

THE LANCET.

London, Saturday, December 24th, 1836.

ALTHOUGH we have not sufficient space to insert a copy of the Charter of the University of London in THE LANCET of this week, we cannot go to press without again adverting to the subject. The main points of the question were noticed by us in the last LANCET. Arguments, however, in proof of the perniciousness of the policy which the new Charter was *calculated*, but was not, we are sure, *designed*, to sanction, might be multiplied to an indefinite extent. One of the apprehended evils, namely, that of private examinations, may, we perceive, be obviated by the governing body of the University, without the interposition either of the visitor from the Crown, or of the Home Secretary of State, or of Parliament. But the two chief defects, the destroying cankers, of the new institution, admit, we fear, of no sufficient remedy, without an application from the legislature. We refer to the election of the governing body of the University by favour of the Crown, instead of by Concours (OR MENTAL TRIAL), and to the villainous practice—we can designate it by no other appropriate name—of admitting candidates to examination by favour of “certificates” which are issued from particular schools,—establishments which are to be honoured with the “recognizing” stamp of the new University. Thus, genius and talent, intellectual acquirement and industry, will not be more highly distinguished, or more favourably received or acknowledged, in the new establishment, than they have been already in the old monopolising colleges. The ancient system of *partiality* is about to be revived by the reforming spirit of the 19th century, and genius is to be spurned from the portals of an university which is founded in the very heart of the British empire. We discard, altogether, from our present views of the question the incom-

petency of some of the medical gentlemen who are named, in the charter, to act as medical examiners. Those persons are the mere dust on the wheels of the new machinery, and would be altogether incapable of obstructing the advantageous progress of the new national engine, if it were constructed upon entirely sound principles. We cannot, however, avoid remarking, with reference to some of the appointments, that the ministers have been earwigged, in completing the Charter, by some exceedingly *dishonest* advisers,—by thoroughly *knavish* advisers. Otherwise, the several persons whom we could point out, and *will* point out, on another occasion, would not have been puffed into notoriety by disfiguring the Charter of a London University. If proof be required of the *dishonesty* of the persons who have advised ministers to make four or five of the medical appointments in the new institution, that proof shall not be withheld from any public tribunal which is allowed to be competent to decide on the merits of the evidence against them. Two or three of the nominations are even of a disgraceful character. In saying thus much we feel gratification in being enabled to acknowledge that we observe the names of others of the medical examiners, which are wholly unexceptionable, whether they be considered with reference to the known attainments of the parties, or to the character which those gentlemen sustain in the profession.

The allusion which we have just made to the newly-appointed fellows is a digression from the object which we have in view on this occasion. It is our purpose, and we avow it most willingly, to prevent, if possible, the conditions of the newly-framed Charter from being confirmed by an Act of the legislature. We are anxious, therefore, to awaken to a sense of their duty at this crisis, all the friends of a liberal and just system of education in this country, and especially would we direct the attention of the *heads of schools*, public as well as private, classical as well as medical, to the conditions

of the new Charter, but more particularly to that clause which directs the heads of the University to examine candidates on their presenting "certificates" from some one of the institutions therein mentioned. If the conductors of private classical establishments, and of the smaller medical schools, permit this regulation to be enforced without offering to it their most strenuous and determined opposition, the system of monopoly and favouritism, in all its departments, will be reinvigorated, and the most youthful antagonist of that odious mode of regulating our colleges, may not live to see it destroyed, or even weakened.

All persons, therefore, who take an interest in the subject to which the new Charter relates, ought, without loss of time, to give effect to their opinions, by assisting to organize some plan of opposition. Doubtless the minister will apply for a grant of money—a grant of *public money*—to enable him to construct and set in motion the new institution. Let him be answered by a demand from a thousand quarters, "that ALL candidates for examination, whether they have been educated in *Colleges* or in *Halls*, in *public* or in *private* schools, in the libraries of the *nobility*, or the parlours of *tradesmen*, or the garrets of *mechanics*,—shall be entitled to claim an examination for the degrees, and that all preliminary disqualifications shall be discarded, with the single exception of that which may be made to depend on a disreputable moral character." By opening the doors of the University, thus widely, to the genius and talent of *the nation*, the excellent objects which are specified in the preamble of the Charter would be most fully and comprehensively attained. The words in which those objects are defined deserve to be quoted:—

