John Plowden Morton, Madras Establishment, from the Half-pay List to the Effective List.

VOLUNTEER CORPS.

Rifle: 2nd (Prince of Wales's) Volunteer Battalion the Devonshire Regiment: Surgeon-Lieutenant C. C. Brodrick resigns his commission. 4th Volunteer Battalion the Devonshire Regiment: Surgeon-Lieutenant E. H. Sutcliffe resigns his commission. 1st Volunteer Battalion the Royal Scots Fusiliers: Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel J. McAlister retires under the provision of Paragraph 111 of the Volunteer Regulations, 1898, with permission to retain his rank and to continue to wear the uniform of the battalion on his retirement. 1st Surrey (South London): Richard Jocelyn Swan to be Surgeon-Lieutenant. 1st Wiltshire: Surgeon-Lieutenant P. J. Barcroft resigns his commission.

"THE TRANSPORT OF SICK SOLDIERS."

The above subject was referred to in this column last week. The correspondence has been continued in the *Morning Post* by "Surgeon-Major" who agrees for the most part with our contemporary's previous correspondent and incidentally characterises the military arrangements at the Hospital of Hong-Kong as a "disgrace to civilisation." He however agrees with our contention that it is the War Office who are to blame. He says: "But the blame must not be laid on the Army Medical Service, for as matters now stand it is powerless to enforce its own recommendations, the War Office having the right of veto on all matters medical; the saddle must therefore be fitted to the right horse. As I have already stated, I have seen the working of army hospitals in several other countries, and I have no hesitation in stating that our War Office would be well advised if it put some of its obstinate pride in its pocket and went to France, Germany, Japan, Italy, or even Portugal, for some novel, practical, and humanitarian ideas as to how military hospitals should be equipped and worked, for I regret to say that Great Britain is nearly half a century behind the times in this respect. Let the Director-General of this department be given a free hand and then held responsible to the nation for his stewardship. Anything short of this will only land the department in hopeless disaster in a big war."

THE POST OF SURGEON-GENERAL OF HER MAJESTY'S FORCES IN INDIA.

Surgeon-General Gore has arrived in this country from India on having completed his tour of service as principal medical officer in that command. As we have already announced he will be succeeded by Surgeon-General W. Taylor, C.B., who is leaving England to take up the appointment vacated by Surgeon-General Gore. The rumours as to the abolition of the separate post of Surgeon-General of Her Majesty's forces in India and its amalgamation with that of the office of the head of the Indian Medical Service were, as we predicted would be the case, without foundation. Colonel Townsend, R.A.M.C., is officiating in the appointment pending the arrival of Surgeon-General Taylor.

SEA TRIPS FOR SICK SOLDIERS.

We learn (on the authority of the *Times of India*) that the Indian Government have accepted the proposal to send sickly British soldiers on sea trips in Indian Marine vessels this season whenever it is possible to find room for such men. We congratulate the Indian authorities on their decision, for it is quite a step in the right direction from a medical and hygienic point of view.

THE POST OF PRINCIPAL MEDICAL OFFICER IN EGYPT.

It has, we believe, been settled that a Surgeon-General is no longer needed for the medical direction of the British Forces in Egypt and that Surgeon-General Price who was to have succeeded Surgeon-General Skey Muir will not do so, but that an officer of the rank of Colonel of the Royal Army Medical Corps will be nominated to the post.

DEATH IN THE SERVICES.

Deputy Surgeon-General Henry R. L. MacDougall, Bombay Army (retired), at Dunollie, Oban, on Feb. 9th, in his sixty-fourth year.

The following officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps on their arrival in India are to be posted as follows: Lieutenant-Colonel Carey and Major Berryman to Bengal, Major Marder to Madras, and Major Stables to Bombay.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

DIFFICULTIES UNDER THE NEW VACCINATION ACT.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I was lately required by the usual notice from the vaccination officer of a union in which I am one of the public vaccinators to visit and offer to vaccinate a child in my district residing, according to the notice, five miles from my own residence. I gave the statutory notice by post and in due course made an express visit to the stated place of abode but found no such child resident there. I was informed that the family had removed into another union some 10 or 12 miles distant. Am I not entitled to claim from the guardians in addition to the usual 1s. fee payment for my express journey, so fruitless, by some carelessness on the part of their vaccination officer? I shall claim 5s. at the end of the quarter.

I am, Sirs, yours obediently,

W. ROBERTSON.

Glanton, R.S.O., Northumberland, Feb. 15th, 1899.

* * The Vaccination Order of 1899 makes no provision for such a case, and such an occurrence, under ordinary circumstances, should not be possible. The vaccination officer is only allowed to place on the list which he sends to the public vaccinator the names of children to whose houses he has himself just paid a personal visit, and the vaccination officer's action in this matter calls for inquiry. Then, again, a fortnight is given to the public vaccinator in which to make his visits for the purpose of offering to vaccinate children, and the fee of 1s. per visit was based on the assumption that he would so arrange his work that all the cases in one direction or locality would be visited on the same day. If our correspondent had a 10 miles' journey to and fro and could only make one such visit, then his district is one as to which it is quite certain that the Local Government Board would on his application grant more than the minimum fees of 1s. and 5s.; indeed, they are stated to have done so already in a considerable number of cases.—ED. L.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—If I read Section 1, sub-section (3) of the Vaccination Act of 1898 aright the public vaccinator referred to by your correspondent "L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S." in THE LANCET of Feb. 18th was not only acting strictly within his rights, but he was performing the duty most plainly imposed upon him by the terms of that much-discussed measure. "Fathers in lucrative business" are not exempt from the operation of the Act—dukes and crossing-sweepers alike must own its sway. Yet I feel sure it needs only the relation of a few more such experiences as those of "L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S." and of your other correspondent "P.V." to convince our legislators that the Act is thoroughly unworkable in actual practice. We can but hope that the letters of these two gentlemen may do something to aid the movement for its repeal.

