suming the remaining organic matter, and leaving nothing but pure water containing salts of potash, soda, &c.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Cheltenham, May, 1860.

HENRY BIRD, F.R.C.S. &c.

P.S. The following is a list of common deodorants:—1, Burnett's chloride of zinc; 2, permanganate of potash; 3, protochloride of iron; 4, sulphate of protoxide of iron; 5, sulphate of alum; 6, sulphate of alum and sulphate of iron; 7, sulphate of iron and common salt. These all appeared to act in nearly the same manner upon sewage, and sulphate of iron and alum seemed to be the most efficient. When the smallest quantity of chlorine was added to either of these solutions the smell immediately disappeared. As no danger of poisoning can accrue from using even a strong solution of sulphate of iron and alum, and as it acts as well as, if not better than, the other deodorizers, it ought to be adopted in preference to lime, zinc, and all others; besides being the cheapest of all.

TRANSMISSION OF SECONDARY SYPHILIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The reviewer of Mr. Harrison's book on Venereal Diseases (*THE LANCET*, vol. i. 1860, p. 471) mentions the author's opinions respecting the transmission of secondary syphilis. Mr. Harrison thinks that this disease, which is supposed to be directly conveyed from the male to the female, does, in reality, reach the latter very seldom otherwise than by the intermediate action of the foetus contaminated by the father.

I am certainly extremely happy to be supported by Mr. Harrison's authority, but I must beg to observe that not only have I long ago expressed this opinion, but also based it upon the very arguments which Mr. Harrison brings forward. The author, for instance, says—

1st. That in most of the cases of ascertained secondary transmission the disease has been conveyed from the male to the female, and not from the female to the male.

2ndly. That in such cases the first symptoms which are observed upon the woman appear in regions which leave no room for suspecting infection by coitus or any other contact.

3rdly. That the female then presents neither primary chancre nor bubo.

I repeat that I am very glad to see my arguments sanctioned by the approbation of the learned author, who doubtless has clinically verified their value. But I must remind your readers that these arguments have been put forward by myself, pretty well in the same words as used by Mr. Harrison, in my work entitled "On the New Doctrines of Syphilis," (Paris, 1858.)

Lyons, May, 1860.

P. DIDAY.

THE REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS BILL FOR SCOTLAND.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The annexed is a copy of a petition presented to the House of Commons. If space permit, you will oblige the petitioners by giving it publicity in your journal.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Rochester, May, 1860.

THOS. P. BEAVAN, L.R.C.P. Edin.

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The humble petition of the undersigned medical practitioners of Rochester, Strood, Chatham, and Brompton,

Showeth,—That your petitioners have seen with regret that in a Bill now before your honourable House, intituled "Registration of Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill," it is proposed to render more stringent the clause in the present Acts relating to the registration of deaths in Scotland by the compulsory exaction of gratuitous medical certificates of death, within five days, under a penalty.

Your petitioners are respectfully of opinion that a medical certificate of the cause of death is in the nature of a copyright; and inasmuch as the registrar is paid a fee for the mere insertion of the certificate in the register, it is only equitable that the medical attendant, if required to furnish a certificate of the cause of death, should be remunerated for his time and professional opinion by a moderate fee.

Your petitioners respectfully submit that to impose upon the

medical practitioners of Scotland a fine for the non-performance of a gratuitous service to the State is a great hardship, and humbly pray that your honourable House will expunge the penal portion of the 41st section of the present Act from the amended Bill, and consent to the payment of such moderate fee for each medical certificate as in your wisdom may be fair and reasonable, and for which, as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

ADAM MARTIN, M.D., Rochester.

J. B. JARDINE, M.D., Chatham.

HERMAN B. TRIBE, M.R.C.S. & L.S.A., ditto.

A. STEDDY, M.R.C.S. & L.S.A., ditto.

JOHN J. ELY, M.R.C.S. & L.S.A., ditto.

HENRY PEACOCK, M.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., ditto.

JAS. DULVEY, L.R.C.P. Edin., Brompton.

HENRY WEEKS, L.R.C.P. E., ditto.

W. BURTON, L.R.C.P. E., ditto.

JOHN D. BURNS, M.D., L.R.C.P. L., ditto.

JARMAN PATRICK, M.R.C.S., L.S.A., ditto.

J. H. FAYLE, M.R.C.S. E., Chatham.

FRED. JAS. BROWN, M.D., Rochester.

J. H. HUTCHINS, M.R.C.S., L.S.A., ditto.

WM. BELL, M.R.C.S., ditto.

J. S. KNIGHT, M.D., M.R.C.P., ditto.

WM. BROWN, M.D., M.R.C.S., Strood.

G. H. DRAWBRIDGE, M.B. Cantab., Rochester.

JOHN LANGSTON, M.R.C.S. &c., Strood.

THOS. PEARCE BEAVAN, L.R.C.P. Ed., M.R.C.S., Rochester.

STEPHEN STEELE, M.R.C.S., Strood.

THE INDIAN MEDICAL SERVICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—By the publication of the Order in the Government Gazette, purporting to give effect to the Royal Warrant for the medical service, the medical officers are left in as unfavourable a position with reference to pay as ever; for now, instead of the pay and allowances of their relative military rank, they will draw those of the grade below them. The assistant-surgeon of six years' service, who ranks with a captain, will receive no more than his junior under six years' service, who ranks with a lieutenant. This state of matters exists only in India, where, one would think,—excepting, perhaps, the coast of Africa,—a medical officer should be most valuable, and is hardest worked.

In all her Majesty's dominions, India excepted, the surgeons receive the pay and allowances of their corresponding military grade; indeed, they have more. In India they are to have less; and as to allowances, even less than those of the next step in military rank below them. The wording of the Order is specious, and at first sight may convey an idea of fairness to those who do not understand the items of the Indian officer's pay-bill; but a little investigation will show how unfairly the rule will operate, for while it leaves the assistant-surgeon of less than six years' service in the receipt of the pay and allowances of a lieutenant, it gives no more to an officer above six years' service, who ranks as a captain; and the pay and allowances of a captain only to a surgeon who ranks as a major. These officers, in any other part of the world in which they serve, receive not only as much, but considerably more than their corresponding military ranks (*vide* H.M. Warrant). The ordinary remuneration that every officer receives in India is made up of a series of items, the aggregate being the 256r. 10a. of a lieutenant, 415r. 6a. of a captain, and 789r. 3a. of a major; and this they draw in India whether employed or not, provided they are in full batta stations, the amount being a little less if on half batta. Gazetted to any appointment, regimental or staff, they become the recipients of some additional staff, company, or command allowance; and to pretend that the items which make up these totals are the extra allowances, and not part of the regular pay, is simply unfair; and one would ask, if they be necessary for the military, why not for the medical officer?

An illiberal construction of her Majesty's Warrant must excite much disappointment and discontent throughout the medical service in India; and it cannot but tend to increase the difficulty of obtaining candidates for the service. The medical officers have but recently been rated at a higher valuation, both as to rank and pay, by her Majesty's Government, at home and in the colonies; and why it should be otherwise in India it is difficult to understand.

The surgeons of the army seek only for a fair and just con-