"WILLIAM THE FOURTH, &c. &c. Whereas we have deemed it to be the duty of our Royal Office, for the advancement of religion and morality, and the *promotion of useful knowledge*, to hold forth to ALL classes and denominations of our faithful subjects, **WITHOUT ANY DISTINCTION WHATSOEVER**, an encouragement for pursuing a

regular and liberal course of education; and considering that many persons do prosecute or complete their studies, both in the metropolis and in other parts of our United Kingdom, to whom it is expedient that there should be offered such *facilities*, and on whom it is *just* that there should be conferred such distinctions and rewards as may incline them to persevere in these their laudable pursuits: Now, know ye, that for the purpose of ascertaining, *by means of examinations*, the persons who have acquired proficiency in literature, science, and art, by the pursuit of such course of education, and of rewarding them by academical degrees, as evidence of *their respective attainments*, and marks of honour proportioned thereunto, we do, by these presents, will, grant, declare, and constitute, &c. &c."

Here we have embodied the very principles which should regulate the conduct of the senate in admitting candidates to an examination. The contrast between the preamble just cited and the clauses which refer to the admission of candidates, through the instrumentality of "certificates" which are to be issued by schools that have been *honoured* by the "recognition" of the University, is peculiarly striking, and exhibits evidence of a ludicrous inconsistency between principles and details. In the *preamble* it is provided, that "ALL CLASSES" shall be admitted to an examination, "WITHOUT ANY DISTINCTION WHATSOEVER." In the *clauses* we find that "certificates" entitling the candidates to examination, are to be granted "from *University College*," or "from *King's College*," or from such other institution as the King shall hereafter order to issue such "certificates." So that "knowledge," that distinguishing attribute of the age in which we live, is *not* to entitle the candidate to admission to examination, unless he first exhibit a "certificate" which has been signed by the heads of a school which shall be authorised, under the sign manual of the King, to issue testimonials of that nature! In a word, the *preamble* informs the public that the new University is founded for the benefit of *all* classes of his majesty's subjects, while the *clauses* state that it has been instituted for that class only, whose pecuniary means will enable them to pay the fees which may be

demanding as the costs of an education in a few "recognised" schools, whence it is evident that the new University is only "national" in name. Virtually, it will create and foster a monopoly, for the immediate benefit of some half-dozen establishments, and to the permanent injury of the community.

Earnestly, therefore, do we entreat the directors of our medical schools, as well as the principals of our public and private seminaries, to enter into a communication with each other on this question, on the issue of which their interests are fearfully hazarded, and prepare forthwith to acquaint the legislature with the nature and extent of their grievances, and of the wrongs which they are likely to sustain, in common with the mass of the public, if the provisions of the Charter, as they now stand, be confirmed and enforced by an Act of the legislature.

THE united hospitals of St. Thomas and Guy, after many years of not very chaste intercourse, are, it seems, threatened with a permanent divorcement. It must be confessed that the medical officers of those establishments have not been on very friendly terms since the differences occurred between them in 1824, 25, and 26. It will be recollected, that in the first-named of these years, the school of surgery of the two establishments mustered in the theatre of *St. Thomas's Hospital* under the auspices and tutelage of Sir ASTLEY COOPER. Subsequently, the contentions between the lecturers led to the building at the back of Guy's Hospital, now styled the "Guy's School of Anatomy and Surgery." Thus the medical officers of the two establishments, during some years, although they had, on the front of the student's tickets, been nominally united, have been in a state of virtual disunion with regard both to the interests and the feelings of the medical officers.

A report which is printed in another part of our journal, will show that the consequences

of disagreement between the surgeons, have at length fallen among the students, and some of those young gentlemen are now incurring penalties which ought to have fallen on parties whose age and experience might have led them to pursue a wiser and more gentlemanly course of policy. From the statements contained in the report, it is evident that the students of *Guy's Hospital* have been subjected to a long-continued series of irritating ill-treatment by the authorities at *St. Thomas's Hospital*. At length, their discretion having yielded to exasperated feeling, two or three of them were betrayed into acts of violence which it is admitted, on all hands, bore no analogy to the indications and evidences of their ordinary habits. The *malus animus* of their pursuers is sufficiently proved by the employment against them of porters, constables, policemen, magistrates, and that ruffianly cast-iron-throated mountebank, ADOLPHUS. Verily, it redounds much to the credit of the surgeons of *St. Thomas's Hospital*, that they should first provoke the students to commit acts of violence, and then exhibit those young gentlemen, who have to make their characters in the world, at a police-office, as "door-breakers," "disturbers of the peace," and "common rioters."

