

I., Mr. W. P. Nicholson's pamphlet : and II., Dr. B. W. Dudley's reply.

Contributors

Nicholson, W. P.
Dudley, Benjamin W. 1785-1870.
National Library of Medicine (U.S.)

Publication/Creation

[Lexington, Ky.] : [publisher not identified], [1829]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/jztxxhrb>

License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by the National Library of Medicine (U.S.), through the Medical Heritage Library. The original may be consulted at the National Library of Medicine (U.S.) where the originals may be consulted.

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.

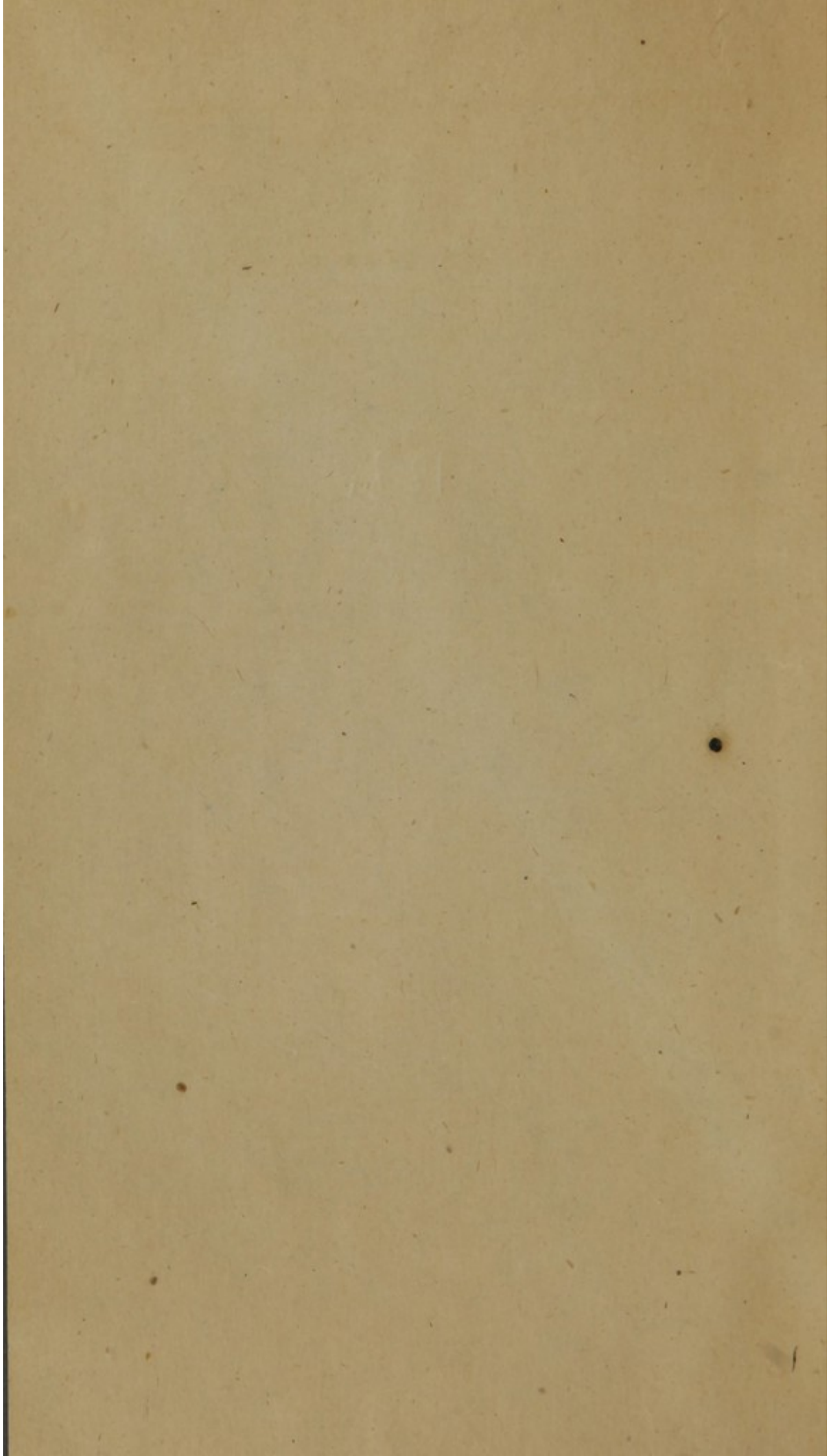
**wellcome
collection**

Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Nicholson (W. P.)

and Dudley (B. W.)





Transylvania Journal of Medicine and the Associate Sciences....Extra.

I. MR. W. P. NICHOLSON'S PAMPHLET, ✓

AND

II. DR. B. W. DUDLEY'S REPLY.

DR. SHORT,

Dr. Sir, The enclosed manuscript was sent to me by its author with a request that I would present it to the editors of the Medical Journal for publication in their next number, or at as early a period as they can. Should the publication be deemed inadmissible in your paper, please return the manuscript to my son who will hand you this note.

I am with much respect your ob't serv't,

M. T. SCOTT.

Lexington, 28th January 1829.



DR. SIR,

The 5th number of the Transylvania Journal of Medicine (For February 1829) has already been published; consequently no communication, now offered, can appear in it. In reference to the manuscript, sent us for publication by Mr. Nicholson, and yesterday delivered to one of the editors with your note, our engagements have not yet afforded us an opportunity of examining it; but as soon as we have leisure to do so we will look over it, and then inform you whether we deem it admissible or not.

Respectfully &c. Your ob't serv'ts,

THE EDITORS

of the Transylvania Journal of Medicine &c.

M. T. SCOTT, Esq.

I

Lexington, February 5, 1829.

DR. SIR,

We have now taken an opportunity of examining the manuscript which you placed in our hands a few days ago, and find its contents to be essentially the same with that of a printed pamphlet, received a short time before through the post office.

As the matter of this pamphlet relates mainly to a personal difference which can in nowise "promote the science of medicine," we cannot allow it a place as a regular article in the *Transylvania Journal*. But inasmuch as Mr. Nicholson conceives himself aggrieved, through its pages, by the essay of Dr. Dudley, and since he has chosen to address his publication to us, that all manner of justice may be done him, we have determined to reprint his communication in an extra form. This will be accompanied by an answer from Dr. Dudley, and together they shall be sent to all our subscribers, to the end that they and the public at large may be enabled to judge fairly of the points at issue between them.

Respectfully &c. yours,

THE EDITORS

of the *Transylvania Journal of Medicine &c.*

M. T. SCOTT, Esq.

I. MR. W. P. NICHOLSON'S PAMPHLET.

BOTH SIDES.

Extract from the Transylvania Journal of Medicine and the Associate Sciences, Vol. I. No. 14, November 1828—page 532.*

DUDLEY ON THE BANDAGE.

"It is rather a singular fact, that on a subsequent occasion, another individual, who had been under my charge, for an injury done the head of the fibula, some time after leaving me, became the patient of the professional character, who had failed in the treatment of the case just recited; and when this very simple case eventuated in the loss of the limb, the patient was taught to ascribe that loss to his treatment, while under my charge.

