that I shall have attended more than 700 cases for a less sum. Let us go one step farther; let us suppose that I have adopted the homœopathic treatment in a large number of my cases, and that my drug-bill will only amount to £20, I shall then have £27 left for my year's toil and anxiety, including the labor of making a weekly return, keeping a register, &c.—or, in other words, somewhere about 9d. per case. This is not a very cheering picture, but, like the "Country Doctor," I am so situated that I must take the district, yet can ill afford to lose by it.

Anxious that fact upon fact and grievance upon grievance should be stated, allow me to say that Mr. Livett's case, as mentioned in your last Number, is not a solitary one, as the salary has been reduced in this county to meet the vaccination fees, and in one union I know, and I believe in several, as much as 10 per cent. has been deducted to meet the little extras arising from midwifery, fractures, &c., and thus most effectually neutralising any benefit that might have been derived from fairly carrying into effect the commissioners' order of March 12, 1842.

In conclusion, let me give you one instance out of many I could mention of the mischievous tendency of the annual election system, and, in proof that our situation should not depend on the whims or prejudices of a majority of a board of guardians, but on the just performance of our duties. Some time since I was attending a poor woman, the mother of several young children, and the wife of an agricultural laborer who was earning 7s. per week; she was pregnant, and was suffering severely from varicose veins, and a most painful ulcer of one leg. Under these circumstances I recommended rest; and, to enable her to provide a person to attend to her children during her husband's absence, a small amount of out-door relief, in the shape of bread, was granted. Not being cured at the end of a fortnight, the *guardian* of the parish called on her, and, to use her own words, abused her, and said she was an idle, lazy huzzy, and threatened to put a stop to the bread on the following board-day, and, when she referred him to me in proof of her sufferings, he replied, "Oh, I know him before to-day" (probably recollecting that I had *even dared*, a few weeks before, to make an order for meat in another case); "he shall have no more of our money after the 25th of March;" and I have no doubt his influence will be used to that effect, because, in the conscientious discharge of a sacred duty, I have saddled the parish with a few shillings extra expense, and he is too short-sighted to see that it might be the saving of pounds.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
A MEDICAL OFFICER.

Dorset, Feb. 6, 1844.

POOR-LAW PRACTITIONERS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—Your correspondent, "A Provincial," in a letter dated Doncaster, and published in your valuable Journal of last week, states that there are medical officers holding appointments in the Don-

caster and Rotherham unions who possess neither medical, surgical, nor pharmaceutical qualifications, from any source. This, Gentlemen, is a grave charge, and one that ought not to rest on a slender foundation; and I would suggest to your correspondent that if his motives are good, and he is satisfied that his information is correct, it is a duty he owes to the profession at large to publish the names of the parties to whom he alludes, that the "black sheep" who have thus imposed upon the commissioners, the guardians, and the public, may be exposed; but I would also suggest to him, at the same time, the necessity of placing his real name and address at the foot of his communication, because somewhat similar charges were, not long since, made by an anonymous writer against the medical officers of the Rotherham Union, which, upon investigation, were found to be utterly devoid of truth.

I remain, Gentlemen,
Yours truly,
AN UNION OFFICER.

DR. FORBES'S REPLY TO DR. HASTINGS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—Do me the favor to insert the accompanying letter in your Journal, in reply to a communication in your last Number.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
JOHN FORBES.

London, Feb. 5, 1844.

MY DEAR HASTINGS,—I have just read your grand *reclamation* printed in the Provincial Medical Journal of last week, and I suppose that you and my other provincial friends would think it uncourteous if I did not reply to it in the same public manner, although I fancy you and I might have had our duel on less conspicuous ground.

It would be very unreasonable in me, or any one else, to suspect that you should be as able as other people to find flaws in the words or deeds of the Provincial Association. Do we not all know that you imagined, prefigured, begot, conceived, brought forth, nursed, clothed, fed, taught, christened, endowed, and set up in life, this always lusty and now most thriving of bantlings—discharging, from first to last, for it all the offices and duties of sole or double parent, as if the papa and mamma were rolled into one in your person? That you love it with the love that such a capacious relationship implies, can any one doubt?—and who knows not, also, that of all the proverbially weak-eyed family of Love, the *parental* branch is the most amblyopic? Wherefore, it seems probable enough, *a priori*, that a critic of common capacity, and without any special relationship to the Association, should be at least as likely to form a just estimate of the character of its "Transactions" as yourself. And I maintain that, in point of fact, this has been the case in the instance in question. As far as regards the merit of the papers reviewed, or of the volume generally, I appeal to competent and impartial judges if the criticism in my

journal is not fair and honest. I will not defend myself against the imputation of its being "illiberal," as your title asserts, nor of its being "malicious," as some might infer from your own words; because I believe your printer to be responsible for the former, and I know you too well to believe that you could intend to apply the latter epithet to me or mine.

