

a safe channel through which to give him surgical notoriety? If so, he is mistaken. I am willing to concede to Dr. Robert Nelson every credit for his surgical ability, and this, too, at a period when he had no competitors; but at the same time this ability must not be too much extolled, nor his performances as a lithotomist exaggerated, which in the critique before us has certainly been done at the expense of—TRUTH—and on this point I will permit others to speak, who ought to know.

Immediately after the receipt of the *Lancet* containing the criticism, I addressed letters to a number of medical gentlemen in various parts of the district, and have been kindly and promptly furnished with the following replies. To Drs. Holmes and Beaubien, who were contemporaneous with Dr. R. Nelson in this city, I especially addressed the following question, "Do you believe that 'Dr. R. Nelson operated for the stone close on to, if not more than, one hundred times in less than twenty years?'" And queries were generally addressed, as regards duration of practice, the prevalence of calculous diseases, the present existence of any cases, and whether my opinion, given to Dr. Gross, as to the rarity of the disease was correct or not. To the letters embodying such enquiries, the following replies have been received:—

*From Dr. HOLMES, Professor of Medicine, McGill College.*

DEAR HALL,—My opinion relative to calculous complaints in this region of country is that they are far from frequent. A practice of upwards of thirty years in this city, during fifteen of which I was one of the attending physicians and surgeons of the Montreal General Hospital, and subsequently consulting physician of the same, must have given me some opportunity. The practice of Dr. Robert Nelson cannot be taken as a criterion. I was present, as a student, and assisting at his first operation, which must have been about 1814 or '15. I know the case was then looked upon as extraordinary; its success established his reputation, and he became the monopolist of such cases, not only in Montreal, but through the greater part of the Lower Province. I consider your statements relative to stone to be generally correct.—Yours truly,

A. F. HOLMES, M.D.

Montreal, Dec. 22, 1855.

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Dr. Beaubien, who was a contemporary of Dr. R. Nelson, has verbally informed me that he does not believe that Dr. R. Nelson has operated for lithotomy over half the number of times specified in the *Lancet*; and from his observation of fully thirty years, he considers the disease a rare one in this district.

*From Dr. CAMPBELL, Prof. of Surgery, McGill College.*

MY DEAR HALL,—In reply to your note of yesterday respecting the frequency of calculous disorders in this city and neighbourhood, I have