

A letter to the independent governors of St. George's Hospital : proving a loss to the poor, by mismanagement, of (even in eight items,) ninety thousand pounds! / by W. W. Sleigh.

Contributors

Sleigh, W. W. 1796-
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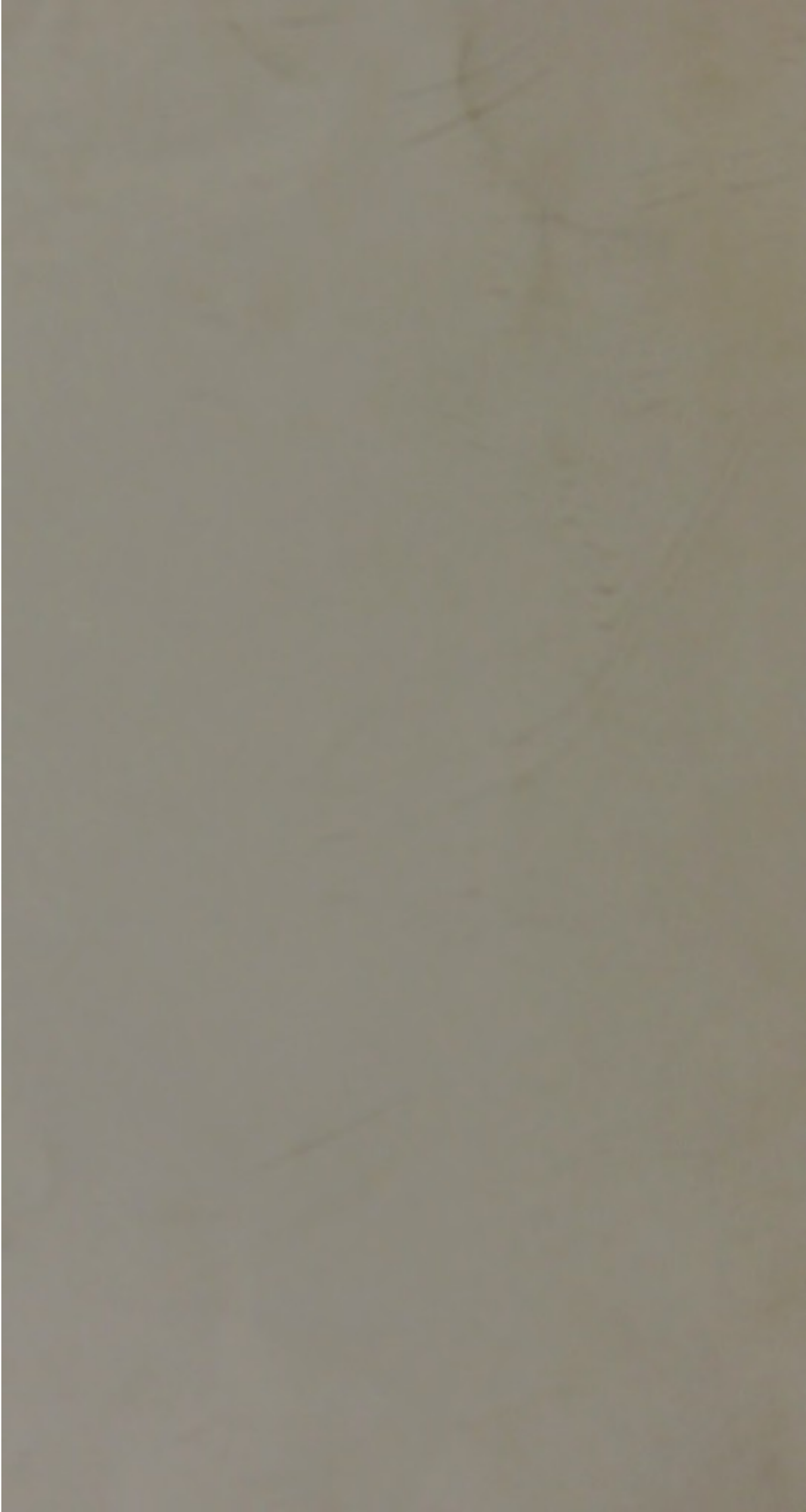
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A
LETTER

TO THE
INDEPENDENT GOVERNORS

OF
ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL.

PROVING
A LOSS TO THE POOR,

BY MISMANAGEMENT,

OF
(EVEN IN EIGHT ITEMS,)

NINETY THOUSAND POUNDS!

By W. W. SLEIGH, Esq.

ONE OF THE GOVERNORS OF THAT CHARITY.

SOLD BY FORES, STATIONER, 41, PICCADILLY.

1827.

LETTER

INDEPENDENT GOVERNORS

ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL

ALONG TO THE POOR

C. Smith, Printer, One Bell Yard, Strand.

BY MANAGEMENT

OF

(EVEN IN RIGHT TERMS)

NINETY THOUSAND POUNDS

BY W. W. SIBTHORP

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HOSPITAL

SOLD BY FORRESTER, STATIONER, 11, MARK LANE

1831

A LETTER, &c. &c.

MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,

THE only apology I shall offer for thus addressing you is one which I believe will be considered satisfactory, viz. that I am vindicating the cause of *thousands of our unfortunate fellow creatures*. Regardless therefore of the motives that may be attributed to me, I shall, I trust, as a Governor of St. George's Hospital, conscientiously discharge my duty : and by adducing a few facts only, call forth the exertions of some, whom God has blessed with power to protect the helpless. Previous to my commencing, I would take the liberty of replying to two questions that in all probability will be put to me. First, "why I have delayed so long without calling the attention of the Governors to these circumstances? and Secondly, "had I been successful at the late election, would I ever have noticed them? To the first question, I have only to observe, that I detest, if possible, finding fault; and having had reason to believe that I should have been, ere this, so situated as to correct them *privately*, or that some other person would have taken up the subject, I deferred it to the present time. In answer to the second question, I do solemnly aver, that had I been successful, I should, after *private* admonition, and *private*, but determined, opposition, to all corruption, but not till then, have adopted *identically this method**.

After all, what have my motives to do with the question? if they be bad, yet if I adduce facts, if I tell

* The extraordinary exertions that were made to keep me out of the hospital, may justly be attributed to a well-founded dread of my opposition, to the utmost of my power, to all abuse.

the truth, *magna est veritas et prævalebit*. On the contrary, if they be good, yet if I tell not the truth, the attempt will bring its own punishment;—I am prepared for the consequences. I shall now proceed to the question, and prove my points, by extracts from the Annual Report of the Hospital, published 1826, and from a private account furnished at my request by the Secretary, dated March 3d, 1826.

<i>Charges made by the Hospital Company.</i>			<i>What they ought to be.</i>		
	£.	s. d.			£.
Medicines - - - - -	1,764	2 0	If purchased judiciously, and not squandered, they would not cost more than * - - - -	250	
Surgical Instruments - - - -	126	1 6	A complete case, that ought to last for years, can be purchased for - -	25	
Chaplain receives, Salary,	140	0 0	A most devoted clergyman could be got for 120l. besides three-fourths of the patients being poor Irish and Catholics, the duty must be trifling,	120	
Christmas Box, - - -	60	0 0			
Board, Lodging, Coals,					
Candles, &c. &c. equivalent to - - - -	100	0 0			
	300	0 0			
Wine - - - - -	109	10 0	Extravagant beyond expression, nine cases out of ten being inflammatory, water not wine is required, hence could not exceed - - - -	50	
The apothecary gets, Salary,	100	0 0	An excellent Apothecary could be procured for - - - - -	100	
Board, Lodging, Coals,					
Candles, &c. &c. equivalent to - - - -	100	0 0			
	200	0 0			
Assistant Apothecary gets			This sum is completely thrown away, as pupils would be glad to pay for being permitted to assist - - -		
Salary, - - - - -	48	0 0			
Board, Lodging, Coals,					
Candle, &c. &c. equivalent to - - - -	100	0 0			
	148	0 0			
Bedding, Blankets, Sheets - - -	716	48 6	This charge I cannot comprehend,		
Articles - - - - -	50	0 0	Although the minutest article is mentioned in the account, here are Articles !! - - - - -		
Total - - - - -	£3,414	12 0			
Deduct the necessary sum from the above - - - - -	545	0 0			
This sum remains superfluous - -	£2,869	12 0	In answer to any observations that may be made in reference to the above items, I have to say, that I will, myself, undertake, (and with the security for its accomplishment) to defray the expenses as enumerated, of the establishment according to my calculation.		

* A respectable Surgeon-Apothecary mentioned to me the other day, that he gives medicine

1602 If we be permitted to form an opinion of the whole account from these eight items *, it would appear obvious that the property of St. George's Hospital, if not *wantonly squandered*, could afford relief to *ten times* the number of patients it now does. And if we reflect that this extravagance, *in these eight items only*, has existed at least for thirty years, the poor have been plundered of the immense sum of NINETY THOUSAND POUNDS. What an Hospital this sum would have built ! How many persons would it have preserved, in these hard times, from perishing of want ! But if there were not thousands in this metropolis who die without the comfort of a home, or the shelter of an asylum, the above abuses might be excusable : if charitable persons give their property to mitigate the sufferings of their fellow creatures, is it not cruel for that property to be appropriated to the enriching of certain selfish individuals ?

