

account. Of course by this operation the voice is destroyed; it is therefore not available except in similar cases of emergency.—*British Med. Journal.*

## Canada Lancet.

MONTREAL, MAY 15, 1864.

A somewhat bitter controversy has recently arisen in Great Britain, from the death of a poor woman at Birkenhead, from post-partum hæmorrhage. The woman, it appears, had engaged no doctor to attend her, and at the last moment, several that were hastily summoned, refused to have anything to do with the case, and the patient died in consequence of the delay.

The *British Medical Journal* defends the conduct of these physicians, on the ground that this woman was a portion of the public, and that a medical man should no more be called upon to work for it without remuneration, than a lawyer, or other member of it. That the system of gratuitous medical services, hitherto so widely given, has had but one tendency, namely, the degradation of the profession in the estimation of this very public. That it is the business of society to provide for the payment of the doctor, when called to cases of this kind. That those who complain of the conduct of the Birkenhead physicians should put their hands into their pockets and form a fund for this purpose; and, that these doctors are going the right way to work, to teach the community their true value, by refusing to attend cases without being paid.

The *Medical Times*, on the contrary, taking a higher view of the subject, holds that the doctor is morally and socially constrained to give his services to all. That it is his duty, first to save life when endangered, afterwards to seek remuneration. That a little knowledge of the world, and a little humanity, would keep most men from throwing away their services on those who do not need them, on the one hand, and from allowing a woman to perish from want of help, on the other. That to refuse our assistance in such cases, is to violate the first rule of morality. And that medical men should have other and nobler ends in view than mere pecuniary interests.

We need hardly say that we perfectly agree with the *Times*, in condemning any human being, whatever be his calling, who would refuse to employ every means in his power to save the life of a fellow creature. We nevertheless consider it the duty of the public to appoint visiting physicians to each district, on whom the poor may have a right to call in case of emergency; and that those physicians should be properly paid for their services. Nor

would this, in our opinion, prevent medical men from continuing, as they have ever been, foremost in deeds of charity as it would have no other effect than to give them the liberty of selecting the objects of it. Altogether we are glad that the subject is being agitated, and hope that it will be productive of benefit both to the general and the medical poor.

We have received the first few numbers of a new weekly periodical "*The New-York Medical Independent and Pharmaceutical Reporter.*" It seems to be ably conducted, and well supplied with original articles by talented contributors. We wish it every success.

**UNIVERSITIES OF SCOTLAND**—A movement is at present on foot in the Scotch Universities to reduce the lectures on midwifery and materia medica to three months' courses, and to transfer these classes from the winter to the summer session. This improvement (?), in which the English schools some time ago set the example, has we understand, the support of the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, but is opposed in the University of Edinburgh.—*Medical Circular.*

### EXTRACT OF MALE FERN.

The ethereal extract is the preparation of male fern usually employed for the expulsion of tape worm, and is the only one given in the new Pharmacopœia. It is, as often styled, the oil of male-fern and is made by exhausting the root, by percolation with ether, which is afterwards distilled off, leaving a dark, oily liquid of the consistence of treacle. We have always been very successful with this extract, and generally prescribe for our patients in one drachm doses; directing the first to be taken in syrup or mucilage after a day's fast, and the second in three hours, with an ounce of castor oil. And if, on thorough search, the head cannot be discovered to have passed away with the evacuation nothing but a little gruel is allowed, and the dose with the oil is repeated the next morning.

Beale in his work on the Microscope (p. 36) directs from two to four drachms as a dose; Pereira (..) says from 30 m. to a drachm; while Christison (496) gives but 18 m. at night, and a similar dose in the morning.

We have been led to this subject on reading some excellent remarks in the *British Medical Journal* of the 9th April, by Dr. J. D. Rendle, of Hixton, Surrey, which we here subjoin. It will be perceived that his mode does away with the most objectionable part of our treatment, namely, the fasting.

"In every case of tape-worm which I have treated for the last three years, the mode of preparing the patient, the dose of the male-fern, and the way in which it was given, have been the same; all which I will now briefly describe. The patient is sent to the infirmary, and late in the evening on the day of admission, the treatment is commenced by giving an ordinary two-ounce black draught; the following day all solid food is forbidden, but almost unlimited supply of beef-tea is allowed, even milk, which is said to be the favorite food of the worm, I purposely forbid. On the evening of this day, half an ounce of castor oil is administered and early on the following morning, about three or four hours after taking the black draught, two drachms of the oil of male-fern are given, suspended