

**[Correspondence between Dr J.Y. Simpson, Dr Robert Christison, Professor James Miller, and others].**

**Contributors**

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to justify myself as well as the public in the  
of you and I have been most anxious to  
your opinion I had as good a chance to  
and possess every one of my professional  
in carrying out (Printed for Private Circulation.)

of justice to the husband and touching  
in behalf of the patient, but this time forward  
and I am sure Professor Miller publishes more on it, I am  
my professional brethren will all be right when I do say that

IN consequence of Professor Miller's published Statement, I feel myself most reluctantly, and most painfully compelled, to place the following Letters in the hands of my medical brethren. I submit them without a word of comment.

In deference to the feelings of the husband and friends of the patient to whom the letters refer, I wish, from the bottom of my heart, that I could feel it possible to act otherwise with any due regard to my professional reputation—to myself—and to my family. All, however, medical and non-medical, who have talked to me on the subject, have unanimously assured me of one point, that the whole case has been already made so very public by others, that it is impossible to make it more public now; though it may be made; (as I hope it is, in these Letters), far more correct.

As to what line of conduct I ought to pursue, under the circumstances in which I have been placed, I have, during the last two days, had nearly as many different opinions given me as I have consulted individuals. I know it is hopeless in such a matter to please all. I have reason to feel certain, that some minds would misconstrue any mere brief statement, or any mere abridgement, or anything, indeed, less than the whole. Hence, I do most conscientiously believe, that the plan which I have thus

at last adopted, is the speediest, as well as the simplest plan, of *at once* arresting all further remark and slander, if it be not, in fact, the *sole* plan of effectually doing so. And I earnestly pray and beseech every one of my professional brethren to assist me in carrying out the natural wish, so feelingly expressed, in the concluding and touching letter of the husband of my patient, to have the whole subject, from this time forward, buried in oblivion. If Professor Miller publishes more on it, I am sure my professional brethren will hold me right when I declare that I shall not reply to his remarks, of whatever tenor they may be.

J. Y. SIMPSON.

52, QUEEN STREET, 30th April 1852.

I.—From Dr SIMPSON to Dr CHRISTISON.

Saturday Morning, 20th March 1852.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—It was on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon that you were so kind as to inform me of the rumour that was being busily propagated through Edinburgh by one or two\* homœopathic physicians, to the effect, that 1st, Mrs —, whom you were so good as visit with me two Sundays ago, had died of bleeding after an operation upon the uterus; and 2d, that the authority given by the physicians in question, for this report, was the discovery of a large effusion of blood upon the bed of our lamented patient, by Mr Hardie the upholsterer.

You know of my calling on Mr Hardie immediately, and the result. I did not get till yesterday the letter which he at once promised to write me, as he had to go off to Carstairs; and the two following days I had to run to Dunse, and subsequently to Glasgow. Before copying for you his note, permit me to make one or two remarks.

1. Mrs — had, as you are aware, an operation (not a serious one) performed upon Friday morning, and the uterus was not the seat of the operation. Mr Syme had performed upon her a similar, or the same, operation about two years ago. The same week on which I operated on Mrs —, I performed the same operation on two other patients;—the first of them you know of, viz., an English lady, one of whose family you saw professionally when she was in town, and who set off for England the week subsequently. In the other instance, I performed the operation in my own house, Mr Drummond being present, and the patient after it went home to her

\* After receiving this letter, Dr Christison stated to me that he found the information given to him as to two homœopathic physicians being engaged in promulgating the misreports, was wrong. One only was traced to be busied with it.

own residence, about a mile distant from mine,—sufficient proof, if that were required, that the operation was *not* a very formidable proceeding.

2. Mrs ——— kept as well as could be looked for from the Friday to the Sunday morning ; but early on this last day, symptoms, as you considered them, and as I believe them to have been, of rapid and sinking inflammation of the peritoneum came on. I was far too deeply distressed at the time of the unhappy result, to ask for an autopsy, and felt too much for the poor husband to venture to do so ; but as circumstances have turned out, I regret this now.

3. At the time of the operation, there were not, I believe, above two or three ounces of blood lost, if so much ; and it was readily and easily restrained by the usual plug. Nor was there any hemorrhage during the day. During the night, however, as her husband told me next morning, some bleeding had occurred on moving, I believe ; but not enough to make him send for me. In consequence of this, I did not remove the plug from the wound that day, but left it *in situ* till the following (Sunday) morning. On removing it then, there was no return or threatening of new bleeding,—a circumstance I *particularly* attended to, as that morning her pulse was rapid, and she was complaining of local distress and pain. These local symptoms were, I thought, in all probability, the effect of the distension of the wound by the plug, and I hoped they would disappear after its removal ; and as to the former (the state of the pulse), her husband assured me that it had occurred also after Mr Syme's operation, and was common in her after much slighter causes. She had opiates, &c. You know her further sad history,—that in the course of the afternoon, the above symptoms rapidly increased, and that my poor patient died before midnight.

4. Mr Hardie was, as you are aware, cited as the authority that Mrs ——— died of hemorrhage. His letter of yesterday to me is as follows :—

To Dr J. Y. Simpson.

Sir,—In answer to your question about rumours regarding the late Mrs ———, I beg solemnly to say, that I never stated, and could not state, that she died of bleeding. I heard that she had died of inflammation after some operation, and I casually remarked to a medical gentleman who came to my shop, that she must have been very ill, as there was some staining of blood on the surface of the mattress, which I thought to have been the result of bleeding at the arm for this inflammation. This medical gentleman and another

afterwards came and asked me what might be the size of the stain on the mattress. There was no clot of blood on the surface of the mattress, as, I hear, has been reported on my authority.—Your obedient servant,

(Signed) WILLIAM HARDIE.

Edinburgh, 19th March 1852.

Mr Hardie, who seems, and is, I believe, a most quiet, upright man, in giving me this letter, expressed great and honest indignation at two medical "gentlemen" coming to him, a tradesman, stealthily to get information for the purpose of using it in the way they have used it. I am sure that if they were interested in the subject, and had come and asked me the proper particulars, I would most willingly have given them all the information they could wish. Let me add, that the two "medical gentlemen" in question were not the homœopathic physicians whom you know to have been active in spreading the libel, but, though allopaths, they are both of them particular friends and favourers of the homœopathic physicians.

5. You know well how great an appearance of staining a few ounces of blood can make, as we see on the carpet after a slight surgical operation, or on the bed of a patient after labour, if the bed has not been protected, as it usually or always is, by leather or oil-silk placed below the sheet and blanket on which the patient is lying. In Mrs ——'s case, the comparatively slight operation which was required was performed in bed, without the bed being in any way protected from the blood. And it is quite possible that more than her husband or I supposed may have escaped during the attack of hemorrhage, which occurred during the night following the operation. The bleeding that came on was stopped by her husband applying cloths steeped in cold water; and I need scarcely add, that the water from these wet cloths would increase the subsequent appearance of staining and bleeding upon the mattress.

6. But even if my patient *had* died of bleeding,—a result which I never saw from any operation on this part of the body, but which has occasionally occurred under the care of the most able men in the profession,—surely that even would have been no sufficient reason or excuse for two Fellows of our Colleges going to the shop of an upholsterer for the purpose of obtaining from him information of the kind alluded to, and then propagating, on the basis of this information, a report injurious to the character of a professional brother.

7. At the time you saw Mrs —— with me, I mentioned to you that I had seen only one similar case, with the same rapid sinking and

death about the third day after a slight operation, and that in an instance where an excellent hospital surgeon had, at my request, thrown a ligature around an internal pile, and where there was no hemorrhage. But I need not add to you, that ever and anon patients do sink, as in this case, from internal inflammation, or other causes, after operations even of the slightest kind, as the operation for fistula, the removal of small tumours, the cut of the lancet in common bloodletting, &c. Such unforeseen and unfortunate instances have from time to time occurred, and will doubtless go on occurring, causing, as this case did, unspeakable distress to all concerned—to the friends as well as the medical attendant;—and surely the latter deserves in such a case the true sympathy of his fellow-practitioners and not their reproach and persecution.

