

SHEFFIELD PETITION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

Since, (and the word here has reference to a fact capable of easy proof,) Dr. Favell has thought proper to appear in your columns of the 20th November, for the purpose of preventing your readers being (to use his own expression) "*staggered by the petition*," a copy of which appeared in your number of the preceding week, and which petition is now in course of signature in this place, I must request you, in fairness to the numerous and respectable individuals who have already signed it, to insert this reply.

The Doctor "begged to observe," that this petition was not another petition which was adopted at a public meeting of the profession, held October 16, 1844. Now as both petitions have appeared in your Journal, and as they differ so much in their nature, it might have been imagined that your enlightened readers would have been able of themselves to discriminate between them, without the assistance of Dr. Favell. But further, the Doctor makes reference to a meeting of the profession, at which the petition which he favours was adopted, though not without opposition, and complains that the minority instead of "*submitting*" to the decision of the majority, got up a counter petition; and he charges the parties so doing, with at the same time *secretly getting it up, and industriously carrying it about from house to house*. Now such a palpable self-contradiction requires no comment; and as regards the submitting part of the question, let me ask Dr. Favell by what authority he and his friends claim to control the opinions of a minority?

But it yet remains for Dr. Favell to prove that a *majority of the profession in this neighbourhood* approve of the views taken by a *majority of that meeting*, which was called by the signatures of the parties who were the parents of his favoured petition, and was attended by 36 gentlemen only out of from 96 to 98 who had been invited; when therefore considerable difference of opinion existed, it could not be supposed that such a meeting would fairly represent the profession here.

The Doctor does not seem pleased to see it announced that what he calls the "counter petition," had already received the signatures of a very numerous and influential body of regularly educated practitioners of medicine and surgery; and states that he has no means of knowing how far this statement is correct; and he seems to regret that the names have not been published. Now, as to the means used by himself to obtain information I know nothing; and there is not the slightest objection to publish the names, except that the petition could not then be received by the House of Commons. However, I will provide a copy, which shall be open for inspection at all times, either to the Doctor or any friend who has interest in the matter, and should the original be in my possession, no medical gentleman shall be refused a sight of it.

Once more; Dr. Favell regrets the names have not been published, "in order that the profession might be able to appreciate the amount of influence which in this neighbourhood is exerted in behalf of *quackery*

and imposture." So ridiculous, and uncalled for an insinuation will speak for itself. I leave it to Dr. Favell, and the cause which requires such advocacy.

I am, Sir,
Yours respectfully,

HENRY BOULTBEE.

Sheffield, Nov. 25, 1844.

VALERIANATE OF QUININE.

M. Francis Devay, physician to the Hotel Dieu, at Lyons, has lately published a memoir on the valerianate of quinine; its mode of preparation; its chemical and pharmaceutical characters; and its employment in intermittent fevers and neuralgia. The valerianate of quinine, in small doses, is a very efficacious anti-periodic, superior to the sulphate from its neurosthenic properties; neither does it give rise to the gastro-intestinal symptoms occasionally caused by the latter salt. The quinine is modified by its intimate association with a vegetable acid.

The valerianate of quinine is formed by one equivalent of valerianic acid, one of quinine, and two of water, one of which constitutes the water of crystallisation. It has a slight odour of valerianic acid, and a bitter taste, which resembles bark; It is easily dissolved in water at the ordinary temperature; alcohol dissolves it much better, and olive oil also has the same effect, on the application of a slight heat. The mineral, and most of the organic acids, decompose it. Submitted to a temperature of about 90° R. it loses one equivalent of water, softens, and melts into a resinous substance.

It is prepared in the following manner:—Into an alcoholic and concentrated solution of quinine, is poured a slight excess of valerianic acid; the whole is then suspended in twice its bulk of distilled water; the mixture is accurately stirred, and submitted to evaporation in a stove, at a temperature not exceeding 50°. When the evaporation of the alcohol has taken place, the valerianate is presented in the form of beautiful crystals, sometimes isolated, at others grouped together, which increase from day to day. It may also be prepared by double decomposition, by mixing the sulphate of quinine with the muriate of lime or barytes, dissolving both in weak alcohol.

The valerianate of quinine may be recognized by the following means:—1st. A concentrated alcoholic solution of the valerianate of quinine precipitates the neutral aqueous solution of the nitrate of silver; this precipitate is redissolved in a large quantity of water.

2nd. An aqueous solution of the valerianate of quinine does not precipitate that of the chloride of barium.

3rd. This aqueous solution, when boiled, gives rise to the separation of oleaginous drops of the melted valerianate.

4th. If this solution is treated with acids, there is a separation of valerianic acid, easily appreciable by its odour; and if this decomposition is effected with some crystallised valerianate of quinine and concentrated acid in solution, valerianic acid is obtained in an oleaginous form.

The valerianate of quinine, like that of zinc, being very easily decomposed, it is best to exhibit it in the most simple form, upon which its success in a great measure depends. We com-

