

THE LANCET.

London, Saturday, February, 10, 1827.

IF the efforts of the SURGICAL REFORMERS were directed against the existing Charter, merely for the purpose of effecting the dismissal and humiliation of the "Ruling Powers," they would merit little notice, and less support. The Members of the College have more enlarged views. It is true, their personal wrongs have been numerous, and that they are anxious to escape from the yoke of their present tyrants; but they are too magnanimous to require that this emancipation should be evidence of their persecutors' degradation. Feelings of animosity should ever be alien to the promoters of legislative enactments, otherwise greater injustice might be inflicted than that which it is proposed to remedy. When men descend to the gratification of feelings of revenge, they are always reduced to the level of their enemies, and frequently far beneath them in moral delinquency. The Charter renders the government of the College DESPOTIC in its most comprehensive sense—the Council are absolute in power—have *unlimited authority*—and are IRRESPONSIBLE. If, then, the Members are unceasing in their endeavours to remodel such a constitution, shall it be said that their conduct is prompted by feelings of revenge? Is there not in such a form of government sufficient to excite from a dread of the *future*, without even bestowing a thought on the past? Assuredly there is. In truth, it is so pregnant with mischief, and is so decidedly opposed to the welfare of the public and the best interests of the profession, that every Member of the College who does not energetically co-operate in the attempt to accomplish its REFORMATION, must be deficient in either honesty or understanding.

No. 180.

That by far the greater part of the *toad-eaters* that crawl around our Hospitals will refuse to attach their names to the Surgeons' Petition, is more than probable; because these reptiles, stupid as they are, can discover clearly enough that a liberal system of competition would be destructive to their hopes of advancement. They foresee that if there were *reform*, the "turning" of the College "wheel" would produce no *grist*; hence, such as they are, their labours are opposed to a change. These *toad-eaters*, with few exceptions, either are, or have been, apprentices to surgeons of the London Hospitals, and the identity of the latter with the Council of the College, we need not demonstrate.

There are other Members of the College who object to sign the petition, simply because they are too ignorant to estimate the advantages which it contemplates; these persons are of opinion, that our medical legislation is in excellent trim, and that they are right worthy and *learned* members of a most learned profession; hence they suppose that any alteration in our College would be attended with a loss of professional consequence; and being unable to comprehend *why* a change is required, they consistently, if not wisely, advocate "things as they are." As an index to this class of individuals, we will present the reader with a paragraph from one of their letters; and those who are acquainted with the nature of the examinations at the College, will feel no surprise that it should have been written by a *Member*; we have ascertained the *authenticity of the document beyond all doubt*, and as we use it in a good cause, rely on the forgiveness of the author:—

"To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I disapprove of your prosedins altogether in that matter of the Colledge. You say they are not strict,—I say they are, and I can prove these words. When I was hexamined, they were werry severe. The late Mr. Chandler it was that hexamined me; and when it was over, (it lasted ex-

actly thirteen minutes,) he said my answers were werry cridetable. It seemed to me a werry awfull business; and all the hexaminers looked so serous, that I was werry frightened. Now you talks about haberrogating the Charter, and I suppose if you do this you will pull down the Colledge;—now this I think would be a great pity, has it is a werry fine building, and is a monnement of our respectability. I shall not sign the Partition, and all my friends will do as I do. I think it would be a werry great shame, to give the wenerrable hexaminers any more trouble.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

— Street, Feb. 1st, 1827.

We can assure our correspondent, if his friends were as numerous as the preparations in the Hunterian Museum, that the reformers would have no desire to see their names appended to the Petition; and whether there be subscribed to it *five*, or *five thousand*, signatures, it matters not,—the allegations remain the same; their truth or falsehood is not to be established by a stroke of the pen; *there must be inquiry*. As there is no doubt that a parliamentary committee will be appointed; as it is our wish that the fullest investigation should take place; and as it appears that our correspondent has given the subject a portion of his valuable attention, we will not omit to have him and a few of his friends who object to sign the Petition, summoned before the Committee. Their evidence would be exceedingly important, and of itself sufficient to satisfy any twenty-four rational gentlemen, that the government of the College of Surgeons requires some *little alteration* at least.

