

Two letters addressed to the editors of the Leeds Mercury, with an appendix containing a letter from Mr. R.G. Horton.

Contributors

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CHAPTER XVI.

TWO LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO THE

EDITORS OF THE LEEDS MERCURY.

BY C. TURNER THACKRAH.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

A LETTER FROM MR. R. G. HORTON.

LEEDS :

PRINTED BY EDWARD BAINES AND SON.

1827.

Mr. SAMUEL SMITH, not content with the notoriety of a Newspaper, has published his Letter in the shape of a Pamphlet. This proceeding has induced me to throw my hasty compositions into the present form.

Leeds, June 8, 1827.

LETTER I.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE LEEDS MERCURY.

Leeds, May 18, 1827.

GENTLEMEN,

I TRUSTED that the dispute which has divided the Surgeons of Leeds for the last two months, had closed in silence, if not in reconciliation. We might have expected, that the party, who, from their aggression on their Brethren, and their over-bearing spirit, have been aptly termed "*The Arrogants*," had been so humbled at the late exposure of their principles and conduct, as to be little disposed again to insult or oppress. But the prosecution of Mr. R. G. Horton for an assault, tends to prove that the *Odium Medicum* is, of all hatred, the deepest and the meanest. The abettors of this proceeding are disgraced in the esteem of every person acquainted with the facts. But as these facts are not generally known, and as several particulars bearing on the case, could not be introduced at the trial, I think it incumbent upon me to expose the source of the prosecution, and to defend the character of my pupil.

The Plaintiff's Counsel appears to have been particularly instructed to conceal the abettors of the prosecution. In his short speech, he several times protested against the statement of any circumstance, save the mere assault, and endeavoured to prevent Mr. Baines from opening out the case in its full relations. Why this anxiety? The following statements will explain it :—

1. The malicious tales which first annoyed Mr. Horton, have been distinctly traced to an individual in the party of the Arrogants.

2. Mr. Wilson Cryer insinuated that Mr. Horton had come to the Infirmary as a Spy on a secret Meeting of Surgeons, held within the walls of that Institution.

3. This insinuation was made, and these tales were told, in the presence of Mr. S. Smith, one of the Surgeons to the Infirmary, and during the time that he was acting in his official capacity.

4. Mr. Samuel Smith never interfered till Mr. Horton rose, and complained of the improper conduct of these Pupils, in attacking him when they ought to be attending to the examination of the Patients.

5. When Mr. Horton rose to remonstrate, Mr. Smith, to use his own words, "saw that Horton was baited."

6. Mr. S. Smith, nevertheless, did not, after the completion of his official business, interfere to prevent the ebullition of irritated feeling.

7. Mr. Samuel Smith has repeatedly admitted, that

Mr. H. was the best, or one of the best, Pupils of the Infirmary, and has *protested his friendship for Mr. Horton.*

8. Mr. S. S. nevertheless admits that he advised Cryer to prosecute Horton; and, from other information, it appears that he went with Cryer to an Attorney.

9. Cryer himself, on his cross-examination at the late trial, admitted, though after some hesitation, that if the cause had been taken to York, he believed he should not have had to bear the expense of the suit.

If these statements be true, (and I believe it will be difficult to disprove any one of them) no man of common understanding can for a moment doubt the nature and object of the prosecution. Here is an unoffending young gentleman "baited," because he is the Pupil of a Practitioner obnoxious to the Arrogants,—insulted as if he were a Spy,—urged to an assault, and then prosecuted for that assault,—provoked to an offence, and then severely punished for that offence! There is reason, moreover, to believe the insult premeditated. Horton was attending to the examination of the patients, when his attention was called off by a series of insinuations—"Have you heard of the case against A.?" says one Pupil. "Have you heard of the case against B.?" says another.—"Who twice came to the Infirmary one afternoon?" says a third. This modest Officer of the Institution then charged Horton with falsehood, and

insinuated that he had gone as a Spy. Nor was this systematic annoyance interrupted by the Surgeon who presided at the table! Is the decorum, I would ask, of an official situation to be so little regarded, that disputes among the Pupils are to be carried on at the very table of the Surgeon, who is examining the patients? Is he not to demand from his Pupils even the *outward* appearance of respect? Why, moreover, did not Mr. Smith's friendship for Mr. Horton interpose to prevent insult and annoyance? Why did he not afterwards interfere to prevent the outrage? And why, at length *did* he interfere to urge Cryer to on the prosecution of Horton? These are questions he is called on publicly to answer. His plea of Newtonian abstraction, if it could be admitted as an excuse for his silence at the table, affords no solution of his subsequent conduct. His mind, it appears, regained its ordinary functions, just in time to take measures of vengeance on Horton. For Mr. Smith, though I am obliged to introduce his name, I feel, of course, neither hostility nor respect. He is only to be considered as one of a Party, who first insulted their Brethren, and then suffered the exposure of their conduct,—a Party, who, defeated on public grounds, have recourse to private detraction—defeated in their attack on the Surgeons, have descended to the prosecution of a Pupil. What

will be the next step in this bathos of character? The *Intelligencer* of yesterday shows even an ignominy deeper than I could have conceived. My enemies have descended not merely to falsehood, but to *forgery*. Fearing no production, signed by a member of their party, could gain credit with the public, they have had the meanness to affix my name to the letter of a Buffoon! To effect their designs, they do not hesitate even at the commission of crime. But when slander is esteemed virtuous, no wonder that forgery should be accounted honourable! To this party is due the merit of inventing a novel and unprecedented mode of assassination. It will remain on record. There may be a distinction between forgery with intent to rob a man of his money, and forgery with intent to rob him of his character. But no honest man will think the first baser than the second. And whatever sophistry be used to palliate this infamous transaction, its remembrance will never be effaced from the minds of an impartial public.

