

IRISH APOTHECARIES' DIPLOMAS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I avail myself of the readiness with which you give insertion, in your very useful Journal, to every communication relating, either to the advancement of medical knowledge, or to the health and comfort of the community, to solicit, through its columns, attention to the manner in which diplomas are granted from the Lying-in Hospital of this city. With the manner of conducting the internal arrangements of the institution, or the description or kind of instruction given within its walls, I have nothing to do. If defects exist in these particulars, (and it has been whispered that some do exist,) the pupils, who are the persons most interested, if they possess no other means of remedying them, have, at least, the medium of your Journal, (which has produced so much reformation in other places,) to make them known; and no one, who has witnessed the effects of your exertions, will deny, that defects may be removed and abuses corrected, by making the public acquainted with their existence. What I complain of is, that diplomas are granted to persons, who are by no means qualified to practise even midwifery. The persons to whom I allude are Irish apothecaries. Amongst this body I will admit there are many individuals who are well informed, but they are exceptions; and I will assert that the most prominent characteristics of the majority are great ignorance and consummate effrontery. In England, the apothecary is a well-instructed man, compared to a person of the same denomination in this country; because, by the laws of the Apothecaries' Hall there, he is obliged to be informed upon many branches of medicine, besides pharmacy; while, here, his education consists in using the pestle and mortar, and compounding physicians' and surgeons' prescriptions—"secundum artem," together with the reading of the London or Edinburgh Pharmacopœia, without any attention whatever to the primary and material branches of medical knowledge, viz., anatomy, physiology, surgery, and the practice of physic; without an acquaintance with which, he is as unfit to be an accoucheur, as he is to be what he professes and attempts to be, namely, a general practitioner. Is it not shameful to have the care of human life intrusted to men, who, after seven years penance amidst tinctures, syrups, balsams, boluses, ointments, and pills, and probably without ever having seen more of disease than a cut head, a black eye, or a full-grown crop of the itch; and after thirty minutes examination at the Hall upon the making

of calomel, the doses of rhubarb and magnesia, the making of ointments, with a few set questions upon acids, alkalies, and opium, receive a diploma to practise the art and mystery of an apothecary? With such qualification as this, or without any whatever, a person can pay 20*l.* at the Lying-in Hospital, and, after six months, receive a licensè to practise midwifery! That such an individual, from practice in that way, may attain a mechanical expertness, like an artificer, in devising and employing the most ingenious methods in forcing children, dead or alive, through the natural apertures, I will not deny; but I strongly suspect that he will not be possessed of that degree of medical information, that skill and judgment, which difference of constitution, concomitant and incidental circumstances, and diseases in the parturient person, demand in a practitioner of midwifery. If such a person should, by chance, be a handy finger-smith, and be competent to the duties of the vocation, yet a great injury to the community results from the practice of conferring a diploma, where no real qualification accompanies it; for, with this document, men palm themselves upon the people in country towns and villages, and commence the pious employment of killing and curing his majesty's liege subjects with as much professional composure and sanctimonious gravity, as the most learned, or seemingly learned, big-wig in London, Dublin, Edinburgh, or elsewhere.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

HIBERNUS.

Dublin, Dec. 23, 1828.

NON-EXPANSION OF HORSES' FEET.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following experiments, &c., were originally intended as an answer to some letters which have recently appeared in *The Sporting Magazine*; but as it appears the party who have the management of that publication, are desirous of hearing only one side of the question, they have refused them admittance. Aware that most of your readers are interested in the safe going of their horses, and that any thing which can tend to elucidate the much-agitated question of *foot lameness*, or be productive of *practical results* in the shoeing or treatment of their horses' feet, cannot be uninteresting to any class of the community, I enclose the paper for THE LANCET.

The expansive quality assigned to the foot, having led to many errors in these matters, I propose, first, to endeavour to clear away the mist which has enveloped it, and,