

new regulations of the poor-law commissioners coming into force next March. This is more particularly the case in those unions where the guardians have peremptorily refused any remuneration for midwifery attendance. Surely, Sir, this must be decidedly opposed to the wishes of the poor-law commissioners, who seem now desirous of doling out to the medical profession a proportion of justice due to their character and station. I remain, Sir, yours respectfully,

AN UNION SURGEON.

August 19, 1842.

* * We invite the attention of the Poor-law Commissioners to this letter. It is quite clear that no contracts should be entered into now.

DEFENCE OF SURGEONS IN OBTAINING FOREIGN MEDICAL DIPLOMAS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is the mark of a badly-cultivated mind to make sweeping conclusions from a few facts. To condemn an entire class because some individuals of that class are censurable, is in accordance neither with justice nor common sense. Yet specimens of this are not few. The subject of foreign medical degrees has of late given ample scope for such sort of anathemas. Now you, Sir, who can see through the mist of antiquated usage the murky gloom of conventionalism, and perceive the clear atmosphere of reason beyond, are in little danger of having your feet caught in the traps set by corporation cunning. What is a "good" degree, a real *orthodox* degree, and what is its intrinsic value? Is its possession a proof of medical skill? Does it give any man a right of superiority in a medical point of view over any one of equal skill and experience? May not a man become an M.D. of Oxford or Cambridge, without ever having attended a case on his own responsibility? How, in the name of common sense, can a degree from Edinburgh or Glasgow elevate its holder above the licentiate of Apothecaries' Hall, whose credentials have frequently been refused to graduates of Edinburgh, in consequence of their classical and professional ignorance? And why is a member of the College of Surgeons and licentiate of the hall, who has been for ten or twenty years in practice, to be stigmatised as a quack, because he is willing to devote himself more exclusively to physicians' practice, and thinks fit to procure some university sanction and reputable authority for taking the distinctive appellation of "doctor?" Circumstances in life may have led him to the step, and he seems to be following the leadings of Provi-

dence in taking it. And how can it, in the eyes of reasonable and honest men, be thought to be an act of discredit? The healing art is a *Dei donum*, and knows nothing of conventional location. Like pure and undefiled religion, it is free as the air. Yet pride and avarice would corrupt both, and tell us that medicine is nothing without having at its origin an university of a certain construction, nor religion anything without a mitre, and have placed a vast number of the enlightened community in the ranks of "quacks" and "infidels." But before a man cries "quack," he should ascertain that the party is ignorant of the art he professes. I believe that if the foreign diplomas were inspected, they would be found to be very satisfactory testimonials, in many, if not in most, cases; for on the face of them they bear a declaration of the attested qualifications, by reason of which the degree has been conferred, declaring that the holder had previously undergone satisfactory examinations, and was already in practice. Evidence of moral and professional respectability is also required. Such persons are honestly and rationally entitled to the degree of M.D. without being justly stigmatised by offensive names, and none but men of a low cast of mind will place them in an improper category. And why should not medical as well as military and naval men rise by age and experience? In the *army* a rank by *purchase* is not considered to be disreputable. I believe, indeed, that none are more fond of calling out "quack" than those who are themselves of a quackish disposition. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A FOREIGN GRADUATE, THIRTY YEARS
IN PRACTICE AS M.R.C.S.L.

London, Aug. 26, 1842.

PRICE AND TERMS OF ERLANGEN DEGREES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It having accidentally come to my knowledge that a most respectable practitioner in medicine, resident within twelve miles of this metropolis, had been charged 100*l.* for the diploma of M.D. of the ancient University of Erlangen, near Frankfort, by one of the advertising agents, when the sum of 22*l.* only is required by the university, I beg to inform my professional brethren that on addressing a letter to Dr. Leupold, the present dean of faculty, requesting to be admitted to the degree of M.D., containing a statement upon oath (sworn before a magistrate) of the applicant being a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and of the Apothecaries' Company, or an undergraduate of any university, with a recommendatory letter or certificate from some respectable eminent surgeons and physicians, as to character, capability, &c., with a thesis in English, on