To return to the business of Horton—The plea of this prosecution was—the *wounded honour* of the *Sub-Apothecary* of the Leeds Infirmary! This honourable gentleman showed no marks of his flagellation to the Jury, and swore that he was not mortally wounded. Whether the honour of this honourable gentleman be really

worth £20, is a question which would be best determined by the spirit he showed in its defence. Had he seized the pestle, or emptied on his opponent a bottle of Julepum Salinum, we should all have praised his valour.

As to the insinuation of attending as a spy, which this honourable gentleman employed to provoke Mr. Horton, it was, like the insinuations of the party, utterly false. And when, at my request, Mr. Horton offered to apologize for the blows he had given Mr. Cryer, on condition that Mr. C. retracted his insinuation, I repeatedly engaged to satisfy Mr. C. that Horton went for a book, and had *bona fide* no other motive. Horton could not have stooped to have been a spy, even if I had been mean enough to have asked him. But the party under whom Mr. Cryer acted, either could not comprehend the principles of rectitude and honour, or they were determined at all events to have the "*summa lex*," the "*summa injuria*." If they sought merely for equity, why did they refuse the equitable adjustment to which I have alluded? Why did they subsequently refuse the repeated and varied offers of Mr. Horton to put the matter to a reference? He was quite willing to submit to the judgment of any two gentlemen, whether in or out of the profession. What could be more equitable or fair? The very Counsel whom they employed at the trial,

seemed ashamed of bringing such a cause into a court of justice. But bitter enmity must be gratified; and to this wretched passion must be sacrificed the decorum of official situation, the decency of professional character, the esteem of society, and even self-respect.

Nor were the party content with a suit at law. Their counsel threw out remarks, founded no doubt on the particulars in his brief, which were aimed at the *permanent* injury of Mr. Horton's professional and literary character. Now of this allegation the counsel did not produce an iota of proof. It remains, like the other insinuations of the party, with the character of a lie on its face, and the lineaments of its parent, inveterate malice. To remove any unfavourable impression against Mr. Horton, which might be imbibed by a stranger to his character, I beg to state that the last annual prize, which I gave for the greatest professional attainments, and the best general conduct in my pupils, was awarded to him. The judges were two impartial surgeons, who closely examined the respective merits of the pupils, and passed a high encomium on each.

Mr. Horton's character, in every respect, will bear a comparison with that of any of his prosecutors. He is not a man in years, and a boy in character; nor does he join the folly of youth to the malice of age. He does not profess friendship, and prove it by a criminal pro-

secution. Nor has he afterwards to blush in a court of justice at the exposure of his conduct. Though a pupil at the Infirmary, he is not an "Infirmary Backbiter." He neither fabricates nor spreads calumnies to embroil the profession. His time is spent, not in the frivolous amusements of youth, but in the constant and diligent study of his profession. The attempt to consign such a man to a felon's prison, because, with the spirit of his family, he resented a cowardly insinuation, could only proceed from the heart of the most mean and malignant. Yet Cryer, rubbing his hands with delight at the prospect of Horton's punishment, expressed his hope that his quondam friend would be sent to the tread-mill!

As to the silly tale against myself, to trace its origin is to prove its falsehood. It is one of a tissue of lies, which I am accustomed to hear, and which, like the figures in the Kaleidoscope, are renewed and varied indefinitely at the will of the manager. I dare the forger to bring the cases alluded to in the *Intelligencer* fairly before the public, and to sign his real name to his production. But vain, I fear, is the attempt to convert a skulker into a man. I have nothing to apprehend from the charge, and he, every thing from its falsehood. The brand of infamy would be marked on his forehead; nor could he walk the street without

the cry of "Shame on the Backbiter." Open attack I have never feared to encounter; but it is as difficult to grasp the author of a tale, insinuation, hint, or innuendo, as to seize an Indian, who fires his piece behind a tree, and is immediately lost among the bushes.

As my name was introduced on Mr. Horton's trial, and as it is the obvious aim of his prosecutors to treat it with all possible disrespect, I may be allowed to speak of my own character.

Had I sat down in the dull routine of the mere money-getting practitioner, I should never have been molested; but several particulars of my professional conduct have marked me for the hostility of an insolent and selfish party. My first offence was, that after a course of difficult and protracted inquiry, I published a book on the Blood; which not only received high praise in this country, but has been translated into Foreign Languages. My next offence was, the distinction which I gained at the opening of the Philosophical Hall, and the subsequent credit of delivering two courses of Physiological Lectures. The publication of a book on Digestion and Diet was another sin. Subsequently, the suspicion that I have for years been studying Symptomatology and the Treatment of Disease with more than ordinary attention, has brought upon me additional ha-

tred. I might tell of the opprobrium I have gained on each of these occasions,—deeply aggravated by the fact, that my practice has been progressively on the advance among the upper classes. My last and greatest offence, is the establishment of an Anatomical School, and the completion of the first full course of Anatomical Lectures ever delivered in the town of Leeds,—in despite of difficulty, anxiety, and toil,—in despite too of the discountenance of three-fourths of the Leeds practitioners. Well might Rochefoucault observe, that a man is more hated for his good qualities than for all the ill he does.

What is the cause of the opposition and calumny which for years have been my lot? I can only refer it to professional envy. So obvious is this, that even the forger of my name, and the insinuator of lies, admits the fact in its fullest extent. I have the satisfaction, however, of endeavouring to do my duty. If I have not the good will of the “Arrogants” of Leeds, I have the esteem of disinterested practitioners around it. I have some credit, moreover, with the most eminent in my profession throughout the kingdom; and even foreign physicians have honoured me by an attention, the more flattering from its contrast with the disrespect shown me by a party in Leeds. Whatever credit I have gained abroad,

or reputation at home, I owe nothing to patronage or to favour. The aid of others I have never sought. My only desire has been the opportunity of prosecuting my professional engagements without molestation.