Pray excuse this long letter, written by snatches while waiting upon a patient. Make any use of it you please, with one proviso,—namely, that the matter do not be allowed in any way to hurt the feelings of the lady's poor husband; for I would most willingly bear any possible amount of personal abuse and injury, rather than that should happen. And lastly, let me thank you, my dear Dr Christison, for the kind care and earnest zeal with which I have found you, in this as in other instances, watching over the interests of all who have the pleasure of professional intercourse with you.

And believe me, yours very faithfully,

(Signed) J. Y. SIMPSON.

*P.S.*—I enclose, for your safe keeping,—1. The original of Mr Hardie's letter; and 2. A very kind and beautiful letter of thanks which I received from Dr —— a few days after his wife's death.

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## II.—From Dr SIMPSON to Dr CHRISTISON.

Saturday Forenoon, 12, Royal Terrace.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I have been locked up here at a midwifery case since sending off the letter which I wrote this morning in Abercromby Place. And, on thinking over its contents and painful revelations, I fear I may have been wrong in not stating to you in it, that one of the inquirers at Mr Hardie's shop (the second), is a member of the profession with whom you are on sufficiently intimate terms. Yesterday I met him in consultation at a case under his care; and I am to meet him again next week.

I have deemed it right to state this to you, lest my not mentioning the name should afterwards embarrass you about using the letter in the way you may think fit. But still I consider it right not to give his name, for truly and sincerely from my heart I can feel nothing but pity for his conduct; and though he has now and before tried to injure me, I have no desire to do the same to him.

The name of the other medical inquirer you already know, as Mr Hardie told me it at the time I first saw him; and I already verbally stated to you all our conversation. The individual should, as you know, have been the last man in the medical profession to have done aught to injure me, provided there be such a virtue as gratitude among us; but still I would infinitely prefer that neither you nor I divulged his name.

I have not spoken on the topic, in any way, to a single medical friend except yourself.

Yours in haste,

(Signed) J. Y. SIMPSON.

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## III.—From Professor MILLER to Dr SIMPSON.

51, Queen Street, April 13, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—Having ascertained that a Document is being extensively, yet privately, circulated among the members of the profession, emanating from you, and containing, among other things, two letters to Dr Christison in reference to the death of Mrs —, under your care; and being further informed, that in this circular two medical men are specially alluded to, in connection with rumours as to the cause of Mrs —'s death, while no secret is made of my being one of these individuals,—I beg to know whether or not I am one of the parties so alluded to. And, if I am, I have further to request that you will favour me with a sight of the Document in question.

I am, my dear Sir, yours truly,

(Signed) JAMES MILLER.

Dr J. Y. Simpson.

## IV.—From Dr SIMPSON to Professor MILLER.

52, Queen Street, 14th April 1852.

DEAR SIR,—Believe me you are heartily welcome to a sight of my two letters to Dr Christison.

You have, you say, “ascertained that a document is being extensively, yet privately, circulated among the members of the profession, and containing among other things, two letters to Dr Christison.”

I know not, and never heard of, any document or “other things,” except these two letters. And these letters were never extensively circulated.

By the advice of a professional friend, I showed them, as a matter of self-defence, to about a dozen of the members of the profession; all of whom, with one or two exceptions, had previously talked either to me or others on the subject, and who did not, as far as I know, circulate these letters in any way, except in the following instance:—A short time ago I was seeing, with Dr Finlay of Newhaven, a lady (an old patient-of his and mine), who, at the time of our visit, was in an extremely agitated state. On inquiry, it turned out that a patient of Dr — had visited her, and excited her against me by retailing the report to which the enclosed letters refer; and that another

person (a Miss —), the relative of a homœopathic physician here, had also gone and told our patient regarding me, and for the purpose of prejudicing her, some reports that were not only purely false, but also simply ridiculous; and let me add, I found various of my patients beset at the same time with this and similar tales by other patronesses of homœopathy, &c. In consequence, I gave Dr Finlay the two enclosed letters to Dr Christison to read; and without asking my permission, he showed them to two or three other medical men.

In another instance a medical friend showed them, with my consent, to two other members of the profession whom he was desirous to put right on the subject of the report.

The above includes as far as I know their whole circulation; and I think that under the circumstances I acted with great lenity in not circulating them, as I was advised, to a much greater extent.

Yours, &c.,

(Signed) J. Y. SIMPSON.

V.—From Professor MILLER to Dr SIMPSON.

51, Queen Street, Wednesday, 5.30 P.M.

DEAR SIR,—I have just received your answer to my note of yesterday, with enclosure of the "Document" I sought for.

You have forgotten to answer my main question, which I must beg to repeat, namely, whether or not I am one of the two medical men alluded to in connection with Mr Hardie, and the reports regarding Mrs —'s death.

An early answer to this plain question will much oblige,

Yours truly,

(Signed) JAS. MILLER.

Dr J. Y. Simpson.

VI.—From Dr SIMPSON to Professor MILLER.

52, Queen Street, April 15th.

DEAR SIR,—I was carried out of town yesterday afternoon to a case, and did not get back till this morning. Hence my not replying to your note immediately. In answer to your question, I have merely to say "Yes." And I fancied that this appeared as fully as was necessary in my letter of yesterday.

On returning to town to-day, I found awaiting me, a note of last night from Dr Christison, from which I beg to extract the following paragraph\* :—

“Professor Miller has been with me this evening. Mr Hardie evidently speaks very differently to him and to you. I have endeavoured to impress on Miller, as I suggested to you, that Mr H. may be one of a class who have a difficulty in stating the same thing to two parties. He disclaims, it seems, the letter to you, as his genuine statement, and adds that he never expressed dissatisfaction that two medical men, &c. Also he seems prepared to say that both conversations between him and them were purely accidental, and that he, not they, commenced these conversations.”

In consequence of this note, I called upon Mr Hardie this forenoon. I would have taken Dr Christison with me, but he writes me he is off this morning to Bathgate; and Mr Robertson accompanied me. Mr Hardie states that I had misunderstood him in the observations he made after giving me the letter, when he expressed dissatisfaction with two medical gentlemen coming to him, a tradesman, stealthily, to get information, &c. (see my letter to Dr Christison), and he says the paragraph should be qualified with the word “if” before it. He does not in any way “disclaim” the letter as Dr Christison hints, but thinks he was wrong in giving a “*medical* opinion,” (as he chooses to term it), regarding the cause of the stain. And he distinctly states, that at your conjoint visit to his shop with Dr Duncan, you commenced the conversation regarding Mrs — by putting an interrogatory to him about the blood on the mattress, asking the size; and that it was not *he*, as stated in Dr Christison’s note, who “commenced the conversation,” but you.

Yours truly,

(Signed)

J. Y. SIMPSON.

*P.S.*—Let me add, that I am quite aware that Dr Duncan has drawn up a document for Mr Hardie; and which, I believe, he has induced Mr Hardie to copy and sign.

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VII.—Professor MILLER to Dr SIMPSON.

51, Queen Street, April 16, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—The letters to Dr Christison, which you have sent me in answer to my request, contain much on which I might remark; but I shall confine myself to the following essential points :—

\* See further reference to this note at p. 22 and p. 24.

1. I am stigmatised as having gone to Mr Hardie "stealthily," for the purpose of obtaining information from him in connection with the death of Mrs —.

2. It is said that I used the information, so obtained, by "propagating on the basis of it" a report injurious to the character of (you) "a professional brother;" and it is at least inferred that I communicated the information, with a sinister object in view, to one or more homœopathic practitioners.

3. In addition to a statement from Mr Hardie, intended to disprove the accuracy of the report alleged to be so circulated, he is represented as having "expressed great and honest indignation at two medical 'gentlemen' coming to him, a tradesman, stealthily, to get information for the purpose of using it in the way they have used it."

(1.) The first allegation I utterly deny; common rumour first connected hemorrhage with the death of Mrs — in my mind; and that impression was afterwards confirmed through Mr Hardie—how, the following letter from him to Dr Matthews Duncan will sufficiently explain:—

"Edinburgh, April 13.

"Dr Duncan.

"SIR,—In reference to the conversation I had with you on the lamented death of Mrs —, I do not think, as far as I can judge, you had any intention of eliciting any information from me on that subject. But in the course of conversation, I remarked to you, that I thought she had been very ill, as the mattress was marked, and part of the hair clotted with blood, and the feather bed was marked also. And I beg to state further, that you were almost in the daily practice, both before and after the death, of calling at my wareroom concerning the furniture that I was making for you at the time.

