

if committed, should be viewed by its members in the most charitable light; and the reputation of each individual most carefully cherished. The assassin's weapon can scarcely produce a more dangerous wound than the envenomed tongue of the detractor, which may effect its purpose in many different ways. The physician lives upon his reputation; strike at that reputation, and you rob him of that—his good name—"which makes him poor indeed." The personal advancement of the detractor, as the cherished object of pursuit, may be successfully attained; but that success cannot be permanent which is achieved by such unholy means; it will soon flag and fail, because unsustained by the only sure support—an acquaintance with his profession, tact and readiness in applying its resources, and the due fulfillment of every moral and religious obligation. While in other cases I have freely opened the pages of this Journal for the vindication of professional character, when unworthily assailed, I may be pardoned if circumstances compel me to have recourse to the same means in vindication of my own. I desire, however, to avail myself of no undue privilege. The answer of the party implicated, shall have free insertion, no matter what its nature, no matter how complete its repudiation of the act of its author, which, for the honour of the profession, I sincerely hope it may prove.

I will now proceed with the details, and in the first place I will observe, that a difficulty occurring in the settlement of my claim for professional services rendered to Mr. F. when in Montreal, which were, to those who knew their nature and extent, of the most harassing description, and which were very inadequately requited, Mr. F. in a letter to me dated Hamilton, Nov. 12, 1847, stated—"I am happy to inform you that I am and feel much better. My general health is good; and, were it not for the unfortunate position my legs were placed in in Montreal, I might now, Dr. Mackelcan assures me, have been walking about on crutches. Dr. Mackelcan has discovered that my hinch-bone is considerably injured, and that the small bones of my sacrum are smashed to pieces, which facts seem to have escaped your notice." My answer to this communication was, after an authenticated copy of it had been retained, a return of the letter by next post; while, in a note alluding to it addressed to the gentleman in whose house he had resided in Montreal, and dated November 16, I remarked, "That the imputation of *most questionable character* on the professional skill of Drs. MacDonnell, Arnoldi, Nelson, and myself, was to me a matter of less consequence than the idea that one for whom," &c. &c. The original, or a copy of this note, is, I believe, now in possession of Mr. F.'s late partner.\*

\* The note from which the following is an extract, was put into my hands by Dr. MacDonnell. It was written by the late Mr. F.'s brother, Mr. E. J. F., now in Hamilton, to Dr. MacD. The note is dated Hamilton, Nov. 12, 1847:—

"I am happy to say my brother has been a great deal better for the last ten days, much better than he has been since the accident occurred. His bowels are now in a healthy state. His bladder much better: passes water more freely, in large quantities and not accompanied by spasms; his appetite is very good, and he seems to relish what he eats. There is no doubt his general health has very much improved since he came up here. His limbs

On the 18th Nov., 1847, I received a private letter from an old and esteemed fellow-student, dated Hamilton Nov. 14. This letter observes—"As there are various reports here respecting your treatment of Mr. F., unfavourable to you, I wish you would give me a history of the case; that is, the nature of the disease, what parts are injured, and how injured, so that I may be enabled to explain to his brother, or any other party interested, the treatment he has received at your hands, should you desire it. I consider it my duty to write to you, as an old friend, in case any thing should eventually transpire that you might require to take notice of." An answer was returned to this, giving substantially the diagnosis of the case as detailed in the early part of this paper, and to which this gentleman has been, since Mr. F.'s decease, requested to give publicity.†

On the 25th March, 1848, in a letter received from a medical friend in Hamilton, I have the following observation—"You were not four hours from Hamilton before he (Dr. Mackelcan) found fault with the legs being drawn up."

Several letters again allude to the fact, that the difficulty experienced in the settlement of my claim for professional services, was due to Dr. Mackelcan's most unprofessional interference in the matter. One letter most explicitly states, "that had it not been for Dr. Mackelcan's interference, your account would have been long ago adjusted."

I have already published Dr. Mackelcan's letter to me dated October 29, and it will be observed that he is silent in it as relates to the detected fracture of the sa-

are somewhat better: the greatest difficulty seems to be in stretching them, but I think Dr. Mackelcan will overcome that in time, as he has already partially succeeded. I regret to say that Dr. Mackelcan has observed, what seems to have escaped the observation of yourself and Dr. Hall, viz., *that there is a piece of the hinch-bone broken off, and the small bones of the sacrum smashed to pieces*, which I am very much afraid may retard his recovery.—I am, &c., E. J. F.

(The italics are the writer's own.—A. H.)

† Having written for a copy of this letter, dated Montreal, November 20, 1847, the medical gentleman to whom it was addressed has kindly sent me the original, from which I make the following extracts:—"My opinion, however, frequently expressed to Mr. F. himself, his brother I think, and others of his friends, was, that a fracture did probably exist; but, if any where, then about the lower part of the cervical vertebra, and this idea based exclusively on the symptoms which prevailed. Paralysis, however, rapidly came on, and continued for a length of time, giving rise to the idea that extravasation had taken place on the cord due to laceration or rupture: certainly there was severe spinal concussion: but, excepting the probability of fracture of the spine, there was no evidence of such a state detectable on the most careful manipulation; and this, too, by three of us (excluding Dr. Arnoldi, who first saw the case with me,) every one of whom were anxiously looking for it. *I need not say that we might have been mistaken*, but this I will say, that it is more likely that we were all right," (and so the event has proved.) In another part of the same letter I remarked that "one of the strongest arguments in favour of the disease being above the 6th dorsal vertebra, and below the origin of the phrenic, is the priapism which he (Mr. F.) had for the three or four weeks subsequent to the accident, and the absence of all derangement of respiration." Again, "I feel perfectly satisfied of the correctness of the opinion which I formed of Mr. F.'s case; and it strikes me that Dr. Mackelcan has placed himself in very equivocal circumstances, if he has originated the rumours, and I can hardly think they could have received any substantiality without the assistance of his *very mobile tongue*."