To the charge of egotism I am indifferent. When twenty mouths are open to rail, surely some liberty may be allowed to the defendant; and when especially a buffoon has been employed to prevent the statements which his party well knew I had a right to make—the malicious aim ought to be defeated. If I have said a tittle of myself which is not true, I call on them to expose it. If I have said of myself nothing but the fact, I appeal to the public, whether a man who spends his life and health, as I have done, is the fit object of professional opposition and systematic calumny.

The aim of the “Backbiters” is to distract my attention, and stop my progress. They will be disappointed. What they say for the future will have little effect either upon me or the public. They have rendered themselves despicable in society—for a tale-maker is the *skunk* of every company he enters.

The party of Arrogants ought surely to be the last of all men, to seek for flaws in the practice of others. “*Lepus tute es, et tu pulpamentum quæris!*” They must be fully aware, if we could

condescend to a warfare of so mean a kind, that we might retort facts for fictions, and give ten real cases for every insinuation of theirs. But we disdain to tell of the operation of lithotomy without a stone in the bladder,—a hernia punctured in mistake for a hydrocele,—the pudic artery divided in an operation,—a nerve tied instead of an artery, *cum multis aliis*,—nor of the melancholy result of such cases. It would be quite easy (using Milton's phraseology) to "handle such men in a rougher accent, and send home their haughtiness well bespurred with their own holy water." It would be easy to make them "the sewer of their own mess." And the party with whom I act, however loath to expose conduct which would disgrace not the faulty surgeons only, but the profession at large, contains individuals who will assuredly retort, and with severe effect, on these "Infirmity Backbiters."

The spirit of the parties in the late medical dispute has been tolerably well developed in the newspapers. That of the Arrogants has never dared openly to answer the allegations brought against it, though one of these was little less than a personal charge of falsehood. Not an individual of that *honourable* party ever dared to sign his name to an answer. Their replies were anonymous, and as remarkable for their want of common talent, as the cause for want of common jus-

tice. Had they lived in the days of the Covenanters, they would have had for their champion, that tender of chickens, Goose Gibbie, in the armour of a soldier.

Reverse the picture. On our side was no subterfuge, no anonymous libel. Every letter had its manly signature. The cause was good, and each writer was proud of espousing it. This circumstance, gentlemen, independent of further inquiry, reflected great discredit on the party of the Arrogants: and when the facts were fully examined, their exposure was complete. Nothing could have occurred to establish the charges against them more decided than the prosecution of Mr. Horton. Insult and injustice, meanness and subterfuge, are stamped on the abettors of this law-suit. And never, I trust, will a similar proceeding again disgrace the faculty of Leeds.

According to the custom of the party, some hireling writer will now be engaged to defend them. Poor *Investigator* will embody their matter in a sonorous oration, or the writer of odes for Warren's Jet Blacking will again be engaged to write odes for the Backbiters; or the *forgery* may again be employed. But the only writer who will receive the notice either of the public or myself, will be one of Mr. Horton's prosecutors, or the Infirmary Backbiters. If there be one of the party who does not fear the light, let him emerge from his mole-hill, and come forward in his own

name. But let him speak to the point. Let him argue that the prosecution was devoid of cloak, malice, and meanness. Let him satisfactorily explain the silence of the Infirmary Surgeon when "Horton was baited." Let him illustrate the means used by this amiable gentleman to prevent the disputes being brought into a court of justice. And especially, let him exert all his abilities to prove that Mr. Horton would have been prosecuted, even if he had not been my pupil.

Though I dislike a literary warfare, as it draws me from pursuits more useful in themselves, and more agreeable to my habits,—I am an Englishman. Nor will I patiently bear insult and oppression, whether directed against myself or my pupil. An English public, I am confident, will ever take the side of the injured, and suffer neither the malicious prosecutor, slanderer, nor forger, to pass without execration.

C. TURNER THACKRAH.

LETTER II.

Leeds, June 1, 1827.

GENTLEMEN,

THE letter which appeared in your last week's paper, with the signature of "Samuel Smith," is an admirable illustration of the spirit of his party. It is a letter of subterfuge and invective, and of malignity more remarkable than either.

Where is the argument? Argument is an instrument dangerous to a bad cause and to puerile hands. Where is the reply to the nine specific points stated in my letter? Half of one of them is said to be false. The statement, however, was expressed with doubt, and, even if it be incorrect, does not at all affect the question. The nine points stand unconfuted.

Where does Mr. Smith even attempt to substantiate the tales with which he has privately endeavoured to injure my professional character? I again publicly charge him with propagating slander in reference to two cases in my practice, and which have been ridiculously termed the "Schirrous Case" and the "Tapping Case." I defy him to prove *any mal-practice in either.*

Where are the particulars on which was founded that iniquitous attempt in court, to injure Mr. Horton's character; an attempt which the gentlemen of the law have stated to be almost unparalleled in litigation? The subject, like other material circumstances, is studiously omitted.

The letter, instead of being an answer to charges, or an explanation of facts, is a mass of invective and gasconade. Had the writers wished honestly to state the truth, they would have confined themselves to the points in dispute; their language would have been as calm as their arguments were strong. They would never have substituted vituperation for reason, nor concealed the facts of the case in a mass of irrelevant abuse.

So apparent, indeed, is this evasion, and so strong its effect on all but the personal friends of the writers, that the letter signed "Samuel Smith" has done more to discredit their cause, than even the exposure of their preceding conduct. From every thinking man we hear the expression, "a cause must be bad which cannot be trusted on its own merits."