Some may be inclined to exclaim, how is it possible this evil could have existed ?—Does not a weekly Board meet ? Would the Medical Officers sanction it ? In reply to these natural exclamations, I beg leave to say, first, the evil does exist ; secondly, a weekly Board does meet ; thirdly, some of the Medical Officers do sanction it, and others are afraid to expose it. I shall now unravel the mystery. I shall now draw the curtains aside, and show what is doing behind them.

least 8000 patients annually, and his druggist's bill does not exceed £150 a year. The number of the hospital patients is not *one half this*, and the expense of medicines *Eleven times greater*. Is this to be attributed to the profligacy with which the medicines are used ?

* Let it not be imagined that the eight items I have mentioned are the only ones in which extravagance is apparent ; it is far otherwise, (eg. see the account of coals annually, 337*l.*) Nor, that because I have been silent as it respects other transactions, there is nothing else to be reprov'd—delicacy, as a surgeon, forbids my noticing them.

The account of the establishment averages yearly 8,441*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.* If my estimate be accurate, it ought not to exceed 3,000*l.*

The affairs of the Hospital are *nominally* managed by a weekly Board, which consists of:—

1. The Chaplain. Income from the establishment, about £300.
2. The Medical Officers. Who on an average make by their situations about £2,500
3. About a dozen junior Surgeons and Physicians. Who by their courtesy and obedience to their former masters, expect one day or other to get appointed to the Hospital.
4. The Secretary and Collector.
5. About half a dozen elderly Gentlemen. Their objects are those of pure charity; but are easily lead by the more active.
6. And lastly, one or two Governors occasionally step in, say—"how do you do? how do you get on?"—and out they go * !

There would be but little use in appealing to the above Board; what one says, the rest *und voce* support, they dare not act otherwise.—In fact, no one dares censure, no one dares to find fault!

What possible interest, some may say, can the Medical Officers have for sanctioning this system? I will tell you.—It is their great interest to possess at *their command* a number of votes†, for two reasons; first, to thwart any attempts that may be made to call in question their practice; and secondly, to bring into the Hospital, as Surgeon, that pupil who most suits *their purposes*. If they broke through this system, their plans would be rendered void, their adoption of officers to succeed them, would very soon fail of success, and their

* I myself have occasionally attended; but having evinced a disposition to oppose all abuse, I became so obnoxious in the eyes of the chaplain, that he could not treat me even with the common courtesy of one gentleman to another; and he being always in the chair, I have thought proper to discontinue my attendance.

† The chaplain, I understand, boasts he, himself, *can command* a hundred Votes !!

conduct would be scrutinized. Why should they not then support it as long as they possibly can?

Further, in order to render this system—this *Jobbing Company*—as impenetrable as possible, they have adopted two measures; the first has no precedent in any similar Institution * on the face of the earth. It is, no matter what sum of money you may contribute to the Hospital, your name must be posted up for two months in the Board room—you must be proposed by a Governor, and at the end of the time you must be ballotted for, ere you are acknowledged a Governor, or have a voice in the transaction of your own affairs: does not this speak volumes? The second has no precedent in any of the Metropolitan Hospitals. It is depriving Peers of the realm, Members of Parliament, and Ladies, voting by proxy—that is, allowing them no voice in the transaction of that Institution which actually belongs to them, unless they neglect their own important business, take the trouble to come hundreds of miles to the Hospital, or Ladies exhibit themselves at a public election! It is scarcely necessary to notice the object for all this; they well know that such personages are for the greater part of the year in the country, and when in town, are too busily engaged to attend the Hospital: and judging correctly, that the most effectual way of supporting their present system, and guarding against the introduction of any *officious person* who might oppose their system, they have virtually deprived nine-tenths of the Governors the privilege of saying yes, or no, in the management of their own Institution!! And I have it from the best authority, that it is now in contemplation, *amongst the*

* Of this I am not positive.

Medical Officers, to deprive all the Governors, except themselves, the privilege of voting *at all*, for the plausible reason, they say, of saving the Governors the trouble of being canvassed!! Is it not full time for some active Governor to investigate this subject, to call a General Meeting of the Governors, to appoint from amongst them *indiscriminately* a Committee—and to have, if not restored to the poor, at all events saved for them for the future, from five to six thousand pounds a-year! Would it not be an act of charity? Would it not be vindicating the cause of the helpless?

To conclude, My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, you will perceive in thus attempting to expose corruption I have undertaken an arduous task. It will draw upon me the vengeance of all concerned in it—various objects will be attributed to me; but while I know that nine-tenths of the Governors are independent—are men of talent, and unshackled in judgment—I may defy the others; and the poisoned darts of calumny that may be hurled at me, which weapons, if they break not ere they reach me—my shield, *integrity*, shall make them recoil upon themselves.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,

Your most devoted and faithful servant,

W. W. SLEIGH.

23, Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square.

May 14th, 1827.

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OBSERVATIONS

ON
THE IMPROPRIETY

OF

MEN BEING EMPLOYED

IN THE BUSINESS OF

(Self-Gratification)
MIDWIFERY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE,
YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1827.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY C. H. REYNELL, BROAD STREET,
GOLDEN SQUARE.

Miss Letitia Kelly

MAL-OBSERVATIONS, &c.

IN writing the following observations, I have taken these propositions for granted as correct:—That the preservation of moral purity in women is intrinsically good:—that it greatly contributes to their own happiness; and not less so to that of men.

Being by nature social animals, mutually dependent upon each other; for information, from the slow progress of our knowledge if we are unaided in the attainment of it; and for protection, on account of the numerous evils to which we are exposed, it appears to me to be the duty of every man who is aware of any existing system being injurious to the community of which he forms a part, and who possesses the means, as he believes, by which such system may be corrected, to acquaint the community with the evil, and to employ such means in the endeavour to effect its correction. To accomplish both these objects in regard to the present disgraceful system of midwifery, and to the licentious practices which it does, and must, in many

instances, necessarily occasion, I offer the following observations to the public, through the medium of the press.

The subject, I think, well merits the attention of society; and is one that I have not a short time, nor superficially, considered.

In discussing this subject, so as to expose the evil effects of the present system, I am, of course, not unconscious that I may considerably offend many of those medical men who practise midwifery; but in remarking upon the system as I shall do, I have no intention to injure them in their proper avocations of surgeons and apothecaries. When acting justly and ably in those capacities, I regard them as the most valuable members of society; the surgical and medical sciences being, in my opinion, of all sciences the most noble; inasmuch as the skilful and honourable professors of them are assimilated with the Creator more than any other men. The Deity, by the sublime operation of his natural laws, bestows life; the surgeon and physician, by the power of their arts, renovate and preserve it. But with this opinion of the grandeur and vast importance of those sciences, I am the more sensible of the extreme impropriety of midwifery being, as it is in so many instances, connected with them as a branch; because, as I shall endeavour to shew, midwifery has no relationship to either surgery or medicine; and because it ought to be exclusively the business of women, as the greatest abuses do and must necessarily arise from men being employed.

The generality of mankind are naturally weak and credulous ; with very little resistance they yield to those who possess or assume superior intelligence ; and with as little reflection believe as reasonable those things they do not understand. In consequence, they are easily imposed upon and deluded by individuals who are more artful and designing than themselves, and soon receive false opinions, and become bigoted to absurd customs. In this way only can I account for the origin and continuance of the unnecessary and baneful custom of women being attended by men in midwifery cases, instead of by persons of their own sex ; and for the abuses it naturally causes having been so long unexposed and uncorrected, though they have grown to an enormous bulk, and are encreasing more rapidly than even the number of those persons by whom the art of midwifery is professed.

Notwithstanding, as there are many persons endowed with judgment and courage, that such a system should ever have been admitted into civilized society, and allowed progressively to increase, is to me truly wonderful. If it were in itself expedient, however offensive, and if the abuses attending it were of a trifling nature, and not very important in their consequences, I should not be greatly surprised ; but being convinced that of all the evils now existing, the present practice of midwifery is the worst, and its effects the most baneful to society ; that such a system should remain not only unexposed, but permitted progressively to increase,

as I before observed, has excited my astonishment more than any circumstance I have ever reflected upon.

Much has been said and written in regard to the increasing power of civil governments. Innumerable have been the attacks levelled at the customs and professors of the law ; and even the church has not escaped its full share of censure : but, in my opinion, the evils attending these institutions are but trifles when compared with the secret tricks and infamous deceptions frequently practised by many of the midwifery professors : the evil effects of which extend themselves through the community like a pestilential air, from the injurious consequences of which no one can entirely escape.

The abuses I most particularly allude to, are the licentious conversations introduced by them to women when in a state of pregnancy, in order to effect the indecent personal examinations, which there is sufficient cause to believe they in numberless instances require and obtain, under the pretence of ascertaining medical facts, when actually there is not the smallest necessity for such examinations occurring.