A positive "misstatement," to be sure, you have pointed out in the article; but how this could appear to you "astounding," is only explicable on the theory of the ophthalmological idiosyncrasy above adverted to. No critic could have wilfully tried to pass off on his readers 200 pages for 60, knowing, at the same time, that the means of detecting the falsehood was within the reach of at least 1700 quick-sighted associates. I am surprised that an old book-man, like yourself, did not instantly discover how the matter stood. Had you done so, and pointed out the mistake to me, I should have at once settled the thing by recording it among the *Errata* of my next volume. Besides serving the same purpose, this plan would have had the advantage of saving us both from the trouble of inditing these *epistola graves* for the perusal of sundry good people who probably care little about the matter.

The fact is this:—In printing the unlucky article impugned, from a somewhat crabbed MS., there was an accidental transposition of the clauses of one sentence, which transposition escaped notice in the revision, as the *sense* of the passage was not thereby affected, although the matter of fact was. The passage was originally written thus:—"With the exception of the essay of Mr. Turner, on Dislocations of the Astragulus, which we reserve for a separate notice on another occasion, not more than 60 pages out of 567 are occupied with original papers on practical subjects; these few we shall analyse."

Any one accustomed to see how the best printers (and mine I avow to be a capital one) deal with a blotted interlined *copy*, will have no difficulty in accounting for the transformation of the above into the following passage, more especially if it is recollected that *the words in both are identical*:—

"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 Astragulus, which we reserve for a separate notice on another occasion."

Whether the reviewer's gentle insinuation be justified or not, viz., that there might have been expected more than *five* papers of a practical nature (and four of the five occupying only sixty pages), in so large a volume, I leave to your own consideration in conjunction with the last sentence of your letter—to wit: "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!"

You, my dear Hastings, and my other friends of the Provincial Association, do not need to be told how highly I appreciate it and its labors. In my humble capacity as a member, I have toiled with

you from the beginning; and I flatter myself the "British and Foreign Medical Review" has not been unmindful of its duty towards so important an institution. I am, however, on the whole, rather glad than otherwise that you, also, have come forward to impugn a piece of criticism in the Review, as your doing so supplies me with another striking proof that my journal still holds on stiffly in the course it took at the beginning, speaking what it deems the truth, without fear or favor, and *that* alike of the works of dear friends as of strangers. When my reviews of books come to be written gratuitously by the authors of the same, or by their friends, or are supplied and paid for by publishers, then I presume I shall be as little troubled with reclamations as certain other editors whom you and I wot of.

Believe me, my dear Hastings,
Most truly and faithfully yours,
JOHN FORBES.

London, Feb. 5, 1844.

. We fear that our friend Dr. Forbes himself not only labors under a touch of the parental infirmity of vision to which he alludes, but is also not altogether free from a far more serious affection of the intellectual visual faculties; at least, we know not how otherwise to account for the double vision exhibited in his twofold character of author and reviewer. In the second and fourth volumes of the "Transactions of the Provincial Association" are recorded two papers, one extending to 116 pages, the other to 109 pages, on a subject of as little *immediate* practical interest as any of those referred to by the reviewer of the eleventh volume. These papers, however, though of the very same nature as those under the ban of the reviewer, are possessed of high claims to consideration. They are upon the Medical Topography of the Land's-end, and bear the name and impress of Dr. John Forbes!—and not their least merit is, that they have induced other able laborers in the same field of inquiry to enrich the pages of the Transactions with similar reports.

The private peccadilloes in the reviewing line which Dr. Forbes and Dr. Hastings may themselves have conjointly committed, or have winked at in others, would seem to be rather foreign to the question at issue. For our own parts, we are free to acknowledge that we agree with our correspondent "Phylax," that if there is any leaning, it should be to the side of indulgence. Nevertheless, when occasion calls for it, we can ourselves administer a little wholesome critical chastisement, and, as an instance in point, may allude to the exposure which we gave some time back of wholesale plagiarism in a work of some authority, the which plagiarism, by the way, was suffered to pass without note or comment—we presume in a moment of amiable weakness—by the "British and Foreign Medical Review." Tomahawks and scalping-knives are, however, at best but dangerous weapons, for though the cloud of obscurity rests over the authors of reviews, the editors enjoy no such immunity. They are often held personally responsible, as Dr. Forbes well knows, for the sins of their employers, and, living continually in a house of glass, should be the more careful how they throw stones.—Eds.