THE GRAND COMMITTEE of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, roused at length by the repeated notices we have taken of the imposition, have issued an order which directs that the BOX CARRIERS shall extort no more fees from the students, when they attend *post mortem* investigations. This was a most odious tax, and we congratulate the pupils on its repeal.

It is with regret we observe that the MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY in LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, which for at least twelve years largely contributed by its *meetings*, its *library*, and its *transactions*, to diffuse useful knowledge, and to stimulate its members to professional investigations, has been gradually falling into decay from the period of its opposition to the publication of the reports of its proceedings in the pages of this Journal. Practitioners of talent and eminence were naturally suspicious of the veracity of statements of cases, and declarations of opinion, promulgated by men who dreaded PUBLICITY; hence they have deemed the discussions unworthy of notice, and neglected the periodical meetings; and it may with truth be now said, that the Society is one of comparative insignificance. This is strongly exemplified by the complete dearth of "Papers," by the paucity of its "Transactions," (and we hear that no more are to be published,) and by the most fatal symptom of all, the late resignation of many of its members. If more proof were wanted, it might be found in the circumstance that many eminent surgeons have refused to fill the office of President for the ensuing year!

Who can reflect on the approaching death of this Society, without endeavouring to trace the cause and course of its malady? On its birth, all the most respectable of the profession in the metropolis, as well as many in the country, enrolled their names amongst its members; we should only omit most of the *Odd Fellows* of the College of Physicians, Baillie excepted, who was its first President. A list of distinguished men, such as Cline, Cooper, Blane, Abernethy, Pearson, and many others, afterwards filled in succession that once honourable chair, whilst the important offices of Librarian and Secretary, were admirably executed by Bateman, Roget, Samuel Cooper, and Lawrence. The period when these men resigned their different functions, we may date as the *first fatal symptom* of the dis-

ease which has now so nearly destroyed the constitution of that once excellent body. A different *grade* of persons has since come into office. The "Council," like their neighbours on the opposite side of the square, have become self-elected, and, we fear, corrupt. Papers of the lowest order of intellect have been admitted into the "Transactions," whilst others, infinitely their superiors, were either delayed or altogether rejected as unfit for publication—no doubt for the *wisest* of purposes.

The febrile disturbance has daily increased since the first attack of the distemper, and the severity of the now existing putrescent or *typhoid* symptoms, can be easily imagined, when it is told that the "bestnights" they now have are "got up" by JEMMY COPLAND, whose *resurrection* from the *Mausoleum* appears to have been effected with a view to the performance of this duty; by Doctor JEMMY JOHNSTONE of *Carrickfergus, surgeon and libeller*; by ANTHONY TODD THOMSON, of loquacious notoriety and perversity; by poor RODERICK, the YELLOW GOAT, and editor of the Hole-and-Corner Case Books; by AUTHOR GUTHRIE, (at the serene age of 52,) *assistant surgeon to Dowager LYNN*, notorious for his eloquence, his grammar, and the pathos of his periods! and by those celebrated supporters of Hole-and-Corner Surgery, LITHOTOMIST SHAW, (who never forgets to ejaculate that he is the *brither* of Mr. CHEELS BILL); and COCKNEY MAYO.

DIED at his house in New Broad Street, on Monday, the 29th ult., THOMAS ROBSON ELLERBY, Esq. Surgeon, ætat, 37.

Those who had the pleasure of Mr. Ellerby's acquaintance, will long regret his loss; he was a man of considerable talent in his profession, and his conduct was characterised by strict integrity in the practice of it. He was an ardent friend, and an agreeable companion,

Mr. Ellerby was a valuable Member of the COMMITTEE of Surgeons, who will experience some difficulty in adequately filling up the vacancy occasioned by his lamented death.