The history of the case is as follows. In attempting to mount his horse, the patient was thrown with the inferior and outer part of the knee on a piece of timber. In a few minutes I was called, and upon examination, the head of the fibula gave to my hand the sensation of an egg-shell crushing between the fingers; no other part of the limb received the slightest injury. The patient was in great pain, which was attributed in part to the injury sustained by the peroneal nerve. The bandage was applied, extending from the toes until it passed the knee, notwithstanding a variety of imprudences, committed by the patient, in rolling in bed, in eating and drinking secretly, articles of the most injurious kind, whereby two severe attacks of fever were produced, and in interrupting the dressings; yet about the twenty-second day from the injury, he was well enough to leave me and go to the country.

He was not long in the country, before I was informed that he was again ill, and that his leg was swelled and painful near the ankle. The individual who could lend the weight of his word to propagate error and do injustice, in a case, the history of which affords sufficient evidence in favour of the treatment instituted, only exposes his own weakness and folly to the derision of the intelligent in the profession.

* In the printed copy of Mr. Nicholson's pamphlet directed to the "Editor of the Transylvania Journal of Medicine, &c. Lex. Ky." we find this note in manuscript,—"The Ed. will please return the MS. to Mr. Scott and insert from this. W. P. N." Consequently we follow the printed pamphlet literally, although it differs in some respects from the MS. copy, and contains some errors in the extract from our Journal.—Eds.

Had the bandage been judiciously continued after leaving me, (*I will here remark that the bandage was continued until the day my limb was amputated; probably not with that JUDICIOUS power in which it was first applied,*) the patient might have been the subject of fever for months in succession, from improper indulgence in eating and drinking, without necessarily losing his limb. Nothing can exceed the folly and stupidity of the charge against the use of the bandage in that case; the more especially as the patient was well enough after two attacks of fever, induced by imprudence, and the injury done his knee and the head of the fibula, to leave town in twenty-two days. It must be manifest even with the tyro, that the evil effects of the bandage, when they do occur, are speedily made known. Swelling, inflammation, deep seated abscesses, suppuration and sloughing, are incomparable with its direct action on any part. Its tendency is immediately opposed to each of these states of the system. The law whereby constitutional diseases are inclined to spend their force on parts rendered prematurely weak and excitable by violence or otherwise, seems to have escaped attention.

It is from that law, a solution of the case in question, is to be drawn; while from ignorance or neglect of it, the patient ultimately lost his limb. By means of the bandage, I have been enabled to save more limbs, the removal of which had been determined on by other physicians, than all the cases of amputation together would amount to, in which I had the least agency, either immediately or otherwise, for the last fourteen years.

To the Editor of the Transylvania Journal of Medicine and the Associate Sciences.

SIR—On perusing one of the late numbers of your Journal, I perceived several statements of cases therein, intended to illustrate the utility of tight bandaging, under the signature of Dr. B. W. Dudley, the professor of Surgery in the Transylvania University.

The case which particularly arrested my attention, is the one that he most fully dwells on, in the 532 page of the 14th number, for Nov. 1828, which is evidently intended as a representation of my own case. Presuming that your Journal was established to promote the science of medicine, to impart correct information to the student, and to enlighten the community at large, by publishing to the world facts, and correcting or exposing *errors*, I have therefore deemed it necessary to address you, in answer to Dr. Dudley's statement of my case as alluded to above. Had he confined himself to the facts it actually presented, without descending to the gratuitous task of commenting upon my habits at the expense of truth, in violation of his duty as a professional man, and at the sacrifice of the ordinary courtesies of life, I should not, at this late day, have trespassed

upon your attention, or claimed the public ear. But, as he has thought it to accord with his principles as a gentleman, and reputation as a surgeon, to add *insult* to the injury he has already inflicted upon me, through his culpable ignorance of the nature of the injury I had received, and want of judgment in the treatment of my case, and seems disposed to exculpate himself from censure, by the heralding forth his good fame, at the expense of my reputation, as well as that of others, justice requires that I should arrest the current of erroneous impressions, which it is too evidently the wish of Dr. Dudley to impose upon the public. Were his statements destined to be seen alone by those to whom we are both known, or by those who could have an opportunity of informing themselves rightly as to facts, I should have treated his production with that contempt, which, from its malignity and falsehood, it so richly merits; but as such is not the case, I must be indulged while I rescue my character from the insidious stab of one, who avails himself of official station, to injure an individual whom he, by his want of skill, has rendered a cripple for life.

To begin then with Dr. Dudley and his statement. I am really at a loss to conjecture to whom he alludes when he says, that "I was taught to ascribe the loss of my leg to *his* treatment, by a professional character, into whose hands I fell subsequently to being under his charge." In his published history of my case, he states, that "in attempting to mount his horse, the patient was thrown on a piece of *timber*." Now the fact is, that in attempting to mount the horse, my cloak caught, and I could not gain the stirrup, and in jumping off I sprained my leg, as will appear in the sequel. I fell on a grass plat; but as to the piece of *timber* the Doctor alludes to, if there, it must have been buried under ground, as it was neither visible to the sight, nor tangible to the touch. His notice is the first intimation I ever had of it. He then says, that "upon examination of the head of the *fibula*, it gave to his hand the sensation of an egg-shell crushing beneath his fingers; no other part of the limb received the slightest injury." It certainly cannot have escaped the memory of Dr. Dudley, as well as that of several other persons, who were present when I met with the accident, that not more than ten minutes elapsed before he was present, and that after pulling off a tight boot, and examining the limb, he observed it was only a sprain; but upon a more close examination, he said both bones were broken about three inches below the knee, and employed two gentlemen in holding the broken bones, while he was preparing the bandages, which he applied in the following manner: he first tore off five or six small bandages about two and a half inches in width, and about two feet long; these he saturated with whiskey, and bound over the knee; he next applied the long roll bandage, (which was also saturated in spirits,) beginning at the toes and extending upwards nearly to the hip-joint. Being thus bandaged up like a harlequin and placed upon a bed, but a very short time had elapsed before I felt the most excruciating tortures, and observed to those present, I could never stand it; that the pain created by the blood endeavouring to force its passage to the extremities of the injured leg,

was beyond endurance. I felt the pain just above the knee joint, and in the tendons underneath the knee.

My friends taking it for granted that the Doctor ought to know best, notwithstanding the remonstrance of the Rev. George C. Light, who wished to relieve me, suffered me to remain in the situation I have described, until I became delirious, under the baneful effects of the tight bandaging. While in this situation, I may have been guilty of the imprudence of rolling in bed, as reported by Dr. D.; but agreeable to the representation of my friends, Dr. D. was sent for three different times during the first night; the first time he sent a message to this purport—that I must endeavour to bear the bandages, and that they ought not to be removed (I think) for two weeks. To the second message he returned a note, stating that he would not have the bandages removed for one hundred dollars, and that the cause of my extreme pain arose from the circumstance of the fracture extending into the knee joint, and that he could compare it to nothing else than egg-shells beat in a mortar. The third time he was sent for, he came, and observed, he was astonished I had no more philosophy. Philosophy! Philosophy in a man partially deranged by tight bandaging, which prevented his blood from circulating? Had Job, with all his patient forbearance, been driven to madness by the empiricism of his physician, I question very much whether his philosophy would have availed him much more than mine did me. In the morning of the second day, when he came to see me, Dr. D. loosened the bandage to the knee joint, and, if I mistake not, it was relieved again the same day by Dr. Webb, by the consent of Dr. D. The bandaging from the knee to the extremity of the foot, was not removed for several days, and always reapplied as soon as wet with spirits, as before. In this situation I was kept for twenty-six days, (Dr. D. says twenty-two.) Whether the variety of imprudences as ascribed to me by Dr. D., such as rolling in bed, &c. arose during the first forty-eight hours, when labouring under delirium, brought on by his want of judgment, I know not; it is, however, a pitiful subterfuge for him to take shelter under such a flimsy covering, from the well deserved censure, consequent on his ignorant treatment of me. The next items in his list of my imprudences, are his charges against me of *eating* and *drinking secretly*, articles of the most injurious kind. This is evidently an afterthought, eminently worthy of one so skilled in surgery. Is it not too ridiculous for serious refutation, that an invalid, who was unable to move from off his bed, could procure articles of food and drink *secretly*? But if they were so secretly disposed of, how came the fact in the possession of Dr. Dudley? Did he discover a knowledge of it by the same penetrating eyes that enabled him to discern the *timber*, on which his *imagination* so ingeniously broke my leg? He certainly should have explained the name, and quality of those injurious articles, in which I indulged, as also how and by whom he obtained his information. By whom was I furnished with them? wherefore the necessity for secrecy? I was not in a situation to demand of me a resort to any such means, to gratify my appetite. I had arrived at the age of maturity, and was str-