These examinations are of the grossest nature a woman can undergo, but the exact nature of which I am not at liberty fully to describe ; however, I shall more particularly allude to them afterwards, observing only at present, in regard to the whole of these abuses, that they are so frequently practised, and of so aggravated a nature, that I am convinced

most of those women who abandon their husbands and families for the society of men of intrigue, owe their first contamination to their medical attendants. And I have no doubt that the minds of more women are corrupted by their arts, than by those of all other classes of men combined. Those who have not reflected upon this subject will probably be surprised at the existence of such opinions, while interested persons, who know them to be correct, will perhaps artfully and plausibly admit, for the purpose of evading the strength of my charges, that all human beings are imperfect; that there are depraved individuals in every profession; and that, therefore, there undoubtedly are some unprincipled men who practise the business of midwifery. Such persons, probably, will also represent that I have formed my opinions hastily, and that I have drawn general conclusions from particular instances. Now these two latter assertions, if made, would not be true. I have not formed my opinions hastily; I have not drawn general conclusions from particular instances: I have formed my opinions from long observation, after mature reflection, and from general evidence, and that the best such a subject could admit of, as far as I am able to judge; and I have arrived certainly at the conclusion, that the abuses I complain of are, and must naturally be, great, and of frequent occurrence.

Perhaps it may be inquired by what means I obtained the knowledge upon which I have grounded my opinions? I reply, that from a very early period of

my life the sciences of medicine and surgery have been subjects of great interest to me ; and that this feeling has led me occasionally to visit institutions at which those sciences are practised, and to form acquaintance with medical men. My attention was of course, at times, directed to the business of midwifery, as a professed branch of surgery ; and the accidental discovery of certain abuses committed by some of the gentlemen who practise that art, induced in me, from surprise and indignation, a feeling of inquiry, which my opportunities of various kinds have enabled me to satisfy.

All men who have lived in the world, without having been deprived of the sense of hearing, will admit that there are occasionally great abuses committed by accoucheurs, because they have probably learnt so from good authority ; yet, there are some persons who, not being endowed with the reasoning faculty in an extraordinary degree, will dispute that such abuses are frequently committed. Now, suppose I am mistaken, and that instances of this kind are not numerous ; an alteration in the present practice would not be the less desirable on that account. If a system will admit of any great abuses being committed with impunity, that system is bad ; but I think I shall be able to prove, by arguments, facts, and other evidences, that the opinions I have advanced are reasonable and true.

1st. Lust is the most powerful of all the appetites ; to whatever extent it may be gratified, its demands are soon again renewed, especially if attracted by

variety in its object; and when the body has lost its power of indulgence, the mind frequently retains its desires, sometimes even heightened in a great degree. Therefore, men advanced in years, when inclined by their vicious propensities, are empowered by their experience, and consequent subtleties, to contaminate the minds of women more than younger and less experienced men. Lust being thus the most powerful of all the appetites, it is, and it is necessary for natural purposes that it should be, less under the influence of the reason than any other appetite; for if we had the power of coolly deliberating upon the effects of indulgence, the intentions of nature would be often frustrated. In consequence whereof this appetite is most subject to abuse.

2d. It is natural to man to abuse power and opportunity.

3d. From the peculiar nature of their profession, accoucheurs have the greatest incitement to lust, and possess more ready means and pretences by which they may gratify it, to a great extent, than any other class of men.

If these propositions be granted, and I think they cannot be denied, everything is admitted that I wish to establish; viz. that great moral abuses are necessarily committed by medical men.*

A similar deduction may as reasonably be drawn in the following form.—To prove the frequent

* To avoid the perpetual repetition of the word accoucheur, I shall occasionally use the terms medical man, doctor, &c.

practice of an abuse which can only be committed in private, and in which all the parties concerned have a strong interest to observe concealment, is impossible; but if its existence is natural and probable, and a clear and unquestionable exposure does sometimes take place, it is irrational to suppose that its occurrence is not frequent.

It is said in the Bible, that "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Causes similar to those so detrimental to the future happiness of a rich man, render it, in my opinion, equally impossible for an accoucheur to be a moral man. By which I mean, that the moral feelings of the professor, however good originally, must be subdued by the power of excitement, and the influence of temptation operating continually upon them. But, if the reader should think that this opinion is applied too generally, let him reflect for a moment upon the actual business of midwifery, with all its attendant circumstances; let him then deeply consider the physical and moral constitutions of man, as connected therewith; and then let him decide whether my opinion be reasonable or otherwise. If he should agree with me, he will, I doubt not, also assent, that the practice of the profession produces an effect upon the mind of the professor, which renders him morally unfit for his employment.

It appears to me that the profession of midwifery and the mode of preliminary instruction have a direct tendency to moral corruption.

All the studies of the professor are directed to the persons of women, generally of the most attractive ages, and in a manner extremely exciting to the most powerful of all animal propensities.

When a young medical man has acquired a knowledge of the rudiments of his profession, he is introduced at one of the London Hospitals to complete his studies; and he cannot finish his education more advantageously, as there can be no scenes so subversive of moral principle as those which are exhibited in the periodical inspections at those institutions. In the course of one morning's round there are not less than fifty women, chiefly young ones, whose persons are exposed and examined in the grossest manner by one of the principal surgeons, in the presence of the pupils; who in their turn, daily supply the place of the principal by exposing and examining themselves the persons of these young women in a similar manner; and upon whom many of them, of course, frequently practice every description of licentiousness that the place and circumstances will admit of. To such an extent are these practices carried, that I have heard it observed by one who had the best means of knowing thoroughly the subject upon which he spoke, that no young women ever went into an Hospital in a modest state of mind and came out so. The reasonableness of which opinion my own experience proves. To exemplify this statement more particularly, I have heard of complaints having been made by women, who have been in Lying-in Hospitals, of some of the surgeons

having acted towards them with wanton and unnecessary indecency. And to prove more fully the power the practitioners have, and in many instances their criminal abuse of it, I was informed by a gentleman who had been medically educated, that on one occasion, visiting a Hospital in company with a surgeon he knew, who had some connection with the establishment, the latter went deliberately, with the avowed object of lust, to a young woman in bed, and, under the pretence of his rights as a surgeon to ascertain certain facts, subjected her to the most scandalous treatment. The gentleman who related this to me expressed his detestation of such conduct, but declared his belief that similar practices were common. This gentleman has a son, who had a strong inclination towards medical studies, and his father had the best means of advancing him, either as a physician or surgeon; but he declared to me, that he had so strong a conviction that if he indulged his son's wishes, the latter would be entirely demoralized by the scenes to which he would be introduced at the Hospitals, that he had therefore caused him to be educated for another profession.

Having thus shewn the contaminating influence attending the abuses of Hospital practice, I think it right to observe, that the systems adopted at those institutions are extremely useful as far as the promulgation and improvement of the medical science may be concerned; but it must be evident, that after young men have been accustomed to such scenes and practices as I have described, for a very

long period, and until licentiousness has become a habit of the mind, they cannot be very fit persons to be introduced, as they are, to innocent and inexperienced young women, in the confidential capacity of accoucheurs; having free access to them and the liberty at all times of privately conversing with them upon the most secret circumstances relating to their persons. And if I have not been very much misinformed, such freedom and frequency of intercourse often lead to the disclosure of other secrets that the husband would little like to be known. For proximity, aided by some other circumstances, is always the source of confidence, if not of love.

Certain it is, that those men who practice midwifery have taken the place in this country of priestly confessors: they generally acquire a knowledge of all the secret affairs of the families they attend. This opinion I have formed from various sources, a specimen of which I shall give:—A young lady I am acquainted with was engaged to be married to a physician. In a conversation I once had with her, the subject of her intended marriage was alluded to, and she expressed her regret that her destined husband should be of the medical profession, observing that the habits of persons of his class were of such a nature she could never hope for happiness in being united to any one of them. She farther remarked, in the course of her observations, that medical men, from the unconstrained conversations they have with their female patients, generally became acquainted with every family secret. This young lady

is very nearly related to several practitioners in midwifery. Whether she acquired her knowledge from bad or good authority, I leave others to judge.

To ascertain the cause from which many of the abuses to which I refer arise, it is necessary cursorily to investigate some of the peculiarities of the human mind and casualties of human life. All the faculties, senses, passions, and appetites of man require variety in their gratifications. Thought intensely applied to one subject will cause extreme anguish of mind. The eye cannot contemplate for a long period without fatigue the same scene, however beautiful it may be in its kind; but after having gazed for a time upon one object, it turns to another, and relief and pleasure are experienced in the change. The ear is not very long delighted by a repetition of the same sounds, though the greatest effort of genius may have been exerted in producing the most perfect specimens of melody and harmony. Neither joy nor grief can exist perpetually. The palate is not gratified by the same description of food, when taken day after day, however good it may be in itself, and however healthful the appetite. Indulgence in variety, as regards all our faculties and feelings, is irresistibly called for by nature; and most certainly the passion of love, but more particularly the animal part of that passion, is generally as vehement in its demands for change. Notwithstanding that persons who are married may appear to live amicably together, and whatever attention they may mutually shew, it must be evident to all who have a moderate power in

observing the vicissitudes of human feelings, that not long after marriage the freshness of passion and appetite begins to be impaired. The rapturous feelings that once existed soon subside, and by degrees the parties become more sensible of each other's defects; mutual complaints ensue, and they evidently shew less attention to each other than they were at first accustomed to do, till in many instances they become eventually wholly indifferent.

