EFFECT OF THE MEDICAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE NEW UNIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Your manly and generous defence of the medical profession deserves the warmest admiration of every member. I feel, therefore, that I shall not be trespassing too much upon your time, if I relate my own case, and show how I, as a medical man, have suffered from the effects of the New Poor Law. Rather more than seven years ago I came to this place, having succeeded an elderly practitioner after his death, by payment of a handsome sum (for the goodwill of his business) to his widow. His practice consisted, in a great measure, of parishes, to which I was re-appointed by the overseers. By dint of perseverance and hard work I was gradually improving my practice, and being strong and active, I did not mind work by night or day. In fact, I was doing well. There was, however, another practitioner residing in this place, but, by some unfortunate habits, he was gradually losing his patients, and I, by his loss, consequently became the gainer. In 1835 he died, and I purchased of the widow the goodwill of his business. Now, his practice consisted very much in attendance on parishes, many of which I could have obtained previously from the officers (they being offered to me), but refused from motives of delicacy. When, therefore, I made a calculation of both practices, I found that I was in the receipt of 80*l.* a year, from parishes alone, not one of which was more than five miles from me, if so much. That I did my duty to the poor, I have the testimony of almost every respectable individual in the respective parishes, in favour of my "care, attention, and humanity to the poor."

I now began to think of clearing away all obstacles, and putting by some money, for I was not like many young men, possessing a rich parent, or friend, who was willing to advance any sum for the advantage of his profession. Mine was uphill work; I was compelled to borrow, and, of course, to pay again; that, however, I did not mind, for I found that by care and attention I had the means of repayment in my power. But, lo! here came the "malum immedicabile," as Ovid would say; or, as Terence, the "dammum," &c.; and so completely have my parishes been disjointed, by uniting them to different Unions, and placing them in districts, that my income is reduced from 80*l.* to a trifle more than 20*l.*; and that, after paying handsomely for what I thought would be a continuance of the attendance, for, without any flattering thought, I knew myself to be a favourite both with the poor

and with the leading men in the parishes. I might, perhaps, have obtained some of these districts, but I knew that I could not attend properly to the wants of the poor, and therefore I declined them.

Now, Sir, if this be not a grievance I know not what is, for sure I am that I cannot be the only one of my brethren who has been so mulcted for the labour and expense which he has bestowed on the advancement of his professional knowledge. I dissected when fourteen years of age, at Mr. Carpue's, and could have passed the College then. I have not been idle since, and that is twenty years ago; and, now, to be served as I have stated, is a trifle too much for flesh and blood to bear patiently. At any rate I rejoice that I am not indebted to the Commissioners for anything; for if there was a law frameable, the tendency of which should be to degrade the medical profession, surely this new Poor Law is the one. I relate my own case, because I think it is the duty of every individual who is injured by the new arrangements to state the cause, in order that the effects of this truly Algerine enactment may be exposed. I will not offer to apologise for thus troubling you, because I have been long aware of your urgent anxiety to hear and remedy the grievances of the profession, and on that ground I know that any apology would be superfluous, and beg to remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

FLETCHER WILSON, M.R.C.S.
Hallaton, near Harbro', Dec. 16, 1837.

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

Tuesday, Dec. 26, 1837.

A MEETING of Council was held this evening. Members present:—

Dr. WEBSTER, President.

Messrs. Bayfield; Davidson; Davies; Eales; Evans; Farre; Harrison; Howell; Pilcher; Wagstaffe; Dr. Marshall Hall.

Dr. John Walker, of Marylebone-street, Portland-place, was elected a member of the Association.

The PRESIDENT stated that amongst the medical officers of Unions already appointed,—

Of apothecaries only, there were.....	316
Legalised by the Act of 1815	201
Illegal practitioners	27
No replies to inquiries sent	5
Of the fully qualified practitioners there	
were in practice one year.....	54
" two years	64
" three years.....	80
" four years	64