In the pages of THE LANCET we have often recommended, as a means of removing from the public mind a portion of the prejudice against human dissections, that SURGEONS, who, of all others, are the best acquainted with the utility of the practice, should insert a clause in their "last will and testament," directing the dissection of their bodies. Mr. Ellerby was a warm approver of this proposal, and frequently expressed his admiration of it in the most public manner, at the same time declaring that it was a practice he should adopt in his own will, and that he sincerely hoped his relatives would see that his wishes were fulfilled. That he strictly adhered to this resolution, the following extract from his will, executed only two or three days before his death, will abundantly show.

"For the guidance and instruction of those whom I may appoint as the executors of this, my last will, I do here set down what my wish is, concerning the disposal of my body:—After my decease, I request to be placed in a very plain shell or coffin, with all possible dispatch; that my friends and acquaintances be assembled as soon as convenient. Preferring to be of some use after my death, I do will, wish, beg, pray, and desire, that at the conclusion of such meeting of my friends and acquaintances, and at which I particularly wish those medical friends who have so kindly attended me through my long illness to be present, that the shell or coffin in which I may be laid, be placed in a plain hearse, with directions for it to be taken to Mr. Kiernan's, or some dissecting-room of an approved anatomical school, followed simply by the medical men in one or two plain coaches, and that they do there examine it to their full satisfaction, taking away such parts as may be of pathological utility. After which, that the remains be dissected, or made whatever use of the anatomical teacher at such school may think proper.

"This I do as a last tribute to a science which I have delighted in, and to which I now regret that I have contributed so little; but if this example, which I have set, and

designed for my professional brethren, be only followed to the extent I wish, I am satisfied that much good to science will result from it; for if medical men, instead of taking such care of their precious carcasses, were to set the example of giving their own bodies for dissection, the prejudice which exists in this country against anatomical examinations, and which is increasing to such an alarming degree, would soon be done away with, and science proportionably benefited as the obstacles were thus removed. Nay, so far do I think this a duty incumbent upon every one entering the profession, that I would have it, if possible, framed into a law, that on taking an examination at a public College for license to practice, whether physic, surgery, or pharmacy, it should be made a *sine qua non*, that every one taking such license should enter into a specific agreement that his body should, after his death, become the property of his surviving brethren, under regulations instituted by authority."

He was attended during his illness by Drs. Clutterbuck, Armstrong, Davis, and Blundell; and as Doctors generally disagree, they presented no exception to the general rule, in the present instance. The three first however agreed that the heart and its investing membrane were principally involved, although there was a difference of opinion respecting the nature of the affection. Dr. Blundell, singularly enough, pronounced the case *hysterical*; aware of their opinions, Mr. Ellerby directed that his brain should be presented to Dr. Clutterbuck, his heart to Dr. Armstrong, his lungs to Dr. Davis, and if a *uterus* could be found, he desired that Dr. Blundell should have it.

On Wednesday next, February 14, at four o'clock, the HUNTERIAN ORATION will be delivered by Mr. THOMAS. We have received several communications relative to the *back-door* on this occasion; and as the following, although short, points well to the subject, we select it for insertion:—

"Mr. EDITOR,—As we are to have an Oration soon, pray can you inform me if the *front door* is to be opened to *all members*, or

must the greater part still go in at the *BACK-DOOR*?

A PURE SURGEON.

Harrow, Feb. 27, 1827.

P.S. If you don't know, apply to SIR WILLIAM BUZZARD."

We are sorry that we have no plea for obtaining such an interesting interview as the postscript suggests, being already in possession of the required information. The tickets are issued, and, lo! *Portugal-street* has disappeared! The front of the card bears the usual inscription, but on the reverse side there is *not* the usual inscription; it is of the whiteness of mountain snow, pure and undefiled, no longer bedaubed with a *back-door* invitation. The Members will now walk in as they ought at the front door of their own College, and they should bear in mind, that this privilege is the result of their spirited opposition to the mean and paltry measures of the COUNCIL. We last year, in the theatre of the College, told Sir William Buzzard and Mr. Abernethy, that the Members had passed through the *back-door* for the last time.