Besides the natural inconstancy of the human mind, there are other causes for this indifference. In some instances, the mental constancy and bodily strength of the husband having been broken up and exhausted by early debauchery, his attentions consequently very soon diminish. The wife finding her condition materially different from that which the glowing imagination of youth had taught her to anticipate; and feeling her personal vanity very far from complimented, a sentiment of dislike towards him ensues. Perhaps the marriage might have been on the part of the lady one of interest, in which her affections were not involved, with a disparity in years unfavourable to the husband; or the power of forming, on her side, a somewhat permanent attachment might have been impaired early in life by disappointed affection. In either case, her feelings become opened to new and oftentimes to vivid impressions. Not many months after marriage the lady is attacked by the usual qualms from pregnancy; and the accoucheur, according to the most modern practice, is then commonly called in. Some of my

female readers, I expect, will immediately apply the following description :—Upon being introduced he assumes an ingenuous air and apparent candour, to impress his patient with a conviction of his honesty and zeal. After having once secured an inroad, the lady is “ put under his care,” as it is termed, and his visits of course are frequently repeated. The husband, having no suspicion of his wife’s danger, is often absent either upon business or pleasure; and the patient (if a woman can be styled a patient merely because she is pregnant,) finds relief from solitude in the society and conversation of the doctor. He commonly begins at each visit by kind enquiries respecting her health, made in a polite but earnest manner; he discovers a solicitude to amuse and please her, knowing that women’s gentler feelings are always deeply affected by kindness and attention. Accompanied by an apology upon the necessity of the case, he asks her questions of a nature that the generality of men are not at all aware of. Nothing, of course, can be concealed from him, and though the patient, from her youth and inexperience, cannot judge how far his questions may be relevant, and therefore justifiable, supposes that a gentleman, and one of an honourable and liberal profession (as it is termed,) would not exceed his duty by asking any unnecessary and improper questions, which must of course be of a private nature. These conversations being frequently repeated, a confidential feeling is excited in the mind of the woman towards the accoucheur; that kind of discourse she would once have

shrunk from, by degrees becomes familiar to her, and she shortly habituates herself to talk to him as she would to her nurse; "which is what women like," at least so a gentleman of the same profession once declared to me to be the case. A pleasing reflection for husbands, and a handsome compliment to ladies.

Such conversations, however, ought never to occur between a medical man and a youthful female; and if husbands possessed the least delicacy of sentiment themselves, or had the smallest regard for that of their wives, such conversations, if ever necessary, would always be carried on through the medium of a nurse or of themselves, unless female modesty is unworthy of preservation; and then let unlimited indulgence be openly and avowedly granted to all women. It is notorious, that there are many accoucheurs, who, under the pretence of asking the wife necessary questions of a private nature, do not hesitate to require the husband to withdraw, who commonly is wise enough to comply. This perhaps will remind the reader of the priest in the Decameron of Boccacio, who sentenced the husband to perform a penance in a dark room at the bottom of the house, that he might be enabled to pass the time agreeably alone with the wife in another apartment.

Unlike the husband, the accoucheur never complains, is never dissatisfied nor indifferent; he is always cheerful, polite, and invariably kind; shewing the most devoted and subtle attentions as he finds opportunities. And it is this system which

excites generally in the minds of women of all ranks that strong feeling of partiality towards their medical attendants, which is found so frequently to prevail.

By these means they obtain an open or secret friend, and thus secure a free access to the house on all real or pretended occasions; I say pretended occasions, because the occasions when medical aid is really required in midwifery cases, independent of disease, never exist. In carrying their plans into execution, they make the parties, when not attending professionally, what they denominate “friendly calls;” and availing themselves of all opportunities, forced and accidental, they insinuate themselves into the hearts of the parties whom they design for a prey, and having commenced a licentious intimacy during the illness of the woman, (if not before), by a natural gradation mature and perfect it, in many instances, when she is in health. “*C’est le premier pas qui coute.*” The impediment is overcome by the first step. If the reader should deny the correctness of this opinion, I refer him to the study of the natural character of human beings, and to the test of experience, not only as regards others, but also himself. However virtuous and honourable this system may be regarded, it is not so deserving of praise as some of the practices I shall presently mention; because in these cases, whatever abuse is committed, the woman must be a voluntary participator.

But to return.—After a familiar intercourse has

subsisted between the parties for many months, I mean during all the latter period of the woman's pregnancy, there can be no difficulty made on the part of the husband, in admitting the accoucheur to his direct and acknowledged business—a business sufficiently objectionable in itself, even if divested of every extraneous abuse. The time arrives for him to act, but while the sapient husband is anxiously wishing for an heir, employing such means as he considers the best to ensure the accomplishment of his wishes, he does not reflect that these wishes are no way furthered by such means, as a moderately well skilled woman would assist to more advantage, being of the only sex fitted for such employments, and as I shall hereafter shew. Nor is he conscious that he is exposing his wife to every licentious trick that the medical attendant chooses to practice upon her; and that at the moment he is pleasing himself with the idea of being presented with a son, his wife is an object of pleasure to the accoucheur. And the more anxious the husband is to have an heir, and the more devotedly he is attached to his wife, the more effectually he throws her into the toils of the medical attendant.

It has been observed, that women offer no attractions to men at the time of child-birth. This I will admit would be in a degree true, as far as the husband or an ordinary person might be concerned, from the principal part of the woman having ceased to be attractive; but it must be evident that there are other parts which would, though at such a time,

retain all their customary charms in the mind of any one, and which are fully exposed to the gratification of the practitioner ; besides, from the flexibility and accommodating property of the human mind, that of the accoucheur becomes accustomed to the painful and disagreeable parts of his profession, while his lustful appetite, equally powerful and inextinguishable, retains its full sway.

To suppose otherwise would be as reasonable as to imagine that a cook or a butcher were by the exercise of their occupations deprived of the desire of eating. To prove, however, that the mind of the accoucheur may, and must become accustomed to the painful and disagreeable parts of his profession, therefore leaving his natural desires unrestrained, it is notorious that the eminent hospital surgeons (happily for their patients), acquire by habit so much self possession, as to perform the most difficult operations, not only with correctness, but with grace.

But it is further said, that if the man have any enjoyment it is of little importance, as the woman does not participate. Upon this principle, a woman might be exposed regardlessly to many other atrocious acts, the nature of which the mind of the reader will readily suggest. I think, however, that it little matters whether the woman participate or not. Can any man of the least delicacy of sentiment, think for a moment without horror of his wife being exposed to the uncontrolled depravity of any man, not less at this, than at any other time ?

It may be supposed that the nurse is a protector

from excessive abuse to women in these situations ; but, in my opinion, she is not : on the contrary, she is more frequently an abettor. The nurse very commonly is recommended by the accoucheur. Will she then deprive herself of future recommendations by exposing the practices of her patron ? Will she not rather in return play to his hand ? And can the patient resist that which is required by the accoucheur and sanctioned by the nurse ? Besides, when there has been no previous acquaintance between these personages, is it to be expected that the latter should possess public spirit enough to combat the abuses of the former and render him her enemy ? The nurse, however well inclined, can be no check upon the accoucheur at the period of child birth, on account of the numberless things which engage her attention at that time. I was lately conversing with one of these nurses, a very respectable and intelligent woman, and, in the course of the conversation I had with her, I enquired whether men who practice midwifery are not in the habit of taking licentious liberties, under false pretences, with the persons of the women they attend ; and she unequivocally admitted that they are.

Having disposed of this part of my subject, I shall now call the attention of the reader to some of the abuses that naturally arise out of this invaluable custom. Were I not to particularize them, many persons would be unable to form an idea of the beneficial effects of this admirable system.

A certain practice at present exists, and I suspect,

from two instances having accidentally come to my knowledge within the circle of my own acquaintance, that it is not very unfrequent among the middle and higher classes. How the idea of it originated with the professional gentlemen, is tolerably evident; but how the reality of it could have been permitted by any lady, or approved of by her husband, is not quite so clear. I allude to the custom of young married women when pregnant, and long before the period of delivery, being examined personally by an accoucheur to ascertain the "position of the child."

The nature of this examination the reader will readily imagine; but to what extent the lady would be improved in her sentiments of delicacy and modesty by it, I am unable to determine.

Connected with such examinations, on various occasions, let the readers know that there is in use among some accoucheurs a cant term, which I should neither be at liberty to mention, nor intelligibly to explain; all I can say is, that it refers to a certain depraved act committed on the occasions referred to, and on others of a similar kind. Another, an evident and a natural consequence of the examination I have been mentioning, I must leave the readers themselves to conjecture, when they combine in their view long habits of familiarity between the parties, as in many instances exist; with youth and artificially-excited desire on the side of the woman, and opportunity at least on the part of the man; and when the final scene is closed, which of

the parties will reveal the particulars of it? Still nothing that may occur can merit approbation more than the examination itself. But when it is considered that it is utterly impossible, as it most certainly is, for any man to ascertain the fact in question in an early stage of pregnancy, or at all, except possibly from the verbal description of the woman, or at the time of delivery, and that if he could do so, no possible advantage could be derived from the knowledge, a practice cannot be imagined more rational and judicious in itself, nor more morally purifying in its effects.

