

change which has taken place in his political sentiments to the "Queen's privy council," and their friends and allies, with the intention of being received amongst them on confidential and cordial terms.

I am, your obedient servant,

ROBT. HOWARD,

Member of the Provincial Medical
and Surgical Association.

Hebden Bridge, Dec. 1844.

THE LONDON HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—At a time when questions involving the interests of the medical community at large are under consideration, I am unwilling to occupy your valuable space with the subject of local grievances. Your journal, however, is the only medium through which certain "hole and corner" proceedings at the London Hospital can obtain the publicity which they merit, and I shall therefore feel obliged by your inserting this communication.

The office of house-surgeon at the hospital just alluded to, has always been filled by a senior-dresser, who, having previously assisted as junior for six months, is well qualified to discharge the various functions which devolve upon him as resident surgical attendant. So effectively, indeed, have these functions been discharged by the "senior-dressers," that it is the concurrent testimony of the surgeons that a serious mishap or mal-praxis has never been known to occur under this régime. The advantage of this system to the students has been, that the responsibility of their position has given them a degree of confidence, an aptitude of decision, and a facility in acting on such decision, which they could not otherwise have acquired, and which has been of infinite service to them in their after career. It is this, in fact, which has been the sole inducement to pupils to enter at this institution, the school, in other respects, presenting no attraction whatever.

Now, sir, the house-committee, vested with despotic power, have determined to do away with a system fraught with so many practical advantages, and, despite the remonstrances of both surgeons and pupils, have acted on such determination. The unfortunate dressers are turned to the right-about, permitted to attend only to such patients as present themselves during the day, at night being excluded from the hospital, and thus prevented from seeing the many important cases which are brought in during that season. In defence of the house-committee's conduct it may be urged, that it is their duty to do what they consider most conducive to the public interest. In answer to this, I would observe, that the future house-surgeonships are not of necessity to be filled by "qualified men," the posts being open, not merely to those who have passed their examinations, but also to pupils, to men, consequently equally liable with their predecessors to the irregularities and propensities of the race. Again, admitting that the house-committee have the right to effect any changes that may seem fit to them, such changes cannot lawfully be made to affect students previously on the list, who have paid for the advantages of the dressership as then constituted, and cannot in justice be defrauded of what to them are "rights." It is true, the surgeons have offered to return their money to those who are dissatisfied, but the liberality of such offer becomes very questionable, when it is considered that the returned money would afford but a sorry compensation for the loss of time.

In making the above remarks, I have been actuated by a sincere attachment to the institution in question, and by a conviction, that the utility of such institutions in general, consists, not merely in affording direct relief to suffering humanity, but in indirectly diffusing such relief far and wide, by sending forth to the world sound practical men.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

REDRESS.

ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF OIL OF TURPENTINE IN YELLOW FEVER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—THE LANCET being extensively circulated among the medical officers of her Majesty's Navy, I am induced to call your attention to a "most important discovery in medicine," which appears to have escaped your notice. I allude to the alleged cure of yellow fever with oil of turpentine, administered by Dr. King, deputy inspector, late of the Naval Hospital, Bermuda, first proclaimed in his official report, and since so pompously announced in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, as to cause doubts to arise, whether the paragraph is to be regarded as an advertisement, or a piece of irony. The use of oil of turpentine, in the fevers of warm cli-

mates, as well as of our own, is well known; and has been strongly recommended by various authors; but it has never ranked very high as a remedy. According to the account of Dr. King, who gave it from the very commencement of the disease, it acted like a charm.

Few, perhaps will be disposed to follow his example, by exhibiting so powerful a stimulant in the high excitement of fever, without some other proof of its utility than bare assertion. "This talented surgeon," however, "had closely studied the causes of the late epidemic at Bermuda, and had successfully applied an approved mode of treatment." It therefore becomes his duty to throw aside his modest diffidence, and give the uninitiated some account of the fever in question—the mode of administration and physiological action of the medicine.

Some intelligent surgeons, who were at Bermuda during the prevalence of the fever, assert that it bore no resemblance to the more severe forms of fever in the West Indies; that it was a simple synochus, which readily yielded to the ordinary antiphlogistic treatment, and that the great mortality among the seamen and soldiers arose from dysentery. Let us therefore hope that Dr. King will also favour the world with some account of the result of his laborious studies in the case of fever, previous to his removal to Hong-Kong, "with increased rank, to complete his investigations in this particular branch of his profession." (Surgery?) Without some such account, he may rest assured that his brother officers, who have treated fever in every clime, will not prove quite so credulous as his friend, Sir G. C., who appears to have selected him as his especial favourite. This, indeed, is so far satisfactory, as it shows that the old gentleman is at last anxious to make some compensation for what some have been so impertinent as to call his invariable "bitter hostility" towards the medical corps.

Your obedient servant,

FAIR-PLAY.

London, Nov. 26, 1844.

THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I crave permission again to call the attention of the medical world to the very serious imputations which rest upon the character and conduct of the council of the College of Surgeons—imputations which, I have no hesitation in saying, are as disgraceful to the council as they are dishonouring to the profession.

Between Messrs. Lawrence and Stanley, on the one hand, and the two members of the council whom Mr. Gossett did not name, on the other, there is either a breach of trust, or a lie. Can the council think it unimportant whether or not such a charge remains unrefuted? If the charges be false, let the gross indiscretion, to call it by as light a name as possible, of Mr. Gossett be shewn, or, at least, let him be called upon to name the authority on which he brings such a grave charge as that of a breach of trust, for it is no less, against the council; whereas, if the charge be true, then let the two of the council affected by it be held up to the ridicule and scorn which they merit. But for my part, I have no doubt that the charge is true. Besides the open way in which it was made, Mr. Gossett's character as a man of honour and a gentleman is too well known for us to believe that he would hazard such a charge without the clearest and most indisputable evidence. Then let us know whether it is Messrs. Lawrence and Stanley who have violated a solemn engagement, or whether two of the council have knowingly and meanly asserted that which is false. Above all, let Mr. Gossett come forward and name the two gentlemen who stated that there was such an agreement among the council, and perhaps from them we shall obtain a distinct avowal or disavowal of the charge, so that we may know for certain which are the two of the council who have so utterly disgraced themselves and the profession.

This is not a matter, Sir, in which the personal and individual reputation of the council is alone concerned, neither can it be a personal one between Mr. Gossett and Messrs. Lawrence and Stanley; but it is a matter in which the fellows of the College more especially, and the profession generally, are deeply and individually concerned. It matters not whether Mr. Gossett thinks himself to have been injured by this dirty intrigue; it matters not whether any one, or no one, has been damaged by the paltry manœuvre. It is the character of the profession which is at stake, and which cannot but be materially degraded if some refutation, or explanation at least, be not drawn from these taciturn gentlemen. Surely, Sir, it cannot be that the whole of the council are so lost to all feeling of honour, as to be careless as to the repudiation of so disgraceful a transaction? Has not a Guthrie imbued enough of the chivalrous feeling in common among the gallant soldiers of whom he was once the companion and is now