

In another, we find the following:—

"I cannot but call it an unhappy and degrading exhibition, not only on account of the inherent vulgarity of the thing,—inviting gentlemen with the deliberate purpose of insulting them,—but from its being calculated to lower the profession in the estimation of the illustrious visitors who were present, as well as in that of Europe, who will be ill compensated for the usual topics introduced in the annual Oration, by the scurrilous and vulgar attack upon the Society of Apothecaries, and those members of the College who have exerted themselves to reform and raise the profession. Verily, if the Council knowingly, and of aforethought, put Mr. Lawrence forward as their defender, it is only to be accounted for on the old principle, that

'Quem vult Deus perdere
Prius dementat.'

"We have not forgotten, although Mr. Lawrence may have done so, that he once presided at a meeting held at the Freemasons' Tavern, for the purpose of reforming the College, and for tearing open the exclusiveness of the Council, in condemning which he could scarce find words strong enough to express his virtuous indignation. We have not forgotten either his humiliating election to the Council by a bare majority of one,—his toadyism and turnings even to obtain this! And yet Mr. Lawrence is the man,—Mr. Lawrence, the maligner of his brother Councillor, Mr. Guthrie,—the spitter of his venom upon all who thwart his vanity,—the convicted of a falsehood at the first public election of Councillors,—whom the Council, in their utter helplessness and destitution of talent, in their imbecility and temerity, thrust forward to insult a profession already degraded by such an one being amongst the Council. Surely it were better that the Oration should have been altogether omitted, than that such an one should be delivered, and by such a man! If the Council come not forward to disown it as a body, they are lost, utterly lost in public opinion; for which, despite their silence, despite the vulgar and coarse effrontery of Mr. Lawrence, they have some regard, as evinced by the show of defence which he made."

MR. LISTON ON LITHOTRITY.

IN Sir Philip Crampton's lecture on the merits of lithotripsy, published in *THE LANCET* of Feb. 14, p. 182, Mr. Liston's opinion of the operation is quoted from his "Elements of Surgery," published in 1832, as opposed to the operation of lithotripsy. The defective state of the apparatus, rendering the operation difficult and extremely dangerous, fully justified Mr. Liston in adopting the unfavourable view with which he regarded the operation. Since that period, the lithotripsy instruments have undergone considerable modification and improvement; and Mr. Liston writes thus in the third edition of the "Practical Surgery," published in 1840:—

"The operation of lithotripsy has been much improved and simplified in all respects; it is applicable now to a great variety of cases, and is likely, in a few years, to supersede in a great measure the operation of cutting for stone. Until very lately, patients applying to surgeons were constantly recommended to submit to the knife, in order to get rid of stone in the bladder, whatever might be the size of the concretion, or the state of the urinary organs. On the other hand, if he fell into the hands of the grinder, no matter what the peculiarities of his case, he was as certain to be subjected to the boring and hammering processes. Now that the merits of both operations are better understood and appreciated,—some few surgeons having thought proper to turn their attention to the matter, and study and understand lithotripsy as well as lithotomy,—patients have a chance of being treated judiciously and conscientiously, and of having that proceeding resorted to which is adapted to the circumstances of their respective cases. I was not slow to adopt the operation of crushing, have always had a favourable impression of it, and have throughout used the same language regarding it; yet I have the credit of being an opponent of lithotripsy. I have all along been, and am certainly still, opposed to the abuse of any one operation, by its indiscriminate employment in all cases, and by its being practised by those alone who know no other. It can be employed safely only by those who understand well the healthy anatomy of the urethra and bladder: who are acquainted with their sympathies, vital actions, and pathological changes; and who both understand, and are in the constant habit of treating, derangements of their functions. The operation of lithotripsy is applicable to patients above the age of puberty, when the symptoms have not endured very long; when the foreign body is ascertained to be about six or

seven lines measurement, or even more perhaps, say as large as a chesnut; when the bladder and urethra are in a tolerably healthy and normal condition,—as indicated by the power to retain the urine comfortably for several hours, and to pass it in a tolerably free stream; and when the viscus admits of injection and a careful exploration. That the stone may be seized readily, and acted upon without danger to the lining membrane, the bladder should contain at least five or six ounces of fluid."

LETTER FROM DR. CORY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your leading article on the subject of "Quackery," in *THE LANCET* of Feb. 14th, you have introduced the name which I bear, among the delinquent disciples of Empiricism. As there are only two or three of the name practising in this metropolis, I hope you will allow me to state that I have never had any connexion, either directly or indirectly, with any nostrum or patent medicine, and also that I consider the legitimate practitioners of medicine much indebted to you for your able exposition and denunciation of all the varieties of quackery.—I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

EDWARD AUGUSTUS CORY, M.D.,
Member of the College of Surgeons and
Society of Apothecaries, &c.