The only persons who derive any advantage from these examinations, besides the accoucheurs themselves, are those men who "make the most of life," and they can never be grateful enough to the doctors for so kindly paving the way for them.

There is a maxim in English law, that every man should be regarded as innocent until he be proved guilty. This is very liberal; nevertheless, the people of all civilized nations have discovered it necessary to devise almost every description of security for themselves, both individually and collectively, against the encroachments of crime; thereby giving the clearest evidence of the general existence of suspicion. Upon this principle it might be supposed, that the more power to act wrongly a man possessed, the more he would be suspected, not to the end of injuring him, but for the protection of others. Yet, from some unaccountable anomaly, the accoucheur, who of all men has the greatest power to act wrongly,

and in one of the most important affairs of life, is of all men the most confided in. To pursue this reflection.—Every one must have observed, who has made any observations, under what rigid limits men generally are admitted into families; how soon jealousy is excited, and from what trifling causes it begins. The most common galantries in behaviour, directed towards a young married woman, will often inspire the husband with suspicion and anger, and be the cause of eradicating the best friendships; yet, this man will abandon his wife to the uncontrolled pleasures of the accoucheur, admitting him without restraint at all times, and allowing him to enjoy privileges very little short of those possessed by himself. Is not this something like straining at gnats and swallowing camels? Is not the reader of opinion that the wise men of Gotham were downright ninnies compared with these sages? Can anything equal this in consistency and rationality, unless it is the care that is taken of girls in forming their minds under the influence of religion and virtue, when probably their principles will be corrupted, and they themselves be exposed in their future lives to all kinds of contaminating licentiousness, in the way the reader finds described in these pages?

Although the privileges of these men are not very frequently (as I suppose) quite equal to those enjoyed by the husbands, they are fully compensated for the defect in the quality of their gratifications, by the number of them. The husband, in some

instances, confines himself to his wife, while the doctors repeat their pleasures with hundreds or thousands of women in the course of the year, and to as great extent, as it may be presumed, many of them, of a certain age and after certain habits of life, desire or are capable of enjoying.

The case is somewhat different with other men. If a naval or military commander were to commit any professional offence, it would be quickly detected and punished. Should the bishop advance any unorthodox opinions in his charge to the clergy of his diocese, or in any other way commit a dereliction of his duty, his error would be published, censured, and remembered. If the judge should mistake a point of law, or misdirect a jury in any respect, his words would be recorded, and his fault be made known. But the accoucheur, on the contrary, if he have any discretion, is in little danger from his crimes being detected, or if detected, of being published to the world; for, if they should be discovered, it is the interest of the husband, on account of the delicacy due to his wife, to conceal them; and if they should be exposed to the world, the accoucheur has always a plea for his own justification. In regard to this opinion, that these persons have always a plea for their vicious actions, I shall mention an observation that was made to me by the most intelligent man I ever conversed with; he was of the highest rank in the profession of the law. His observation was made in reply to some of my remarks, in a conversation I had with him upon the subject these pages

contain. "I have no doubt of the correctness of your opinions: medical men (*accoucheurs*) discover by degrees how they may be enabled to practice their licentious vices, and if they are detected, they have always a plea."

This observation brings me to an objection that, unless for the previous and subsequent remarks, I expect would have been made, viz. "that it might be supposed *accoucheurs* would be deterred by self interest from the commission of professional crimes. In my opinion, were they without a plea, there would be no reason to form such a supposition. Does not experience prove, that instances occur every day of people, when under the influence of depraved appetite or passion, sacrificing by one act in a moment all their hopes in life? But medical men seldom incur such risk to any extent, however depraved their conduct, because of the plea their profession supplies. And even when the plea is not extremely satisfactory, they generally suffer very little in consequence; because, when women have become thoroughly accustomed to one man of this profession, they would rather endure in silence acts which, when the worst, are not more gross than those they must submit to at the period of childbirth; and when not quite so bad, may, under a plausible excuse, be somewhat favourably construed, than sustain an open rupture with him, and undergo all the disagreeables of changing their *accoucheur*, and be exposed to abuses perhaps equally great. Besides, the generality of women,

from the influence of custom, regard these persons as a description of privileged men. Instances, however, in which some of these men do commit themselves most palpably and indisputably, even in the opinion of the most bigoted and prejudiced of their sagacious partisans, may sometimes accidentally be heard of, notwithstanding the delicacy generally observed by the injured parties, in mentioning publicly such circumstances; and possibly then the accoucheur may in a degree be affected in his profession. Yet there are some of these gentlemen who make no secret of their vices, but on certain occasions openly avow and triumph in them.

For instance:—One of them, whom I could name, was in the constant habit (I do not know whether he is now) of boasting at his convivial parties of the debaucheries he committed among the females whom he attended in his professional capacity. But had this gentleman not had the opportunity, he would not have had occasion to boast of his success. The whole evil is effected by the opportunities. Let there be no opportunities, and it is clear there could be no abuses.

Women are sometimes affected by a disorder, which, from delicacy to my female readers, I shall forbear to describe. This disorder may, I believe, be generally relieved by certain medicines, applied through the medium of the stomach, or by a surgical process.

I had long had some knowledge of this latter

practice ; but the certainty of its abuse I arrived at from the following circumstance :—

The wife of one of my friends was, during an illness subsequent to child-birth, suddenly affected in the manner I have alluded to ; she had been attended at the time of her confinement by one of two medical men in partnership :—her usual attendant happening to be absent, the advice of the other was requested. Learning the nature of the disorder, he suggested to the nurse that the surgical process was necessary, and went away to procure an instrument ; but the other surgeon happening shortly after to arrive, the husband, who had in the mean time been apprised of what had passed, related the particulars to him, and enquired whether there was an absolute necessity for so horrible a proceeding as that proposed. After an expression of disapprobation, the former admitted that he thought the remedy suggested was not necessary, and declared that other and inoffensive means should be tried ; such means were tried accordingly, and the disorder was speedily and effectually relieved.—Yet the individual, who contemplated this device, is employed as an accoucheur by families, who are perfectly well acquainted with his character, which has been fully developed, and as honourably to him, in some other respects.

Upon this latter circumstance, for private reasons, I make no comment ; but, let the reader dwell for a moment on the idea of such a man being let loose upon society, having a free and confidential intercourse with young and inexperienced women.

The incident I have related is not directly in point; but two most important reflexions arise out of it, and on which account only I have introduced it.— If the nurse in this case had been a properly educated midwife, the gentleman in question would not have hazarded the praiseworthy act he meditated. It is evident that he calculated upon the supposed ignorance of the nurse and inexperience of the lady. And, as there are men so exceedingly depraved, and as it is impossible in most cases to distinguish between those who are so, and those who are less viciously disposed, it cannot be denied that it is in the highest degree improper to employ men in the business of midwifery, which affords so many opportunities, and of so great magnitude, for the commission of crimes.

The business of midwifery is conducted very differently in many other parts of Europe, where men are seldom or never employed. I have been informed by individuals whom I have met with abroad, that the ladies of their countries would shudder at the idea of admitting men to the gross and disgraceful liberties taken in midwifery cases. A very pleasing compliment, not only to the modesty of the English ladies, but a high eulogium both on the honour of their doctors, as well as on the good taste and excellent judgment of husbands, who so necessarily expose their wives to such agreeable proceedings. But I attribute both the origin and continuance of this detestable practice to the villany of medical men, in suggesting

and enforcing it, and to the folly of husbands in encouraging it, and not to the licentiousness of women in permitting it. There being no doubt that the majority of women abhor the disgusting practice to which they are exposed in these cases; for one instance, among many:—I know a young married lady who, in allusion to this subject, declared to another that, had she known before marriage what she must have suffered after, she would never have changed her condition.

I was some time since conversing with a surgeon-accoucheur upon the subject of his profession, and among other things he represented that the following is not an uncommon case:—When young girls of respectable character are so unfortunate as to be seduced, they are of course terrified in contemplating the probable consequences of their indiscretion; and in their anxiety, from the dread of being exposed to the cruel persecution of the world,—if unable to judge themselves whether they are in a state of pregnancy,—frequently go to accoucheurs, in the endeavour to ascertain the fact; that those gentlemen, after asking them certain questions, examine them personally; a villanous act to gratify lust, and to ground a false pecuniary claim upon, as such examination must be totally unavailing. This statement, which I understood referred as well to his own practices, was given with evident signs of exultation; a feeling that, it may be presumed, a knave always has in the recollection of a successful trick.

The gentleman who related this is somewhat young, and is in the habit of passing many hours weekly in the company of young ladies, whom he attends as an accoucheur: a very fit person, certainly, to be so employed. But the character of this gentleman, as he himself intimated, is not at all singular, nor the confidence reposed in him at all uncommon.

Another surgeon informed a gentleman of my acquaintance that, there are many men of his profession so viciously inclined that, when attending pregnant women suffering pains of a private nature, they require a visual examination, as necessary, when a verbal explanation from the patient would suffice. The woman, believing the examination to be necessary, as represented, submits; but, from an amiable motive, conceals the circumstance from her husband, knowing that the communication would, as women express themselves, “do no good, and would only vex him.”