"I am sorry that anything I have said should have been the cause of any unfriendly feeling amongst any party.

"Sir, I remain your obedient servant,

(Signed) "WILLIAM HARDIE."

At the time of this conversation between Dr Duncan and Mr Hardie, neither of these parties was aware who had operated on Mrs —, or whether she had been operated on at all.

My own subsequent interview with Mr Hardie—whom I employ for housework—and my conversation with him upon this subject, were purely accidental. Dr Duncan and myself, one very inclement evening, had to visit a patient at some distance, and intended to avail our-

selves of a public conveyance, the nearest point of whose course (from my house) is Mr Hardie's shop. Arrived there, and the omnibus not in sight, Dr Duncan suggested that we should take refuge in the shop, and at the same time see a piece of furniture belonging to Dr D. We did so. Mr Hardie was not in the shop; but in a few minutes entered from behind. The first words between us were an urgent request on our part that he would not disturb himself, or leave his employment, as "we did not want him." He, however, insisted on remaining with us; and a short conversation ensued in regard to Mrs ——'s death—the engrossing topic of the day.

(2.) The second allegation I also deny. Like most other medical men in Edinburgh, I had several conversations with professional brethren as to the fate of Mrs ——; and if I mentioned the facts of which I had been informed by Mr Hardie, it was simply in exchange of information regarding a case on which the mind of the profession was at the time much occupied.

As to any connection with homœopathic practitioners, I have spoken to none except to Dr Henderson; and I beg to refer you to the following correspondence between me and that gentleman:—

" 51, Queen Street, April 13.

" MY DEAR SIR,—In consequence of certain rumours which have reached me, I am constrained to trouble you with the following question:—What part had I in informing you as to the death, or supposed cause of death, of Mrs ——, under the care of Dr Simpson?

" I am, my dear sir, yours very truly,

(Signed) " JAMES MILLER."

" Professor Henderson."

" 61, Northumberland Street, 14th April.

" MY DEAR SIR,—You informed me neither of the death of Mrs ——, nor of the supposed cause of it. Previously to the short and casual conversation we had on the subject, I had learned, in common, I presume, with most of the inhabitants of Edinburgh, both of the death and of the operation which preceded that event. I believe I mentioned to you that the fatal occurrence was reported, on the best authority, to have been due to hemorrhage. Although I desire to mingle as little as possible in professional squabbles, I am quite prepared to furnish you with the authority to which I have just adverted, should you feel it necessary to require it from me.

" I am, yours very truly,

(Signed) " WILLIAM HENDERSON."

" Professor Miller."

During this "short and casual conversation," which took place in the street at mid-day, I naturally communicated to Dr Henderson the substance of what I had learned through Mr Hardie.

Dr M. Duncan informs me that until two days ago, after the per-

usal of your circular, *he* had not spoken to, or communicated with, any homœopath, or homœopathic practitioner, on this or any other subject, since long before Mrs ——'s death.

(3.) As to the third point. It is enough that I again refer you to Mr Hardie's letter to Dr M. Duncan, already quoted; also introducing here the purport of a statement made by Mr Hardie on having been shown that part of your letter to Dr Christison which concerns himself. That the communication from him which you have engrossed in your first letter to Dr Christison, conveys an inaccurate expression of his meaning in the answers made to your questions. That although he signed, he neither wrote nor read the communication alluded to, which was written and suggested by you. That things of importance which he stated, were omitted; and that he solemnly denies ever expressing indignation at two medical gentlemen stealthily getting information from him, as he did not believe they did so.

From your letter of yesterday, I observe that you have waited on Mr Hardie, and from himself have received information to the above effect.

In the postscript to the same note, you state that "Dr M. Duncan has drawn up a document for Mr Hardie, and which I believe he has induced Mr H. to copy and sign." This is untrue.\*

Is it necessary that I should further repel the imputations which you have made against me?—imputations which you have been the means of privately circulating so "extensively," that they have reached the ears, if not the eyes, of most of the profession in this city; without the knowledge, far less the approval, of Dr Christison, who, at the time he received your communication, took pains to point out to you very different views of the motives and conduct of the "two medical gentlemen" from whom, though most concerned, the letters have till now been, to their injury, withheld; and that, notwithstanding, you were at the time meeting both these gentlemen in consultation.

I now call upon you to retract what you have so unwarrantably laid to my charge.

I am, Dear Sir, yours truly,  
(Signed) JAS. MILLER.

Dr J. Y. Simpson.

*P.S.*—Dr Matthews Duncan, the other party implicated with my-

\* For its truth, see p. 16 and 26.

self, has seen this letter, and requests me to state that he deems it unnecessary to repeat the above facts in a separate communication to you. The only explanation that will be satisfactory to either him or me, is one which includes both.

VIII.—Dr SIMPSON to Professor MILLER.

52, Queen Street, 17th April.

DEAR SIR,—My letters to Dr Christison were written simply with the view of defending myself, and not with the view of making allegations against you. Such allegations (and these of a very painful kind) did certainly come out in the course of my own defence; but their appearance there was no blame of mine. And for your own sake I regret to add, that your letter to me of yesterday, instead of refuting, only seems to me to confess and to confirm, the truth of all the statements which occur in my letter to Dr Christison regarding your proceedings in this matter.

About a month ago now, I learned from Dr Christison, that it was assiduously reported in homœopathic and other quarters, with doubtlessly a view so far to blame and injure me professionally, that Mrs —— had died of hemorrhage, and that the authority cited for the truth of this allegation, was the authority of Mr Hardie, an upholsterer, who had found, it was averred, marks of great hemorrhage upon the mattress on which the patient had been lying. Dr Christison advised me, for my own sake, to use at once proper means to contradict this misreport; and we both thought that the simplest method was to go to Mr Hardie and find if he had made any statements to the homœopathic physician, who was busy in promulgating the rumour. Accordingly, with Dr Christison, I looked up in the Directory Mr Hardie's address, and immediately called upon him; but he was not at home. He waited, however, upon me in the course of the afternoon, when I saw him for a minute or two in the lobby, when hurrying out to dinner—explained to him the object of my visit, and asked him to write me a note detailing the state of the mattress on which my patient had been lying—which he at once promised to do. Then and subsequently, he mentioned to me the humiliating fact, that it was not the homœopathic physician who had obtained from him information about the state of the mattress, but first Dr Duncan who had a conversation with him on the subject, which he communicated to you, and then conjointly you and Dr Duncan had visited his shop, and had questioned him farther on the matter. In

your letter of yesterday, in addition to this, you *confess* that you yourself subsequently acted as the medium of communicating this information to the homœopathic physician in question, who, as I have said, afterwards busily promulgated it on—the upholsterer's authority.

The history of the whole matter, for sometime after this, is contained in my two letters to Dr Christison of the 20th March; and in my two recent notes to you of the 14th and 15th April; so that it is needless to recapitulate it.

When, a few days back, I first heard that you and Dr Duncan were acting in the matter with a view of exculpating yourselves, I own I did feel at a loss to imagine what kind of defence you would attempt. I was told in one quarter that, in the way of extenuation, it was averred that Mr Hardie's letter to me was improperly "forced" from him; and I was told again, that it would be proved that Mr Hardie had volunteered to you the report which you had propagated; and that though you had promulgated, on the authority of an upholsterer, a report calculated to injure me, you had not, as was averred, stooped to extract your information from the upholsterer himself, by directly questioning him on the subject.

Dr Christison's note to me of Wednesday night, incidentally showed me that such was actually the line of defence which you had at that time assumed. In consequence of this, and thinking it possible that Mr Hardie, a tradesman of Dr Duncan's and yours, might have been induced to retract some of his statements, I forthwith waited upon him (as I informed you in my last note); and that there might be no subsequent ambiguity, I took with me Mr Robertson, S.S.C. Mr Hardie had evidently been beset regarding the matter, and regarding his letter and statements. But the following minute of our meeting, and of his statements at it, was drawn up by Mr Robertson, and subsequently signed by Mr Hardie, and by his son Alexander Hardie and Mr Robertson, as witnesses.