Let not the Members be deceived by any signs of contrition on the part of the "Ruling Powers;" REFORM must come from WITHOUT, and not from *within* the College. There can be no security for us, while the Council are irresponsible, and so long as they are allowed to *elect* their colleagues. An application to Parliament is the only measure that can have the effect of *establishing* and placing upon a *secure basis*, the RIGHTS of the Members. This is now the universal opinion. It was but on Thursday last that a most numerous meeting of the surgeons of BRISTOL took place at Reeves's Hotel in that city. H. Daniel, Esq. in the chair. Our correspondent states that it was *unanimously* resolved to *petition Parliament*. Thus following the example of the surgeons of London and Winchester. The aspect of our cause brightens daily.

UNDER the head ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL at page 495 of our 176th LANCET, we printed the report of a case of STRANGULATED HERNIA. It was inserted without note or comment, and thus rich in its naked beauty, it was our intention to have left it until after the appearance of JEMMY JOHNSTONE'S April MEDICO-FUDGICO. The motive for this will presently be obvious enough. As the case occupies but little space, and as this Number may fall into the hands of many persons who had not an opportunity of seeing that in which it first appeared, we will here reprint it :—

ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL.

Strangulated Hernia—Operation—Strangulation not relieved—Death—Dissection.

Mary Burnett, aged 32, admitted with strangulated femoral hernia on the left side; she has been subject to rupture for two years, and thinks that she had not reduced it during this time. Since Wednesday last, the 4th inst., it had been more full, and she has had no motions since that day. On her admission she was afflicted with hiccup, sickness, tenderness over all the abdomen, and anxious countenance; the pulse about 108. She was bled, and put into the bath. A small tumour of the size of a walnut was felt in the usual situation of femoral hernia; this was cut down upon; and, on the sac being opened, was found to consist of a portion of omentum, much compressed, presenting the appearance a good deal resembling one of the common conglomerated glands in two small lobes. It had contracted slight adhesions every where to the inner part of the sac, and had a very narrow neck. The stricture over it, by Poupart's ligament, was not very tense; it was divided, and the mass returned into the abdomen.

Since the operation, leeches, weak solutions of Epsom salts, and, lately, a little castor oil, have been employed; as yet she has had no evacuation, nor have the symptoms abated. Her countenance is more unfavourable, expressive of more distress; the hiccup continues; the tenderness of abdomen is increased; a sense of fullness is experienced; pulse about 100; tongue deeply coated; vomited once just now, and continued in the same state till the 15th, when she died.

Sectio Cadaveris.

On opening the cavity of the abdomen,

the stomach, duodenum, and jejunum, with the first part of the ileum, were marked with inflammatory appearances on the posterior coat.

It was found that she had been affected with double hernia; a portion of peritoneum had descended under the crural arch to the extent of about an inch, or an inch and a half, and a contiguous portion of peritoneum had got entangled between the fascia running up, and from the pubes inside the rectus abdominis muscle, forming a sac of about one-third that extent; into the latter a small portion of the ileum had been protruded and strangulated, forming the cause of death.

The piece of intestine adhered to the sac about three-fourths of its circumference, and was confined by the stricture formed by the fascia, and in a very high state of inflammation. Every part of the contents of the intestine was arrested by the stricture, and below it the intestines resembled a large worm; another portion had been strangulated in the sac, and had descended below Poupart's ligament, and which had been reduced during the operation; this portion showed the marks of compression it had undergone.