rounded by those, whose hospitality, kindness and attention were only equalled by their sympathy for my sufferings, and solicitude for my relief—whose indulgence would have precluded the necessity of resorting to secrecy, to procure either the necessaries or luxuries I might have needed or desired. Instead of its being necessary to practice covert devices to procure articles of “a pernicious kind” to indulge in, it was not an unfrequent, though a painful duty I had to perform in refusing the numerous little messes provided by the generous thoughtfulness of those, by whom it was my good fortune to be surrounded. I say the duty was a painful one—it was truly so to me, to be compelled by a sense of propriety, in obedience to the directions of my surgeon, to reject the proffered kindnesses of those whose greatest pleasure it was

“To bind up the wounded heart,
And pillow the aching head.”

It is well known that I neither ate nor drank any thing out of the common prescriptions given by Dr. Dudley, for my guidance, without consulting him, except in one or two instances, which I shall notice, during the whole course of my confinement, while under his charge. I recollect a few days after the accident occurred, of asking for a glass of *wine sangaree*, which was handed me, though *not secretly*. I had scarcely tasted it before Dr. Dudley came in, and pointing to it, I asked him whether it was proper for me to drink it; and on his replying that it was not, I desisted from doing so. Again, about eight or ten days from this period, I drank about a tumbler of cider without his consent; but this was done openly and not *secretly*. About the third week after I met with my accident, and after Dr. Dudley had pronounced that I would *soon* be well, (although my leg was then as scaly as the back of a fish, and smelt, as I was told, very offensively,) I did, as he states, perhaps imprudently, eat a few *oysters*. These are the only times that I recollect of having either ate or drank any thing out of the range of Dr. Dudley's general prescriptions. It is perfectly within my remembrance, that after I had eaten those oysters of which I have just spoken, upon Dr. Dudley's being informed of it, that he said they were the most injurious things I could have eaten, and that a person present observed to him, “Doctor, when I was so ill, you recommended them to me.” “Yes,” was his reply, “but those that I recommended to you, *were cured in their own liquor*.” He was then informed that those I had eaten were also cured in their own liquor, and not with vinegar. After this explanation, he admitted they were innocent. Notwithstanding this admission, in his desperation, like a drowning man catching at straws, he has continued to harp upon this oyster business. I feel satisfied, after this candid detail of facts, that the intelligent part of the community will conclude, that the reason assigned by Dr. Dudley as the cause of his failure, is no less impotent than unjust, and but serves to expose “his weakness and folly to the derision of the enlightened in the profession.” I recollect but once of having any considerable increase of fever, except what was induced by the cause already assigned, while under Dr. Dudley's care, when at my request he gave me a dose of medicine. This was some

time after the "*egg-shell fracture*" took place. I am the more certain of this circumstance, because of my having asked him if the medicine was not *calomel*, and observing to him that I was in the habit of taking from fifteen to eighteen grains. His reply is distinctly within my recollection; it was, "if ten grains would not have the desired effect, fifty would not."

I shall now notice the journey I performed, which, as the Doctor says, was about the 22d day, but which, in fact, was on the 26th day. He says, "nothing can exceed the folly and stupidity of the charge against the use of the bandage in *my* case, the more especially as the patient was well enough after two attacks of fever induced by imprudence, and the injury done his knee, and the head of *his fibula*, to leave town in twenty-two days." Here the Doctor is at points with himself. He certainly must have forgotten that in giving a history of the case, at the commencement, he says, no other part of the limb received the slightest injury except the *head of the fibula*, which was like the crash of egg-shells; but when he recites my journey, performed on the 22d day, in order to impress the public with the idea that the case was a very desperate one, (which, unfortunately for me, was made so by his mismanagement,) and that consequently the case was bordering on the miraculous, he recollected of a sudden that the knee was injured.

Now in all human probability, if the Doctor had written another paragraph, he might have recollected the circumstance of his giving two gentlemen the trouble of holding *two bones*, which he represented as being broken, whilst he was preparing and applying the bandages. It is unfortunate for the success of the Doctor, that he is not able to continue this delusion, as with the aid of those two bones, which were never broken, except in his imagination, he might be able to make out a tolerably specious case. Facts, however, stand too strongly arrayed against him, and he has been compelled to yield to circumstances. Owing to his wretched misapprehension of the nature and extent of the injury I had received, and barbarous application of the bandages, the flesh sloughed off, and exposed the bones to view, when it was discovered that there was not the slightest crack perceptible—no evidence of *broken bones*.

This can be established by some of the most eminent physicians, as well as by several respectable gentlemen in and around Lexington. Thus driven to the wall, the Doctor has very prudently dropt the *broken bones*, conscious that so flagrant a mistake would be received as a proof of his defective judgment, and as a reflection upon his skill as a surgeon.

A more gross misconception of the character of an injury, I think I might venture to assert, is not to be found in the books; nor never did any individual suffer more through stupidity than I have done; for, by what other name shall I designate that condition of the mind, which mistakes a simple sprain, for an injury of the complicated kind, as ascribed to mine by Dr. Dudley? I will return to my case. The day succeeding the one on which I met with the accident, Dr. Webb, as before premised, came to see me, and observed that if the bandage remained in

its then situation much longer, I must either lose my limb or my life; and if I mistake not, it was at his suggestion the bandage was loosened the first time to the knee, by Dr. Dudley. About the second week, my friends, finding my situation growing worse, called in another physician, Dr. Pindell, in consultation with Dr. Dudley, to whom Dr. D. represented the "*broken bones*" and the "*egg-shell fracture*," observing to him that he should not like to remove the bandages. Dr. Pindell did not insist upon their being removed, but replied that he should have preferred putting my leg in a box, and advised the application of warm vinegar, which was poured over the bandages, with the approbation, as I presume, of Dr. Dudley. After this, Dr. P. made two different appointments to meet him in consultation, but Dr. D. both times failed to make his appearance, which occasioned Dr. P. to desist from visiting me, and I never saw him again until after my removal from Lexington.