" Mr Hardie says, that Dr Simpson must have misunderstood him, when he states in his letter to Dr Christison, 'in giving me this letter, Mr H. expressed great and honest indignation at two medical gentlemen coming to him, a tradesman, stealthily to get information, for the purpose of using it in the way they had used it.' Mr Hardie says, that this paragraph wants the word 'if.'

" In Mr Hardie's letter to Dr Simpson, there occurs the expression, 'which I thought to have been the result of bleeding at the arm for this inflammation.' Mr Hardie thinks that this is a medical opinion, which he was 'not entitled to give, and that he does, and can, give no opinion as to the cause of the staining on the mattress.'

" Mr Hardie states, that Dr Simpson did not in the slightest way force the letter from him;—that two or three days before it was written, Mr H. pro-



mised to write it, at the time when Dr Simpson first saw him. That on his second visit to Dr Simpson (Dr Simpson having sent for him, because he had not received the promised letter), he stated the particulars, and asked Dr Simpson to pen the letter, as he was not himself a good hand at the pen,—and that the letter was read by Dr Simpson to Mr Hardie, and carefully read, before Mr Hardie signed it.

“That Mr Hardie stated the circumstances to Dr Duncan, casually,\* at his first visit; and that what occurred at the second visit was this,—that Professor Miller and Dr Duncan came to his shop, as they said, to wait for the omnibus, and that Professor Miller simply asked him, What was the size of the stain on the mattress? Mr H. described the size,—Professor Miller being, according to his belief, previously cognizant of the facts communicated by Mr H. to Dr Duncan.

“In witness whereof, the preceding statement, written by John Robertson, solicitor, Edinburgh, on the date foresaid—[15th April 1852]—and is subscribed by Alexander Hardie, son of Mr Hardie, and the said John Robertson, and William Hardie also.

(Signed)

“A. HARDIE.

“WM. HARDIE.

“JOHN ROBERTSON.”

\* Mr Robertson drew up this minute with the words, “stated the circumstances to Dr Duncan *voluntarily*.” But Mr Hardie, when it was taken to him to sign, made Mr R. change the word from “*voluntarily*” to “*casually*,” as he did not voluntarily give the information.

In the postscript of my last note to you, it was stated, “I am quite aware that Dr Duncan has drawn up a document for Mr Hardie, and which, I believe, he has induced Mr Hardie to copy and sign.” You say “this is untrue.” I stated it on the following authority. Mr Robertson drew out at home, on Thursday forenoon, a clean copy of the above report of our meeting, which he had taken in scroll. He subsequently carried this clean copy for Mr Hardie and his son to read and sign. In transmitting this copy to me in the course of the afternoon, he accompanied it with the following note:—

“I enclose Hardie’s statement, fair copied and signed. Hardie showed me the copy of a document, which, I suspect, he signed, and may have written out himself. I said, the copy was in Dr Duncan’s handwriting; and he said, it was. It was in three paragraphs, to the effect,—1st, That Hardie had not intended, and did not intend, what was said in the letter circulated by you; 2dly, That you had not taken down all the things—that you had omitted what told against you; 3dly, A denial of the imputation against the two medical gentlemen.”

Only one paragraph in your yesterday’s letter to me seems to require any reply, if indeed it is not already replied to, in the document drawn up by Mr Robertson. You say,

“That the communication from him (Mr Hardie), which you have engrossed in your first letter to Dr Christison, conveys an inaccurate expression of his meaning in the answers made to your questions. That, although he

signed, he neither wrote nor read the communication alluded to, which was written and suggested by you;—that things of importance, which he stated, were omitted.”

In answer to these statements, I have merely to refer you to Mr Robertson's document, signed by Mr Hardie and his son, to show you how erroneous they are.

\* I gave Mr Hardie three days to write the promised letter home, and he could have put into it what he pleased. When at last he came to my house without it, I asked him to write it there; but he declined, on the plea that he was not a good hand at the pen, and asked me to write for him, and he would sign it. This was at mid-day, when my house was full of patients; but I sat down and stated the particulars as he mentioned them to me. And, in order to prevent all possibility of misunderstanding, I read the letter over to him, not once, but twice, before allowing him to sign it. It is, of course, greatly shorter than he told me the story, as he described at length your speaking to him from the front into the back-shop,—the words of your first question to him about the size of the blood-stain on the mattress, and his answer, etc.; but surely it would have been useless to have written down all such minutiae. If he had asked, or wished anything whatever “of importance,” or not of importance, to be added, most assuredly it would have been done.

In the same paragraph of your last letter, you state that Mr Hardie solemnly denies ever expressing indignation at “two medical gentlemen coming to him, a tradesman, stealthily, to get information for the purpose of using it in the way they had used it.” Certainly, however, he made to me a remark of this kind and tenor; and, as you will see from Mr Robertson's authenticated document, Mr H. does not deny the statement; but says that it should have been qualified by an “if” (to use his own words to Mr Robertson and me), the “if” being placed before “to get.” No doubt he may thus have used the qualifying “if,” though I did not notice that qualification at the time; and, let me add, I am most willing to take the blame of the misreport (if it be such), lest it should hurt Mr Hardie in his business relations with Dr Duncan and you. But this is a point of no moment in the general question.

In your communication of yesterday, you think proper to complain that, to your “injury,” my two letters to Dr Christison have been

\* This paragraph comes to be afterwards specially referred to in p. 23.

“withheld” from you till you asked for them. Assuredly I did not deem myself called upon to submit them to you. As, in your own letter, you confess you cross-questioned an upholsterer, in his shop, on the state of a mattress of a patient of mine,—thus obtained information calculated to “injure” me; and, subsequently, you communicated the said information, thus obtained from the upholsterer, to a party who, as you well knew, would delight to spread it (or rather to parties); and all without saying a single word to me on the subject, or asking me as to the actual facts of the case. I wrote two letters merely in self-defence, and showed them to a dozen professional friends; and, because I did so, you blame me for not showing them to you. But, certainly, I know no reason or reasons why you should have the privilege of privately using measures calculated to traduce me without my knowledge, while I should not have the privilege of defending myself against these measures, without formally informing you. And if, in the necessity of the self-defence to which you forced me, your character has unavoidably suffered, I can only add that I am sorry for it; but certainly I am not to blame for it. If a man privily aims a stroke at me, without any reason or provocation, and if, in the act of my parrying the stroke, this man becomes unavoidably wounded, the wound, I opine, is the result of his own conduct, and not of mine.

In exculpation, you urge (as far as I understand your letter), that the report of my patient dying from hemorrhage was not originated by you upon the upholsterer’s information, but that this report was previously in circulation, and was merely assisted and strengthened by your *adding* to it the information which you had accidentally procured from the upholsterer. Even though I conceded to you any benefit your cause can derive from this pleading, still, the course which you yourself thus confess that you followed, was a course surely calculated to bring discredit upon any member of the profession.

You conclude your letter by saying, “I now call upon you to retract what you have so unwarrantably laid to my charge.” I am not aware that I have anything whatever to retract. Indeed, I have been blamed by most who have spoken or written to me on the subject, as having acted too leniently towards you. And you seem entirely to misunderstand the true nature of your own painful position in this matter. Even in your last letter you speak of your doings in it almost as if they were meritorious. Not one single word of regret drops from your pen. Under these circumstances, I most willingly

leave it to our medical brethren to decide whether or not your conduct in the matter has been derogatory to yourself, and to what extent it has been so ; and whether or not it has been derogatory even to the medical profession as a body. I have myself no doubt of the verdict to which every high-minded and unprejudiced member of the profession will come on these points. And, in arriving at this verdict, you will find, I believe, that no importance will be attached by any to your question of the amount of blood lost by my patient, either when I operated, or when I withdrew the plug, or at other times, when I was *not* present, but when she was under the watchful care of her kind husband. She did *not* die of hemorrhage ; but whether she did or did not, alters in no way the *animus* and nature of your strange conduct. For, even if she had died at the moment of operating, by hemorrhage, and if, either then or subsequently, the whole blood of her body had escaped upon the mattress, that misfortune would afford no apology or justification whatever for your following the conduct you confess to me you have followed, viz., going and extracting information on the subject from an upholsterer in his shop ; giving, " in exchange," to others (to use your own words) the information which you had thus demeaned yourself to extract from the upholsterer ; and, among these others, having (again to use your own expressive terms) " naturally communicated " it to your homœopathic friend, Dr Henderson,—a person sure, as you well knew, to promulgate it forthwith, as extensively as lay in his power.