This report is so very satisfactory, so unequivocally lucid, and so particularly consistent, that at first sight one might almost imagine it had been written by either GIMBERNAT, ASTLEY COOPER, or LAWRENCE; but the *archives* whence it was extracted, are scarcely less celebrated than the works of these authors, which will at once be confessed, when we announce that the above report was carefully copied from the *Case Books* of St. George's Hospital; consequently, it is an "AUTHENTIC REPORT!" There are, however, a few omissions in it which we will supply, whilst there are a far greater number of omissions that old Nick himself could not supply. The patient was admitted under the care (care?) of Mr. ROSE, the operator was Mr. ROSE, the conductor of the *post-mortem* examination was Rr. ROSE, and the *writer* of the report was Mr. ROSE—what a ROSE! what an astonishing ROSE! "Many a flower is doom'd to blush unseen;" but such has not been the fate of the ROSE of ST. GEORGE'S. His wishes, however, are far otherwise, as have been manifested by

his "Hole and Corner" propensities. Men of great wisdom are generally diffident, attached to solitude, and derive their chief enjoyment from the intellectual pleasures afforded by retirement. It is often said that modesty and genius ever go hand in hand; hence it occasionally happens that the most celebrated of the "Hole and Corner" surgeons, when before the public, carry with them more of the appearance of simpletons than of men of learning, and this merely from their extreme bashfulness. The hostility then of these gentlemen to the publication of LECTURES and HOSPITAL REPORTS arose from no other cause than the disrelish of *vulgar approbation*, always entertained by great minds! Convinced of the elevated character of their surgical exploits—conscious of the superiority of their professional attainments, they seek not the empty applause of the learned; and yielding to the impulse of their inclination, naturally retire to "Holes and Corners," for the purpose of avoiding the vulgar gaze of the wondering and "admiring million." But men of weak minds pursue a different course; thus we see that CANNING—BROUGHAM—PEEL—ROBINSON—LIVERPOOL—LAWRENCE—WARDROP—CLUTTERBUCK—CARMICHAEL—COOPER—ARMSTRONG—MACARTNEY, and many others, embrace every opportunity of presenting their offerings at the temple of science, and of submitting their mental fruits to the ordeal of public scrutiny, for the gratification of the public taste, and for the improvement and happiness of mankind. These, however, are simple men; and ought, from their ignorance, to dread the influence of public opinion; their reputation, they well know, must perish with their bodies; whilst that of the Council of our College, and the rest of the "Hole and Corner" Surgeons, will "live for ever in the records of 'Hole and Corner Surgery.'" Relinquishing irony, the use of which is scarcely warrantable on such an occasion, let us in sober sadness

ask, if it be possible that the Report just read, is from the pen of a London Hospital Surgeon? And that such an operation, (taking into view the post-mortem appearances,) was the performance of a London Hospital Surgeon? Unfortunately, both must be answered with an affirmative. As to the Report, who ever beheld so much botheration, so much downright nonsense, within a similar space? and this is an "AUTHENTIC Report;" written, we presume, for the instruction and guidance of young gentlemen educating as surgeons! Fortunate pupils, to have such an instructor!

"A small tumour, the size of a walnut, was felt in the usual situation of femoral hernia; this was cut down upon; and on the sac being opened, was found to consist of a portion of omentum." * * * * * (Very well.) "The stricture over it by Poupart's ligament was not very tense; it was divided, and the mass returned into the abdomen." The *mass*! What mass? A mountain of omentum of the size of a *walnut*! A precious mass, truly! But what of the intestine? It does not appear that any was seen *during the operation*; the *post-mortem* examination, however, exhibited quite enough. The stricture over it by *Poupart's ligament*! Why not have said, BY the "man in the moon?" The last description would convey about as accurate an idea of the *real* situation of the stricture, as the first. Under the head *sectio cadaveris*, we are informed, that the poor woman had been "affected with *double* hernia;" and having discovered that there is another case of this description on record, and as it is *rather* curious, we will publish a report of it in our next; meanwhile we will endeavour to learn *on what day it was* that Mr. ROSE operated, and having ascertained this, we will attempt to render him some little assistance in a further exposition of the *post-mortem* appearances.

