

drains. They were also equally sensible to the health-preserving influence of plenty of fresh running water in the conduits. At p. 3 we find the following:—"It is advisable—That all sale of corrupt Provision of Food be restrained; that Streets and Houses be as diligently and carefully as may be, kept clean; the Streets washed and cooled as much as may be, by the plentiful running of the conduits, and water otherwise procured. And it were to be wished that Vaults for Privies might be emptied only in Winter; and that Soap-suds, and Liquors wherein foul clothes are washed or rinsed, might, as much as may be, be otherwise conveyed than through the Streets and Gutters, or washed away with plenty of water."

"It were also to be wished, that the Slaughter-houses were utterly put from out the Liberties of the City, being in themselves very offensive; and that Funnels in Church-vaults be considered of, and the depth of graves, and the putting of quick-lime into them, and the infected buried without the City."—p. 3 & 4.

I will ask you to reprint only one other short extract. It refers to the duties and emoluments of "Doctors, Apothecaries, and Chirurgeons."

"The Church Orders for prayers being first observed as in former times. It might be desired, that by the Government of the City there be appointed six or four Doctors at least, who may apply themselves to the Cure of the Infected; and that these Doctors be Stipendiaries to the City for their lives; and that to each Doctor there be assigned two Apothecaries, and three Chirurgeons, who are also to be stipended by the City; and so due and true care may be taken in all things, that the people perish not without help, and that the Infection spread not, while none take particular care to resist it, as in Paris, Venice, and Padua, and many other Cities. And if any Doctor, Apothecary, or Chirurgeon stipended by the City, shall happen to die in the service of the attendance of the Plague, then their Widows surviving shall have their Pensions during their lives."—p. 1 & 2.

The insertion of the above in THE LANCET, will oblige,
Your obedient servant,

Essex-house, Putney, May 13, 1850. JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D.

THE SPECULUM ANI.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your journal of the 4th of this month is the account of an operation for fistula in ano, by Mr. Hilton; also of the use of an instrument, which you term "a very ingenious speculum ani, of his invention." It is a very useful instrument, and calculated to fulfil the intentions you describe. On reading your description of it, however, I could not but immediately recognise (and no doubt many other surgeons will do so likewise) the close resemblance it bears to an instrument usually called "Salmon's Dilator." How long Mr. Salmon has been in the habit of using it I cannot say, but that he did so eight years ago I can personally and feelingly vouch for. All your remarks on the utility of the dilator are likewise precisely similar to those I have often heard Mr. Salmon make in reference to his invention, which, I believe, originated from an accident occurring to him by the bistoury wounding the fore-finger. The examination by the syringe in place of the probe was likewise first used, and has been, by Mr. Salmon, by whom it has been adopted for the last twenty years.

If, therefore, there is any merit due to those who study to improve the mode of operation for fistula, I cannot, as a grateful patient of Mr. Salmon's, refrain from asserting his claim to the originality of the invention.

To carry out the fair play of "*palman qui meruit ferat*" is my sole object in thus trespassing on your pages.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,
Duddeston Hall, Birmingham, May 18, 1850. H. ROBERTS, M.D.

KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL.

THE OPERATING THEATRE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You would confer a lasting favour on my fellow-students and myself, by calling attention to the increasing and uncomfortable crowding of King's College Hospital Theatre, on operating days, by qualified surgeons. Every week this nuisance is more annoying—a nuisance I must call it, for we poor learners, alas! lack the power of following the different steps taken for eradicating a disease—when the accumulated

heads of those "grown grey in service" pop in between us and the patients.

Surely, Sir, it is not asking too much of these heads either to stay away, and look after the gallipots and poultices, or to take possession of their allotted stations—viz., the front row, and stand back.

Glad as we are to see so well-merited a tribute of respect paid to our talented professors—to students this impediment is of serious consequence; and to those of us who, like myself, have found it hard work to raise the very expensive fees, it becomes a matter of twofold importance.

On Saturday last, the regions devoted to the dressers were usurped by no less than thirty disciples of Galen;—judge, then, if, considering the size of the theatre, my remarks are unfounded. The thanks of the class will be yours by right if you will kindly draw attention to this growing evil.

Yours, with all respect,

NEOPHYTE.

May 27, 1850.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND ASSURANCE OFFICES.

(COPY.)

Walker, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, May 5, 1850.

GENTLEMEN,—Having been applied to by your agent in Newcastle, to fill up a printed form of queries relating to the general health and habits, &c., of Mr. —, who is wishful to effect an insurance with your office, I beg to state that I will do so, and forward it as directed, upon receipt of the fee of £1 1s.

I remain, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

W. B. SMITH, Surgeon, &c.

To the Directors of the Minerva Life Assurance Office, London.

(COPY.)

DEAR SIR,—The circular sent to you relative to Mr. —'s life assurance is not in the proper form. I now enclose one. The office pays its own medical referee, Mr. Edgecome, but it never pays the medical gentleman who is referred to by the assured; and yours is the first instance in my experience in which the medical referee of the assured has demanded a fee. The case seems unreasonable, and the office will not pay it; but if you insist upon it, you can charge it to Mr. —.

It appears somewhat grasping, however, as no examination is required, simply that you should furnish to the office, at the request of your patient, the information you have gained by being for some years the medical attendant of himself and family, for which, no doubt, you would receive the proper professional remuneration; and now that your patient requests you to certify the fact, the demand of a guinea before signing your name to a paper which will require about two minutes to fill up, does strike one as ungracious.

I am, yours truly,

Newcastle-on-Tyne, May 7, 1850.

JOHN T. HOYLE.

P.S.—I have not said anything to Mr. —, being persuaded you will see the matter in a different light.

(COPY.)

Walker, near Newcastle, May 9, 1850.

SIR,—Without entering into the substance of your letter of the 7th instant, further than to state that it is a most un-courteous one, I beg to inform you that I have seen Mr. — on the subject, and stated to him my reasons for declining to fill up the paper, without in the first instance receiving a fee from the office for so doing.

I have recommended him to insure in some of the highly respectable offices who pay professional men for their advice, one of which I am glad to find you are the agent for.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

To Mr. Hoyle, agent for the Minerva Life Assurance Company.

W. B. SMITH.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THE INCOME TAX.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have just noticed a letter headed "The Medical Profession and the Income Tax," and beg to assure the writer, that so far from being singular in his cause of complaint, he must have been particularly favoured, as he seems to have been allowed to deduct certain expenses, "assistants, horses, servants, dogs, &c.," (the latter must be a misprint for drugs.)