After a day or two, Dr. Dudley stopped the application of the vinegar, observing it was of no use; that the application of the bandages was all that was necessary; and that the reason why most of the physicians were so averse to using them, was because they did not know how to apply them. That they were like a set of old dray horses, (I think he said,) that could not be got out of the old beaten track. If I am not egregiously mistaken, he also stated that the old fashioned mode of using *splints* in cases of fracture was entirely abandoned, being superseded by the application of the bandage, by the first surgeons in Europe.

My limb, in a very short time after this, became very offensive, and Dr. Dudley will recollect, he was asked the cause. What he attributed it to, I was not informed until some time after my removal to the country, whither he was not invited, his services not being desirable. It must, I think, be obvious to all, that mortified pride has driven him to the unenviable task of accounting by means of slander and falsehood, for consequences arising from his own mal-treatment of me, and hence springs his charges of the secret use of articles of a pernicious tendency, which he has so uncharitably trumpeted forth to the public against me.

It may be proper to remark in this place, that whilst under the direction of Drs. Pindell, Satterwhite and Webb, my course of diet was altered, and instead of restricting me, they gave me stomachics to increase my appetite. This they deemed necessary to counteract the ill effects which were likely to result to my general system from the copious discharges of my leg, it being their opinion that if my appetite failed, I could not survive many days. I would here ask, is it probable that a little *wine sangaree*, a *tumbler of cider*, and a *few oysters*, used during a period of twenty-six days, could have produced such unhappy results? If so, what could have produced that scrofula appearance and purple spots, before I either drank the cider or tasted the oysters. Surely it was not barely taking a mouthful of wine sangaree to wet my lips, and moisten a parched throat. No, the cause is to be traced to the application of the bandage, and to that alone, notwithstanding "the law whereby constitutional diseases seem to have escaped attention, and the four-

teen years experience" (of Dr. Dudley,) in the application of tight bandages.

But to proceed; knowing I was trespassing upon the generous hospitality where I was then unavoidably confined, I was anxious, as well as my more interested friends, to remove to the country, and Dr. Dudley must surely recollect being questioned as to the propriety of the measure; if he does not, I perfectly remember his answer, which was, that I had better remain a few days longer, that I would *soon be well enough*. I waited patiently several days, in hopes *well enough* would arrive; but instead of getting better, I evidently grew worse. Dr. Webb at last insisted upon my removal, stating he could not, with propriety, interfere while I remained under Dr. Dudley's charge; and without consulting him, I was removed to the distance of two and a half miles from town. Dr. Dudley would fain have the public believe that when removed to the country, my leg was nearly well, than which nothing can be farther from the fact. I will describe the manner of my removal, from which it will be perceived that I was as low as I well could be. Dr. Webb removed me in a carriage, on the bottom of which a bed was placed. I was taken from the chamber in which I was confined, and carried to the carriage, and carefully laid on the bed provided for my reception. Thus situated, I was conveyed by slow travelling to the residence of M. T. Scott, Esqr. lifted out of the carriage, and carried to a bed previously prepared for me.

So much for Dr. Dudley's Flemish account of my being well enough about the twenty-second day, to leave him and go to the country. The day after my removal, after I had somewhat recovered from the fatigue of this *wonderful* journey, Dr. Webb removed the bandages, when it was discovered that there were several purple spots, and one black one, about three or four inches below the knee, on the outer part of the leg, from which a copious stream of the most offensive matter immediately issued, nearly filling a quart vessel. As soon as it had stopped running, Dr. Webb went to Lexington for Dr. Pindell, who again attended me as a consulting physician. In a short period after this, every muscle in my leg began to decay, and finally rotted off; my heel and part of the toes sloughed off. It was the opinion of the respectable physicians who attended me, as well as that of other intelligent persons who witnessed my sufferings, that the whole was ascribable to the improper application of the bandages, and *that* during the first forty-eight hours.

In all probability, had the sprain, for it was nothing more, been left to nature, she would have performed a cure in a few weeks; but it was my misfortune to call to my aid a votary of tight bandages, who, to gratify an unhallowed pride of opinion, has compelled me to wear a wooden leg "*as a monument of bad surgery.*" The fact is, that if Dr. Dudley was to put the same pressure upon an uninjured leg, that he did upon my sprained one, the same disastrous results would no doubt be produced.

Again, Dr. Dudley attributes my sufferings and loss of limb to the interruptions of the bandages or dressings while under his care. This

is the more strange, as he acknowledged to M. T. Scott, Esq. that during that time, the bandages were never removed but by himself, except once partially, and then by his directions. The Doctor is not, however, over scrupulous in framing excuses; for upon another occasion, in despite of the facts I have detailed, he asserted that if I had remained three days longer under his care, I would have got well. If there had been the slightest ground for such an assertion, how is it possible that the inflammation, deep seated abscesses, suppuration, and sloughing, that *immediately* followed my translation from Lexington, could have taken place. It will not be contended that this instantaneous change is attributable to the effects of the country air; if not, what was the cause? Nothing more nor less than Dr. Dudley's tight bandages. The excuse which I have just exposed, calls to my mind a conversation which he had with the same gentleman, in reference to the application of his bandages. He gravely contended that if he had the strength sufficient to exert a force equal to the power of ten horses in their application, it would be impossible to injure a limb, provided the bandages were wrapped regularly. I merely mention this to convince the public how carefully the Doctor is to outrage decency and common sense, rather than his favorite hobby should not be sustained. Every one who knows any thing about the matter, must know that such a force applied to a limb, would grind it in good earnest to an *egg-shell* substance; it would be better for the Doctor to be candid for once, plead guilty, and abandon his leg-destroying bandages; for unless he does, should he have many cases, he will have much to answer for; for each one will have cause to bear testimony against him. The Doctor really seems to have set out with a determination to run a tilt after dilemmas, as will appear from the following. He says, "He (I) was not long in the country before I (he) was informed that he was again ill, and that his (my) leg was swelled and painful near the ankle."

Now it so happened that my illness had not intermitted. But why should he particularise the pain as being "*near the ankle?*" The fact is, there were many other parts of the leg which caused me infinitely more suffering and pain. To me it seems somewhat singular, that the Doctor's information should be so precise at this remote period as to enable him to locate the *seat of pain*; for on reference to a note written by him only 11 months after the accident occurred, he affects to have forgotten both me and my case.

Notwithstanding all Dr. Dudley has said to the contrary, it is an undeniable fact, which can be substantiated by several distinguished gentlemen of the faculty, that my leg was in a state of mortification when my friends removed me from under his care, extending from 4 or 5 inches above the knee to the end of my toes. To the skill of the physicians who attended me, after my removal, together with the unceasing attention of my friends, am I indebted for my recovery. To Dr. Webb, who scarcely ever left my bed side during a period of five months; to Drs. Pindell and Satterwhite, (the two latter attended in consultation,) I owe a debt of gratitude, I fear I never shall repay.

In about five months after my accident, my situation being considered extremely precarious, Dr. Scott of Chillicothe, (now of Lexington) was written for; but having unfortunately met with an accident the day before his intended departure with a view of visiting me, he was prevented from coming, and I of availing myself of his services at the time.