The facts of the case may be stated in a very few words. The privileges of the students with regard to the surgical practice of the Borough hospitals, have always been enjoyed in common by the students of the two establishments. There was no distinction made between them. Each student paid for witnessing the surgical practice of the two hospitals. How, then, could it be expected, that a pupil who had paid the entrance fee at *Guy's Hospital*, should be subjected to a rigidity of discipline in the theatre of *St. Thomas's Hospital*, while the student who, on the other hand, had paid the fee at the latter institution was never subjected to similar grievances, or severity of discipline, in the theatre of *Guy's Hospital*.

The cause, therefore, of the disturbance may be traced to the disunion, the unworthy

rivalry, or the gross ignorance or mismanagement, of the authorities of *St. Thomas's Hospital*, as it seems to be quite clear that if the students of the two hospitals have paid for equal privileges in, and opportunities of witnessing the surgical practice of, the two establishments, it could not be expected that the students of *Guy's Hospital* would tamely submit to be deprived of privileges which were conceded, without hesitation or restriction, to the pupils who had paid the entrance fee at the other establishment. If, therefore, the surgeons of the two hospitals had issued new rules, or enforced old ones, of a perfectly reciprocal tendency and effect, the students would then have been relieved from the operation of invidious distinctions of discipline, and the pupils of *Guy's Hospital* have been spared the infliction of those irritating causes to the operation of which they have been so wantonly exposed. But, instead of adopting this honest and judicious course of policy, Mr. TRAVERS, the senior surgeon of *St. Thomas's*, informed the magistrate, "that an extraordinary notice had been issued from *St. Thomas's Hospital*, declaring that *none of the students of GUY'S HOSPITAL would be admitted unless they were provided with their tickets.*" This was clearly a proceeding of hostility by the surgeons of *St. Thomas's Hospital* against the students of *Guy's Hospital*. It can be regarded in no other light. An "extraordinary" notice of this description was calculated to create a disturbance, and, probably, it was *designed* to have that effect.

If the surgeons of *St. Thomas's Hospital* intended to act with perfect fairness towards the students of the other establishments, why did not the "extraordinary" notice declare that all students who might be desirous of witnessing the operations would henceforth be required to produce their tickets of admission? Under such a mandate the students of *Guy's Hospital* would have uttered no complaint. The spirited conduct they have displayed shows that they are the friends of fair, open dealing. Selected, as

they have been, as the objects of an invidious distinction,—of a prohibition from admission to the theatre, without the production of their tickets,—whatever may be the infringement of the law to which their spirited resistance has led, it receives the strongest possible moral justification from the facts which the investigation has disclosed.

That Mr. TRAVERS should be in a state of "constitutional irritation," and call for constables and police to rid the theatre of eye-witnesses of his movements when he was about to operate for stone, was quite natural, and to be expected. The operator felt that a crowded state of the area might prove inconvenient, especially if the sought-for stone were endowed with the faculty of locomotion, escaped from the bladder of the patient, and adroitly made its way to *the snuff-box of the nurse*. This is no improbable surmise, but for full particulars of such a phenomenon we must refer the students of *Guy's Hospital* to the police-loving, press-hating Mr. TRAVERS.

WE have long had reason to believe that MESSRS. SKEY, CUMMIN, JONATHAN PEREIRA, and HOPE, were not *conjurors*, but certainly we did not believe that they were such blockheads as to *pay* every week for a rod which has made them smart beyond endurance. The ejection, however, of THE LANCET from their "reading-room," at this period, reminds one of the lady, who, although constantly complaining of her ugly shape and wrinkled face, as reflected in the glass, was induced, nevertheless, to retain the tormentor, from the repeated assurances of her maid that it was an excellent plate. THE LANCET is a faithful mirror, and does not conceal deformity.