Clarke's Terrace, Cannon Street Road, Feb. 1846.

LETTER FROM DR. BASHAM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In one of the leading articles of your journal of last Saturday, on quacks and their abettors, you have selected a letter of mine, in favour of the use of Carrara Water, as an illustration of the dietetic quackery of the day. I do not complain of the tone or spirit in which your observations are made; but I claim your attention to the fact, that in last July, before my letter to Mr. Maugham was published, there was admitted into the pages of *THE LANCET* an article by me on the medicinal uses of the bicarbonate of lime, containing a short statement of the special forms of indigestion, in which this factitious water had proved serviceable: mention was also made of those cases in which it was inadmissible, and probably might prove injurious. The paper contained, also, a short account of the mechanical process of preparing the water, and some difficulties of a chemical nature, inseparable from its preparation from common chalk—such as the presence of alumina, &c. &c.—are mentioned.

This article was intended honestly to direct the attention of the profession to the dietetic and medicinal uses of this new preparation; that my opinion might be tested by general experience, convinced that the same journal which permitted an advocacy of its efficiency would equally receive a denial and counter-statement, if I had overrated the merits of this water.

I cannot think, therefore, that, after your publication of an article explaining the manner of preparation, and the dietetic and medicinal uses of this water, I can be accounted amenable to your condemnation of giving a most unqualified opinion of a patent medicine; or that, after directing the attention of the profession to a new preparation, which I had satisfied myself was serviceable, as an adjunct, in some forms of indigestion, and cautioning against its use in others, I can be entitled to the not very enviable distinction of an abettor of quackery. I trust, therefore, that you will afford publicity to this letter, or to the facts stated therein, that I may be exonerated from the charges, whether of presumption in dictating to the profession, or of having committed the grave error of intruding myself between medical men and their patients.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

W. R. BASHAM.

Chester-street, Grosvenor-place, Feb. 1846.

* * Dr. Basham is on the wrong tack. Explanation of a paper published before it was generally known that the Carrara Water was to be launched out as a quack medicine, is no defence of a testimonial published constantly since the said preparation has been so advertised. Dr. Basham defends that which is indefensible. He was charged with giving, for public advertisement, a testimonial in favour of a patent medicine, or dietetic nostrum. His letter does not touch this charge at all. It would have been much better if he had written to say that as a patent preparation he should never

prescribe it again, and should forthwith recall his testimonial. He would thus have remedied his own error, and saved us further remarks. What if the Carrara Water have virtues? Is it not indisputably a patent, a quack medicine? We know of no difference between the terms; and would Dr. Basham fasten a moral poison on the profession, for the sake of another palliative of dyspepsia? This is what it really comes to. We respect the Doctor, and regret finding him in a wrong position.—Ed. L.

THE BRISTOL MEDICAL SCHOOL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am directed by the Associated Lecturers of the Bristol Medical School, to request insertion in *THE LANCET*, of the following remarks, in reply to a letter from Mr. Lansdown, published in the number of that journal for February 7.

Mr. Lansdown states, that having had occasion to prefer a charge against the Bristol Medical School, his complaint was treated with insolence: and after going into a variety of details to substantiate his charge, he appeals to the medical public for a verdict in his favour.

The charge originally brought by Mr. Lansdown against the lecturers was,—to quote the words of his first note addressed to them,—of “the very irregular manner in which the lectures at the School are usually delivered:”—and he subsequently, in the same note, refers to this as “a general charge of complaint,” including unpunctuality in the hour of attendance, as well as omission, or rather postponement of lectures. And all this was mainly based on the testimony of one pupil, whose own attendance was found, on reference to the class registers, to have been extremely irregular.

To this allegation, so supported, the lecturers, believing it to be unwarranted, returned by their secretary, a simple, but not, as they conceive, uncourteous, far less insolent reply,—expressive of surprise that it should have been made, and offering Mr. Lansdown the means of investigating for himself the degree of regularity with which the lectures had been delivered. The result of such an investigation showed, that out of the whole number of lectures which, agreeably to the prospectus, should have been delivered from the commencement of the session to the time of Mr. L.'s complaint, and which would have amounted to about 360, thirty-three had been postponed. Of these, it further appeared, seven belonged to the course of Theory and Practice of Medicine, six to that of Surgery, six to Midwifery, three to General Anatomy, one to Descriptive Anatomy, and ten to Materia Medica. With respect to the last-mentioned course, the lecturer himself has sent you an answer, removing the responsibility from the body of lecturers; and, with that exception, it will be at once evident, that the only noticeable postponements occurred in those courses, the delivery of which is, from the nature of their subjects, preferably entrusted to gentlemen whose extensive engagements in practice, while furnishing presumptive evidence of superior qualification for the chairs they occupy, afford at the same time a sufficiently obvious explanation of their occasional unanticipated and unavoidable absence from their place in the lecture-room. Such an explanation, seeming to the lecturers themselves both obvious and reasonable, must, they thought, have occurred to Mr. Lansdown; and they therefore again declined to admit that the *general charge* preferred by him rested on just or reasonable grounds. They had reason to believe, that whenever the cause for which a lecture was postponed allowed it to be done, due preparatory notice had been given: and they knew that, with respect at least to six of the seven winter courses, the punctuality of the lecturers was as great as was possible. The readers of *THE LANCET*, to whom Mr. Lansdown appeals, need not be informed that the engagements of men actively occupied in the general duties of the profession in provincial towns,—and by such it is that the posts of teachers in the provincial schools must necessarily for the most part be filled,—are absolutely unable to obey, with undeviating regularity, the fixed appropriation of their time at a certain hour on every day, or on four out of the six days in the week.