Let me add, that in consequence of the reports afloat during the last few days as to alleged errors in my first letter to Dr Christison, I shall deem myself entitled to show our present correspondence to the medical gentlemen who saw my first letters, or to use it in any other way I may consider fit.

Yours truly,

(Signed) J. Y. SIMPSON.

*P.S.*—The present letter was written during the time I was in attendance upon a midwifery case on Saturday ; but I had not time to get it copied till to-day (Monday), and I regret I have no leisure to abridge it as I intended to do. I hope, further, it will close our correspondence on this subject.

## IX.—Professor MILLER to Dr SIMPSON.

51, Queen Street, April 20, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter dated the 17th I received to-night (the 20th) on my return from the country, and am told that it was handed in late last night (the 19th).

I grieve to find that, while you admit the inaccuracy of the facts on which your offensive imputations were founded, you refuse the retraction which simple justice demands.

It only remains that I give my refutation a similar currency with your original circular; and I shall most gladly and confidently abide by the decision of the profession.

I must decline discussing any of the petty and irrelevant points which in this new letter you have laboriously introduced. The only shadow of ground you now maintain for attributing blame to me in the whole matter is, that in the casual meeting in Mr Hardie's shop I began the conversation.

This forces me to state the following circumstances, which I would rather have spared you:—My meeting with Mr H. was after I had heard, on indisputable authority, that you were *denying* the occurrence of any (notable) hemorrhage in the case of Mrs —; and I, of course, experienced much difficulty in harmonizing that denial with the information about the mattress. My first words to Mr H. were, that I did not want him. But in the conversation, which was in a manner forced upon me, it was to be expected that I should take occasion to assure myself of what so strangely contradicted your reported statement, and which I had suggested as a difficulty, in receiving your statement, to Dr Christison, my informer. Dr C. properly conveyed all this directly to you; and, subsequently, you set about to injure and defame two medical gentlemen, on the specious ground of defending yourself.

I am, yours, &c.,

(Signed) JAS. MILLER.

Dr J. Y. Simpson.

*P.S.*—Let me direct your attention to one mistake among others, in your last note, too egregious to pass over. You say, in reference to the writing of Mr Hardie's letter, "I sat down and stated the particulars as he mentioned them to me;" the fact being quite otherwise, as you well know.

By such tactics, believe me, you will not succeed in shifting on me,

or on any one else, the "painful and humiliating" charge of unprofessional conduct which is lying upon yourself.

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X.—Dr SIMPSON to Professor MILLER.

52, Queen Street, April 23, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—You only deceive yourself when you say (as you do in your last note) that I "admit the inaccuracy of the facts" stated in my letter to Dr Christison. I maintain the accuracy of one and all of the statements therein made. Nay, in your own letter (of the 16th April) you yourself, however unwillingly, confirm and *confess* to me the truth of all the more essential statements made regarding your own acts and proceedings in the matter.

The brief history of the whole case now stands as follows.—

1. Dr Duncan elicited information from the upholsterer in his shop relative to the state of the mattress. (Mr Hardie maintains he did not volunteer that information.)—2. Dr Duncan carried the information to you; then you and he again visited the shop together, and you cross-questioned the upholsterer on the matter.—3. Subsequently, and without asking me for the true circumstances of the case, or saying one syllable to me on the subject, you adopted means of promulgating extensively your own untrue account of the cause of Mrs ——'s death, averring that it occurred from hemorrhage, and thus pointing to, if not proclaiming, the inference that I was blameable, and was guilty of some malpraxis.—4. Among your other means of promulgating it, besides telling other parties, you "naturally communicated" (to use again your own words) the information you had believed you had extracted from the upholsterer to your homœopathic friend, Dr Henderson, the person most likely to promulgate and spread it widely.—5. Dr Christison kindly came to my house and informed me of the current misreport; and we were able to trace it back to Dr Henderson, and I confess there seemed to me little hope of tracing it farther back.—6. But the information derived from Mr Hardie being given by Dr Henderson as the basis of his report, on going to Mr Hardie, I found that the only two persons who had had any communication with him on the subject were Dr Duncan and you; and no doubt could thus remain as to who were the actual founders of the special misreport which Dr

Henderson was busy in circulating, the more as you had been generally looked upon by the profession in Edinburgh as having similarly subserved Dr Henderson on other previous occasions.—7. I communicated the results of the inquiry to Dr Christison, who had originally advised me to make it with a view of contradicting the misreport.—8. In communicating the results, I did not even mention your name in my letters to Dr Christison, and was anxious to avoid doing so; my only object being my own self-defence, not the exposure of your misconduct.—9. But Dr Christison wrote and told me this last idea was impossible, and that he knew it was you who had been at Mr Hardie's.—10. Up to this period I had not spoken on the subject to a single person, except Dr Christison, and when I asked Dr Christison at last as to whether or not I should *now* state the refutation of the prevailing misreport to some of my medical friends, he at once stated that he considered it would certainly be proper in me to do so.—11. The first medical friend I stated the circumstances to thought with me that the simplest means of contradicting the prevailing misreport would be to show my two letters to Dr Christison to a few medical men who had been speaking of the matter; and I did so; and I do not see how I could possibly have adopted any *more* lenient means, as far as you were concerned.

In extenuation of your conduct, you have already attempted various defences, all of them, I fear, implicating you deeper, and one or two of them affecting, I am sorry to add, your character for matters more grave than unprovoked professional scandal. Take two examples.

1. You gave Dr Christison reason to suppose (see my note to you of the 15th April) that Mr Hardie was "prepared to say" that *he* had "*commenced* the conversation" about the mattress with you;\* and this was one of your defences, viz.—you had not asked for the information; he had given or forced it on you. You know that, in consequence of this, Mr Hardie was asked the actual facts before witnesses, when he made a declaration showing that this was not in consonance with the truth. I do not stop to inquire whether you expected to get Mr Hardie to say what you knew was the reverse of true in this instance. It is enough for me that Mr Hardie repudiates your allegation to Dr Christison on this point, and in consequence you have now at last owned that you did ask for the information, and "began the conversation."

\* See the Extract, p. 10.

2. In the postscript to your last note (April 20th), you reiterate, most unadvisedly, what you had stated before, that my letter to you contains some mistakes; and, in support of this statement, you *select* for refutation *one* of these mistakes, as, to use your own language, "too egregious to pass over." Let me quote your own observations in your own words.

"You (Dr Simpson) say, in reference to the writing of Mr Hardie's letter,—'I sat down, and stated the particulars, as he mentioned them to me;' the fact being quite otherwise, as you well know.

"By such tactics, believe me, you will not succeed in shifting on me, or on any one else, the 'painful and humiliating' charge of unprofessional conduct, which is lying upon yourself."—[See p. 20.]

It is painful for me to prove, that you must have known this "egregious" mistake of mine, not to be such; and that the unusual language in which you choose to speak of it, was quite unjustified and unjustifiable. In fact, your averment on the matter is a deliberate statement of what is not true. Two persons only were present at the meeting in my house between Mr Hardie and me,—viz., Mr Hardie and myself. In my last letter to you, I stated under what circumstances the letter from Mr Hardie to me was written. My word was so far pledged for the truth of that report. The other party, Mr Hardie, carefully read over the whole of the paragraph in my letter to you regarding our meeting in my house, including the part which you aver contained a mis-statement on my part (see my former letter to you); and immediately he made and signed the following declaration of his belief, that my report, not only on the one point, but on *all* the points, was an accurate report of the *res gestæ* of our meeting.

"Mr Hardie states, that on reading over the paragraph\* in Dr Simpson's letter to Professor Miller, of 17th April, beginning, 'I gave Mr Hardie,' and down to 'have been done,'—that the paragraph contains a correct statement of the circumstances of their meeting and writing the letter alluded to in the paragraph at Dr Simpson's house, as far as he recollects."

(Signed) "WM. HARDIE."

