is without a parallel. It is reported by a Dr. C. A. Lee, in a late number of the "New York Journal of Medicine."

Certain physicians were employed by the authorities to vaccinate such inhabitants of Salisbury, Connecticut, as had never had the cow-pox. For this service the trifling sum of fifty dollars was divided between them, being about four cents, or less than twopence, for each case. It fell, unluckily, to the lot of a student, who supplied the place of one of them, to vaccinate a girl, about twenty. The punctures were made low down—in fact, very near the elbow—which was accounted for by the difficulty of raising the sleeve, a very tight one, and perhaps by her affected modesty. She complained of some degree of pain after the operation, which was followed by no very unusual degree of inflammation, but afterwards for some time she suffered from pain and stiffness about the limb, extending to the neck and jaws, and always worse *when she thought or talked about it*. But the evidence showed that even this was not very bad. In fact, she was an ill conditioned hysterical subject, and the pains were easily referable to this source. Plenty of medical evidence was adduced in proof of this view of the case.

Judge Daggett, however, in the face of the medical witnesses, and of common sense, laid down this preposterous dictum:—

"In performing the operation of vaccination or inoculation, the physician is liable for all consequences if he neglects the usual precautions, or fails to insert the virus in that part of the arm usually selected for the purpose, notwithstanding many other parts of the body might be proven to be equally proper, and even more suitable locations." He illustrated this principle by saying that a man would, in like manner, be liable for all consequences, in transporting public or private property, who departed from the usual route, though the one selected should, on every account, prove to be the best one. This principle, illustrated by numerous examples, and enforced by all the eloquence of the learned and accomplished judge, sufficed to influence the minds of the jury in behalf of the plaintiff; and they accordingly brought in a verdict in her favor for 500 dollars and costs, the total expense amounting to about 1,000 dollars. A more unrighteous verdict, I will venture to say, does not disgrace the record of any civil or criminal court in this, or in any other country.

"This case," continues Dr. Lee, "is a highly important one; for if the principle laid down by the judge, and on which the verdict was given, be correct, and is to regulate similar or analogous cases in future, then farewell to all improvements in medicine and surgery. If the physician or surgeon is bound to keep the old beaten path, and never deviate from the plan laid down by his predecessors, without exposing himself to the danger of being mulcted in heavy damages, where is the chance of improvement and discovery? Had such laws governed the decisions of English courts, we should never have heard of the

splendid surgical achievements of Hunter, Pott, the Coopers, Abernethy, Bell, and Liston. The practical effect of the principle which decided the above case is well illustrated by a fact which came to our knowledge during a recent visit to the town in which the physician, who was the defendant, resides. From that time to the present, we were informed, that he had not bled a patient, for fear that inflammation of the vein might follow, or a nerve be injured, or some other injury, real or imaginary, be the result, and thus subject him to another ruinous prosecution. Rather than take such a risk, he chooses to resort to the exclusive administration of internal remedies, even where blood-letting is clearly indicated. If such a principle be adopted, who does not see that the science of medicine must retrograde, and that the people themselves are the only sufferers, as on them rests the responsibility. * * *

"In fine, from this case we learn how grateful the mass are for the gratuitous services of the physician. Here, a female, of rather more than ordinary intelligence, is vaccinated free of charge, at an expense to the town of about *four cents*! She is visited frequently afterwards, and the same attention paid her as though she had expected to reward the physician's liberal services; and then the only recompense she she makes is, to institute a legal prosecution, and follow it up, until one thousand dollars have been abstracted from the hard-earned fees of the son of *Æsculapius*!"

ILLIBERAL CRITICISMS OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN MEDICAL REVIEW.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—The review of the eleventh volume of the "Transactions of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association," in the last number of the "British and Foreign Medical Review," has surprised me not a little, as it contains a most astounding misstatement with respect to the contents of that volume, which I should never have expected from the learned and respected editor of that generally well-conducted quarterly journal.