Whatever may have been the warmth of feeling or keenness of resentment which our party has displayed, frankness and fairness have marked all its proceedings. The warfare has been open and manly, directed to legitimate ends, and carried on by legitimate means. As a fair example, I confidently refer to my letter. It was founded on

public transactions. It descended to no remarks on any man, except so far as his public conduct laid him open to inquiry or reproof. It contained no calumny. It did not even state the truths which might have a private application. The contrast to this equitable proceeding, is strongly apparent in the letter signed "Samuel Smith." And had I been sure that the two productions would have been compared by every reader,—nay, had I been sure that the letter of the opposite party would have been twice carefully perused by every inquirer, I should have been spared either commentary or refutation. I speak of the letter as containing, in general, the sentiments of the party. There are some passages, indeed, which, from their folly and malignity, can only be the production of Mr. Samuel Smith. But enough has been divulged by this *honourable* gentleman, to show that he has the countenance of the Seniors, and expects their efficient support. The supposition, moreover, that he would have hazarded, on his sole responsibility, a letter of libels, is incompatible with what he himself states of his circumstances and his family. I need not stay to inquire who elaborated the letter, and rounded the periods. If Mr. Smith's friends believe him capable of such effort, I shall not attempt to undeceive them. We may freely afford to a cause and character like his, the credit of a flashy, though borrowed, garment. He is, how-

ever, responsible for the sentiments; and these alone I shall examine.

The commencement of the letter marks the character it is to assume. It begins with "lie on," and in consonance with this gentlemanly advice, fills your columns with coarse imputations of falsehood. These imputations, however, recoil on the libeller as soon as the letters are compared. He ought to be aware that the mere mention of truth is dangerous to his cause; and that the name of honour reproaches his character. The profusion of angry epithets is another feature in Mr. Smith's letter. But as he takes to himself the character of "a boy," I excuse his wrath.

His remarks on Mr. Horton's prosecution are too vague and feeble to require exposure. He has, however, succeeded in convincing the public, that he *was* the principal instigator of this malicious proceeding. Yet with a sincerity of his own, he again avows his regard for Mr. Horton, and his wish to serve him! Mr. Smith's friendship is as peculiar as his sincerity. I cannot doubt his friendship for Mr. Horton, for he has repeatedly protested it, and is again ready to call God to witness. I only say it is a *peculiar* friendship—a friendship so peculiarly unfortunate, that Horton might well exclaim, "I care not for my enemies, but Heaven preserve me from my friends!" The character of Mr. Smith's friendship is also

shown by a circumstance to which he is weak enough to allude in his letter. Treachery to myself, or a conduct which I could explain only on that supposition, made me shun his familiarity long before the period to which he alludes. Observing that I avoided him, Mr. S. engaged a friend to call on me, and state his regret for the coolness of my demeanour, and his wish to make an apology or explanation if he had done any thing to offend me. But I civilly declined this gentleman's mediation, determined for the future to renounce an acquaintance, which might be employed to betray me. Weak men are dangerous associates,—a truth which I regret that I did not learn early in life. The gentleman, whom Mr. Smith employed as a mediator, is a man of honour, and, though unconnected with our party, will confirm the accuracy of my statement. Compare this fact with Mr. Smith's profession of his having "declined my acquaintance." His modesty is equal to his veracity. Who could suppose any man reduced so low, as to seek the "countenance" of an individual who needs countenance himself? The idea can excite only a laugh or a sneer.—The society of the other members of the party will probably be granted me as soon as I ask it. At present, however, I have little inducement for such a request.

The charge of egotism, I knew they would endeavour to fix on me. It is futile. Enough

has been done by that party, to warrant my making a much fuller defence. Every art has been employed to depress, every kind of tale invented to injure me ; and the very libels of Mr. Smith make my remarks on my own character appear too short for the occasion. But the statements in my letter, on this subject as well as on others, Mr. Smith misrepresents. I never mentioned my *talents*. I spoke of my *labours*. I refer to them again : and whenever the malice of a party demands such reference, I shall publicly and fearlessly make it. I again ask, “ whether a man, who spends his life and health as I have done, is the fit object of professional opposition and systematic calumny ? ”

Mr. Smith, it appears, abhors egotism in another, and enjoys it in himself: like the holy Mussulman, who calls down the vengeance of Alla on the drinker of wine, but is himself the private votary of excess. The “ modest ” gentleman occupies about *sixty* lines with the detail of his own accomplishments ! His motive is obvious ; but a *vretext* he can scarcely find. No man, as far as I know, ever deemed Mr. Smith’s professional character of such importance as to make it the subject of censure. His conduct, however, to Mr. Horton was too remarkable to pass without notice. In reply to this notice, Mr. S., instead of adducing facts to prove his honour and veracity, gives a detail of his accomplishments ! He talks of his education ; but he does not attempt to prove that his know-

ledge is proportionate to the expense incurred, or that his understanding is equal to his years. He talks of Anatomical Lectures delivered by himself and his colleagues. The only knowledge I have of such attempt, refers to the summer of 1819 or 1820, when the body of a malefactor, executed at York, was brought to Leeds. Surely Mr. S. was not wise to allude to an occasion on which he gained so little credit. If the teachers under whom he had previously studied, were the first professors in Europe, as he wishes your readers to believe, he had evidently derived from them little of that accuracy and order, which are the great points in anatomical demonstration. Will Mr. S., moreover, in his endeavour to depreciate my labours of last winter, make the profession believe, that a few lectures irregularly and imperfectly given, and at the interval of years, are to be put in competition with a course of from seventy to eighty,—and in which were introduced at least *twelve* fresh subjects? Mr. Smith boasts of his skill in making anatomical preparations. I believe he makes them well; and as it is an art which requires little knowledge and no talent, I trust he will continue the occupation. If he never have effected any thing for the advance of professional science, he is not to be blamed, for no man should be expected to do an impossibility. The close of his puffing paragraph is remarkable. He states that what I learnt in two or three courses, he learnt in five! This statement seems weak even

in Mr. Smith. He succeeds so ill in recommending himself by the *puff direct*, that he should confine himself to some indirect means of bringing his accomplishments before the public.