We regret to see our old friend JONATHAN become so waspish. A time there was when JONATHAN would bring us his little blue books, and petition, by the half-hour together, for little notices in THE LANCET, of his little performances. He is a good-tempered fellow, and we are sorry to see

him in such bad company. He should take warning in time. His associate CUMMIN is all but flayed. As it is sometimes admissible to break a fly on a wheel, we shall put Mr. SKEV there shortly, while we criticise one of his "contributions to pathology" (!) in a late number of the anti-medical miscellany.

The following silly letter having been printed in the anti-medical miscellany of Dec. 10th, we addressed a note to Mr. FERRIER, the coroner of Great Yarmouth, relative to the allegations which it contains. Mr. FERRIER has favoured us with a reply, and both documents are here placed before our readers. The answer of Mr. FERRIER to the accusations of the busy-body who wanted an inquest to be held, but knew *nothing* of the affair, is complete. How unfortunate it is that the two scoundrels of the press cannot deprive general practitioners of the benefits of the Medical Witnesses Act:—

"To the Editor of the 'Medical Gazette.'

"SIR:—The following *facts*, I think, will show the *total* inefficiency of the Act for remunerating medical witnesses, and that where it ought, *if possible*, to have worked well, a medical man being the coroner.

"I was sent for to see a person, who, when I arrived, was dead. I found, upon inquiry, that she had *miscarried the previous day*. A half-pint bottle, in which there had been turpentine, was in the room. From this and other circumstances, I thought it was a case in which some legal steps ought to be taken to inquire as to the cause of death. Upon *acquainting the magistrates*, they were of my opinion, and ordered the coroner (Mr. Ferrier, a surgeon,) to hold an inquest. This gentleman accordingly requested a surgeon, a *friend* of his, to make a post-mortem examination of the body, and summoned me to attend the inquest, at which he held forth very learnedly, favoured the jury with a long *harangue* about the treatment of tape-worm by turpentine, and stated that a large dose of turpentine had the same effect upon the system as small and repeated doses had. After the inquest he refused to give me an order for payment, stating, as his reason, that he had not a *special summons*! I then appealed to the magistrates, who told me that they had no power to make him do it.

"If Mr. Wakley really intends to amend the act, he had better insert a clause pre-

venting medical men being coroners, as it gives them an opportunity of forwarding the interest of their friends, and gratifying *private pique* in their public capacity, which in this case *most decidedly has been done*. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"CHAS. C. ALDRED.

"Yarmouth, Norfolk, Dec. 3, 1836."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Not having seen the "Medical Gazette" of the 10th December, I was not aware that any letter containing statements respecting my conduct at a late inquest had appeared in print. The facts of the case are as follows:—

A young woman died very suddenly after miscarrying, and I was requested by the authorities to hold an inquest on her body. I was informed by the officer who came to me, that Mr. Aldred, a very young practitioner here, had seen the patient, and that that person had informed the magistrates that he suspected that some unfair means had been used to produce death. I immediately gave an order for summoning a jury, and, supposing that Mr. Aldred was acquainted with some facts which would lead to the implication of some individual for whom it might be necessary to prepare a warrant, I sent for him to the police-office, where the clerk to the magistrates, myself, and my officer, were waiting. On questioning Mr. Aldred, he stated that he knew nothing about the case, that he had no suspicions of any one. He had merely looked at the body, had made no examination *per vaginam*, and would say nothing about the matter. I felt rather surprised at this, and finding that there existed no specialty for employing Aldred in the business, I did not depart from a rule which I had made for myself in carrying out the provisions of the Medical Witnesses Act, namely, to take the medical gentlemen of the town in rotation, to avoid creating any unpleasant feeling. The gentleman whom I ordered to examine the body, was Mr. Costerton, with whom I am not at all on terms of intimacy. Indeed, I have no particular acquaintance with any medical gentleman in the place, except my partner, whom, in my official capacity, I have never employed.

Mr. Costerton made a very able necroscopic investigation, and his evidence was most clear. Aldred was certainly summoned as a witness to facts, but I did not summon him as a medical witness. As he was in the inquest-room at the time, I asked him some questions about the effect of turpentine, but his answers required explanation to the jury, as they differed from those of Mr. Costerton, and the known properties of the medicine.

