &c. How then, we may ask, do they give suck, to which I would venture to reply, that either from the peculiar formation of their beaks, which have lips attached with the rectum in a common passage; at its upper part is the meatus urinarius, or passage from the urinary bladder; on each side of this are two openings, scarcely admitting a small shell, but none of the concrete substance mentioned by Sir Everard; through these, it is stated, the semen passes, but having rapidly extended to his shoulder, he was in a few minutes threatened with lock-jaw, and exhibited all the symptoms of a person bitten by a venomous snake. The pain from the first was insupportable, and cold sweating of the stomach took place, so alarmingly, that I found it necessary, besides the external application of oil and vinegar, to administer large quantities of the volatile alkali, with opium, which I really think preserved his life. He was obliged to keep his bed for several days, and did not recover the perfect use of his hand for nine weeks." In the cheek-pouches were small shells, but none of the concrete substance mentioned by Sir Everard; the peritoneum of the male was studded with chalky accretions.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

Sir,—I venture to direct attention, through the medium of The Lancet, to the manner in which the University of London, which I believe to be as Improvident and impolitic as it is injurious and unjust, and which, although not necessarily the result either of the spirit or of the terms of its by-laws, is unhappily permitted to form part of a system at present enforced, and seems to militate against the prosperity of the institution, by inflicting a serious injury upon all, and no small injustice upon many, of the unsuccessful competitors, who fail in their first attempts to overcome the severe struggle with which complaints, forwarded directly to the senate, and yet proceeding from personages of authority, or emanating from aggrieved individuals, have in times past been deemed intrusive, and their claims for consideration treated accordingly. It will, however, be sufficiently obvious, that in alluding publicly to the wrong of which I complain, I am actuated by a desire to see a fair and reasonable justice awarded to those who fail in their first attempts to overcome the severe and probing examinations of the University; and thus sincerely anxious to aid in promoting its welfare, by urging upon the senate a less equivocal recognition, and a more equitable adjustment, of the rights of the subjects. I have no authority to boast, no personal grievance on which to declaim; I am disinterested, save in the proceedings and the character of the University, and ambitious only in ministering to the rights of