His challenge to a dissection, is a good example of the *puff oblique*. The perfumer, hair-dresser, and empiric, also publish their challenge. It is a well-known plan for gaining notoriety. If Mr. S. really mean any thing by his bravado, one of my pupils will confidently accept the offer.

Mr. Smith's process of puffing is not limited to the newspaper. He can say more than he ventures to write. Does he not remember boasting to a Surgeon of this town, that in the general practice of the Infirmary, the deaths of Mr. Chorley's patients were *five to one* of those of Mr. Smith? Does he not remember boasting that *his* last eight operations, for Lithotomy, were successful, while the three last of Mr. Hey's were fatal? But Mr. Smith is of course a *modest* man.

He speaks occasionally with great magnificence, or perhaps others have injudiciously written words on his paper. He talks of "branding," of "annihilating" his opponent! Weak Youth! let him begin with a better cause; and first learn to think, to reason, and to write.

The mention of the late Mr. Hey excited my surprise. I never wrote any thing against *him*. At the last contest for the office of Surgeon to the Infirmary, I was roused by the conduct of the *pre-*

sent Mr. Hey, in endeavouring to bring into that institution a Senior, in opposition to the Juniors; and as I deemed that conduct unfair in itself, and unbecoming a Surgeon to the Infirmary, I published two or three letters on the subject. These, though "nameless, were never disavowed." I considered it no reproach to take up my pen against the encroachments of influence and power. And so convinced were the trustees of the unfairness of the party I exposed, that they determined to prevent the monopoly, and elect a Junior. To this circumstance, in part, is Mr. Smith indebted for his situation. A great number of trustees would vote for any *Junior* who had most proxies. Mr. Smith had most, and thus he obtained his election. The mode in which he procured these proxies; the subsequent secession of a large number of nominal subscribers; and the law then adopted at a general meeting, to prevent the future *purchase* of the office; are still in the memory of the public. The trustees very properly determined, that the post should never again be assigned to a man, who had no other merit than the possession of £500. I should not have alluded to this unfortunate subject, had not Mr. S., with his characteristic folly, introduced it.

To return. My efforts in behalf of the Junior Surgeons could scarcely have reference to the late Mr. Hey, for he was no longer an officer of the

Infirmary. I have no copies of my letters, but no such allusion can I remember.

The late Mr. Hey and I, had, it is true, a disagreement of another kind, which occurred a few weeks before that gentleman's death. It was purely professional. It was on the point of the Blood's Coagulation, and the subject is fairly stated in my "Inquiry," p. 50—52. "Being informed of the different result of our experiments, he repeatedly expressed a desire for our jointly re-examining the point in dispute, and I was equally willing to accept the offer." We went together to the slaughter-house, and there, in the presence of competent spectators, and without the least unfriendly feeling, examined the point in dispute. Though the fact proved in my favour, I am not aware of having distressed or "stung" the venerable Surgeon. I am sure, at least, he had no cause for pain. And so far was my mind from any impression of disrespect, that the Appendix to the "Inquiry" contains a tribute to his memory, which closes with the following passage:—"While we venerate his memory, may we copy his example; and by a like integrity and steadiness of conduct, by the same undeviating attention to the discharge of our professional duties, and by a similar ardour in the pursuit of useful knowledge, seek that honourable distinction to which he attained!" Had Mr. Smith's character been formed on this model, he

might have been an intelligent member of the profession, and a respectable member of society; at least he would never have made himself the object of ridicule or contempt. He would scarcely have asserted, that "I stung the venerable father of his profession to the quick!" I have always felt and always expressed a high opinion of the talents and professional character of the late Mr. Hey. He was, indeed, a man whose memory merits a better tribute than Mr. Smith's puerile tears. But I do not drag the deceased into a controversy, with which neither his name nor his character can have any connexion. Neither do I seek favour with the living, by weeping over the dead. I carry no Lachrymatory to produce for effect. My character I do not seek to prop on the reputation which another man obtained; like the misletoe that fixes on the oak. In advancing a step further, I shall astonish the sycophant. Notwithstanding my respect for the late Mr. Hey, had he encroached on the rights of his brethren, I should have more promptly opposed him, than I now do the tool of an arrogant party. In the same sentence I would have joined a tribute to his talents, and a censure on his conduct.

Mr. S. proclaims himself the parasite of the Seniors. In several parts of his letter, he introduces his deference, his respect, or his admiration. "*Viscata beneficia!*"

But what place or pension can he hope for, if

it should appear that this *honourable* gentleman privately traduces the very men he publicly extols? Mr. Smith is ever ready indeed to support his veracity and good faith by calling God to witness. He called God to witness his tears for the suffering of the late Mr. Hey; he called God to witness his Newtonian abstraction; he called God to witness his friendship for Mr. Horton. But it is unwise in Mr. Smith to use such language. Thinking men do not like the frequent use of asseverations and protestations. They suspect a bad cause or a bad character.

