

Our correspondent, Mr. W. J—, of N—, is mistaken in supposing that we object to his practising Mesmerism. We might lament that he should labor under the delusion; this would not, however, have called for public remark. It is the mode in which he makes known his peculiar qualifications that we deemed it right to censure. We are glad to perceive that he is so far conscious of what is due to propriety as to desire to withdraw his name from the Provincial Association, and will take care that his resignation is conveyed to the proper quarter.

REVIEWS.

Austria: its Literary, Scientific, and Medical Institutions, &c. By W. R. WILDE, Esq. Dublin: Curry and Co., 1843. 8vo, pp. 325.

We have attentively perused Mr. Wilde's work, and consider it as a highly creditable performance. The author has set an example of industry in travel which it would be well were the liberally endowed travelling fellows of Oxford to follow. Dr. Radcliffe assuredly never contemplated that individuals who were to share the bounty of his munificent bequest should be mere drones, as has been, for the most part, the case.

The first two chapters of the work comprise the subject of education generally in the Austrian dominions. The following remarks are very pertinent, as contrasting the courses of surgical instruction pursued in that country and this:—

"The education required in this (Austria)—the higher branches of study (*Studium der Arzneikunde und höhern Wundarzneikunst*)—requires five years, and none are permitted to attend the lectures upon these subjects but those who have obtained at the final examinations of their philosophical studies a certificate of first class in all the obligatory course. They only are eligible to become doctors of medicine and surgery.

"Students wishing to take out the degree of doctor of surgery are obliged, in addition to this course, to attend the surgical clinique, and the lectures upon the practice of surgery, during the fifth year; but as these lectures take place at the same hour as the ophthalmic clinique, those pupils are compelled to attend the latter in the next ensuing season—that is, the first semester of the sixth year. Those who wish to take out a special diploma, as *Augenarzt*, are obliged to repeat the second semester of the ophthalmic course; and those who wish to become master-accoucheurs are required to attend for two additional months in the obstetric clinique, and also to undergo an especial examination.

"Thus we find that, according to this very extensive and well-arranged course, not only is the routine of subjects accurately defined, but the student is obliged strictly to adhere to them in the manner, and according to the order marked out by the board of medical directors. I cannot too strongly admire and recommend this practice, more especially as it is one whose adoption in Great Britain would be a vast improvement in the present system of medical education there. In England, with few exceptions (and even in those exceptions the kind of instruction is very meagre), there is little or no preparatory education required by the different colleges and licensing bodies. The student is at perfect liberty to choose what lectures, and how many, he will first attend; the object not being

how he can best prepare his mind, by initiatory degrees, for the more mature branches of study, but how he can soonest, easiest, and cheapest become possessed of the *certificates of attendance* upon these lectures, a large majority of which said lectures he has never heard, nay, may never have seen the lecturer till he comes to purchase from him the necessary certificate. There being no tests required, as to his knowledge of any of the subjects he is *supposed* to study, till the hour of his examination (still some years distant), a great number of them have never cost him an hour's thought or reading; and when this examination does arrive, the chances that he is never asked a question except upon anatomy and surgery, and a little physiology, are, in the chief licensing institutions in Great Britain, so slight as almost to amount to a certainty. Again, in the order (if the term can be so applied) of these studies, what difficulties do not hourly present themselves in the student's path. Hospitals and practical subjects are attended to long before their theory has ever been learned. Here the pupil really *walks* the hospital without acquiring a definite knowledge of any one thing; he witnesses operations of which he neither understands the rationale nor the cause, except by his grinder, during a few hard months' study prior to his examination, the result of which more frequently depends upon his memory than his practical knowledge; he is never once called upon to test or exercise his acquirements until the hour before he receives a license to practise, and too frequently he finds, at the conclusion of his studies, that he has begun at the wrong end. As matters now stand in this country, this is not the student's fault, but the fault of those who have, or ought to have, the direction of his studies and pursuits."

