perseverance, but by the most courteous language and demeanour; not a word should be uttered that could give offence to the most irritable and unreasonable of our opponents. The committee should resemble "a committee of the whole house," to use parliamentary language, that is, provincial physicians coming to town from the more remote districts should be entitled to sit and vote.

Some steps have been already taken towards the formation of such a committee; but the difficulty of communicating with physicians at a distance is by no means trifling, and the number of gentlemen interested is much greater in the country than in town. I have, therefore, Gentlemen, availed myself of your excellent periodical, using it as a means of communication, in the hope that provincial physicians may, on this question, start into energetic and continuous activity—an activity, however devoid of acerbity or coarseness.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

MEDICUS.

Feb. 10, 1844.

EACH PROFESSION REQUIRES A DISTINCT SURVEILLANCE.

By a SOMERSETSHIRE M.D.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—In reply to the "rambling" letter of your Lincolnshire Vicar, I beg first to observe that the publication of unprofessional letters in your medical journal is not likely to be very palatable to the majority of your readers, not only causing a waste of time on their part, but likewise a waste of paper in your columns. Your correspondent professes to "have made few advances with the rapid progress of the present intellectual age," and, as a natural sequence, ridicules all innovations. To show the incorrectness of his conclusion, I would merely remark that the "last thirty years" have made a very great change in the general education of the people, and if the mass then spoke incorrectly from ignorance, they have not that plea to offer at present for their partiality to "old-fashioned" notions. As well might the courtiers of the age of Queen Elizabeth vaunt of the elegance of their style and the correctness of their diction, and pronounce the present state of affairs to be but "horrid barbarisms," as the "Lincolnshire Vicar" to bewail the loss of his favorite "spatterdashes" for the classical term "antigropelos." That the reverend gentleman should complain of "anomalies" in our profession is far from remarkable, as we entertain precisely the same idea with regard to his own; but we do not venture to pass critiques on the church, or entangle ourselves in theological tenets, for the simple reason that we think each profession has quite enough to do to reform itself, and that, therefore, *each profession requires a distinct surveillance.*

If the "Lincolnshire Vicar" will look at home, he will find quite enough "to cause no little astonishment, and sometimes no little mirth." * * *

But we forbear, and turn to his crude ideas of physicians and apothecaries. Thirty years ago the line of demarcation between an M.D. and a general practitioner was much more strongly drawn than at present; then the finely powdered wig, the court cut coat, the gold headed cane, and the silver buckles were added to his external appearance, then the portentous shake of the head boded all manner of omens, then apothecaries approached their presence with awe and trembling, and then a momentous silence sufficed their patients for troublesome explanations. Those were the golden days of Galen's sons; but now, like the class of the "old English gentlemen," the physicians motto must be—*fuius*. The vicar's rusticity must, therefore, alone account for his ignorance of the above, as he, poor soul, innocently asks, "are doctors getting up?" Still, however, there is a difference of rank between the above mentioned classes, admitted by society at large, as well as by professional etiquette, similar to that accorded between a barrister and an attorney, a rector and a curate. The precedence of the first arises from the following causes:—The *regular bred* physicians are, for the most part, sons of gentlemen, they receive a collegiate education, travel for professional information, attend the schools of Paris, Berlin, or Vienna. They read the new publications, so as to keep up with the spirit of the times, since the science of medicine is one of progressive improvement. They study general literature, are versed in the arts and sciences, and, at an age much maturer than that of the clergyman, to whom the cure of souls is intrusted, they return to devote their time and talents, enriched by accumulated facts and observations, to the alleviation of human misery, often for many years without any remuneration, than the satisfaction of an approving conscience.

Now, let us turn to the case of a general practitioner. Apprenticed at an early age, either to a surgeon or an apothecary, for the term of three or five years, more than the half of which time is spent in performing services wholly irrelevant either to his situation or education, with perhaps slender means, and still less time at his command, how can it be expected that he should devote himself to the completion of his classical studies, or the acquirement of elegant literature, &c. ?—and often, at the expiration of his term, he finds himself obliged to accept an assistant's situation, with a salary of perhaps £20 per annum, and duties requiring £100. Can it, then, be reasonably entertained that he will lay aside his professional avocations to improve the imperfect state of his medical knowledge? No. Therefore the education of the one will not allow him to vie with the superior opportunities of the other; and I think the reverend gentleman will acquiesce in my conclusion that the physician is, therefore, entitled to precedence.

If your clerical correspondent had ever visited London, he would have remarked that physicians are the favored set, both at court and among the higher and wealthier classes. He would there have found "phenomenon the first of our medical horizon" often repeated, as several of the most popular and rising physicians of the day plead guilty to being young in years; and, indeed, if a general practitioner is entitled to confidence at twenty-five years of age, surely a physician may claim the same indulgence at thirty-

five years, the noonday of developed faculties and advanced intellect. But I suppose some deference must be paid to an "old fashioned" notion of bygone days, that physicians were only competent to gain their bread when they had no teeth left to enjoy it.