Not content with any ordinary topic of vituperation, Mr. Smith now publishes a private affair, which occurred more than four years ago, and which is utterly unconnected with the subject of controversy. He clothes it in every aggravation he can invent. Falsehood is added to fact, and fairness lost in declamation. This dastardly assailant of private character knew, that the nature of the subject would not permit me the chance of explanation or reply. Honour and decency allow me only to state, that if half what he asserts or insinuates were true, *an Appeal to a Court of Justice would surely have been made.* Is the dastardly assailant, who can maintain neither the decorum of professional character, nor the sincerity of private intercourse, destitute even of common decency? He may plead indeed his love of morality as his reason for the censure of a sinner; but no man will respect

that motive which violates the noblest principles of christianity. Zeal for religion has often been the plea for massacre; and a similar plea is now offered for an attempt at moral assassination. If history brand the hypocrisy of the first, what better name can be given to the character of the second? Yet Mr. Smith quotes Scripture with a piety peculiarly his own. He will lift up his eyes to heaven, and pray for vengeance on the man he hates, then protest his friendship, and call God to witness the purity of his motives.

Mr. Smith pleads a numerous family and the want of pecuniary resources. His plea shall save him alike from a criminal prosecution, which would confine him in a prison, and from an action of damages, which would injure his family. His punishment shall be the detestation of his townsmen.

This is the closing scene of Mr. Smith's dishonour. He will scarcely again venture before the public, except as an *anonymous* libeller. But he may perhaps find public odium follow him further than he expected. It has already marked him in the Theatre. I would advise him to avoid places of public resort, lest he again hear the cry of "Mr. Puff," "Hypocrite," and "Skunk." The attempt at moral assassination marks for ever the aim and character of my enemies. Slander, libel, and forgery were not sufficient. They have now put the capital on the column. This last attempt substantiates all I stated on the subject in my letter;

may, it proves to a greater extent than I ever did or can state, a malice, which is a reproach to humanity, an envy, which is a disgrace to a liberal profession. The public are now fully convinced, that to injure my character, every means will be used, which the art of invention, the tongue, or the pen can effect. This conviction is my security. My professional character is before the world; my private character I leave to those who know it.

The confusion into which Mr. Smith's letter has designedly thrown the whole controversy, obliges me to give a summary of the facts. The party of surgeons, since known by the title of Arrogants, (I adopt the word merely as a mark of distinction) first gave a public insult to their brethren, and conjoined with this, a display of gross inconsistency, if not falsehood. This conduct was exposed at a public meeting, called by advertisement, and which the Arrogants ought to have attended for the explanation and justification of their proceedings.

Letters subsequently appeared in the newspapers, again demanding an explanation, examining the pretensions of the Arrogants, and exposing that spirit of monopoly and oppression which have long marked their conduct. The reply was anonymous; futile in argument, and sonorous in epithet. This production, a gentleman of the insulted party called on the Se-

niors to acknowledge or disavow. The answer was an anonymous disavowal of the anonymous letter; a mode of reply so singular and ridiculous, as to be unparalleled in the annals of controversy. At the same time, the Arrogants, finding the ground fail them, commenced a new plan of annoyance, the propagation of professional slander. Again a public call was made on them for the justification of their public conduct; and a demand for the *public* statement of the cases or charges of mal-practice which they privately circulated. The reply was an anonymous ode.

The next point was the subject of my letter. Certain tales of which Mr. Sam. Smith has acknowledged himself the propagator, were employed to provoke my pupil to an outrage. A prosecution was the result,—a prosecution so evidently malicious, and so evidently the act of a party, that there is not one honest and well-informed man who does not reprobate the proceeding. This conduct to my pupil, it was known I should publicly expose; and, to counteract the effect of this exposure, my enemies inserted in the "*Intelligencer*," a *libellous* letter, with the *forged* signature of "Charles Turner Thackrah"!!! The libellous letter, moreover, referred to an account of my Anatomical Lectures, which had previously appeared in the "*Mercury*," and which contained a high cha-

racter of the course. This eulogium the forger had the hardihood to say was my own writing. But mark the result. The next newspaper brought the public avowal of the commendatory letter, by a surgeon at Batley, a gentleman highly respectable in his character, and totally unconnected with any party in Leeds. He states that the opinion was his own, and "in unison with that of a few valued friends."—Next appeared my letter, and then Mr. Smith's dishonourable reply. The Arrogants are now deeply disgraced in the estimation of every man who fairly examines the grounds, the proceedings, and the issue of the case.

Controversy, like the storm or the hurricane, however offensive at the time, is often productive of ultimate advantage. It would be productive of greater, if the weak party had always the honesty to keep the subject on its proper basis. A dispute like the present rouses the attention of the public to the state of the profession, and thus tends to improve our characters and practice. We are all disposed to slide into carelessness and apathy. We have no inquisitors from the college to watch our conduct,—no examiners to ascertain our advance in knowledge, or detect our decline. The due balance, moreover, of parties in the profession, is often righted by free discussion. It is ob-

vious that men in office, and men of age, are disposed to monopolize what they ought to diffuse. Much has been effected by the present dispute, in weakening unmerited influence, in encouraging the professional exertions of the Juniors, and in teaching all that the public will countenance industry, honour, and talent, and *discountenance* the efforts of calumny and the carplings of envy, the supineness of age and the arrogance of office.

C. TURNER THACKRAH.

P. S. The importance of professional knowledge will excuse my referring here to three circumstances in the state of the Infirmary, in which I conceive considerable improvement might be made.

I. The surgical operations might be thrown open to the inspection of all practitioners. Though operative surgery is the lowest grade of the art, it ought not to be conducted with an appearance of seclusion. The free admission of the faculty would tend to improve the practice of the Surgeons of the Infirmary, as well as diffuse information among those who are not connected with the institution. The former would be excited to increased care and assiduity, nor would they omit any opportunity of acquiring that knowledge, which would fit them for appearing with credit in the presence of well-informed men.