By far the greater number of the instances of alleged neglect brought forward by Mr. L., are capable of satisfactory explanation on the grounds alluded to;—one might be shown to have been due to the pupil on whose testimony Mr. L.'s first sweeping charge was made. But the lecturers, not supposing it likely that the tribunal before which Mr. L. has brought them, will enter into the *details* either of the accusation or

defence, prefer to base their justification upon the general statements already made:—adding only what was stated also to Mr. Lansdown,—that the breaks, which unavoidably occur from time to time in the continuous delivery of a long course of lectures, are never allowed to prevent the completion of the course, in accordance with the regulations of the examining bodies,—and that it is very seldom that any one of the courses remains uncompleted at the time when the respective sessions usually terminate.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
AUGUSTIN PRICHARD, Honorary Secretary.
Bristol Medical School, Feb. 1846.

STATE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION IN SCOTLAND.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I take the liberty of sending you a copy of a certificate, (addressed to the teacher of a neighbouring parish—Kilmalcolm,) as an example of the necessity of some legislative enactment, compelling public bodies to receive medical certificates which are signed by medical men only. The individual whose name is attached has a licence, it is true, but it is from the board of excise, permitting him to retail spirituous liquors. He, however, scorns such limitations, and will sell a half-penny's worth of butter-milk, or a shilling's worth of quinine, will bring a pot of porter, or set an arm with equal complacency. He commenced business here as a dancing-master, but not succeeding, turned, with dancing-master-like agility, to the analogous (!) branches of medicine and surgery. That a portion of the population should entrust their lives to an individual to whom they would not confide their children's education in so important a matter as dancing, is their own affair. But, Mr. Editor, would you believe that an officer of her Majesty's customs was permitted to absent himself from his duties on the ground of a certificate granted by the same individual, of corresponding orthography, and in which, among other symptoms of indisposition, the patient's pulse was stated to be nine hundred and ninety-nine.—I am, Mr. Editor, your obedient servant,

A PROVINCIAL PHYSICIAN IN SCOTLAND.

February, 1846.

13th octob., 45.—to the Gentlemen of Purs rets in Kilmalokam Gentlem this is to certyfy that Alex Holm hes ben affected with a sor hand this 2 weets and wil be for a few weets longer “I have Been Drecing his wovnds ones a day Sinc and I Know his Sirckamstans which I hope your Honors wil do the Sam your arly notes to the abuve wil obleg the Nedful.—I am, Gentlemen, yours Trwly.

“To Mr. —, Techer, Kilmalokam.”

MR. BROWN'S CASE OF OVARIAN DROPSY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I do not know whether you admit into your journal reviews or critical remarks* upon articles originally appearing in your pages; but if such productions have an exemption from the notices that point out the value or defects of other publications, there is clearly a flaw in our system of journalism that affords impunity to the writers of twaddle and quackery.

I am led to make these remarks by the perusal of a paper, in the last number of *THE LANCET*, by one “Isaac B. Brown, Esq., Consulting Accoucheur to the Paddington Lying-in Charity.”

The “practice” in this case, as detailed by the “practitioner,” is a specimen of what sometimes occurs in that walk of the profession called “general practice”—a profuse pouring in of drugs of all sorts, without any settled physiological principle of treatment.

When I read the reports of cases in the journals of the day, the blood freezes within me, so horror-struck am I at what the patients suffer at the hands of the doctor; and I am never astonished at finding an account of the *post mortem*, for which, I confess, I often look down to the bottom, in advance, seeing, from the first day or two's treatment, that all is up with the patient. That the patient, in the present case, had a narrow escape, is palpable, and it is equally so that her surviving the treatment is to be attributed entirely to a more than human constitution. But the lady recovered, and the recovery is called a *cure*, and the cure, so called, is ascribed to the treat-

* If our correspondent had been a regular reader of *THE LANCET*, he would have known that it has never been our practice to exclude such “critical remarks” from our columns.—Ed. L.