In my capacity as coroner of this borough, I shall always use my own discretion as to the medical witnesses whom I may employ.

I am sure that the new statute has worked well, and will continue to do so, having myself had no trouble with overseers when the Act has been explained to them, or any medical man. I am conscious of no departure from the strict line of impartiality in performing my inquisitorial functions, and the only feeling of the kind which gives me any uneasiness is, that I did not hold an inquest upon the body of a man named Tooley, a patient, I believe, of a *Self-supporting Dispensary*, in this place, who was attempted to be lithotomised, in which case, after long and unsuccessful attempts, I understand the young gentleman, the operator, who is "surgeon," and, I believe, "dispenser," to the said self-supporting institution, started to Norwich, a distance of twenty-two miles, to bring Mr. Cross from that place, to complete the business, when Mr. C. made ample incisions, and removed a large calculus. The patient has since died, and I have no doubt, from the delay that took place, and the injuries received by the unsuccessful surgical attempts, many hours having elapsed before Mr. Cross could be brought here to complete an operation which had been attempted to be performed for *more than an hour*, unsuccessfully, by Mr. A., and which could easily have been completed by several surgeons in Yarmouth, who were never applied to for their aid.

I should not have condescended to notice this letter had you not requested me to do so. I am Sir, with respect, your's faithfully,

W. S. FERRIER,

Coroner of Great Yarmouth, and
Senior Surgeon to the Great Yarmouth Dispensary.

MEDICAL WITNESSES ACT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—We are happy to be enabled to bear testimony to the benefit arising to the profession from the Medical Witnesses Act. Since the passing of the Bill we have had no difficulty whatever in getting our claim allowed and paid. We therefore beg to add this to the numerous testimonies which you have already received respecting the operation of the new statute, and request that you will accept our thanks for your exertions in behalf of your medical brethren. We remain, Sir, your ever obliged and humble servants,

RICHARD PHELPS,
JAMES WILLIAM DANIEL,
THOMAS PALMER DANIEL,
JOACHIM GILBERT.

Beaminster, Dec. 15th, 1836.

To the Editor of THE LANCET:

SIR:—Whenever the coroner has issued his order to the surgeon, or shown your Act to the local authorities in this part of the county, or explained to them its nature, and the consequences resulting from any opposition to its enactments, no difficulty has been experienced by the medical witnesses in obtaining the fees directed by the statute to be paid.

With every feeling of gratitude to you for the Medical Witnesses Act, which is not only a source of substantial benefit to the medical profession, but a measure which tends greatly to promote the ends of public justice, I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient obliged servant,

J. C. YEATMAN.

Frome, Somerset, Dec. 16th, 1836.

SIR:—Permit me to take this opportunity of offering to you my sincere thanks for your zeal, unremitting exertions, and powerful advocacy, in behalf of the profession to which I have the honour to belong, but particularly for the boon conferred by the passing of the Medical Witnesses' Act. I have great pleasure in saying, that in this neighbourhood we have not experienced any difficulty in the operation of the Act, or in obtaining the fees awarded by it. I had occasion, a week or two since (by order of the coroner), to make a *post-mortem* examination, with an analysis, and to give evidence at the inquest. The order for the payment of the fees was immediately and cheerfully complied with by the parish authorities. I have the honour to remain your most obedient servant,

W. H. STEPHENSON, Surgeon.

Rochester, Dec. 11, 1836.

To the Editor.—SIR:—A case of hemiplegia is related by Mr. Douglas in the number of your excellent journal of the 3rd instant, in which he imagines that he prescribed the hydriodate of potash with benefit, and he recommends it to notice as a new and efficient remedy in cerebral effusion. Mr. Douglas will perhaps allow me to inform him, that the medicine in question has, for a considerable period, been extensively used in paralytic affections, dependent on morbid growths and effusions, by every well-educated professional man, Mr. Douglas alone excepted. He may be referred, in evidence, to a number of cases published during the last ten years, or to *THE LANCET*, Vol. 1, 1831-32, page 729, and also to Dr. Copland's Dictionary of Practical Medicine, article *Aplexy*, or Dr. Manson's Work on Iodine, published about ten years ago. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

VERAX.

20th December, 1836.