II. The practice of the Infirmary, general as well as operative, should be open to the Military Surgeons. From the gentlemen of this class with whom I have the happiness to associate, I infer that the Military Surgeons are not only men of greater professional attainments than the bulk of resident practitioners, but are much more anxious to avail themselves of every opportunity of improvement. In other towns, the officers of Hospitals are generally liberal and polite enough to throw open their public practice to the inspection of these gentlemen; and I think it would be no discredit for the Surgeons of the Leeds Infirmary to copy the example. If jealous feeling deter them from admitting the resident Surgeons, this cannot be a valid objection to gentlemen whose practice is confined to the army.

III. Professional details of cases, or "Hospital Reports," should be regularly published. The practice would have the double advantage referred to in No. I.

APPENDIX.

TO THE

EDITORS OF THE LEEDS MERCURY.

GENTLEMEN,

IN your Paper of last Saturday, Mr. Samuel Smith expressed his good will towards me. The following are proofs:—

1st. In the presence of Mr. Thackrah and myself, he stated that he had frequently sent the Elaboratorian to request my attendance on post mortem examinations, to which the other Pupils were not invited.

2dly. In his Letter he asserts, that *had it not been for the line of conduct he prescribed to himself upon a late occasion, he believes I should have been expelled the Infirmary.*

In reply to the first assertion, I beg to state, the Elaboratorian distinctly denies that Mr. Smith ever once sent him with such a message.

The second is equally founded in truth, for I can prove satisfactorily to all but Mr. Smith's packed friends, that Mr. S. exerted himself to the utmost, to effect my expulsion from the Infirmary.

If to these be added the obligation I am under to Mr. S. for involving me in a law-suit, it would be ungrateful on my part not to accept his proffered friendship, with quite as much sincerity as he offers it.

Respecting the letter signed "WILLSON CRYER," I really cannot refrain from expressing my surprise, that the Sub-Apothecary should again expose himself to public ridicule and contempt. I am not so much surprised at his taking advantage of my present situation. He knows my hands are tied by the law, or he would not have dared to repeat his false assertions. To refute each separately would be only a waste of time.

I beg simply to state the following facts regarding my going to the Infirmary Library twice in the afternoon on which the *secret* meeting of the Surgeons was held. Mr. Thackrah sent me to the

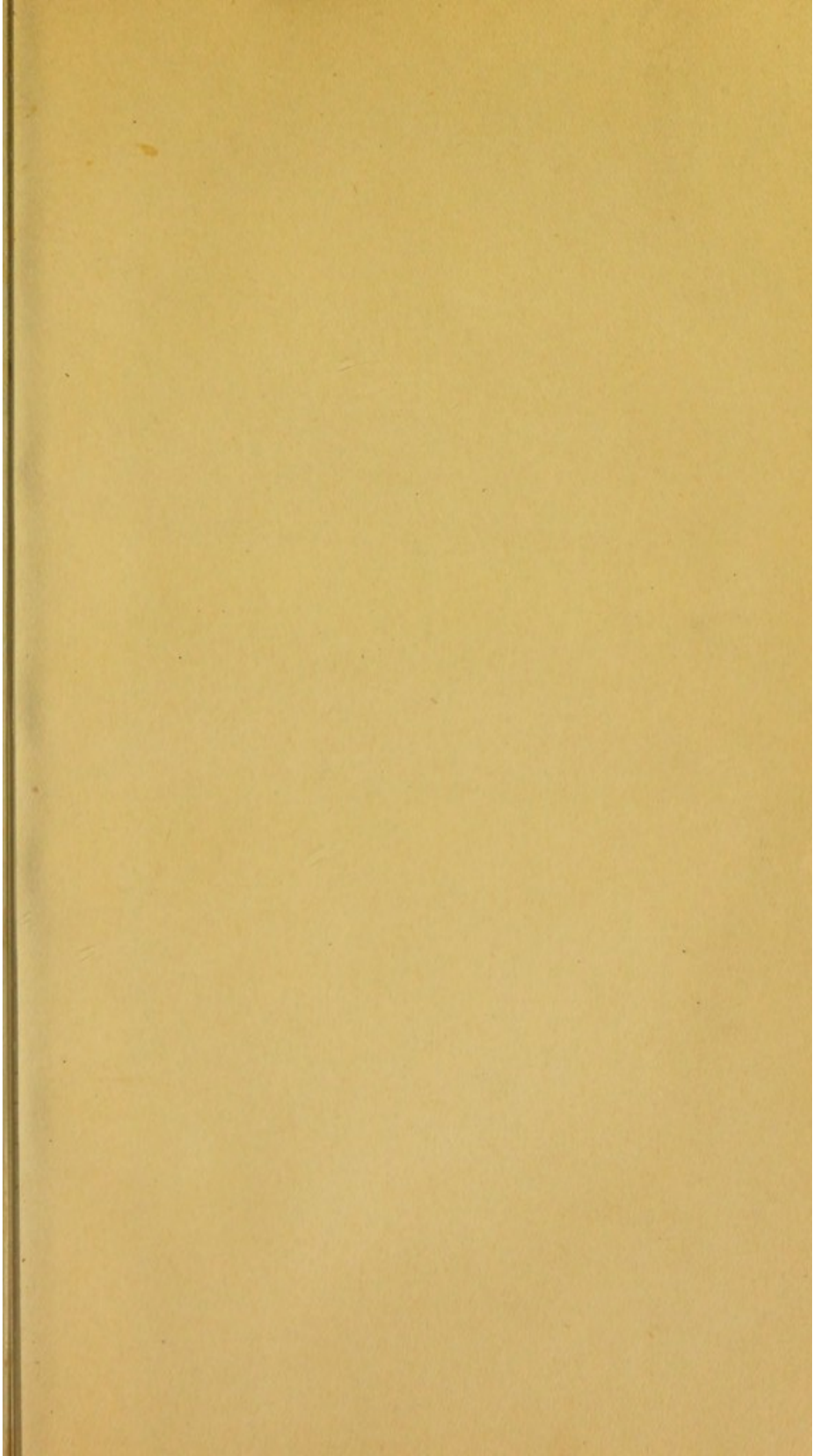
Library for a particular Volume of the Lancet. At the door of the Infirmary I met the Elaboratorian, who asked me if I could lend him Reece's Medical Guide; I had not the book, but I said I would get it for him. Upon inquiry, Cryer told me they had not such a book in the library. When I returned home, Mr. Thackrah asked me for the volume of the Lancet. I had forgot it, and immediately went back to the Infirmary. I then met several Surgeons unconnected with the Institution, but whom I knew to be Subscribers to the Library. I imagined there might be a quarterly meeting; at which time the books are not given out. I asked Cryer if it was a library meeting; he replied, it was a *private* meeting, and that it would be a breach of trust if he told what it was about. I then asked for the book for which Mr. Thackrah had previously sent me, and found it had been taken out in Mr. Thackrah's name, without his knowledge.

