

## PART IV.—NOTES AND NEWS.

*The Lunacy Commissioners and the Surgical Home for Women.**Letter from CHARLES P. PHILLIPS, Esq.*

SIR,—The Commissioners in Lunacy having observed in the *Times* of the 15th ultimo a paragraph relating to the London Surgical Home, it became their duty to communicate upon the subject of it with the founder and Senior Surgeon of that institution.

I forward herewith a copy of the correspondence. As the matter is of considerable public importance, the Commissioners hope that you will be able to give the letters a place in your Journal. I am, &c.

CHARLES PALMER PHILLIPS, *Secretary.*

Office of Commissioners in Lunacy, 19, Whitehall Place, S.W. ;  
January 23rd, 1867.

Office of Commissioners in Lunacy, 19, Whitehall Place, S.W. ;  
January 3rd, 1867.

SIR,—I am directed to transmit for your perusal the enclosed copy of a paragraph which appeared in the *Times* newspaper of the 15th ultimo ; and to inform you that the House-Surgeon of the London Surgical Home, having attended a meeting of this Board on Monday last to explain that paragraph, then substantially admitted to the Commissioners present the reception into the Home of females of unsound mind.

The Commissioners will now be glad to hear from yourself, as Senior Surgeon of the Home, whether there is any and what mistake in the paragraph, or on the part of the House-Surgeon, as to the objects of the Home ; and, if any mistake has arisen, whether you have taken, or intend immediately to take, any and what steps to disabuse the public mind upon the subject of this apparent violation of the Lunacy Law.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES PALMER PHILLIPS, *Secretary.*

I. BAKER BROWN, Esq.

[The paragraph in the *Times* newspaper above referred to, and in that newspaper headed "The London Surgical Home," contained the following passage : "A peculiar feature of the Home is, that, in addition to the ordinary maladies which come under the head of surgical diseases, women are received who are of unsound mind, provided that their infirmities are not hereditary or of a long duration previous to their application for admission. In it the great experiment is being made for the first time of endeavouring to cure mental diseases by surgical operations."]

136, Harley Street, Cavendish Square, W. ;  
January 5th, 1867.

SIR,—In answer to your communication dated the 3rd inst., I beg to state that the article in the *Times* newspaper to which you refer was written by a gentleman, a perfect stranger to me, who came on the part of the *Times* newspaper, was shown over the Home and supplied with all the papers by

VOL. XIII.

9

the Secretary; and I never saw the article until it appeared in print the next morning. I was very much vexed at the mistake therein, and instantly took such steps to ensure correction as I thought would be sufficient. I have been daily waiting to see my hopes realised, and am now most willing to take any steps the Commissioners may advise to disabuse the public mind upon the subject of any apparent violation of the Lunacy Law.

I shall be very happy to wait upon the Commissioners to offer any further explanation, if they think it necessary. I remain, &c.,

I. B. BROWN.

CHARLES PALMER PHILLIPS, Esq.

Office of Commissioners in Lunacy, 19, Whitehall Place, S.W.;  
January 8th, 1867.

SIR,—The Commissioners, observing with pleasure your sense of the gravity of the mistake in the *Times'* article of the 15th ultimo upon the London Surgical Home, direct me to acknowledge their receipt of your letter of the 5th inst., and at once to obtain from yourself, as Senior Surgeon of that institution, a plain and direct contradiction of its being open for the reception of females of unsound mind. The Commissioners doubt not that, in possession of such an authoritative contradiction, they will be able themselves to procure for it that necessary publicity which you have hitherto failed to get.

I am, &c.,

CHARLES PALMER PHILLIPS, *Secretary*.

I. BAKER BROWN, Esq.,  
The London Surgical Home.

136, Harley Street, Cavendish Square, W.;  
January 10th, 1867.

SIR,—I have no hesitation at once in stating, as Senior Surgeon and founder of the London Surgical Home, that the institution is not open for the reception of females of unsound mind, and in no papers or advertisements issued or published by authority has it ever been stated so. During last year, one patient, a servant of —, was taken in as suffering from hysteria. I immediately discovered she was of unsound mind, and, as quickly as possible, had her removed to Hanwell Asylum. I am, &c.,

I. B. BROWN.

CHARLES PALMER PHILLIPS, Esq.

*Mr. Baker Brown must feel highly favoured that a special reporter should have been despatched from Printing House Square to describe his institution. We presume, however, that the statement made in the report was furnished to that gentleman by some one officially connected with the Home. The profession will take note of Mr. Brown's announcement, that no patient of unsound mind has been cured of the disorder by clitoridectomy, in the Surgical Home. It was understood that such cures were the striking proofs of the efficacy of that procedure.\*—British Medical Journal, January 26th.*

\* SURGERY FOR LUNATICS.—In the painful and disgusting case of Hancock v. Peaty, the advocate, Dr. Spinks, stated that the unfortunate lunatic had been placed under the care of Mr. Baker Brown, who, "unknown to her husband, had performed a most cruel, and he might say barbarous, operation upon her." As this is one of the great experiments for the cure of mental diseases by surgical operation to which the '*Times*,' on unknown authority, alluded, and which Mr. Baker Brown so promptly confounded his house-surgeon by repudiating, so far as his Home is concerned, when interrogated by the Lunacy Commissioners, the statement of Dr. Spinks is not without importance. Mr. Peaty himself is reported