From these specimens I think it will be apparent that, if I condemn many of these gentlemen, I condemn them from their own confessions, or upon the evidence of their own fraternity.

I shall now relate a particular practice of the above description, that I have good reason to believe is adopted by some of those men who practice midwifery.

It is a common occurrence, and probably an universal one, for women, when pregnant, to suffer at times acute pains in the abdomen and loins.—

These pains are occasionally so severe as to alarm them considerably, and induce them to consult the accoucheur, instead of applying to an experienced matron, who could easily remove their fears. The woman is then entirely in his power, which there is reason to believe, if she be endowed with personal charms, he in some instances avails himself of in this manner. After some plausible cant to deceive her, he concludes by suggesting the possibility of an inflammation of the womb ensuing. It is universally known that this is a very dangerous disease. The woman is of course terrified at the bare idea of it, and, under the influence of her fears, submits to any personal examination the accoucheur may represent as necessary. The nature of the examination in question ; in what state of excitement a young woman of strong feelings would be placed by it ; how completely her fears for the time would, by her sensations, be dispelled ; and what advantage might be and is taken under those circumstances, by men willing to avail themselves of the opportunity, I must leave the readers to form their own ideas upon ; but the fact is admirable enough in itself, without speculating upon the probable consequences.

To such an extent is the whole of the system carried, of which this practice forms so striking a part, and such is the profound wisdom of the world, that if the husband should happen afterwards to be made acquainted with the affair, he could make no objection to it, however enraging it might be to his feelings ; because otherwise, it would be represented

that his false delicacy might have caused the death of his wife, and he himself stigmatised prospectively as a murderer.

There is now an accoucheur of the greatest celebrity, who I have been informed does adopt this device whenever circumstances at all furnish a pretence for it, and that with every fine and interesting woman that applies to him for advice. My author was a surgeon, whose sufficient means of information and strict veracity I have no reason to doubt, and who, I believe, could have had no motive to misrepresent, as the communication was made to me in a private conversation, and at a time before I designed to write this pamphlet.

This is a further example of the criminal deceptions that may be practised to gratify a depraved propensity; and though the feelings of mankind render it impossible for any one to become acquainted with more than a small proportion of the treacherous systems adopted for such a purpose, yet, that which is known enables the mind to draw pretty certain inferences as to the extensive existence of abuse. In consequence of such feelings, I am unable positively to adduce any other instance of this practice: but it will be evident to all the reflecting part of mankind, that if an idea be disseminated among midwifery professors, that such a contrivance can be successfully adopted, and with impunity, there can be no doubt that there are many among them who would eagerly buy their gratifications at so cheap a rate.

Of all their ingenious plans that I have happened to hear of, this that I have last related, I think, is the most able, because they are not compelled to undergo the tedious process of inducing the woman voluntarily to participate. By this well-arranged contrivance, the most innocent and modest young woman may become the object of the greatest enjoyment to the accoucheur, however little she may be inclined to gratify his wishes.

One of the most respectable practitioners in London told me, that it is the practice of medical men (accoucheurs) generally to alarm women by hints of danger, when none exists, for the purpose of obtaining more complete power over them; and it is well known that they uniformly defame the character of midwives.

In reflecting upon the following circumstances:—the nature of human beings; the attendance of men in midwifery cases being, not only entirely unnecessary, but destructive of the delicacy and good morals of women; and the various abuses which naturally spring from the system, little doubt can be entertained that the practice had its origin in lust, and its continuance from the same cause. Depraved and artful men, having a strong desire towards some particular women, contrived to persuade them of their attendance and assistance being necessary during the periods of pregnancy and delivery; that being the only expedient by which free access to their persons could be obtained:—then that which was regarded as necessary yesterday becomes expe-

dient to-day; that which had once been done and found agreeable, was soon often repeated; the practice became common, and the custom was established.

It is therefore not at all surprising that an immense number of young men should adopt the midwifery business as a profession, seeing that it gives an introduction to and opportunities of indulgence with the female sex, that no other employment or situation in life affords. I know of some individuals, who, it is fair to infer, from the affluence of their circumstances and the depravity of their lives, practice this business merely for the indulgence of their vicious inclinations. One I have heard of, practices it even gratuitously, undoubtedly from a very charitable motive.

Though the abuses that are practised are not generally known to men, women, either from their own experience, or from the conversations they have with each other, are, as I have had many reasons to believe, universally aware of their existence. Being aware that ladies possess great knowledge in the affairs of love, I have, under different circumstances, asked several of them, whether it is their opinion that a licentious intercourse is frequently carried on between accoucheurs and the parties they attend; and I have invariably received an answer in the affirmative. I mention this merely to shew, that the present pernicious system of midwifery often produces the effects I have in one of my first observations described; and, from the observations I

myself have made in my intercourse with the world, I am certain that the affections of many women are utterly estranged from their husbands, whose domestic comforts are consequently for ever destroyed by the arts of medical men; though the cause may not be apparent to the aggrieved party, and perhaps is never known nor even suspected by him.

The old ladies say, that the young ones of late years have become wonderfully more enlightened in medical and surgical matters than they themselves were in their juvenile days; and they also say, that the conversation of the young ladies is less restrained now than formerly; and then it is asked how this change is to be accounted for, but from their habit of discoursing frequently upon certain subjects with their medical attendants.

I knew a young married lady, who, being in an advanced stage of pregnancy, became very ill, and a miscarriage was apprehended. An accoucheur was sent for to attend her, and she afterwards became much worse in consequence of fever ensuing. She then acquainted some of her female friends that this gentleman had availed himself of his opportunity to take criminal liberties with her person, addressing to her at the same time the most licentious discourse. She shortly after died, and her death was attributed to the fever consequent to agitation of mind that was induced by the conduct of the accoucheur. It would afford me a very high gratification to mention the name of this gentleman, but the fear of prosecution restrains me. Delicacy had a

similar effect upon the family of the young lady. I can however say, that if I were to mention his name, the public would immediately recognise by it one of the most celebrated professors in London, who is without restraint admitted to hundreds of young ladies of the first and most respectable ranks.

From an observation that was lately made to me respecting this gentleman, I have reason to believe that he adopts the following practices; the relation of which will perhaps not greatly surprise the reader after the preceding anecdote :—It appears that he does not indiscriminately attend ladies who apply to him; but when his attendance is required, he calls upon the party. If her person be attractive he agrees to attend her; if otherwise, he excuses himself on the plea of ill health, or having already too much business; professing his call to be one of politeness merely. To prove motives is impossible, but this is certain. He has offers of so much more business than he would be able to attend to, that he has the power of making a choice without sacrificing his self-interest; and he does reject some ladies, although of superior station, in the manner, and upon the pleas, ascribed to him. Also, in the case of the young lady I have mentioned, he proved himself to be a gentleman not unlikely to adopt such a system. Besides, the extent to which the refinements of vice are carried by many persons, every body is acquainted with.

I could detail many other instances of abuse

practised in these cases, but I think I have shewn a sufficiency to convince the public that great crimes may be and are committed in consequence of the business of midwifery being performed by men. I shall therefore now proceed with a few observations of a more general character. "Women are certainly completely in our power, if we choose to use it," was the observation of another surgeon I happened once to be conversing with. Then, independently of facts, is it probable that, as human beings, they do not use it? is a question I would ask any one, against whom a commission of lunacy had not been obtained, without expecting to receive an answer in the negative.

Much has been objected to the abuses of the church of Rome, and undoubtedly they are very great. The system of oral confession is evidently an evil of no trifling magnitude; because it may be, and therefore naturally is, frequently perverted to the worst purposes. A subtle and libidinous priest, in the confession of young girls, may, by certain questions, clearly suggest ideas to them that they themselves have never or but imperfectly formed; and induce a train of thought highly inflammatory to the passions, and corruptive of the morals: but then the priest has nothing to do with the person. He has no pretence to take the smallest liberty in that respect; or, if he should be tempted to commit such an act of imprudence, he would incur the greatest risk of entirely ruining his character. How very different is the case of an accoucheur: he not only has an unlimited

freedom of speech, but all his business is concerned with the person of the woman; and it depends upon himself alone, whether he will use his opportunities or not. Yet good Protestants are continually inveighing against the priest, without perceiving that the evil is infinitely greater in the case of the doctor. "We have an almost unlimited power," another surgeon observed to me. "There is no necessity for us to plot, we come to close quarters at once." From this power, an eminent accoucheur, in the course of his career, by the vicious practices I have detailed, may corrupt the minds of hundreds, if not of thousands, of women, and his rewards are fame and riches. On the contrary, a man, in any other situation of life, under every circumstance of temptation, has an intrigue with a married woman: if the affair, unfortunately for the parties, should be discovered, a general outcry is raised against them. Everybody is shocked at so wicked an action. The man is from that time received warily in society, and the woman is for ever rendered an outcast from it. Thus, those ladies who may be inclined, are tolerably safe in intriguing with their medical attendants at their own homes; and entirely so if the interviews are conducted at the habitations of the doctors (some of which, as I have heard, are extremely convenient for the purpose); for these gentlemen have always an opportunity, protected, as I have before observed, by a plea: therefore, if the doctor can bamboozle the husband, he may visit the lady as frequently as he pleases, or

she may visit him, no one else has either the right or the grounds for making any inquiries; as every man is regarded as the natural protector of his own honour; but if a suspicion should be excited in the mind of any one, and also expressed, the lady's situation must always be considered as sufficient explanation for her intimacy with the doctor.