The recompense of medical attendance is usually proportioned throughout Europe to the cost of the necessities of life. Thus, in Vienna, where we have known a carriage and pair of horses bought for £20 the ordinary fee to a doctor of medicine or surgery is a *golden münzt* (two shillings) for each visit, while that for a consultation is always a ducat. The law, moreover, makes strict provision for the remuneration of medical men; and in posthumous cases the physician and apothecary take precedence in this respect of the relatives and legatees. The highest sum, according to our author, realised by any physician or surgeon in Vienna is from fifty to sixty thousand florins a-year.

There is no branch of medical science that is better managed in Austria, says Mr. Wilde, or that might with greater advantage be imitated in many respects by ourselves than that of pharmacy.

"It is there studied and practised as a separate and distinct branch of knowledge; the apothecary neither aspiring to the character of a medical practitioner on the one hand, nor descending to the trade of a druggist or retail grocer on the other. There, the apothecary is solely a compounder of physicians' and surgeons' prescriptions. He dare not, under the severest penalties, prescribe even the most simple remedies, nor perform the most insignificant surgical operations—nay, more, he cannot sell a dose of physic without the written order of a physician or surgeon who is recognised by the university of his country. Under this order of things the prescriber and the taker of medicine have the advantage of having that medicine accurately compounded by a properly-educated pharmacist, whose whole time and ability are devoted to the subject. Only a certain fixed number of apothecaries are permitted to dispense and sell medicine in the empire; in Vienna the number is limited to forty, and never varies, for the *Apotheke* or shop, like the title of monarchy,

never dies, but merely changes masters. These establishments are known by their signs, and not by the names of their owners, who may be, and often are, widows of apothecaries, or merely tenants of the relatives or executors of such. The apothecary has no connection whatever with the patient; he never leaves his shop to apply his remedies or perform the minor operations of surgery, such as bleeding, cupping, leeching, &c., as with us—these being, as I have shown, the exclusive province of the *Wundarzt*. Each medicine has a certain stated price fixed by authority, and marked in the pharmacopœia and medical tax-book, so that no exorbitant demand can possibly be made; and, as has been already stated, no apothecary dare, under a heavy penalty, compound the prescription of any medical man whose name is not set forth in the printed list of authorised practitioners. The poor of this country being everywhere so well provided for by the state, the great number of hospitals that exist, and the smallness of the fees received by the practitioner, enabling the middle classes to procure proper medical advice, render unnecessary the system of self-doctoring or quack-doctoring in use in Great Britain. The department of pharmacy consists of doctors of chemistry and master apothecaries; and these latter are again subdivided into the *Apotheker*, who is a *bonâ fide* possessor of a shop, the *Pächter*, or tenant who hires such of an apothecary or his relatives, and the *Provisor*, who is a dispenser employed by an apothecary unable to manage his own concerns, or by his widow or friends, &c., and, finally, the *Gehülfe*, or journeyman employed under any of these. No apothecary or doctor of chemistry can hold two establishments."

The system works well in smothering irregular practice; let quack-ridden England ponder this in her heart.

"In Austria, both the public on the one hand, and the prescriber and legitimate compounder of medicine on the other, are protected against quacks, mountebanks, patent medicines, wonder-working nostrums, poisonous pills, mineral cosmetics, and the thousand deleterious substances advertised, puffed, and vended, under the name of specifics and panaceas, not only with the permission, but frequently with the *authority of the state*, in Great Britain. The public prints are not hired to entrap the ignorant or credulous, by lauding empirics and impostors; the public eye is not disgusted by unseemly and disgraceful placards; nor modest females insulted, by having indecent handbills thrust upon them in the open streets, as occurs daily in this country. Moreover, no one is allowed to sell medicine of any description without a proper education and a satisfactory license; and the trade of a druggist is, as it should be, confined to the wholesale vending of medicines to apothecaries. England might and ought to take a wholesome lesson from this well-ordered condition of the present state of pharmacy in the Austrian states."

Chapter V commences with an account of the race of German students, which is followed by reflections upon the present state of science in Germany. In the next chapter the great general hospital is described. It is of immense size, furnished with 2,214 beds, 1,247 for males and 967 for females, receiving from 18,000 to 20,000 patients annually. It contains, moreover, the residences of the priests, directors, professors, physicians, and other medical attendants; the chapels, the pharmacy, and compounding department, pathological museum, lecture-rooms, operating theatres, besides a *gasthaus*, with a *table d'hôte* for the use of the students; the latter cheap and bad.

