

nurse of the establishment, to be sent for by the board when wanted"; and they will not then unite with the *Norwich Mercury* in insulting medical gentlemen by comparing their position with that of menials.

Lest any one should suppose that we are unfairly censuring the newspaper organ of the anti-medical governors, we reprint a passage from the leader to which we have already referred:—

"The *real cause* of the proposition, however, jumped out in the very few words which fell from Dr. Ranking—that the medical men did not like to be placed upon a level with the nurses or the porter, to be sent for when wanted. That this is 'the rub', was evident, and we confess we heard it with regret, for it argues a false feeling, which is not generally the companion of strong intellects and high minds."

Alas! alas! to how low an ebb in social estimation has the hospital system of England brought our profession! It has tarnished the native lustre of medical philanthropy, and changed the voice of public thanksgiving into that of scornful ingratitude:—and who can

"Cover the monstrous bulk of this ingratitude
With any size of words?"

THE CRIMINAL PRODUCTION OF ABORTION BY PERSONS CALLING THEMSELVES SUR- GEONS SHOWS THAT A MEDICAL REFORM ACT IS REQUIRED AS A MEASURE OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

A most disgraceful instance of the criminal production of abortion, in which the characters of a clergyman of pious repute and of two persons calling themselves surgeons are involved, has been several times within the last fortnight brought before the Hon. G. C. Norton, at the Lambeth Police-office, and will soon be tried before the Criminal Court. A Mr. James Thompson Currie, a practitioner in London, has (according to the evidence published in the newspapers) for some time past been acting as the accomplice of a man named Cunningham, *alias* Smith, who was in the habit of seeing pregnant females at Currie's surgery, for the purpose, as it is presumed, of causing them to abort by the employment of mechanical means. The case which led to the discovery of the criminality of Cunningham, and to the implication of Currie subsequently, took place at the house of a Mrs. Halcomb, at 4, Stockwell Road, Clapham Road. A young woman, named Eliza Mardon, took rooms under the guidance of her seducer, the Rev. Mr. Gordon, at Mrs. Halcomb's house, and received medical visits from Cunningham, who informed Mrs. Halcomb that the young lady was suffering from a polypus of the womb, which it would be necessary to remove. On one occasion when Cunningham was alone with the lady, her cries were so loud that Mrs. Halcomb made an excuse to enter the bedroom, where she saw sufficient to lead her to opine that a foetus and not a polypus was being evolved from the womb. Cunningham was seen by her to remove something from the bed, and to take it away with him.

After a time Mr. Darnton Greenwood, of Clapham, was called in. He formed a decided opinion that the patient had recently passed through the process of labour, and gave such information to the authorities as led to the arrest of the two above-named prisoners.

On examining the medical directories, we find no men-

tion of the name of the prisoner Cunningham; but Currie is described in the *British Medical Directory* as L.F.P. and S. Glas., 1839. We should be sincerely glad if time might show that neither of them belonged, by qualification, to the medical profession. Nothing can point out more strongly, than the occurrence of such cases, the duty we owe to ourselves and to society, of applying with renewed zeal for such a measure of medical reform as would draw a line between qualified and unqualified practitioners.

Criminal abortion is, we fear, a much more common crime than many of the good and the just amongst us may suppose; and we therefore deeply deplore that the medical colleges cannot rid the profession of miscreants, who are found out in the commission of this sinful and horrible practice. The conduct of Mr. Greenwood, in the present case, seems to us to have been careful, just, and well deserving the earnest approbation of the profession and of society; but no one can save the medical profession from sharing in the disgrace of such discoveries, till there is a legal register of qualified practitioners, and a medical council, with power to erase from it the names of delinquents. We would earnestly say to our colleagues, that an opportunity at present exists, such as never before existed, for obtaining a useful measure of medical reform; and that, with such scandals as that to which we have now called attention damaging our social reputation, it becomes a duty to meet each other in the spirit of the most liberal concession as regards our class interests, and to rally round Sir Charles Hastings and his colleagues in the Medical Reform Committee of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, in obtaining at least an instalment of reform during the present session of parliament. Nothing will tend more to the accomplishment of this object, than our pouring petitions in profusion upon the table of the House of Commons. By signing such a form of petition as that which we published last week, no one will compromise his individual opinions upon matters of detail; and those who have strong views upon any matters of special difficulty, can easily make them known through the medical journals, or through the medical committees which are now being formed throughout the kingdom. At the present crisis, we require on the one hand full and free discussion, and on the other a brotherly and patriotic spirit of mutual concession. The conciliatory spirit in which the discussion of the Reform question was conducted at the meeting of the Metropolitan Counties Branch on Tuesday, is an omen of good. A full report will be found in another part of this number.

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