

tained as that which *The Times* correspondents have so lately asserted, the boon would be an invaluable one both to the operator and the patient: the deadly vapours of chloroform would give place to the harmless current of the battery, and patients would no longer shrink from an operation which, though a minor one, is nevertheless rife with extreme agony: but we are convinced that no patient who had borne extraction under the influence of galvanism, and without it, would give preference to the former mode of operating, which, judging from our own feelings, only augments the misery. It may be urged that we were unable to arrive at a correct conclusion, not having submitted to the final ordeal; but we are of opinion that our test was the more satisfactory, for directly the nerve is ruptured, which must necessarily be one of the first effects of extraction, the electric current is cut off; and it is immaterial whether it be continued during the latter part of the operation or not.—We are, Sir, your obedient servants,

Harrow-road, Upper Berkely-street.  
September, 1858.

A. PRINCE, M.R.C.S  
F. FENNEL, Dentist.

### MANAGEMENT OF GAOLS AND WORK- HOUSES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Touching the subject of workhouse management, there is not one word in your leading article of the 11th ult. but must at once strike every one as true. Workhouses differ from gaols inasmuch as the former admit both worthy and unworthy subjects; the latter only admit unworthy people sent there for crime. Perhaps at the present time these unworthy people meet with more sympathy than is their due; still it is proper that everything supplied to them should be as genuine as the authorities having the supervision of them can obtain. So it should be with the workhouses, and I suppose, under the present circumstances and condition of things, such is the case.

Governors of gaols are often, if not always, gentlemen; governors of workhouses, or masters and matrons, are people but little removed from the class they overlook. This is one way of accounting for many things that are improper in pauper management. Then, again, who are the people that overlook the masters and matrons? People (guardians) who in their own walk of life may be exemplary enough, yet totally unfit to supervise others. The magistrates and higher classes ought to take more interest in pauper business than they do. It is their business, for the inmates of workhouses are often the worn-out labourers of the wealthy classes, and the wealthy classes, having provided workhouses for them, ought to see to their proper treatment and management.

The bad sort—for the thief and prostitute seek shelter in the workhouse, when worn out by their improper ways, for the purpose of being recruited, and then they return to their iniquity—ought to be separated from those above them in morals, &c., and therefore more room ought to be devoted to them; even their meals ought to be served in different apartments. The associations in the workhouses are most to be complained of.

I believe the clothing of pauper inmates is the same in the winter as the summer. This is a great injury and injustice, and does infinite mischief and causes much grumbling. Ladies ought to be interested in the supervision of female paupers; for there are many things in the management of the female inmates of a workhouse incomprehensible to the guardians, as at present constituted; and, indeed, many wants belonging to the women cannot be mentioned to men in very decency.

Let magistrates and gentlemen undertake the supervision of the paupers, and let the master and matron be selected from a rather higher order than they now are, and give the *superior officers* more management and control, and then a different state of things might result. As it is, the officers of superior education are absolutely under the command of inferiors in every respect; and, when the natural order of things is reversed, what can be expected but evil results.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Sept. 1858

A POOR-LAW SURGEON.

### LECTURES AND LECTURERS ON PHYSIOLOGY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The new regulations of the examining boards have done much good by reducing the number of lectures to be attended by the student, and they would confer a still greater boon

were they to exercise some surveillance on the matter and manner of the several courses. The one to which I wish to call your attention at present is the course of "Physiology and General and Morbid Anatomy." As this title necessarily gives a wide range of subjects, the various lecturers indulge their several idiosyncrasies to their hearts' delight, and accordingly the physiological course varies in almost every particular in the several schools. One lecturer gives little else than physiological chemistry; another, microscopic anatomy, to the exclusion of other subjects; others, again, waste their own and their pupils' time by recapitulating a great deal of the rough anatomy which is properly given by the anatomical lecturer. Now as medical students are looking forward to becoming medical practitioners and not philosophers merely, it would seem but rational to direct their minds to those parts of physiological science which bear most upon their future occupations. A man must be acquainted with the "Science of Life," in order that he may know how to combat disease, and must know thoroughly how the functions of the various organs are performed in health, before he can undertake to reinstate them when perverted; but it is not necessary that he should be "up" in all the intricacies of organic chemistry, nor be able to settle the vexed question of the malignancy of myeloid growths. Although minute anatomy must necessarily form part of the physiological course, it must be remembered that it does so only in order that the *functions* of the several organs may be properly understood; and, therefore, to spend days on the former, and perhaps only half an hour on the latter, is a manifest injustice to the student. Respecting minute anatomy, too, I may remark how miserably deficient some of the lecturers are in microscopic illustrations. Diagrams are all very well as aids, but each student ought to see each structure under the microscope at the time of the lecture, and not days after, when he has forgotten all about it. (The microscopic arrangements at the London Hospital theatre are the best I know.)

As regards the functions, the same want of illustration prevails. Many things can be demonstrated in a few minutes, which it would take hours to explain without illustration, and the actual experiment serves to fix the fact indelibly in the student's mind. The lecturer on Physiology is clearly bound to explain the morbid changes which the several tissues and organs undergo, and the impairment of function which they give rise to; but the treatment should of course be left for other teachers. To give a proper course of physiological lectures, a man must devote a good deal of care and trouble in making preparations for each lecture, and as the lecturer on Physiology has larger fees than most of the other teachers, it is but reasonable to expect him to spare no trouble or expense in making his course complete.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Sept. 1858.

PHYSIOLOGY.

### MEDICAL REGISTRATION ASSOCIATIONS.

MEETINGS for the purpose of forming Registration Associations, with the view of carrying out effectively the New Medical Act, are about to be held in Lambeth, Macclesfield, Bristol, Newport (Isle of Wight), and other places. It is essential that at these gatherings unanimity should prevail; and it should be the object of every qualified practitioner to assist in making the Medical Act effective by putting a stop to the proceedings of unqualified practitioners and quacks of every description.

PUBLIC DRINKING FOUNTAINS. — The late mayor of Chester, Peter Eaton, Esq., an extensive brewer there, had placed at his own expense, in different parts of the town, public drinking fountains, from which the wayfarer may slake his thirst, a neat bowl being attached to each fountain, for the convenience of drinking. This supply of pure water has been found of great advantage to the working classes in the city, and an indirect dissuasive from the public house. The corporation of Sunderland also are at present erecting public drinking fountains in their borough, in the principal thoroughfares, at the railway stations, and in the public park. Those which are fixed against the walls are made of cast iron, enamelled on the inside, in shape somewhat similar to those at Liverpool; the design is exceedingly neat, and is surmounted by the borough arms. Eight fountains are at present in course of erection, but the number will shortly be increased. The cost of each fountain is about £5.