It often happens that when those men who practise midwifery have acquired celebrity in their profession, and have therefore no longer occasion to win their way by gentleness and courting (and this generally happens at that period of life when gentleness and courting would avail them little), they commonly assume, grounded upon their great experience and profound wisdom, a grave and decided air; demanding openly and boldly any kind of examination their virtuous propensities may prompt them to require. The husband, if he be apprized of the doctor's dictum, is compelled to concede, from the supposed necessity and urgency of the case; the wife, under the influence of fear, of course submits, and the doctor has his gratification; knowing little about the matter, if there be anything the matter, and caring no more for the result; receives his fee and departs, laughing as he goes at the gullibility of mankind. But to acquire the celebrity I have been speaking of, there are among others two modes of puffing in use at the present day. The one is, by advertising to give lectures upon midwifery, and the diseases of women and children; and the other, by publishing books written upon the same subject;

shewing, perhaps, the practicability of effecting delivery without the use of instruments, thereby diminishing the distress and pain which females suffer in the trying and dangerous moments of child-birth. Everybody is then convinced that men who put forth such advertisements must be exceedingly clever, and therefore very desirable persons to employ. Though such lectures and books may be, and without doubt are, merely compilations from other works, treating upon difficult and extraordinary cases; and the advertisers themselves, in some instances, brutish and ignorant, but abundantly endowed with the art of deceiving, as the five, seven, ten, and twenty guineas they receive from each of their patients clearly prove. But though these gentlemen attempt to alarm women by their representations of danger in child-birth, and endeavour to convince them of the wonderful abilities required in the accoucheur, there is scarcely ever any real danger, and therefore rarely, or rather never, any necessity for women to be placed in the shocking situations they are placed in, when attended by men. And this is certain, from thousands of years having passed away without such a person as an accoucheur having been known until the last half century, except in some solitary cases; and yet we do from no authority learn, that women suffered more painful labours, had more miscarriages, or that there were more deaths in such cases formerly than now; but, on the contrary, were not women more healthy, from their habit of taking proper air and

exercise, than in lying upon their sofas continually as now so generally recommended by the doctors? and was not child-birth formerly less regarded as dangerous than at the present time? It is also undeniably evident, that midwifery is not a surgical business. Surgery is applicable solely to cases of injury and disease; while child-birth is only a natural effect, the most simple in its operation, and never requiring any artificial aid, beyond that which a good and properly-informed nurse can supply; except in the most uncommon preternatural cases (which from their infrequency are barely worth alluding to), and then the midwife must have additional assistance as the accoucheur has now. At the same time the aid required is of that peculiar nature, that it clearly is the business of a woman only; as the title of midwife denotes.

I do not suppose that, after the evidence of ages, any accoucheur would assert that women are naturally disqualified to perform the necessary business in cases of midwifery; especially when the experience of every one proves that women have more presence of mind than men, in sudden, difficult, and dangerous disorders; and that by habit they can acquire a dexterity far exceeding that of men.

But there are other and better reasons to prove that midwifery should be made the business of women only. I have lately heard of some distressing cases having occurred from the improper interference of the accoucheur, when there was good cause to believe that nature would of herself have duly per-

formed her own work. What did this uncalled-for interference arise from? The reply is evident—either to make work, as it is technically called, by forcing or obstructing nature, and by which the lives of women have been sometimes sacrificed; or from ignorance, or lust. But suppose the latter to be the only cause; is it to be expected that any man can perform such, or any business, correctly, when under the influence of depraved desire? I am convinced that the lives of women, from that cause alone, cannot be equally safe as when they are attended by persons of their own sex.

Modesty is natural to women; and notwithstanding the contaminating influence of the arts often practised by men, this sentiment is retained by the generality of them, in a degree that persons of the opposite sex cannot, from their own feelings, at all estimate, and can only judge of by the effects. It is, therefore, no uncommon circumstance for women to contemplate with detestation and with dread the horrible indecencies to which they are exposed, when attended by men at the time of child-birth, and are often induced to submit to such indecencies only at the solicitation of the sages their husbands. The conclusion to be drawn is this, that it must be most injurious to the health of the woman to be agitated by such feelings as I have described, at a time when they are suffering great bodily pain; and there can be no doubt that fever is in consequence frequently induced. To prove that I am not singular in my opinion, and that my statement is not exaggerated, I think it right to inform the reader

that the morning after I had written the above passage, I read it to a gentleman with whom I was conversing. This gentleman is married, has a family, is entirely a man of the world, and is extensively acquainted with medical practitioners. When I had finished, he made the following remark :—" You are certainly right; but you ought, I think, to have gone farther. There is no doubt that there are many women of such extreme delicacy of mind, that their lives are sacrificed by the cause you have assigned."

And, as the examples of the great have always an influence upon the minds of the bulk of a community, let me remind ladies that the last queen who reigned in England was always attended by a midwife, without ever sustaining the smallest injury; and let me also remind them, that her grand-daughter, who we hoped to be our future queen, was attended by an accoucheur, and that she died. Cases, however, do sometimes occur, when medical advice is required after child-birth; and of course, if women are ill, there can be no objection to the attendance of a medical man, as on any other occasion.

The rights of human beings are very unequally distributed between the two sexes, the man possessing far greater privileges than the woman. Of this inequality all women are aware; and they are therefore, and very reasonably so, highly excitable when the talents or virtues of their own sex are called in question: yet, by employing men in

midwifery cases, they reflect by implication in the severest manner upon the capabilities of their own sex. Certain it is that they have no reason to extol the gratitude of the men they employ, for the preference given them: for, while most other men generally speak with respect and tenderness of women, medical men, as far as my acquaintance extends, with one exception, universally defame them when in private conversation. The greatest slanders against the moral and intellectual character of women, I ever heard, have been uttered by the practitioners of midwifery; thus defaming them for the follies that the deceptions practised by themselves induce women to commit. Of these I will present a specimen, for the perusal of my female readers. Conversing on one occasion with a gentleman who has considerable practice in midwifery, I introduced the subject of the general characteristics of women. His opinion may be collected from some of the observations he made; they were these:—"I think six or seven out of ten married women are immorally disposed; and in those cases the medical attendant has the best chance of success, as he is readiest and the most safe. I think the intellectual powers of women far inferior to those of men."

Perhaps I shall be required to account for medical men employing men to attend their own wives. I admit that they do so in some instances, but not in all. Many of these gentlemen attend their wives themselves; but the contrary practice, under existing circumstances, is no way detri-

mental to my argument. Whether midwives are sometimes secretly employed in these cases I know not, though I have little doubt that they are; but it is evident that they cannot be employed openly, because the system by which men-midwives derive their profits and pleasures would thereby be annihilated; besides, though men may be at times employed, it is only in these instances, at the period of delivery, when the woman sustains less contamination from abuse; and not during the various stages of pregnancy, as in many other cases. Also, the husband, from the knowledge he has of his fraternity, would undoubtedly select a man of the best character, and who would be restrained in his feelings by his consciousness of the experience and knowledge, or possibly the presence of the husband. However, if their wives should be a little corrupted, men-midwives would not generally take it very much to heart, not being over remarkable for their connubial attachments. On account of the varieties of their pleasures, they generally soon become cloyed with their wives, and solace themselves with those of their neighbours. As a collateral evidence of this, I ask the reader whether he ever knew the case of a midwifery professor and his wife living happily together?

Having alluded to some of the systems of puffing, I shall now mention one of the disguises which some of these gentlemen assume.

People, whether rightly or wrongly I know not, do frequently associate the idea of licentiousness with a gay dress, and decorum of character with a

formal one. To benefit themselves by this prejudice, and to secure the absurd confidence of society by disguising their real character, some of these gentlemen dress themselves in a singularly precise style, and adopt a conformable manner. This is generally found a very successful contrivance, and admirably suits the imaginations of the more prudent part of the community. It would not surprise me very much, if my readers had observed some of the specimens of this class. I thought this observation might be found useful, and I now proceed.

If the present detestable system were unavoidable, it would be wise to leave it unnoticed, like other irremediable evils; but seeing that it is, as I have shewn, both pernicious and needless, and that the remedy would be perfectly simple by employing women, as heretofore, instead of men, the infatuation of the world must be regarded as a delusion little short of insanity.

But men have already not triflingly monopolized the employments of women.

There are male domestic servants, who wait upon ladies in their drawing-rooms, and these persons ought not to be despised. Some of them, I have heard, have been very useful people; but for the kind offices of John the footman and Thomas the butler, the ancient house of —— and the noble house of —— would long since have been extinct. There are male ladies' corn-cutters, who cut ladies' corns at the moderate expense of half-a-guinea. There are male milliners, who entertain themselves by

gazing upon ladies, even of the first rank, and in the most interesting manner, while they serve them. There are male staymakers—very valuable persons—who advertise to make stays so excellently, as to afford ladies comfortable support before and after accouchement, and counteract abdominal corpulency. And there are male bathers, who bathe ladies to admiration in both rough and calm weather; at least they do so at Boulogne and Liverpool. I wonder whether next summer will accomplish that desideratum at Ramsgate and Brighton. I quite forgot to inquire, when I had the opportunity, which of the two former towns had the honour of setting the fashion;—but perhaps some other place that I have not visited might dispute that deserved celebrity with them. From these specimens, and from the rapid improvements in civilization, I do not despair, as I have not yet descended into the vale of years, of living to the time when male monthly nurses will be employed for all those ladies whose husbands have the means of paying for them.

