nothing but the follicles of Graaf, in a stage of development more or less advanced.

5th. The tumefaction of the Graafian follicles, and their elevation on the surface of the ovaries, seems to be an indispensable condition for fecundation of the ova.

6th. The orgasm accompanying coition may of itself suffice to produce this state of the follicles, without its having been previously prepared by the instinctive impulses of nature; only, as in that case, this state and disposition of the follicles is not completed till a longer or shorter time after coition, conception is thereby retarded, and is, moreover, far less certain than when connection has taken place while the follicles were already swollen and prominent, as they are at the rutting season, and at the approach of the menstrual period.

7th. That, as regards the faculty of reproduction, woman seems to occupy a place intermediate between female animals which have seasons of heat or rutting, and those which are always capable of fecundation from the mere orgasm excited by coition, without other preparation on the part of nature. Their nature, however, approaches more nearly to that of the former class, our statistical researches having informed us that of 100 women, six or seven at the most become pregnant after sexual intercourse at a distance from the menstrual period; while, in most women, conception dates evidently from such intercourse at the moment of the catamenial evacuation or some days days before or after the menstrual period.

MESMERISM.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—In No. 146 (July 15, 1843), you published a very able and interesting Address on Mesmerism read at the annual meeting of the Bath and Bristol Branch of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, held at Bristol, June 29, 1843, by J. B. Estlin, F.L.S., &c. I have never seen the subject so well and so judiciously treated before.

I think that the address is calculated to do a great deal of good, and that Mr. Estlin deserves our best thanks for writing and publishing it.

But I should hardly have troubled you or him with my opinions on this subject, had not Mr. Estlin himself particularly requested his professional brethren to do so. He says—"In conclusion, I have only to add, it will be gratifying to me to find that in the sentiments I have advanced I meet with the accordance of the majority of my professional brethren." Mr. Estlin thinks that the less medical men have to do with these Mesmeric and phreno-Mesmeric exhibitions the better. He says—"My object is to exhort my professional brethren not to listen to the call made upon them to lend themselves to assist in the inquiries which are demanded of them into this 'vexata questio';" and, in other place, he says—"I cannot but strongly feel that our profession will best consult its own dignity and the benefit of society by keeping aloof both from the investigations and the investigators that have lately been before the public in this and other cities;" and, again, "It seems to

me impossible for a medical man to engage in the practice of animal magnetism without resorting to expedients and allying himself with persons not altogether congenial to a refined taste and cultivated mind." I entirely concur in the truth and soundness of these observations, and circumstances which have recently taken place in this town tend very forcibly to corroborate the opinion. Here, as in other places, it was asked by many, and also by the press—Why do not the medical men interfere in this matter, and either explain the truth or expose the fallacy of the assertions and experiments which are made and exhibited? Acting upon this suggestion, an attempt was made, and a most eminent man, our senior physician, accompanied by several other medical men, attended one evening at the theatre for the purpose of witnessing the performance and demonstrating its absurdity by such observations and questions as the cases might suggest. But the attempt was an entire failure. Although we had been to a certain degree called upon to make an appearance, the populace numerously assembled, would not hear them. Ignorantly happy in their credulity, and bigotedly determined to believe what they could not understand, they would admit of no interruption, no investigation, and to the very few and insufficient observations our learned friend was able to make, the most vague and vulgar answers of the lecturer were considered satisfactory, and received with acclamation.

The triumph of phreno-magnetism was shortly afterwards blazoned forth through the town in large characters, and the disciples of delusion claimed a victory. A previous attempt had been made by other medical men at a smaller meeting, but with no better success. The people were determined to believe, and the attempt to undeceive them was perfectly useless.—"Qui vault decipi decipiat." I was not present at either of these occasions, nor, indeed, at any of the itinerant's performances. Having availed myself of our local press as a medium for making my opinions known, I thought I might fairly excuse myself from the disgusting annoyance of personal attendance. I have published two letters on the subject, but as they are addressed to the editor of the "Northampton Herald," and appeared in that paper, I presume you will not think proper to make use of them. I cannot take leave of Mr. Estlin's admirable address without quoting, in conclusion, his last and finest sentence, "When our duties call upon us for the unavoidable infliction of pain, let us not harass our patient by attempts to ascertain if he be one of those few who may be thrown into such a state of unconsciousness as to be insensible to it, but let us endeavour to strengthen his mind to bear up under his trial, by suggesting to him Christian motives and a Christian's hopes."

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

H. TERRY

Surgeon to the Northampton General Infirmary,
Surgeon to the Northamptonshire Militia, and
late Assistant-surgeon in the Army.

Northampton, July 31, 1843.