"John Robertson, *witness*."

"W. T. Jamieson, *witness*."

I gladly leave this document and its painful exposition of the untrue character of your *strongest* averment, without one word of comment.

Evidence has been offered me regarding some of your other *minor* averments, about the cause and occasion of your visit to Mr Hardie's

\* See this paragraph in full in p. 16.



shop (the "inclemency" of the day of your visit, your going in "to wait for an omnibus," &c.), being of a nature too similar to the above; but I have avoided the matter as having little, or, in fact, no real bearing upon the question, and have not thought it any duty of mine to inquire into it.

As a reason for your interfering so strangely and gratuitously in the case at all, and interrogating Mr Hardie, you state that you had "heard, on indisputable authority, that I was denying the occurrence of any (notable) hemorrhage in the case of Mrs ——." Not above three or four medical men at most, had spoken to me on the subject of Mrs ——'s case, when Dr Christison came to my house and informed me of the spread of the special report, which we traced back to you. To these gentlemen, of course, I at once freely stated the particulars of the case. But the wording of your letter on the matter, seems explicitly to point to Dr Christison as your "indisputable authority." And you must excuse me adding, that I feel too high a respect for Dr Christison's character as a consulting physician, to believe that he ever did, or could, by any possibility, give you "authority" for making any statement of the kind. It was at my request and desire that Dr Christison was called in to see Mrs ——, and in the course of consultation I necessarily stated to him all the facts of the case, as far as I knew them. Amongst other things, I stated what is mentioned in my first letter to him, that (as occurs in all cutting operations) a small quantity of blood was lost at the time of the operation, (surgery is not so advanced as to prevent that); that during the following night, as her husband told me on the second morning, some bleeding had occurred on moving, but not enough to make him send for me.\* When Dr Christison saw my patient, he had not any hesitation in coming to the conclusion, that she was dying of peritonitis; and he found that, for some hours previously to his visit, her husband and I had been applying *hot* fomentations and counter-irritation to the abdomen, &c. Would not such treatment have been in itself a symptom of pure madness on our parts, if she had been dying of surgical bleeding? Nay, I can scarcely fancy any tyro in surgery actually believing that a patient could die of surgical hemorrhage two or three days after an operation, and after the loss of blood had ceased; and I feel assured that no one, knowing surgery as you do, could possibly and really believe in such an occurrence.

You took it upon you to go and investigate an upholsterer upon the

\* See anteriorly, p. 4.

cause of the death of a patient under the charge of another practitioner; and upon the result of that investigation founded a misreport, to which you took means of subsequently giving ample circulation. And you speak, in your letters, as if you had a right to investigate thus privately into other men's practice. I am not aware that you, or any other medical man, has any such right; or, indeed, that any other man in the profession would maintain such a doctrine as you practised on this point. If such a doctrine were once reduced to practice, it would most certainly be utterly subversive of the christian feeling and gentlemanly bearing towards each other, which characterises the medical profession in Edinburgh as a body. And if medical men really came to act towards each other in the way that you acted in this case, and maintain you were right in doing, the members of the medical profession would speedily, I fear, become degraded, from honourable and high-minded men, to mere scandal-makers.

I do hope and trust, for your own sake, that after you have taken a careful and unimpassioned consideration of your whole conduct in this affair, you will see it your duty to offer a due apology to the profession and to me in regard to it.

Yours truly,

(Signed) J. Y. SIMPSON.

Professor Miller.

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XI.—Professor MILLER to Dr SIMPSON.

51, Queen Street, April 24, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter of yesterday evening is still a vain attempt to shift to another the blame which attaches to yourself, by means of inuendos and misstatements, alike unwarrantable and unbecoming. I cannot consent to a continuance of such correspondence. But the case between us has assumed too grave an aspect to rest where it is; and I shall adopt such other means as seem most suitable for vindicating my character.

Meantime, while I indignantly repel every allegation, whether open or disguised, which in this letter you point against me—and for the formal refutation of all that is important in which I again refer you to my first letter—I must briefly notice direct charges as to alleged deviation from truth on my part.

1. I gave Dr Christison no "reason to suppose"—far less did I make any "statement"—that Mr Hardie had "commenced the conversation about the mattress" with me. And no "allegation" of mine to that effect could have been "not in consonance with the truth"—as you have unwarrantably asserted—simply because no such allegation was made. Besides, you are aware that I possessed the "information" before seeing Mr Hardie at all; and it was but its confirmation I got in his shop, in reference to the report of your contradictory statements upon the subject.

Nor did I say that the "*information*" from Mr Hardie was "forced" upon me. What I did say was that the "*conversation*" was "in a manner forced upon me." With characteristic ingenuity you have changed the words, and so misrepresented my meaning.

My defence has neither received nor required change. It has been always the same; consistent denial of your accusations, and a plain statements of the facts of the case.

2. My language as to the "egregious" mistake I specified in my last letter, and in regard to which you venture to say that I make "a deliberate statement of what is untrue," was both "justified and justifiable." You may puzzle Mr Hardie, with the aid of your lawyer, and obtain from him a vague general statement such as you adduce in apparent contradiction of my charge; but Mr Hardie's former articulate declaration remains—to which I make no doubt he will adhere—that you "conveyed an inaccurate expression of his meaning in the answers made to your questions," which were leading ones; that you "wrote and suggested" what was written in his name; and that "you omitted things of importance which he stated." On again reading this, are you not forced to admit that I am justified, even in your own sight, not only in making but in repeating my statement, that it was otherwise than the fact that you "sat down and stated the particulars as he mentioned them" to you? Further, you have yourself found it necessary to correct one error in that letter.

3. As to my alleged want of "authority" in stating that you at first *denied* the occurrence of any (notable) hemorrhage in Mrs —'s case, I can only say that before sending to you my last letter, I read over to Dr Christison that part of it which concerned himself, and he acknowledged its entire accuracy.

The true question at issue between us is more than exhausted, so

far as bitter writing is concerned. Henceforth, I must decline all further correspondence with you on the subject.

I am yours, &c.

JAS. MILLER.

Dr J. Y. Simpson.

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XII.—Dr SIMPSON to Professor MILLER.

52, Queen Street, April 29, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—I sit down to write you; but let me state, *ab initio*, it is not with any view of answering the published Statement which you have thought fit to distribute so largely among the members of the profession. I write for the purpose of submitting to you two or three documents, and what I consider an important proposition.

You bring three or four accusations against me in your printed Statement, and in the manuscript Letters which you have circulated among the profession in Edinburgh.

1. That I lost a patient upon whom I operated, of hemorrhage.

2. That notwithstanding, I “denied” to Dr Christison, and others, that this patient did die of hemorrhage, and was in so far guilty of stating what was not true.

3. In publishing your “simple Statement of facts” (as you term it) to the profession, you allege (see paragraph 7) that Dr Christison had not seen my first letter to him “in the shape in which it was afterwards shown” to some of my friends; and hence it is implied that I was guilty of circulating among the profession, as a letter to Dr Christison, a letter which Dr Christison had not seen; and had committed other “mistakes and mis-statements.”

4. That, in my own vindication, I had circulated privately and extensively the letter above alluded to, to Dr Christison, without any intimation to Dr Christison or you.

In relation to these points of accusation, let me begin in the reverse order, or with the 4th and last.

In regard to it (the 4th), I have already stated to you (see my letter of April 15th), that the Letters were *not* circulated extensively;\* they were only shown to about a dozen professional men. And as to first informing you of the matter, I have already given you at length (see letter of April 17th),† one sufficient reason for that, viz.—that if you

\* See p. 8.

† See p. 17, 18.

did not think fit to tell me (your next-door neighbour), that you were spreading a report about the mattress, I was surely not called upon to ask your liberty to contradict it. Perhaps you may argue that you told it to Dr Christison that he might tell it to me. Dr Christison did not tell it to me on your authority, but on the authority of Dr James Duncan of Heriot Row, who had heard it indirectly emanating from Dr Henderson; and I have sufficient proof to adduce, if necessary, that a considerable time before telling it to Dr Christison, you told it for circulation to Dr Henderson;\* that you first promulgated it through Dr Henderson, and then informed Dr Christison of the report that he might communicate it to me; and that the order of time implied by you in reference to these matters in your circular to the profession, is a wrong order of time. Be so good as bear with me for a moment, while I state another reason why I acted as I did. I felt sure from the strange way that you were proceeding, that if I had told you either face to face, or by letter, that the report of hemorrhage being the cause of death was untrue, you would merely have vexed me more by affecting not to believe me, even though I pledged my honour to you that my patient had not died of bleeding. I did not choose to submit myself to this indignity; and the more so, as I had not then the documents which I have now, in evidence of the fact that my patient did not die of hemorrhage. But let us pass from this point, lest the discussion of it irritate either or both of us.