Men of little reflection, or those who are very young, being actuated by strong affection, marry without contemplating some of the consequences of their engagement; but there are undoubtedly many men of intelligence, and of good principles, whose society would contribute in a great degree to render the marriage state of women the most happy; and who themselves would prefer that state to the disagreeables of a dissolute life; who are deterred from marrying, in consequence of the detestable situations

to which they know their wives would probably be exposed, from the present custom of employing accoucheurs. For it is well known that, the custom is so prevalent, few men would dare to employ a midwife, being aware that they should, by so doing, subject themselves to the most injurious defamation.

I am acquainted with the case of a gentleman, who, not wishing that his wife should be polluted by the tricks of any of these persons, entreated that a midwife might be employed; and a matron of one of the hospitals was engaged accordingly.

It so happened, that the lady afterwards had a very severe illness, proceeding, as it was perfectly well known, from natural causes, over which human power could have no controul; but it furnished the doctors with a most fortunate opportunity of raising an outcry. These worthies represented everywhere in the neighbourhood of the parties that the gentleman alluded to had nearly destroyed his wife by his absurd jealousy; and all the neighbourhood agreed with him. Thus it is evident there is no alternative; yet, when a man is married to a beautiful and interesting young woman, who has the modesty and delicacy to keep herself aloof from all other men, what can be more repugnant and galling to the feelings, than the consciousness that she may be exposed to all the polluting tricks of some ignorant but crafty licensed debauchee, who has the impudence to have written over his door "Surgeon Accoucheur," in order to gratify his depraved

inclinations with the greatest facility, and upon the most extensive scale.

Observations similar to many of those contained in these pages I once made to a medical man, and his reply was so remarkable, that with it I shall close my evidences:—"Your opinions are just and correct; medical men play the devil in families, especially those who are married, for they are the least suspected: but such is the folly of mankind, that if you were to declare publicly the opinions you have expressed to me, very few would believe them to be well-founded, and none would seriously attend to them." This opinion, I suppose, must be true, or such a system and such abuses would not have so long existed. Nevertheless, I shall offer the remedy which the title of these Observations implies—that, as the present system is in itself so extremely objectionable, and the abuses attending it are of such excessive magnitude, and impossible to correct, in any great degree, while such a system continues—it is to take the business of midwifery entirely from men, and to return it to women. For, though the evil propensities of human nature cannot be eradicated, the injurious effects of them may be diminished, if not entirely obviated, by good institutions.

There are many thousands of portionless young women of superior minds, well educated, and of the most respectable characters, who, from men having so extensively monopolized the employments of females, have the greatest difficulty in procuring

subsistence, unless by resorting to prostitution—the consequent fate of incalculable numbers. Let five hundred, or any other requisite number of such young women, be educated immediately in the art of midwifery, by one of the most respectable London professors, as young men are now, and one hundred additionally each following year. Let this, if necessary, be effected at the public expense; the cost would be trifling, and the re-payment to the community both morally and pecuniarily ample and complete. I say pecuniarily also, on account of the comparatively small remuneration usually made to women, however valuable their services. Let proportionate numbers also be educated upon the same principle at Edinburgh and Dublin, and the evils of which I complain would be speedily terminated. This arrangement no man in the kingdom, except interested persons, could object to; and all those women who have no particular attachment to their accoucheurs would universally approve of it. And if any Member of Parliament—such a man as Mr Peel, a man powerful in himself, supported by the Ministerial party, and possessing the confidence of the Opposition—would suggest a legislative measure to the above effect, I am certain it would be passed without dissent, as far as Parliament and the public would be concerned. And surely it is not a subject unworthy of legislative interference: consistently, it cannot be so, because the legislature have made every provision to protect the moral purity of women

in all other cases, comparatively of far less importance. But if the legislature should not be inclined to interfere, people, if so disposed, might effect a change themselves, and in a short time, by employing the matrons of lying-in-hospitals, or any well-recommended midwives. If a few respectable individuals would boldly set the example, and profess distinctly to their friends that they employed women in regard to the delicacy due to their wives, such example would be speedily followed, and the custom would as rapidly change as the present one was established. Also, if any intelligent young women, who possessed but moderate pecuniary means, would obtain instruction in midwifery, they would unquestionably procure immediate and lucrative employment. And if a respectable medical man would, upon the appearance of this pamphlet, publicly undertake so to educate them, he would acquire a popularity and profit that in his ordinary practice as an accoucheur he could never attain to.

With a few more remarks, I shall conclude my observations. It will perhaps be represented that, by taking up this subject, I am desirous of curtailing the liberty of women. Such representation would not be true. In my opinion the privileges of women are so much too few, that, if it depended upon me, they should be greatly increased rather than diminished. My only wish is, that an entire change in the present practice of midwifery may be effected, and that its professors may no longer, under the pretence of

benefiting society, have the power to pursue a system from which society sustains nothing but injury.

It is difficult to conjecture how my observations will be received by the midwifery practitioners themselves: whether, confident in the influence they have acquired over the imaginations of the community, they will allow my remarks to pass unnoticed; whether they will attempt to meet them with ridicule; or whether they will denounce them as false and groundless slanders. The majority of those gentlemen, I expect, will adopt the first course, and that will be the most prudent, as the more the question is agitated the more the public attention will be directed to the inquiry, as to the degree of justice my statements contain. Some will adopt the second, and some the third course. By the two latter classes I do not expect to be treated with extraordinary lenity; but either course I shall be equally regardless of.

Whatever may be said or written, I in rejoinder refer, not to one singly of the remarks I have made, but to the evident spirit and meaning of my observations collectively; but the most effectual means that can be adopted to counteract the effect of my reasoning, will be to excite apprehensions in the minds of women, by recounting or adverting to cases of danger, and to those in which death has ensued. This point I have already fully treated upon, notwithstanding I shall add one observation more regarding it. It is, that women should reflect

that the former cases are very uncommon, and the difficulty of which can be encountered by a woman at least as well as by a man: and that the latter cases form a part of the casualties of life, which no human aid can prevent, and of not more frequent occurrence than other fatal accidents, to which all animated nature are equally or more subject.

I have no doubt, however, that many of the profession will entirely approve of my observations, I mean those, who think too justly to approve the present system, and are too honourable to uphold it; and those, who, suffering under the dreadful effects of nervous disease, occasioned by many years of excitement and excessive indulgence, curse the day that they adopted midwifery as a branch of their profession.

I will however offer one suggestion:—Let men with a good grace abandon the practice of midwifery, or at least exercise unfair means no longer to effect the continuance of the present system; and it would then naturally change of itself, and the business, without legislative interference, would return, as formerly, to the hands of women. Let medical men confine themselves to their proper avocations of surgeons and apothecaries, and act justly in those capacities, becoming thereby most invaluable members of the community, and they will receive no molestation from me; but, on the contrary, I shall always be ready to offer them my humble tribute of respect and praise.

In any event, I do not despair of my observations

doing some good, notwithstanding the weakness of individual effort, when opposed to the deeply-rooted strength of a numerous and powerful body. Every physician, surgeon, and apothecary, throughout the country, who are not connected with the present system, will, I expect, support me, because they must feel as other men. And I have had the clearest proofs that many of those persons detest the present practice as much as myself; one of whom, a man of the most celebrated talents, once made strenuous private efforts to effect a change: and I have very lately been informed, that there are some medical men who possess such a high sense of virtue as to avoid the business of midwifery, that they might not be tempted to commit acts unsanctioned by honour: possibly such instances are not very common. But to resume: no other man, I imagine, can read with indifference that which I have written. My observations, I know, are of a nature to affect the feelings of every one, as the evils I have described are not confined to solitary instances, but extend themselves into innumerable families; and I am convinced, that if any man were to give only a fair and reasonable degree of attention to the subject, and such as he would to any matter in which his pecuniary interest or pleasures were concerned, he would arrive as nearly at the conclusions which I have drawn as is possible for men to do, allowing for the differences of natural character, education, habits of reflection, and peculiarities of life.

Though no public attention should be given to

my observations, those of the profession who practise midwifery will, I expect, feel the effects of them, as those gentlemen will in consequence be received more warily in society than heretofore. However, like all other great evils, these will at last work their own cure. Corruption will at length consume itself, and the time, I think, cannot be very far distant. The number of accoucheurs has increased, and is increasing to such a degree, that they must, in spite of all their contrivances, ultimately ruin each other. Every place is infested with numberless surgeons, &c.; they swarm, not only in populous neighbourhoods, but even in every newly half-built street, annihilating in numberless instances, by their vicious practices, the moral purity of the most refined and valuable part of the creation, as noxious insects corrode and canker the most luxuriant fruits and most beautiful flowers.

THE END.

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