The "Lincolnshire Vicar" seems to be easily petrified, simply because his own medical friend, a most excellent and clever man, was "metamorphosed into a Doctor." Perhaps he will open his eyes beyond their full stretch when I declare my perfect inability to see anything wonderful in a well-educated man wishing to retire from the more active duties of his profession, and to enter the ranks of the M.D.'s. He was not actuated by the *auri sacra fames*, but for the purpose of possessing, comparatively speaking, the *otium cum dignitate* of the higher division.

With regard to his illiberal remark, "I am quite sure of one thing, it cannot be a very difficult matter to be a physician," I beg to assure him that it appears to require "more brains" than to take orders, as both Oxford and Cambridge men, who had taken their degree of *Bachelor of Arts*, have been rejected by the College of Physicians. That we have black sheep among the flock, is not to be wondered at, nor are we not singular in that respect. I have heard of men "metamorphosed" from laymen into churchmen, by a few magical words, without the onerous duty of keeping terms, or even paying a premium of £30 or £40.

I do not mean to uphold the laxity of our government with regard to medical law; far from it, for if the legal enactment was enforced, which prohibits all M.D.'s from practising in England without the town or country license of the Royal College of Physicians in London, and if a penalty of £50 was added for the infringement of each case, one half of which to be awarded to the informer, and the rest either to government or the benevolent medical fund, we should soon see our ranks thinned of those who really "cast a slur on the rest of their brethren." As it is now currently believed that the College of Physicians have taken the subject under their immediate consideration, there is no doubt of proper regulations being adopted for the legal qualification of practising medicine.

In conclusion, I beg to add, that as the science of medicine is not stationary, and that objects and theories, at present glimmering and undetermined, may in a few years be established as facts and deductions, should we not be most happy to resign our places to the "young" physicians, who, benefitting by modern discoveries, which fresh genius and skill have better systematised, and being well read in the valuable truths of the ancients, are perfectly competent to fulfil their high duties with honor, industry, and perseverance?

One parting word to your medico-clerical correspondent, whom I rather suspect to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. The minds of men are imperceptibly influenced by the moral atmosphere which surrounds them. Should we, therefore, wish to benefit from the great discoveries of the present day, and participate in the researches after scientific truth, we must not bury ourselves in a retired village. If we moderate our wishes to a reformation of manners and customs, let us confine ourselves to our own department, and

bear in mind that *each profession requires a distinct surveillance.*

I remain, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
A SOMERSETSHIRE M.D.

MORE ROUGH NOTES AND A FEW FACTS FOR LORD ASHLEY.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—The letter of a "Country Doctor," in your last week's Journal, has stimulated me to offer a few more facts and a few more grievances to your notice (I lament to find they are not peculiar to this county), in the faint hope that greater publicity, and an accumulation of disagreeables, may somehow or other lead to the discovery of a remedy.

In a district of several parishes, at a distance varying from two to five and a half miles, and including the parish in which I reside, I have attended, since the 25th of last March, nearly 700 cases, and I have no doubt that, before the year expires, the number will not fall short of 750. To accomplish this vast amount of labor, I shall have ridden not less than 2,000 miles, nor have paid less than £3 for turnpikes, beside the expense of a horse, which, as oats and hay are now cheap, I will rate at the low sum of £25. My salary, *including vaccination fees and all other extras*, will not exceed £75, I shall, therefore, receive £47 for my services, out of which small sum, however, I shall have to pay for medicines, leeches, and all other appliances, except trusses. Now, Gentlemen, allow me to call your attention, but more particularly that of the noble lord, to the following simple statement:—On looking over the abstract of the Report of the Committee of Management of the Dorset County Hospital for the year 1843, I find the number of in and out-patients attended during the year amounts to 505, *more than two hundred less than I shall have attended*, and the cost for medicine alone amounts to £159 7s. 2d., or more than double the whole amount of my salary, including extras, and more than treble the amount I shall receive after deducting the expense of my horse: this, you will say, is perfectly astounding; it is, however, perfectly true. I have no doubt the excellent officers of the Dorset Hospital select their drugs with care, and use none but of the very best quality; I do the same, and I know that I give from 10 to 20 per cent. more than I should do were I to purchase articles of an inferior quality, but in so doing, self-interest, and I hope a much higher principle, tells me that I am right; but how stands the debtor and creditor account? Am I to adopt the homœopathic or the hydropathic treatment (water is most abundant in every one of my parishes), or am I to put my pauper patients on the same footing with those in the County Hospital? Let us, for argument sake, suppose the hospital doctors have been unnecessarily lavish with the most expensive drugs—let us suppose that under a more niggardly and pinching system, or, if you will, under a more careful and economical one, the drug-bill had amounted to only £50 for the 505 cases—yet it is even then evident