WE have been alive to the manœuvres of certain ACCOUCHEURS, who are hard at work to get themselves created a COMMITTEE by the College, to examine their candidates in the *mystic art*. As these gentry *work* in the dark, we shall not fail to watch their proceedings, — apply probably an occasional *moxa*, and, finally, if necessary, give them a “discharge.” So inveterate, then, are the Council against GENERAL PRACTITIONERS, that rather than admit them to a seat in the COURT of EXAMINERS, they would erect an EXTRA COURT. But let them refer to their Charter, when it will be seen *they dare not do it*.

In another part of this day’s Journal will be found a letter from Dr. GRANVILLE, which we should not allude to in this place, were it not for the *apology*, contained in the first paragraph, for the Doctor’s perusal of THE LANCET. As this extreme politeness is not altogether congenial to our climate, we do not know how we can better dispel the mystery in which it seems to be involved, than by informing our numerous readers that Dr. GRANVILLE was *born and bred* in the polite atmosphere of ITALY. We beg to assure the DOCTOR, that we require no other *apology* from any man for perusing THE LANCET, than the one so substantially and bountifully supplied every Saturday morning.

THE COLLEGES OF HENRY VIII. AND CHARLES II.

In honorem Collegii, or the Licentiate’s Oath.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It delights me, even when I cannot approve the doctrines or opinions maintained, to see the Press discussing freely every subject of human concernment, but more especially the important science which consists in a knowledge of the means of preserving life and restoring health, and the manner of exercising professionally the healing art. Under unrestrained discussion, truth and error will always ultimately, and soon find their proper level; and all private interests will be sunk in, or identified with, those of the community. It was a noble saying of Dr. Akenside, that he liked to see striking manifestations of freedom, if he was even occasionally knocked in the kennel. Of late years, the difference between

the results of the discussions of an unfettered press, and the infallible dogmas which were wont to be issued authoritatively from colleges and schools of physic, has become particularly apparent. The public journals, whether daily or weekly, whatever may be said to the contrary by dignitaries who consider such channels of communication as *infra dignitatem*, are now regarded, by unbiassed and sensible persons, as both the most ready and the fittest arenas for settling disputes in the medical, as well as in other departments.

That an appeal to the tribunal of public opinion in this matter has become indispensable in this country, we have by far too many proofs to allow us any longer to doubt. The champions of the different branches of the medical profession, and of their opposing ramifications, have, for some time, been in the field; and much skirmishing has already taken place between them, with a view to establish the exclusive right of each to the privilege of bleeding the purse and person of that renowned capitalist, John Bull, Esq., who has for centuries evinced a notable docility, and unparalleled power of sustaining most inordinate evacuations, by every possible outlet. The system of the physicians, whether ordinary or extraordinary, of this celebrated personage, appears to have been a continued course of depletion, as if disease consisted in nothing else than vigour in excess. They have sought to strengthen his frame, by detaching portions of it to distant quarters of the globe, to invigorate his vessels by shedding his blood, and to enrich his treasury by emptying his pockets; and it now only remains for the patient and his friends, if he have any disinterested ones, to ascertain how much more of this superlative treatment he can bear, without absolutely giving up the ghost. For the description of persons who are thought, by their respective partisans, to be the most fit candidates for the situation of performers in chief, on the purse and person of the aforesaid productive patient, I refer you to the papers of some recent contributors to your own columns, and to those of other journals. Of these writers, some give the preference to fellows of the College of Charles II., some to its licentiates, and some to graduates of universities, who are neither the one nor the other; whilst others prefer pure surgeons, and others general practitioners. From their total silence respecting the patient, one would think they were of opinion that he ought not to be regarded in this matter, any more than if he were dead, and already laid out for dissection. All this contrariety of opinion, will, however, get us in time into the right path, and work out his salvation.