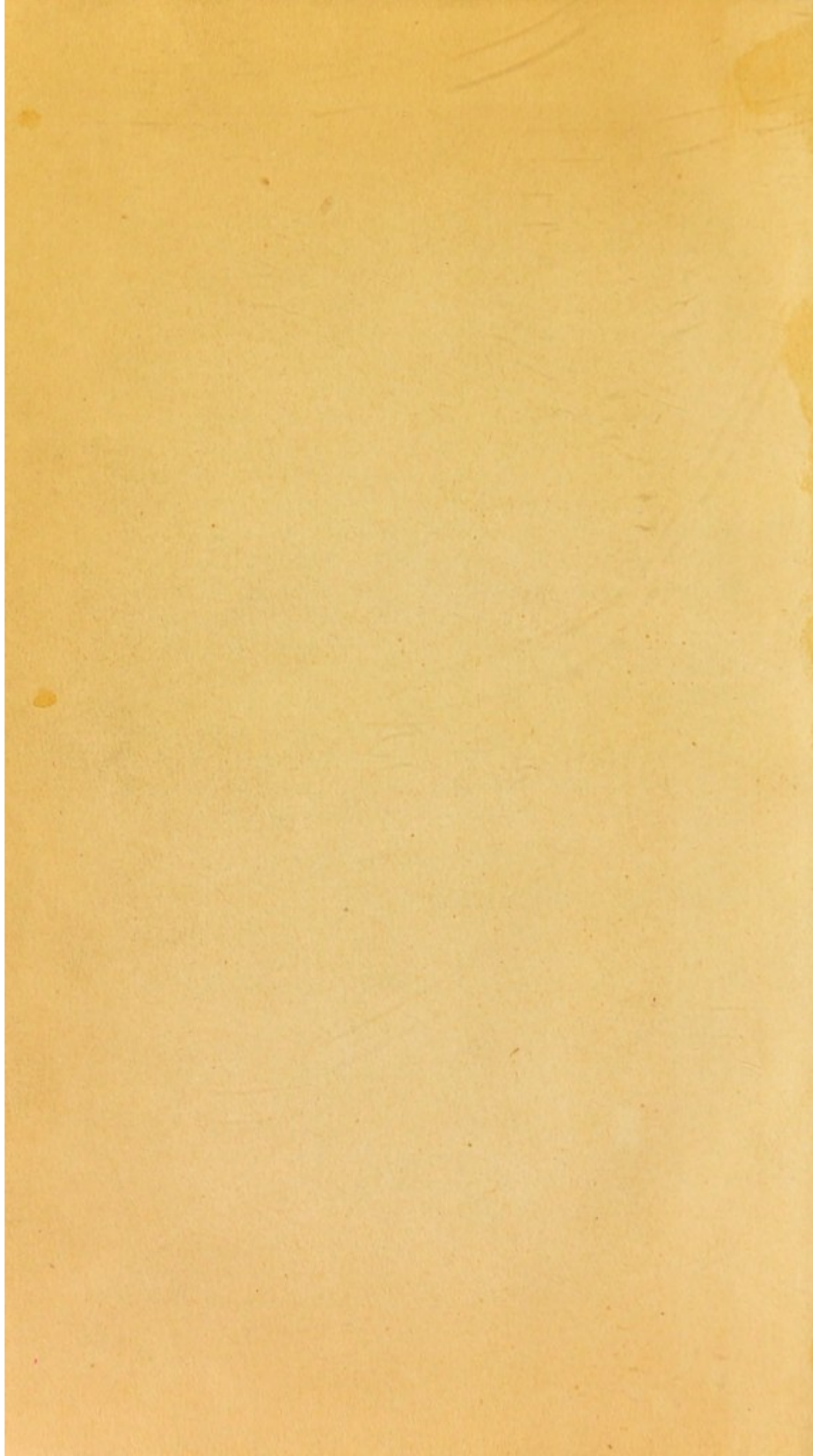
Mr. Cryer denies his having expressed a hope that I should be sent to the *Tread Mill*. I have since ascertained that he expressed this hope to more than one person; I have the permission of his fellow-student, Mr. Gordon, to name him as one of them. With such proofs of this gentleman's *veracity*, further comment would be superfluous; but I must say, that as a party tool, the choice could not have fallen on a fitter object than this honourable Sub-Apothecary.

I am, Gentlemen, yours, &c.

RICHARD GEORGE HORTON.

South-Parade, June 1, 1827.





ARDS.