The admirable system of clinical instruction pursued in the above hospital is fully described, more particularly as regards ophthalmology, for which the Vienna school has so long enjoyed a transcendent reputation. The labors of Skoda, in reference to auscultation, and those of Rokitansky to pathological anatomy, are discussed in chapter VIII. The value of Skoda's researches in that field were, we believe, first alluded to in this country in Dr. Catherwood's work upon Diseases of the Lungs.

The author enters into a detailed account of the *Gebäranstalt*, or imperial lying-in hospital of Vienna, one of the most splendid and extensive establishments of the kind in Europe.

"Pregnant women of all grades, and of every religious persuasion, can avail themselves of the advantages of this asylum; the poor and destitute are admitted gratis, and the rich by paying a certain stated sum; thus it is well adapted to the circumstances of all classes where poverty and necessity, or where fear and a desire of secrecy, induce such to apply for refuge therein during their hour of trial. Here every comfort is supplied—no visitor can intrude, no law affect, and no authority reach its inmates—nay, more, the very fact of their having been delivered there is inadmissible either as documentary or personal evidence in a court of justice. The whole institution is divided into two great divisions, the paying and the non-paying; the former is perfectly distinct from the latter, and consists of three classes; to the first, or highest class, are allotted five neat, well-furnished, and secluded chambers, perfectly distinct and separate from each other and from the rest of the establishment; they are guarded with the greatest strictness, and are inaccessible to all but the attendant physician, and, if necessary, the nurse. Each of these is occupied by one person alone, who pays one florin twenty kreutzers, or about two shillings and eightpence daily for its use. These are said to be for the young ladies of the imperial city, and are, I have been credibly informed, sometimes the resort of females from among the highest circles of society.

"The second class have not separate chambers, but occupy two large rooms with six beds in each; the cost of admission into this portion of the hospital is fifty-one kreutzers, or about one shilling and eightpence halfpenny daily. The *Entbundenen*, or those already delivered, are separate from those pregnant awaiting their accouchement.

"The third class occupy several wards, with ten beds in each, and as females are received at any time after the sixth month of pregnancy, those undelivered are kept apart from those in the puerperal state; the whole are separated into the *Schwangeren* or pregnant, the *Gebärenden* or parturients, and the *Wöchnerinnen* or puerperals. The expense in this last division is eighteen kreutzers, or sevenpence daily. Not only in the first, but in all the three paying classes, no admission is permitted; none are allowed, on any pretext whatever, to enter therein, except the immediate attendants; and besides this, the localities of this part are so arranged as to secure those residing therein from the gaze of the curious. The principle of secrecy is imposed as one of the strictest duties on all those in any way engaged in the institution. Should a female desert her family and take shelter here, the vigilance of the police, or the inquiries of her friends, may trace her to the door of the *Gebäranstalt*, but no farther. Here the executive enters not; such is the law, that not only is a father or a husband denied an entrance, but he cannot, as has been already observed, receive from the records of the hospital, or any one connected therewith, any testimony of her reception or delivery. Indeed, in many instances, and in

almost all the cases occurring among the first or highest class, such evidence could not possibly be obtained, as a female may enter, accomplish her delivery, and depart from the hospital without her name being known, or even her face seen by the physician or any of the attendants! The entrance into these paying wards is not the same as that leading into the general hospital, but by a private way, ending in a small *cul-de-sac*, that runs between the ancient Spanish cloister and an adjoining barrack; and as it is forbidden to have any windows looking into this lane, persons approaching that way are perfectly secure from observation. At the end of this *cul-de-sac* there is one small door, with a bell attached to it; a porter remains at the entrance day and night, and conducts the person requiring admission to whatever department or division they require, or their means afford. Persons are allowed to appear masked, veiled, or otherwise disguised; they may enter at any time previous to their delivery, and remain as long as they wish; they may carry their infants away with them, or send them to the foundling hospital through the medical attendant. The names and address of persons admitted into this division are not required, but each female must write her name and residence upon a billet, which she seals, and on the back of which the physician inscribes the number of the room and bed she occupies. This ticket is then placed in a small locked-up cabinet beside her bed, and at her departure it is returned to her unopened, its object being that, in case of her death, the institution may inform her friends, or be able to produce this testimony of her decease on the demand of her relations or the police.

