should (for obvious reasons) always stand outside, and open to the inspection of the attendant.

The only apparatus which comes near mine in efficiency and portability is that of Duval, which, I believe, is in use at Guy's Hospital. This apparatus, entirely made of copper, is extremely neat in execution and ingenious in its plan; but the surface of water exposed for the generation of steam is much less extensive than in mine, the hot air (with the gases generated by combustion) rushes in much greater quantity and at a higher temperature, rendering it impossible to remain as long in the bath as when my boiler is used, and, finally, the price of the apparatus is at least six times greater than that of mine. Moreover, the plan and workmanship are so peculiar that (even if it were not a patent article) it would be difficult to have repairs made in the country.

Duval's apparatus certainly has the advantage of being applicable for the administration of baths of steam-and-sulphurous acid gas; but these are seldom required, and when the apparatus is completely fitted up for baths of this kind, the price amounts to about twelve guineas.

My apparatus is so simple that it may be made in any part of the country from my description; but any gentleman wishing to try it, and desirous to avoid the annoyance of tradesmen's blunders, may procure it at Morris and Osborn's, 32, Parliament-street, at the very moderate price of twelve shillings and sixpence, for the boiler tubes, two earthenware spirit-lamps, and a strong wooden box, not much larger than a hat-box, to hold the entire.

The cloak can be made by any tailor or sempstress, and the stool or table may be had for four or five shillings.

Fourpence worth of naphtha is sufficient for each bath.

London, June 6, 1843.

REGISTRATION OF DEATHS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—I take the liberty of offering one or two remarks upon the letter of your correspondent, "A Medical Practitioner," inserted in your last Number.

When I proposed, in my communication to the Registrar-General, a very simple method of ensuring a more perfect registration of the causes of death, I never for a moment doubted the compliance of the great bulk of the profession in willingly, and without fee or reward, assisting in a great national undertaking, in the accomplishment of which the *science* they cultivate would be most materially advanced. I am still of the same opinion. Let any medical practitioner, how arduous soever his duties may be, reflect for a moment upon the few minutes in the year that it would cost him to fill up the table I suggested, and then compare this with the aggregate good which he would be one of the means of promoting, and I feel confident we should never hear from any respectable member of the profession the unworthy motive for refusal "that he was not paid"—for what? For a few minutes' labor in the cause of science! Surely a

reflection of this kind ought not for a moment to rest upon a "learned and liberal profession." Do not let me be understood as arguing for the gratuitous performance of professional duties. I am the last person to advocate the non-payment of just claims to an ill paid, and often ill used, body of men. But I do not consider the registration of births and deaths a legitimate part of the duties of a medical man, still less do I concur with the proposal of *compelling* the members of the profession to furnish the registrars with the causes of death, and I should be one of the first to contend against so unjust and arbitrary a measure, and which it is obvious, upon the slightest reflection, would never be carried out. To advance the interests of medical science, few of the medical men in this country would, I trust, hesitate in joining; to comply with an arbitrary and unheard-of enactment, quite as few would, I am sure, come forward.

If I am mistaken about these points, then should I indeed blush for the profession to which I belong.

It is quite clear that something must be done, or the excellent object of the Registrar-General and Mr. Farr will not be attained. The plan of the latter gentleman I consider impracticable, because it would be neglected in the hurry of professional duties, and even when a certificate, as recommended by Mr. Farr, was left with the friends of the deceased, it would not contain the valuable information which a tabular form would supply. If it were considered that a small fee for each registration would ensure a more correct return, by all means let it be granted. All that I contend is, that the present system is worse than useless, for it causes important statistical errors, whereas the omission of registration would only be the loss of statistical facts. Let me briefly illustrate this. In the last number of the Transactions of the Association, there is article upon the Medical Topography of Sidmouth, by Mr. Jeffrey; and I find in his report of the dispensary that, in six years, there were admitted 3655 cases of disease, and out of that number only 11 cases of phthisis. Upon turning to the Registrar-General's Report, I find the deaths under the head "consumption," during the year 1841, in the counties of Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk, amount to the startling number of 4037!—in the county of Suffolk alone, 1312. How am I to infer that the "phthisis" of Mr. Jeffreys, and the "consumption" of the report, mean the same disease. I am anxious to make a comparison as to the prevalence of this disease, but I am stopped *in limine*, because I cannot rely upon the correctness of the returns sent to the Registrar-General. *Ex uno disce omnes*. I am forced to the conclusion that the present reports afford me no accurate statistical data upon which I can discover the information I desire.

Let me press this matter upon the attention of those who have the real interests of the profession at heart, and I am sure they will agree with me, that a few paltry registration fees are as dust in the balance when compared with the good they have now the means of effecting.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,
C. R. BREE.

Stowmarket, June 12, 1843.