In the month of June following, Dr. Webb being anxious of returning to Ohio, by the advice of Dr. Scott, and the approbation of Dr. Pindell, who were consulted upon the occasion, I was removed to Chillicothe, a distance of 150 miles. It was considered by my physicians, that in my low and doubtful condition, a change of air might be serviceable to me. At the period of which I am now speaking, five months after the accident, notwithstanding the Doctor, in his report, alleges I was "*well enough*" to leave him and go to the country about the 22d day, I was so reduced that my back and hip bones had come through the skin, and I was wholly unable to help myself. I was so low that it was found necessary to fix the bed on which I was laid, on a springy board in the carriage; I was lifted in and out as occasion required. Mrs. N. and a servant, besides the driver, accompanied me in the carriage, to render such assistance as might be requisite, and Dr. Webb and his brother accompanied on horseback. On my arrival at Chillicothe, Dr. Scott examined my leg, and then pronounced it as his opinion, that it would never be of much service to me; but that after it should have been healed, I would be the better able to judge, and if it should be necessary then to have it taken off, I would be in a better situation to undergo the operation. In about four weeks from my arrival in Chillicothe, I had so far recovered as to be able to set up, and occasionally to walk with the aid of crutches, and a stirrup suspended from my neck, so as to support my skeleton of a leg. In the month of August following, by the advice of Dr. Scott, I returned to Kentucky to avoid the autumnal fever which had prevailed for one or two years in Chillicothe.

In the month of November, I had so far regained my strength, as to be able to leave Kentucky for Baltimore, my leg being supported on a pillow in the carriage.

Thus after *eleven* months of the most intense suffering, I was enabled once more to reach my home, with a mutilated limb, produced from the want of skill and judgment in my medical attendant at the commencement of the case.

On my arrival in Baltimore, Dr. Buckler, who is my family physician, called to see me, and on examining my leg, said it did not *appear* that any bones had been broken, but that it would never be of any use to me, and advised amputation; at this period my leg was nothing but skin and bone, there being nothing left but the artery to nourish it, the little flesh and muscles it used to have, having rotted off.

At Dr. Buckler's request, Drs. Davidge and Jamison, were called on in consultation. On examination, the latter gentleman coincided in opinion with Dr. B. and recommended amputation; the former agreed as to the first point, but recommended amputation to be deferred for a *time* to see the effect the efforts of nature might produce. Desirous, if

possible, of saving my limb, I awaited the operations of nature until the 24th of April following, when despairing of recovery, on that day the amputation was performed by Dr. Buckler and Dr. Gibson, and in the presence of Dr. Lyon, now demonstrator of anatomy in the medical college of this city, Dr. Keerl who is now in Europe pursuing his studies, and Drs. Coskery, Caldwell, Pearce and Handy; these gentlemen, who dissected and examined the limb after it had been taken off, told me there was no sign of fracture that they could discover. Thus ends the history of the case of the "broken bones," the "egg-shell crash, and the injured knee," after seventeen months of the most excruciating torture. It is unreasonable to presume for a moment, that effects so extraordinary could have proceeded from a simple sprain, unless superinduced by improper treatment. To Dr. Dudley's want of judgment and tight bandages, I am indebted for all my suffering and the loss of my limb.

In about six weeks after the operation was performed, I walked to my office, distance probably a quarter of a mile—so much for a skilful surgeon. In the month of November following, I mounted a wooden leg, and have visited Kentucky three times since then; during the last summer and fall, I spent the most of my time in and around Lexington, and never heard a word of my case, until the day previous to my leaving Lexington, when I was informed it was preparing for the press. A few days after my return here from Kentucky, I received a copy of his publication through the medium of the post office. To me it is inexplicable what fatuity could have beset Dr. Dudley, after an elapse of *four years*, to publish my case; much less can I account for the worse than savage pleasure he seems to indulge in, while unprovokedly assailing me. Had Dr. Dudley stopped after giving *his imaginary* statement of my case, erroneous as that was, I should have permitted him to have enjoyed his laurels undisturbed; but as he has calumniated me, and called my morals in question, I have felt myself bound to expose the grossness of his professional errors, and to throw back the foul aspersions upon my reputation, as unworthy of me, and becoming only him, in whose malevolent heart it was nurtured. In a word, I defy him and the miserable beings whom he has employed, or those who gratuitously lent their aid, to propagate the charge of eating and drinking to excess against me, to substantiate it, by the evidence of a solitary individual entitled to credit in the estimation of honourable men.

In conclusion, I will appeal to the public, and ask them, admitting for argument sake, that Dr. Dudley's representation of my case was correct, which I deny—I say I ask them, I ask the intelligent of the medical profession, whether under the circumstances of the case he has made out, he was justified in the application of tight wet bandages? I ask them did they ever see, hear, or read of such treatment, except by Dr. Benjamin W. Dudley, in a case of *egg-shell fracture*, in Europe, Asia, Africa or America? And whether it succeeded? I have done with the Doctor.

I am the public's ob't serv't,
W. P. NICHOLSON.

CERTIFICATES.

The following is in answer to a letter I addressed to Dr. Buckler some time after my limb had been amputated.

COPY.

Dear Sir—In answer to your note of the 24th, in which you desire to know "if I could discover any appearance of fracture in the bones of your amputated limb, more particularly of the head of the fibula and knee cap," I state, for your satisfaction, that no trace of such injury was discoverable in either of these bones, nor could I perceive any sign by which I could infer that the larger bone of the leg or tibia had been fractured.

Respectfully, &c.

May, 30th, 1826.

J. BUCKLER.

My object in procuring the annexed certificates is merely to show that Dr. Dudley was entirely mistaken in the nature or extent of the injury I received.

We, the undersigned, were present at the amputation of Mr. Nicholson's limb, and have again examined it this day, and do not perceive any signs of fracture.

Signed,

S. H. LYON, M. D.

S. H. CALDWELL, M. D.

W. D. COSKERY, M. D.

WITNESS, W. A. SCHEFFER.

Baltimore, Jan. 9th, 1829.

We have examined the bones of a leg, handed to us by Mr. Nicholson, and do not perceive any evidence of fracture in either of them; and the head of the fibula appears perfect.

Signed,

GEORGE S. GIBSON, M. D.

MAXWELL McDOWELL, M. D.

MICHAEL DIFFENDERFFER, M. D.

JOSHUA I. COHEN, M. D.

GEORGE FRICK, M. D.

WILLIAM DONALDSON, M. D.

We have examined the bones of a leg, which was handed to us by Mr. Nicholson, and particularly the head of the fibula, and do not perceive any evidence of fracture.

Signed,

JOHN J. MCKENZIE, M. D.

S. BIRCKHEAD, M. D.

ALEXANDER CLENDINEN, M. D.

ASHTON ALEXANDER, M. D.

SAMUEL BAKER, M. D.

W. FISCHER, M. D.

I do hereby certify, that I buried Mr. Nicholson's limb, and at his request took it up again the other day, cleaned it, and gave it to him, and that the limb now before me is the same one.

Witness my hand, this 9th of Jan. 1829.

JOHN C. BROWN, *Sexton of Christ Church.*

State of Maryland, City of Baltimore, sc.

On the 9th of January, 1829, before me, the subscriber, a justice of the peace for the said city, personally appeared John C. Brown, Sexton of Christ Church, in said city, and made oath on the Holy Evangely of Almighty God, that the several facts contained and set forth in the above certificate, are respectively true as they therein stand stated.

Sworn and subscribed before me the day and year first written.

W. A. SCHAEFFER.

I certify that I was present when John C. Brown buried Mr. Nicholson's limb, and also when he took it up again, and that the limb now exhibited is the same one.

WITNESS, W. A. SCHAEFFER.

W. T. PEACHEY.

Baltimore, 9th January, 1829.