Your 3d accusation is, as I have stated above, principally in reference to my first letter to Dr Christison. Yesterday, I got back from Dr Christison's own hands in his own house, this said letter, which he received from me on the day on which it was written (March 20th), and received, included within it, the two documents referred to in the postscript of it. The letter itself, sealed up as it was by Dr Christison after perusing it, was shown to you by him; and I am sure, that if you will think without passion or prejudice on this matter, your own heart will tell you, that you have made with respect to it, to the profession, a statement which is unfounded as regards me, and improper

\* "Professor Miller alarmed me with the information about the mattress on Mr Hardie's authority, adding, he thought I should inform you; but begging that his authority might not be given, as he had a reason for his name not being mentioned. A few minutes afterwards I was confirmed in this by the very same statement being repeated to me by our friend Dr Duncan of Heriot Row, who allowed me to mention his name, but as having got the information in a round-about way from a homœopathic practitioner (Dr Henderson)."—(*Extract of Letter from Dr Christison to Dr Simpson, 27th April.*)

"I do not recollect having asked Professor Miller his opinion, whether death had been caused by hemorrhage. I asked him a very different question," &c.—(*From Letter by Dr Christison to Dr Simpson, April 27.*)

as regards Dr Christison, whose high integrity and uprightness of character I feel sure both of us sincerely respect. I do not doubt that words might have been taken out of some of Dr Christison's notes to you of the kind given in your printed circular; but I am sure you will grant me that you were aware that these words in Dr Christison's notes do not bear the meaning which you wish to be implied by them in your circular, the simple fact being, that the letter in question was read by Dr Christison on the 20th March,—was talked over by him and me several times since,—and has been in his possession from that time up till yesterday, when he gave it to me that I might use it for the printer.\*

You allude to other alleged "mistakes and mis-statements." In the heat of controversy, all of us are ready—perhaps too ready—to fall into rash averments; but I am not aware of a single mistake, or mis-statement that I have fallen into during the present painful discussion. Perhaps, however, there may be one or more, which, irritated as both of us must confess to have been, I am blind enough not to be able to see. I can conscientiously, however, lay my hand upon my heart and say, that I am *not aware* of a single one. You have, I think, fallen into two or three errors or mis-statements, and some of these of a very grave kind; but I believe you were led into them by trusting too much to unauthenticated and unwitnessed remarks by Mr Hardie. In your last letter to me, you adduce one or two of these unwitnessed remarks, as if they were actually evidence against some observations of mine. But I am sure I need not state to you, that any unauthenticated and unwitnessed observation of Mr Hardie's

\* "I wish Professor Miller, in his anxiety to be brief, had not been so curt in the paragraphs 6 and 7; for an erroneous impression may arise, that I knew nothing at all about the letters addressed by you to me. What I stated, in reply to repeated references to me as to the facts, was that you sent me a scroll letter; that there was one error in it (see the correction p. 3), occasioned by a mistake of mine, which I had pointed out to you in conversation; that I had also, in regard to your letter, said to you it appeared to me perfectly possible that the conversation with Mr Hardie had commenced with Mr Hardie, notwithstanding his statement to you to the contrary; that I had sealed the scroll with the intention of returning it, which I had omitted to do; that it was still sealed, as I showed him it was; that I had not seen the letter, *as* circulated, until two days before; that I could not but know from the first that your letter was intended to be put to some public use; but that you did not ask my opinion about circulating it, nor intimate to me your intention to do so. I may add that I think you were quite right in all this, as it was better that you should be guided by the sentiments of some friend who had not been mixed up with the whole proceedings as I had been.

"If there is any thing else you would like me to speak to in this matter, I beg you to criticise me without reserve. The more you do so, the more will you be satisfied,—at least so far as one can satisfy inquiries as to innumerable conversations held a month ago, as to which, not merely the very words, but even also the order of the several conversations may be important."—(*Dr Christison to Dr Simpson, April 27.*)

Dr Christison and I yesterday compared together the copy of the letter sent to him, and that circulated by me, when the only differences found were one or two quite unimportant errors in the transcription.

cannot, either in any legal, or in any common sense view, be put for a moment into competition with such authenticated and witnessed evidence from him as I have taken care to adduce to you. In corroboration of what a man skilled in that kind of evidence thinks of Mr Hardie's testimony to me, let me enclose for you a letter on the subject from Mr Robertson, the solicitor.

33, Queen Street, 26th April 1852.

"DEAR SIR,—I have lately seen Mr Hardie on three occasions.

"The first was on the forenoon of the 15th inst. along with you; the second was two hours subsequently on the same day, when I went to him alone with a minute of the meeting which I had drawn up for him to sign; and the last occasion was on the 21st, six days later, when he came to me in my own house.

"On the 15th, Mr Hardie was in bed; and although he said at first that he had a cold (I never heard him cough), yet he afterwards informed me that this matter had caused him a great deal of anxiety, and that he had been ill in consequence. He was apparently relieved, as I thought, by communicating to me what occurred betwixt him, Dr Duncan, and Professor Miller.

"On the second occasion, the afternoon of the same day, Mr Hardie was engaged in going over the note written by Dr Duncan when I visited him, and, in consequence of our conversation, he told his son to go to Dr Duncan and get the letter back. I asked Mr Hardie expressly, if he saw anything omitted in the minute I had shown him, to specify what it was, and if anything was wrong to point it out, for that nothing but the truth was wanted by you and me. This you also repeatedly stated to him at the meeting.

"On the last occasion he repeated to me what was stated in his first letter to you of the 19th March. He told me that Dr Duncan had given back to him his letter; and in reference to his first conversation with Dr Duncan being casual, he repeated what he had said on the first occasion, that he did not 'volunteer the information' to him; and he also stated to me the manner in which Dr Duncan commenced the conversation with him on the subject, saying, 'What a dreadful death this is of poor Mrs ——. Why, Hardie, did you not tell me about it?' Mr Hardie was particular in stating, that, on the second occasion of seeing Dr Duncan along with Professor Miller, he was in the back shop, and that Dr Duncan told him not to trouble himself; whilst Professor Miller commenced the conversation by saying,— 'By-the-bye, Hardie, what was the size of that stain on the mattress?' etc.

"I should say, from the experience which I have had in ascertaining the truth of statements from clients, witnesses, and others, that I have had no reason to doubt a single statement made by Hardie to you. In fact, I may mention that he stated to me, in confidence, the influence which had made him anxious to get you to qualify his expression of indignation at the circumstance of two medical gentlemen coming to his shop to elicit information about Mrs —'s death, and why, in consequence, he desired the 'if' to be added to the statement he originally made to you.

"I have only to add, that I feel assured that the more Mr Hardie is asked about the matter, the more will every person be satisfied of the truth of every particular which he has stated to you already. You yourself saw the great care and proper caution with which he weighed every single point, before he would affix his affirmation or signature to it.

"I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

"Dr Simpson."

"JOHN ROBERTSON."

As to your allegation, that I acted as a scribe to Mr Hardie when giving me the letter, I need scarcely remark to you, that the same must necessarily, directly or indirectly, have been the case also in relation to the letter given by Mr Hardie to Dr Duncan; as Mr Hardie, as you well know, is not scholar enough to *compose* that letter, and, indeed, can scarcely use a pen so as to write his name easily.

Lastly,—The two *first* of your accusations,—that my patient died of hemorrhage, and that, notwithstanding, I “denied” that she died of hemorrhage, both to the physician in consultation and to others,—may be readily enough classed together. For if I can prove to you, as I now can by other evidence than my own simple word, that she did *not* die of hemorrhage, I was of course justified in maintaining that that had not been the cause of her very sad death. To prove, then, that hemorrhage was not the cause of her death, and that the evidence which you had supposed that you had obtained from Mr Hardie must have been in some way (I know not how) erroneous, let me adduce to you the following facts.—[See next letter, p. 34.]

