

PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE DRAINAGE OF LONDON
AND THE FERTILIZATION OF THE SOIL OF
THE COUNTRY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Yesterday, I sent you a brief sketch of a plan for the drainage of London. It consisted of a *cloaca maxima* along each side of the Thames, into which all the present sewers should pour their contents, and of closed waggons on the railways, prolonged to these, to convey those contents to distant parts of the kingdom. In this manner, as I said, I proposed to keep the water of the river pure, and fertilize our fields.

I beg now to be allowed to enter into a few details.

The railways are, as I proposed, to be prolonged in *tunnels* to the river side. They may then be continued along the banks of the river on each side, and across the river, just above London-bridge, (or the *Tunnel* might be applied to this use,) and opposite Lambeth, or higher up the river. In this manner a *circulating* railway will be formed, which may connect the most remote parts of London for travellers and for traffic.

Both *cloaca* and railway may be erected over that part of the banks of the river covered at high water, but a mere bank of mud and mire, which might be manure, at low water, the former being below the latter. The railway alone would be extended across the river, if this, which is no essential part of my project, be thought advisable.

The object of removing the present nuisances of imperfect drainage and of pollution of our splendid river will, in this manner, be effectually attained. And of the value of the manure which is now lost, but will then be saved to our country, the reader may learn somewhat by reading the work on agriculture of the celebrated Liebig.

But if the plan of prolonging the railways to the banks of the river be viewed as of insuperable difficulty, *cloacæ* floating on the river might be used to convey the contents of the stationary *cloacæ* up and down the Thames, and thence to the adjacent districts.

Or both of these plans may be adopted conjointly.

Singular are the following brief extracts from Liebig:

"Thousands of hundred-weights of phosphates flow annually into the sea with the Thames, and with other of the British rivers.

"Thousands of hundred-weights of the same materials, arising from the sea, annually flow back again into that land in the form of guano."

Surely, we might dispense with one or both of these several voyages.

It is highly interesting to reflect how the same atoms are made to *circulate* through the very hearts of the people, again and again. Yet so it is. From being their food and nutriment, it performs its office in the interstitial parts of organs, is re-absorbed, expelled, conveyed away, becomes the nutriment of vegetables, and then of sheep and oxen, and again, in its turn, of man! just as a *similar circulation* of atoms is performed through the medium of the atmosphere.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

London, May 17, 1850.

HYGELA.

IODINE IN OVARITIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have informed Dr. Doherty, of Queen's College, Galway, that I should request you to permit me, through the medium of your journal, to rectify a mistake which I have unintentionally made, when alluding to his practice, in my work on Diseases of Menstruation.

At page 132 of that work, I say, "It appears that in the Dublin Lying-in Hospital frictions with iodine ointment are made, internally, to the roof of the vagina, in those cases which Dr. Kennedy used to call secondary ovaritis. We think the practice dangerous, for *certain* reasons, too evident to require enumeration," &c.; but on referring to Dr. Doherty's paper on Chronic Inflammation of the Broad Ligaments, I find that neither Dr. Doherty nor Dr. Kennedy have recommended frictions with iodine ointment, but its "application" to the roof of the vagina. I regret that I was not informed of my inaccuracy when I first published it in THE LANCET, (April 1, 1849,) as this would have prevented its repetition; and I lose no time in removing any wrong impressions which I may have given rise to respecting the practice of gentlemen, as much distinguished by their honourable character as by the value of their contributions to medical literature.

I remain, Sir, obediently yours,

York-street, Portman-square, May 27, 1850.

C. J. TILT.

ON THE QUALIFICATIONS OF MEDICAL
PRACTITIONERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the present state of agitation with regard to medical reform, it may be useful to point out some of the grievances under which the profession labours, in the shape of illegal practitioners. We owe much to you for your unsparing onslaughts on quackery, with its attendant satellites—hydrophobia, homœopathy, and mesmerism, but there are other and intestine evils which infest our unfortunate profession, demanding not a little attention. What I particularly refer to is, the large number of persons practising with a diploma or diplomas which neither legally qualify nor professionally fit them for the onerous and responsible duties of the healing art. I know (*ex. gr.*) the instance of a gentleman who, a short time since, settled in a small town, near Liverpool. His only qualification was M.R.C.S.E., and he was, consequently, unfitted legally or professionally to practise as a general practitioner: professionally, at all events, granting that he had only gone through the curriculum necessary to qualify him as M.R.C.S., though it was whispered that he had served a short apprenticeship to a homœopathist—a man of globules, infinitesimal doses, and humbug; but this additional claim on public sympathy is uncertain. He was supported, however, by certain of the clergy, a large number of whom, I am sorry to say, are too apt to interfere in these matters, forgetting that it is their duty to act only as spiritual instructors, not as pseudo-caterers for the public health, patronizers of quacks and illegal practitioners, or maligners of such medical men as may happen to incur their displeasure. This gentleman, finding that his single qualification, (?) though satisfactory to his clerical admirers, was not so to the more discerning part of the public, disdaining to obtain a legal diploma in the dingy purlieu of Blackfriars, rushed across the Tweed to seek the more imposing title of M.D., hoping to avoid the stigma of illegality by a St. Andrew's degree. Yet this gentleman sneered at the title of "a simple apothecary." Such is the present sad state of the medical profession! St. Andrew's degrees, Giessen degrees, certificates of proficiency from an Aldborough or some other aristocratic dupe—yea, anything that savours of quackery or imposition, will find more favour than legitimate medicine. Nor can we wonder at it, for the public know not what a legal qualification is. The corporate bodies cannot, or will not, protect their licentiates, and even medical men too often forget that a person who has passed with seeming honours from beneath the porticos of a Scotch university, might still be branded as unfit to practise in the more humble locality of Apothecaries' Hall.

Yours most respectfully,

LIBERTAS.

Regent's-park.

SANITARY REFORMS RECOMMENDED IN 1665,
NOT YET ACCOMPLISHED.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is not generally known that the principal sanitary reforms now being contended for in London were all in detail recommended by the College of Physicians, at least one 185 years ago. At that time, the College was recognised by the government as a council of public health, and in that capacity was respectfully consulted. On the 13th of May, 1665, the Privy Council issued a communication to the College of Physicians, from which the following is an extract:—

"We do hereby pray and require you, the President and Society of the Colledge of Physicians of the City of London, to inspect the former rules given by the physicians of former times, and imprinted for the public benefit; and that you take care to review the said former book touching medicines against the infection, and to adde unto, and alter the same, as you shall find the present times and occasions to require, and to cause such, your directions, to be as speedily prepared and printed as possible may be."

In consequence of this requisition, a document was speedily issued with the following title-page:—"Certain necessary Directions As well For the Cure of the Plague, as for preventing the Infection with Many easie Medicines of small Charge, very profitable to His Majesties Subjects: Set down by the Colledge of Physicians. By the Kings Majesties Special Command. London: Printed by John Bill, and Christopher Barker, Printers to the King's most Excellent Majesty, 1665." The College were evidently as fully alive as all now are to the pestilential nature of the exhalations from the church burial-vaults, shallow graves, slaughter-houses, and foul