"I was called, and upon examination, the head of the fibula gave to my hand the sensation of an egg-shell crushing between the fingers. No other part of the limb received the slightest injury."

Dr. Dudley's Statement.

II. DR. B. W. DUDLEY'S REPLY.

A man who has lost a limb through folly is sufficiently punished for his indiscretion; and the public, in the exercise of charity, turns an indulgent ear, when an effort is made to prove that he is not the author of his own misfortune.

Mr. Nicholson is given to understand that I feel no disposition to render his case worse than it really is; on the contrary, I am quite willing to concede to him all the benefit of the argument, that he was in a state of derangement not only for the first two days, as stated by himself, but that he remained so during the whole period of his confinement under my charge. In this concession there is quite as much charity shown to Mr. N. as there is justice done those who have urged him to the commission of an outrage upon truth and virtue in his slanderous publication. Had the same pains been taken to conciliate, that have been to poison his feelings against me, Mr. Nicholson might now be numbered among my friends. Reasons, however, existed among those who directed his opinions and fixed his prejudices, for turning both against me.

Not many weeks after he was withdrawn from my charge and was carried to the country, there were so many falsehoods and slanders circulated to my injury, that I wrote a letter to M. T. Scott, one of the brothers-in-law at whose house Mr. Nicholson then was, and threatened to lay the whole case before the public. By reading the pamphlet of Mr. Nicholson, I am possessed of additional and satisfactory reasons for believing, that his brothers-in-law committed the first outrage on correct behaviour, and that to their interference he is especially indebted for his irreparable misfortune; since according to his own admission, his brother-in-law, Dr. Webb, (who at that time was scarcely familiarised with the initials of the profession, and who could not approach me in the light of a physician,) told him only the day after the injury, "that if the bandage remained in its then situation much longer, I must either lose my limb or my life." From that time the series of imprudences commenced, as well in relation to improper meddling with the limb, as to indulgences of appetite.

During the absence of Mr. Nicholson from this state, and while under the charge of another brother-in-law, Dr. Scott, then of Chillicothe, Mr. M. T. Scott procured of me my bill against Mr. Nicholson, with

the intention, as I thought, of paying it off. But in the October following, after the return of Mr. Nicholson from under the charge of Dr. Scott, he addressed me the following note.

“To Dr. B. W. Dudley: Sir, I propose leaving this country in the course of two or three weeks for the eastward, Baltimore, if my situation permits. As it is not my intention to pay you unless compelled by law I have thought it thus proper to inform you of my contemplated journey in order that you may take such steps as may be deemed most adviseable. Your serv’t. WM. P. NICHOLSON.”

To this note I returned the following answer:

“Mr. W. P. Nicholson:

Sir, I received your note this morning in which you apprise me of your determination to go to the eastward, and that you will not pay my bill which your brother-in-law (M. T. Scott) got of me some six months ago, unless compelled by law.

A legal process before one of our justices of the peace, wherein a Kentucky doctor is plaintiff and a Baltimore merchant defendant, would be truly a novel scene. There are two orders in society against whom I never prefer a claim for professional services, and you are certainly at liberty to rank yourself in my estimation, with either of these. Since you have chosen to recall your case to my recollection in the uncivil style of your letter, I have now to add, that I apprehend I pity your folly as much, as you can love your money, or lament your misfortune.

Respectfully,

B. W. DUDLEY.”

What agency the brothers-in-law of Chillicothe had in causing Mr. Nicholson to write me the foregoing note, immediately after his return from that place, the history of the case will tell. But inasmuch as Dr. Scott could not have forgotten a case of fractured leg under his charge, followed after some time by fistulous abscesses, in which he could not effect a cure; and since he must be apprized that I succeeded in that case in a short time by the use of the bandage, I had some claims on *him* to become the advocate of the practice, and to reconcile his brother-in-law, Mr. Nicholson, to what I had done.

Mr. M. T. Scott has played a part in this business not at all calculated to show his love for consistency, or his regard for disinterested justice. Regrets expressed to one gentleman at the injurious reports in circulation, while currency is given them when in conversation with another; threats or surmises of personal danger, prostration of character, law-suits, and answers in print to my notice of his brother-in-law's case in the journal, are held out at one time; while at others it appears he would like to approach me as a friend and beg me to desist, except that he was forbidden by some unknown cause of anger on my part. Mr. Scott cannot be ignorant of the source of my humble opinion of him.

But I have other reasons for believing that Mr. Nicholson has been goaded on by the bad feelings of his friends in Lexington to make the late unwarrantable attack upon me. Although Mr. Nicholson speaks

of having perused the number of the Journal containing my communication at which he has taken such offence, I do not believe he has ever seen that number, and that he has based his pamphlet on an incorrect manuscript copy of that part of it, relating to his own case only. Otherwise I cannot conceive why he should have addressed his publication to "the *Editor*" of the Transylvania Journal, when it bore on its title-page the names of two gentlemen as *Editors*; how he could have mistaken 4 for 14 in allusion to the number of that work from which the extract is taken; how he could have copied *prematurely* for *preternaturally*; *immediately* for *immediate*; how he could have thrown two sentences into one, by placing a comma where he found a full point; or have made detached paragraphs in his copy, where there were none in my essay; thus perverting the meaning and making nonsense of it. These errors do not savour of the mercantile accuracy of a man of business, and it is quite certain that no printer would have made them from a printed copy. They speak for themselves.

Mr. Nicholson himself complains, after so long a period has elapsed since he sustained the injury, that I should now unfeelingly throw his case into print, and attempt to injure his moral character. Thus far Mr. Nicholson has enjoyed all the privileges of a one-sided story, told by himself and friends. From Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New-York, enquiries have been made of me concerning his famous case. Even now I would suffer him to enjoy all the benefit of his pamphlet, and would be silent, except for the array of professional names, under the weight of whose authority, he no doubt expects to repose in quiet, and to enjoy the satisfaction of witnessing my humiliation. This circumstance gives his communication an importance in the public eye which it otherwise would not possess, and seems to demand from me some observations in reply. I therefore proceed to a plain statement of facts and a few remarks thereon.

Besides the various articles of drink and diet taken to Mr. Nicholson's sick room, consisting of brandy, wine, porter, cider, oysters, cheese, and crackers, his plate was supplied at the table, to an extent that startled those who observed it, with all the luxury and substantial of a profusely spread board; nor did this satisfy the cravings of his appetite; for, as Mr. Beatty informed me, he was in the habit of ordering one dish to be set aside for his benefit between meals; to wit, the back bone of the hog, cold chine being his favorite meat. Even his brother-in-law was heard to express his disapprobation of his excesses.

It is by no means gratifying to me to make this exposition, nor would I in any other circumstances than those of vindicating myself under the charge of falsehood. Mr. N. might have been satisfied that I could not make this complaint except on proper advisement. It is not my custom to be kept in ignorance of the drinks and diet of my patient, nor to make my enquiries of any but those most competent to give me correct information.