Females entering the first class apartments of this division are not required to apply to the porter in the usual manner, but may, if they wish, go to the apartments of the attending accoucheur direct, who will conduct them to their appointed chamber, and with similar secrecy and precaution they may go out. The rooms of this class are likewise provided with cradles and every necessary comfort. Here the patient is permitted to bring her own servants and linen if she desire it, or she can be supplied from the stores of the hospital with every such requisite, &c. Without her own desire, no one except the doctor, not even a nurse or midwife, is allowed to enter her chamber; and, in case of severe illness, she is at liberty to call in another physician along with the usual house-attendant. In the year 1840 twenty-two females were delivered in this part of the establishment. The females in each of those three paying classes may remove their children from the foundling-hospital when they please, on defraying the expenses already incurred in their rearing and education.

About nineteen pages are devoted to the practice and operations of Jäger, one of the most distinguished living oculists, of consummate skill certainly as an operator. Mr. Wilde uses, in several places, the term "distission" for discussion—a mistake which ought to have been corrected in the table of errata.

We recommend the work as a useful hand-book to students visiting the Austrian metropolis.

LETTER ON THE BENEVOLENT FUND.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—A wet morning gives the opportunity of addressing you. Some weeks since I had a long conversation with my friend Mr. Dodd, of Chichester, who suggested to me the outline of the following plan, furnished me with some of the materials from which

the subsequent observations have been deduced, and suggested my bringing forward the subject at Leeds. I did not, however, consider any of the usual meetings of the society a proper occasion for introducing matters so statistical and financial; I had thought of mentioning them after dinner, but having consulted with Mr. Dodd and our mutual friend, Dr. Forbes, we agreed that it was scarcely likely to obtain all the undivided attention to facts which it would require, and I determined upon making it the subject of a communication to the Provincial Journal, by which means I should, in one day, place the matter before ten times the number of my professional brethren who were assembled at Leeds.

It has been often said, that charity is twice blessed—blessed to him who gives and to him who receives; and this is true; but as if the stamp of imperfection must attach to every thing earthly, even heaven-born charity is not without its admixture of evil; for, as regards its recipient, it involves a feeling of dependance, and produces a sense of conscious helplessness, which humbles and depresses, and shrivels the active energies of the character; this entwines itself around the heart, and in its cold embrace contracts the benevolent affections and embitters life.

Now, therefore, he who ministers to the wants of his fellow man, does well; but he who anticipates the cause of want, and saves him from the dependance attaching to its relief, does better; and it will be my endeavour to submit to the consideration of your readers, a plan by which I would enable him to rise above want, by which I would strip the struggling ivy of dependance from the oak, by which I would cut out the canker of helplessness from the rose.

There are in existence several modes of relieving professional distress; as

a. Our own admirable benevolent fund, which admits no title but distress for admission to its benefits; and I verily think that the honest reason why this institution has not been more adequately supported, is this very idea of the apparent humiliation involved by partaking its bounty.

b. Local societies which partake of the nature of a benevolent fund, conjointly with that of an annuitant society, inasmuch as a small pecuniary qualification is required on the one hand, and on the other the amount of this subscription is by no means in proportion to the benefit returned; nor does it give a claim to any fixed sum, which, on the contrary, is regulated by the amount of distress to be relieved, and by the benevolent views of the dispensing committee. Such, for instance, as that existing for the West Riding of Yorkshire, and the eastern division of the county of Surrey.

c. Common insurances on life, or the common purchase of annuities, which need no comment.

I have already stated the *apparent* rather than real ground of objection to the first; to the second, I would remark that the same objection exists, so far as it is purely benevolent, because it gives to the contributor *no right* to any fixed and determinate sum; because, I believe, the relief is almost always limited to widows who have not £50 a year to live on from all other sources; and because the relief afforded is inadequate to secure to the widow that position in society which it is most desirable she should maintain.