At page 92 of the 33rd number of the work in question, after having very judiciously stated that elder practitioners owe a duty both to society and to their own profession, and that it is incumbent upon them not to let their experience die with them; but, on the contrary, that they should communicate, as briefly as they choose, what they know about the treatment of those diseases on which they have fully made up their minds, stating those rules in distinguishing diseases, or in judging their progress or termination, by which they themselves are guided, and giving hints as to remedies, sick room management, and similar details, apparently small, but really most important:—The reviewer then goes on to say, "One of the chief benefits of the Provincial Association was to afford a stimulus to such a useful exertion, and a channel for the results; and we regret that this volume should

not contain more proofs that this object has been more fully accomplished. Not more than 60 pages out of 567 are occupied with original papers on practical subjects. These few we shall analyse, with the exception of the essay of Mr. Turner, on Dislocations of the Astragalus, which we reserve for a separate notice on another occasion."

Now, all that I would ask of every reader of this extract from the said review is, to take down the eleventh volume of the Transactions from the shelf on which it is placed, and judge for himself; but, if my senses do not grossly deceive me, he will there find nearly *two hundred pages*! of this volume devoted to strictly practical papers, instead of *sixty*!! as asserted by the reviewer. It would not be right in me, perhaps, to pass any judgment on these contributions, but I may be forgiven for saying of one of them, by Mr. Turner, of Manchester, on Dislocations of the Astragalus, that it will long remain a monument of his industry, sagacity, and firmness as a practical surgeon.

Moreover, if the reviewer will again take the trouble of perusing this volume, and of comparing its contents with the *objects* which were declared at the formation of the Association to be those which should engage the attention of the members, he will find that those objects are scrupulously prosecuted in this work.

First, we have an excellent practical address, delivered by Dr. Black, of Manchester, at Exeter, containing a digest of all discoveries in practical and theoretical medicine during the previous year, which fulfils the regulation that one of the members should be annually appointed to give an account of the state or progress of medical science during the last year.

Secondly, we have an account of the medical topography of Sidmouth, in compliance with the regulation that one of the objects should be, increase of the knowledge of the medical topography of England, through statistical, meteorological, geological, and botanical inquiries.

Thirdly, we have valuable experimental researches on tubercles by Mr. Addison, of Malvern, in fulfilment of another object of the Association, viz., the collection of useful information, whether *speculative* or practical, through original essays, &c. Even *materia medica* has received attention; for our worthy vice-president, Dr. Jeffreys, has introduced a new vegetable production, "*matico*," to the notice of the profession, which appears to possess considerable powers as an astringent; and the volume ends by devoting the 200 pages to which I have before alluded, to papers strictly practical.

Far be it from me unduly to glorify the labors of the members of an Association to which I shall ever consider it the highest honor of my life to be so inti-

mately connected. I know full well that, individually and collectively, we fall short of the excellence at which we aim; but I do not hesitate to aver that the Association has done much towards redeeming the pledge originally given by its founders. At all events, we may fairly ask of all reviewers who condescend to notice our onward efforts, to give us credit for what we have done, and not through carelessness, or from any other cause to take from our real deserts. In short, we may fairly ask *all* who criticise our performances to speak of us as we are—to extenuate nothing, nor to set down aught in malice.

I will conclude by assuring the reviewer that I am as anxious as he can be to see the labors of the Association more fruitful of beneficial results, and I trust that each succeeding year may develop still more fully its advantages; for, to quote the words of a respected correspondent, it appears to me that there is no society in the world so admirably adapted for the collection of medical facts as the Provincial Association. The number of beds in the provincial hospitals is nearly as great as in the metropolitan, and most of the officers of the former are members of the Provincial Association; besides which, the 1700 members of the Association are distributed through a district having a population of not less than fourteen millions!

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES HASTINGS, M.D.,

President of the Council of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association.

Worcester, Jan. 20, 1844.

REVIEWS.

The Provident Philanthropist. Published for promoting the Union for Benevolence. Nos. 3 and 4.

We entertain such a sincere respect for Mr. Hansard, the editor and proprietor of this periodical, and wish success so heartily to his efforts for benefiting the condition of the poor, that we are sorry to see his energies wasted in producing the crotchety, mystical, incomprehensible schemes, and abstruse, unreadable papers, which fill this publication. We are convinced that a private individual may do much more good by personal acts of benevolence to all the poor within his reach—and he need not be long in finding objects enough for his charity—than by framing gigantic schemes and complicated associations. It is in every man's power to do some good; and though it may be done very quietly, yet the example will not be entirely thrown away. Unluckily, the greatest villain alive may rave about "universal philanthropy;" but ask him to give sixpence to one poor man, and he makes the same reply that Canning's friend of humanity made to the needy knife-grinder.