From the family where he was confined I received my information, and that family recollect my remarks upon his indiscretions, when I ob-

served that Mr. Nicholson was a patient admirably calculated to disgrace his attending surgeon—language that could not have fallen from me, had it not been elicited by communications respecting his repeated improprieties. Why in the concluding part of his address he should again allude to this subject in the following condemnatory strain is truly matter of astonishment. “I defy him and the miserable beings whom he has employed, or those who gratuitously lent their aid, to propagate the charge of eating and drinking to excess against me, to substantiate it by the evidence of a solitary individual entitled to credit in the estimation of honourable men.” I had been willing to concede to Mr. Nicholson the advantages of being raised a gentleman; but how shocking the contrast. After meeting with his accident he was received into the house of a friend, and there assiduously and tenderly nursed; and because, on account of the warm solicitude felt for his comfort and his speedy recovery, daily communications were made me respecting his habits, the better to enable me to exert a proper control upon his conduct as my patient, he has by one sweeping denunciation included those who were pleased to extend to him the most generous hospitality. Surely there could be no inducement on the part of the family to misstate facts; nor has there been any inclination on my part to use them improperly. But as it is possible that Mr. Nicholson may ask for names notwithstanding I have given him the source of my information; for his satisfaction I will refer him to Dr. Stephens R. Beatty of Washington county Maryland, and to Mr. Charlton Beatty of Kentucky, the latter of whom resided in the family at the period of N’s confinement, and the former received his information from the family twelve months ago. The result of an application to these gentlemen, provided Mr. N. has any sense of justice left him, would be to urge him to some atonement for the outrage he has committed on truth and gratitude.

I shall not stop to argue the point with Mr. Nicholson about his falling on a piece of timber, which as he says was neither “tangible to the touch nor visible to the eye”. The only information I had on the subject was second hand.

It is strange logic urged by Mr. Nicholson that because he was of mature age, therefore no secrecy on the subject of his diet could be suspected. He ought to know, however, that there are old as well as young children; and that notwithstanding his maturity in years, he acted to the life, the part of a spoiled child.

In the fourth page of his pamphlet Mr N. observes that I told him on the third week after he received his injury, that he would soon be well; when at the same time, as he goes on to state, “his leg was scaly as a fish’s back,” and, *as he was told*, smelt offensively; while in the seventh page he states, that on the day after going to the country his leg discharged nearly a quart of offensive matter. Now the writer might know that “scales” like those on the back of a fish do not occur during inflammation: that they are the consequence of a partially nourished integument, under the influence of pressure by the bandage; while on the contrary, the formation of nearly a quart of matter would be attended by a tamid state of the limb and a smooth distended skin;

a condition of things incompatible with the treatment pursued, as the facts in the case show.

I do not know how to answer the hotchpotch served up on the fifth page* of the pamphlet, but were I to claim the privilege there conceded to me, of having "dropt the broken bones", by which I suppose Mr. Nicholson means that I ceased to contend that the fibula had been fractured; it would place him in the ridiculous attitude of one engaged to prove by a variety of certificates, what I had gratuitously admitted; while the dilemma of a false accusation necessarily awaits him. But altogether I think this pamphlet proves, to the credit of Mr. Nicholson, that he has not been schooled to misrepresentation, otherwise he would have learned to protect a false statement by a thicker mantle.

I am willing to concede quite as much on the subject of the consultation as will answer the purposes of making out the tale of Mr. N. Not recollecting particulars, I can only add, that I had not time at that season of the year, it being during the medical session, to bestow any attentions not absolutely required of me.

It must, however, appear quite ludicrous among professional men that Mr. Nicholson should represent me as contending that the bandage had superceded the use of splints with the first surgeons "in Europe." It is a practice which I have pursued and inculcated in opposition to that of Europe for more than ten years.

In the seventh page,* Mr. Nicholson observes that matter was discharged from his leg "the day after" he retired to the country, and "in a short period after this, every muscle in my leg began to decay, and finally rotted off; my heel and part of the toes sloughed off." And again, "It was the opinion of the respectable physicians who attended me, as well as that of other intelligent persons, who witnessed my sufferings, that the whole was ascribable to the improper application of the bandages, and *that during the first forty-eight hours.*" Compare the above with the following from the eighth page. "Notwithstanding all Dr. Dudley has said to the contrary, it is an undeniable fact, which can be substantiated by several distinguished gentlemen of the faculty, that my leg was in a state of mortification when my friends removed me from under his care, extending from 4 or 5 inches above the knee to the end of my toes." The contrast of these extracts, extorts from me the concession that Mr. Nicholson must have been in a state of derangement during his confinement in Lexington, and that he has written under the influence of mental alienation. Let us put all together and see how it reads. Matter was discharged the day after leaving town; in a short time (he does not say how long) every muscle began to decay and finally rotted off, notwithstanding mortification from above the knee to the toes took place before leaving town, and consequently long before the muscles began to decay. The application of the bandage during the first two days after the injury produced consequences that did not show

*The references apply to the pamphlet as originally printed, and not to the reprint, which varies in the paging from the original.—Eds.

themselves until twenty days or more elapsed; and yet every body knows that the circulation of a part being cut off will produce mortification in eight and forty hours, as in the application of ligatures upon tumours, and in fractures where the circulation is destroyed. Lastly that the leg was mortified before leaving town, as can be proved by those who only saw it sometime after going to the country.

In regard to various other small items contained in Mr. Nicholson's publication, I decline to make any reply, and have now only to notice the certificates appended to the pamphlet.

The pert tyro may vociferate, the ignoramus may dogmatise, but it is expected of the man of true merit, that he will examine cautiously, deliberately, thoroughly; and that he will not hazard an opinion while any source of information upon the subject before him, remains unexplored. I do not propose to prefer any claims to the liberality of my professional brethren, and I waive, so far as regards myself, on this occasion, all considerations of etiquette usually observed in their intercourse with each other. To no one of the gentlemen who have signed the certificates, am I personally known; nor have I ever had the slightest connexion with either, in any shape, except with those of them who belong to the medical faculty of the University of Maryland; and who (without my solicitation) concurred in *unanimously* recommending me to the Trustees, by whom I was *unanimously* elected to the chair of surgery in that Institution. This transaction took place eighteen months ago, and consequently more than two years after the case of Mr. Nicholson was familiarly known in Baltimore.

If the conduct of these gentlemen be taken as a precedent, then I would ask of them, Who in society is safe? Certificates to prove matters of science, wherein the cause of knowledge and the advantage of humanity is the object, are admissible where truth is in jeopardy. But in the case before us, no such apology can be offered. An individual, not belonging to the profession, applies to a number of physicians for signatures to a certificate wearing mischief on its face; and I hazard the assertion, that no gentleman, whose name is on the pamphlet, can pronounce himself superior to attack with a similar weapon. However submissive his patient, under all the injunctions imposed upon him, the physician is yet liable, from numerous causes, to mortification and defeat: and is he, after the exercise of skill and assiduity, to be subjected to the painful task of vindicating himself against the certificates of his brethren, which charge him with misconception and error, and this too, not for the cause of science, but for the gratification of the worst feelings of our nature? Establish this principle, and what becomes of knowledge, and science, and manly worth? By one fell sweep, each and all will be hurled from their elevated stations in the estimation of men, while they will be replaced by every thing that is abject, ignoble, and disgusting. Once recognise the principle, and the gentlemen themselves would soon give place to ignorance and presumption, to impudence and folly. Galileo was made to renounce his opinions in Philosophy by an impious decree; Harvey struggled for a long time against the ignorance and prejudice of the age in which he lived before he tri-

urged in the great discovery of the circulation of the blood; and in this enlightened age, when a Western surgeon proposes what he believes to be an improved mode of treating various surgical diseases, sixteen practitioners of Baltimore enter their caveat in certificates calculated to suppress all effort at improvement, and he is held up to society as unworthy of confidence or patronage. As an American some sympathy might have been anticipated in behalf of his ardor and perseverance; as a collaborator in the cause of that science, the object of which is the advancement of human happiness, the subject alone should furnish him with protection and defence, from all those who love the science of medicine as a department of knowledge, who pursue the practice with a view to fame and independence, or who are actuated by the warm and more elevated principles of the philanthropist. The natural tendency of certificates of the character in question is to repress investigation, to chill the expansive powers of the intellect, and to encourage servile and irrational imitation. Who will be found so hardy as to depart from the beaten track, when he feels that he is ever liable to be *certified* out of his reputation by his professional brethren? Will he not choose to let his patient suffer rather than suffer himself? None but the reckless would encounter the consequences of such conduct.