Mr Hardie sent the feather bed on which my patient lay to an establishment in town belonging to Mr G——, to which the beds of most people who die, whatever may be the cause of death, are sent, that they may be steamed and cleaned before they are again used. The person, Mr Harrower, who has charge of this establishment, has given me a declaration which I enclose, regarding the state of the bed sent him by Mr Hardie, and which Mr Hardie informed Mr G—— was Mrs ——’s bed.

Edinburgh, 24th April, 1852.

REGARDING the bed sent to me by Mr Hardie to be cleaned,—as to the state of the interior of it when I opened it up, I can declare that little or nothing of it was spoiled, and that it was only on the top or surface that it was a very little red stained with blood. No clotting of any kind. Most beds sent to me are in a thousand times worse state.

BRUCE HARROWER.

If this is insufficient, be so good as peruse the document which I enclose, as No. 3, viz., a declaration before witnesses from the intelligent nurse who attended Mrs ——, showing, explicitly, as it must to you, or to any one professionally acquainted with such matters, that my poor patient did not die of hemorrhage, as I have always stated, but of peritonitis.



"27th April 1852.

"As nurse, I attended Mrs — during her illness. I was not present when the operation was performed, but arrived some hours afterwards at the house, and remained there till Mrs — died. I had occasion, during the whole of that time to attend Mrs — along with her husband, who was hand-and-hand with me during the whole time. The bed was unprotected except by a single blanket, and hence any blood that might escape was collected on it and in it; but there was no hemorrhage except a very small quantity from Mrs — on the Saturday morning. Dr — applied wet cloths, which speedily stopt this. On Sunday morning, the next day, when Dr Simpson removed the plug of lint, there was still no hemorrhage; nor was there, in fact, any during the time I was with Mrs —, except what occurred from her moving on the Saturday morning. Mrs — was much relieved for about an hour and a half after the lint was withdrawn, when pain in the lower part of the stomach came on and increased so much, that Dr — and I applied hot fomentations to relieve her. Afterwards I applied hot salt over each groin, and tried a poppy-head fomentation, all of which relieved her for a time—but each only for a short time. Turpentine was afterwards applied by Dr Simpson. Mrs — had opium pills. The whole amount of staining of blood which I saw upon the bed could not be more than—if so much as—what I see in any common case of labour.

(Signed)

"MARY DEMPSTER.

WALTER GILCHRIST, *Witness.*

JAMES DRUMMOND, *Witness.*" \*

I have another document, a copy of which I beg also to enclose, and to which I most earnestly entreat your careful attention. Only four persons could be evidence upon this matter whether Mrs — did or did not suffer from hemorrhage, viz.,—1. Dr Christison, 2. myself (who have both denied its occurrence to you); 3. The nurse, who denies it in the document I have transmitted to you; and 4. There was a fourth person present, a medical man, viz., the lady's own anxious and devoted husband, who watched by her bedside with matchless kindness and tenderness from the time of the operation to the time of her death. Yesterday I got a letter from him, a copy of which I have been advised to enclose to you. I am not ashamed to own, that during the last twenty-four hours, I have more than once cried over its very painful and very heart-stirring contents; and I have seen its perusal to-day, draw tears from some of the oldest members of the profession, to whom I showed it for advice. Now, I beg that you will most carefully read and consider this letter, with the following view:—

\* I was informed yesterday by a professional gentleman sufficiently acquainted with the matter, that when Professor Henderson, in his letter to Professor Miller, (See p. 12) states, "I believe I mentioned to you that the fatal occurrence was reported, on the *best* authority, to have been due to hemorrhage," he was believed to refer to the nurse. In consequence I sent Mr Drummond to see the nurse yesterday evening. He brought me back the following declaration; and the lady in whose house the

I have prepared and printed all our letters on this subject between you and me, with the view of laying them before the profession to the extent to which you have laid your printed statement. In addition, I have other letters and documents to lay before them, those which I have enclosed; and I am sure that I need not observe to you, in what a very unhappy and detrimental position these documents must necessarily place you if they are published.

But the proposition I have to make to you, contains within itself a proposal calculated to avoid this extreme measure. I would most gladly and thankfully save, if possible, Dr ——'s feelings by not at all publishing the letters and documents in question. At the same time, I most deeply feel (and in this my professional friends agree with me), that you have groundlessly attacked my character as a professional man, and my private character as a gentleman, by the printed statement which you have sent round to the profession. I will consent, in deference to Dr ——'s feelings, and also for the sake of your own character, not to publish the letters and documents I have alluded to, provided you will fully withdraw (and that of course by a statement as public as that by which you have made them), these allegations upon my professional and private character.

Now, pray do not determine upon the subject rashly. Take a whole night to consider of it. Dr ——'s feelings, and (as I believe) your own character are implicated in your decision; and I do hope and trust you will be enabled to decide correctly.

I shall wait till to-morrow, ten o'clock, for your answer.

Let me beseech you, whatever may be your decision, to rectify one mistake into which you have fallen, I am sure, inadvertently. In this I entreat for others and not for myself. I learn from a letter of Mr Robertson's, who has seen your documents at Mr Scott's, where they are open to the profession,—and I suppose to others, since Mr Robertson, a non-medical man, has seen them,—that in these documents and copies of letters, the name of my patient is written every

nurse is, told Mr Drummond that the nurse came to her house immediately after Mrs ——'s death, and always told her of the death being caused by inflammation, never by bleeding.

Portobello, April 29th, 1852.

I do not know Professor Henderson, even by sight, and deny ever having said to him or any one else, that the late Mrs —— had died from bleeding.

(Signed) MARY DEMPSTER.

(Signed) ELLEN HOME, *Witness.*  
JAMES DRUMMOND, *Witness.*

where in full. I submit to you, that this is very needlessly aggravating the feelings of the friends of my patient, and can do no possible good.

Yours truly,

(Signed)

J. Y. SIMPSON.

Professor Miller.

[As this sheet was going to press on Friday afternoon, I received a letter from Professor Miller, acknowledging my letter of last night, maintaining his former grounds, proposing a reference to the Council of the College of Physicians (a measure which would merely painfully and uselessly protract the discussion), and threatening to bring forward "sundry matters which he had hitherto passed over."]

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XIII.—Dr ——— to Dr J. Y. SIMPSON.

28th April 1852.

MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot tell with what feelings of indignation I have just been informed of conduct imputed to two medical men, in having dared to pry into the circumstances connected with the last illness of my lamented wife. The names of these individuals I have not heard, nor, need I say, have I any desire to learn them.

\* \* \* \* \*

The subject is one, which I need not say, opens up painful wounds; but it would ill show all the gratitude I feel for your kind attention, were I to shrink from vindicating your professional character. You will not ask me to enter into details; but you have my authority for stating, what those who know me will believe, that I have no hesitation in asserting that considerably more blood was lost on the occasion of a similar operation performed by Mr Syme two years ago, than on the late sad occasion. I assure you that the hemorrhage never made me uneasy; it was only when the restlessness and malaise which must always follow such operations, were succeeded by increasing pain, and a rapid, unsteady pulse, that I became alarmed. I cannot doubt for a moment, that peritonitis was the cause of my poor wife's death. More I cannot write on this subject; but I hope I have said enough to enable you to stop the mouth of slander.

My testimony may not be credited by the two individuals in question: this, however, will not prevent those whose opinion I value from believing me.

Let me repeat here my grateful thanks to you for your very kind and careful attendance on my dear wife, and beg of you to command my testimony should you require it. But surely your professional reputation can well afford to treat with contempt the insinuations of men who could lower themselves as these two have done; and, above all, let me earnestly intreat of you to rescue my dear wife's name from being made a subject of public discussion and controversy.

Believe me, very truly yours,

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_, M.D.

...and it is very kind  
to you to command  
me to write you  
and to send you  
my testimony about  
the fact that  
I have not been  
in the city since  
I left it in 1848  
and that I have  
not seen any  
of the persons  
mentioned in  
your letter.

M.D.