But let us turn to the merits of the particular case in question. In the fourth number of the *Transylvania Journal of Medicine &c.* Mr. Nicholson's injury is alluded to as one in which upon examination, the head of the fibula gave to my hand the sensation of egg-shells crushed between the fingers. According to Mr. Nicholson's account, the limb was amputated, seventeen months after the injury was received, by his physician Dr. Buckler, who gave a certificate a few days after that time, stating that he could perceive no evidence of fracture. Nearly three years after the amputation, viz. 9th January 1829, the leg was taken from the grave and inspected by fifteen other physicians, all of whom concur in sentiment that there was no fracture.

The question now presents itself, have those gentlemen examined the bone cautiously, deliberately, and thoroughly? I answer the question, and affirm without putting any thing at hazard—they have not.

The principle is admitted by all physiologists, that the bones as well as all the soft parts of the body are constantly under the influence of the two active systems, the secreting and the absorbing orders of vessels. Interesting exemplifications of these facts are presented in observations upon the bone which has been fractured, as well as in other instances, where no violence has been done. In the ordinary mode of dressing fractured bones, while there is an enlargement after recovery at the site of the fracture, there is also a material difference in its internal organization. At the point of union of a recent fracture, there is more vascularity than elsewhere. As nature progresses in her work of renovation by secretion and absorption, solidity takes the place of a spongy texture, and increased magnitude gives way to symmetrical form. Bones that have been irregularly set, and which present rough points near the surface after union, are rounded off by the action of the absorbents in a few months, so as to present one uniform smooth surface. Hence a dif-

faculty, and in many instances an impossibility of pointing out the seat of a former fracture, by a bare examination of the superficies of a bone. When fractures are managed by the skilful application of the bandage, the tendency of which goes to suppress all tumefaction and inflammation in the soft parts, the increased difficulty of ascertaining, by a subsequent examination, the seat of fracture, must be palpable to the most superficial thinker; nor is it possible to decide this question with certainty, by any examination of the superficies of the bone, where the fragments have been placed fairly in apposition. The facility of retaining the head of the fibula in its place by the bandage, could scarcely be doubted by the most skeptical. There is no one point of the osseous system more accessible to the controlling influence of the bandage than the head of the fibula: hence the facility of effecting reunion with the preservation of the natural aspect of the bone.

But without any design to derogate from the anatomical acumen of the gentlemen who have placed their names to the certificates, it is proper for me to make a remark on the difficulty of deciding upon the natural form and appearances of the head of the fibula. Without regard to the size of the individual, it is large or small, flat or protuberant, protected by the tibia or standing in relief by its side; while it is completely shielded by tendinous matter inserted into it, and dense fasciæ and cellular substance surrounding it. Hence a fracture, even with a change of its natural form, would most easily escape detection after reunion; while it would be impossible to decide upon it in cases where, by the influence of the bandage or otherwise, no deformity supervened. To recognize an insulated head taken from this bone, would puzzle most physicians.

From the language of the certificates, the reader is at liberty to infer that they were signed by the gentlemen after a bare inspection of the external appearances of the bone. I have already stated that in cases where the fragments of a fractured bone are replaced in perfect apposition, and retained there by means of the bandage, no superficial appearances remain permanently, whereby to detect the site of the original fracture. But I am warranted by facts to go much farther. Neither the superficies, nor the interior organization of a bone, will betray any marks of fracture, provided the fragments are perfectly adjusted to each other, and secured there by the aid of a bandage. Such a bone examined one or two years after the injury is sustained, will be so perfectly natural in all its exterior manifestations, and so uniform in its interior organization, as to elude the most scrutinizing investigation: nor will a bone, less judiciously set, present at all times the external marks indicating the site of the fracture. On the contrary, even where considerable deformity is manifest in a bone recently fractured, every observing surgeon has seen such deformity gradually disappear, while the superficies of the bone when subsequently examined, will often be found void of all appearance of previous injury. Many causes, of constitutional as well as of local origin, conduce to change the external aspect of a bone much more than fractures, while any abrupt change in the general direction of the bone is a manifestation equally equivocal in character with others mentioned.

In order to detect the seat of a previous fracture, we are instructed by those of exalted standing, and of unquestioned skill and attainments, to make a section of the bone in question. Where the interior conformation presents a regular continuity of fibrous structure, it is impossible to make any discovery. On the contrary, if the regular fibrous texture be interrupted throughout the diameter of the bone, this is admitted as proof of fracture. In cases wherein the appearances upon making a section of the bone are not conclusive in character, a facility of arriving at truth is secured, by extracting all the animal jelly, thus leaving the part to be examined in an insulated state. But while this process enables the inquirer to detect those cases of fracture only, which occur about the middle of the bone, and wherein they are not properly placed and retained in apposition during the process of reunion, it proves radically defective in all others.

All the articulating extremities constitute so many exceptions to the mode of ascertaining the site of a fracture by the interior manifestations; and probably no one bone is better calculated to exemplify the principle, or to prove the position, than the head of the fibula. This, as well as other extremities of articulating bones, is constituted of a mass of cellular net-work bearing no analogy to the rectilinear fibrous conformation of the middle of the same, and other bones. The internal organization undergoes no permanent change as a consequence of fracture, while the superficies as well as the deeper seated parts, by reason of a larger amount of circulation, are susceptible of a more speedy return to their natural appearances. We decline to make any observations on the changes produced upon a soft bone from being buried several years in a grave yard.

Thus it is obvious, that were it made to appear that the bone had been divided, and then deprived of all animal jelly, preparatory to a more cautious and satisfactory examination, those gentlemen would not have been prepared to offer an opinion worthy of influencing the opinions of intelligent men. A blow upon the head of the bone might enlarge it, the preternatural contractions of the muscle inserted into it, might deform it; but these would be very equivocal manifestations when the bone came to be examined, in reference to the existence of a previous fracture. It therefore palpably appears, that no evidence of a conclusive character can be set forth, seventeen months after the injury, however cautious, deliberate, and thorough the examination might have been.

I am well aware that certificates are often given without due consideration, and that they are frequently rendered subservient to purposes not anticipated; and therefore have been disclaimed by their authors. Inasmuch as the physicians who have given countenance to the abuse of Mr. Nicholson are unknown to me, and have never had any just cause to lend the weight of their names to a publication of slander against me, I am left in suspense as to the course which they may esteem due to themselves, and to the profession, of which some of them are distinguished, and all responsible members.

B. W. DUDLEY.

Lexington, Kentucky, Feb. 7, 1829.