I am, Sirs, your faithfully,

Feb. 19th, 1899.

M.B. EDIN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—A letter appeared in THE LANCET of Feb. 18th, under the above heading in which "L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S." complains of the public vaccinator of his district. If "L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S." would read through the Local Government Board's Orders under the Vaccination Acts, 1867-1898, he would become aware that his public vaccinator had only carried out those Orders. The work under the new Act, I know, is distasteful to all concerned, not only to parents and family medical attendants, but also to the public vaccinator, who should not be found fault with for doing his duty because that happens to be disagreeable to others besides himself. "L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S." complains of notices of intention

to visit and offer to vaccinate being sent to patients "*irrespective of their position*"; the reply is obvious—the only distinction of persons made in the Act is as between those who have been vaccinated before reaching the age of four months (or who hold an exemption certificate or are dead) and those who have not been vaccinated at that time of life. The reply to what is left of the letter is this. Had "L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S." not omitted to renew his postponement when the previous postponement lapsed the vaccination officer would not have sent his patient's name to the public vaccinator and all the sequelæ to which exception is taken would have been avoided, and "L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S." would not have had the present opportunity of expressing his opinion upon the working of the Local Government Board's Orders to vaccinators under contract. One word on the general subject. If medical men who are not public vaccinators would only remember that the latter only carry out orders that they had no hand in framing and which they find are frequently very distasteful it might save much friction and unjust feeling.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Feb. 21st, 1899.

PUBLIC VACCINATOR.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It is with much satisfaction I read that some public vaccinators find the new duties they have voluntarily undertaken irksome. I hope they will continue to find them so, for such work is opposed to the ethical laws which rule our profession and it is satisfactory to read that law-breaking brings its own reward. If a public vaccinator may call on people of whom he knows nothing except that they have a child unvaccinated and offer his professional services, then I may call at any house where I hear there is measles and offer my professional services. The public vaccinator accepts the work for the sake of the pay and I might call on a case of measles for a similar reason. If one is unprofessional conduct, the other must be so too.

Most private practitioners by this time have had experience of the public vaccinator calling on sick children, examining them and offering to postpone the operation, quite oblivious of the fact that to examine a patient under another's charge is grossly unprofessional. This outrageous act is compared to the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act, but there is no comparison from an ethical point of view. The latter Act does not seek to legalise "cadging" or encourage it by offering a reasonably good fee if successful and a ridiculous one if unsuccessful. I fail to see how we are to prevent the younger members of our profession from touting for patients with the example of the public vaccinator before their eyes. "S.E. District" thinks it even part of his duty to examine and criticise the work of the medical man in charge. I doubt if the supporters of the Act ever dreamt of well-to-do people being urged to be vaccinated at the expense of the rates. It is another drop in the bitter cup of the private practitioner that he has to contribute to the rates which pay his rival for attending the private practitioner's patients. My hope is that the Act is too outrageous and objectionable in every way to last long and I hope all private practitioners will point out its errors to as many electors and Members of Parliament as they can, and perhaps we may live to see it repealed.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Feb. 21st, 1899.

P. P.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Your correspondent "L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.," evidently does not understand the new duties of a public vaccinator. These are irrespective of the financial position of a child's parents and are clearly defined by the Local Government Board in their General Order dated Oct. 18th, 1898. Firstly, the public vaccinator has to visit and vaccinate all those who desire his services, rich or poor. Secondly, when an unvaccinated child is four months and a week old, if the vaccination officer receives no certificate of postponement or of exemption or of insusceptibility and the child has not had small-pox the name goes on a list which is forwarded to the public vaccinator who has thereupon to visit the child, first sending a notice of his intention to do so, and offer to vaccinate it. If the offer is not accepted there is an end of his duty; if it is accepted the vaccination must be postponed if necessary. I take it the child "L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S." alludes to was over four months old and the name in that case would go on the list referred to above.

Possibly the certificate of postponement reached the vaccination officer after he sent the list to the public vaccinator who, of course, should not call again if his offer is refused or if he finds the vaccination has been postponed by the medical attendant. Under certain circumstances the name might appear again on a subsequent list; in this case the public vaccinator would have to act as before—notice, visit, and offer, even if on the previous occasion the offer was refused.

In THE LANCET of Feb. 18th is also a letter giving "The Experiences of a Public Vaccinator." I would like to say that mine, as far as they go, do not agree with these. I have had nothing unpleasant happen and have had 50 names of children sent me to visit and make "the offer" and with "requests from parents" over 100, and in my district I think the new plan is generally liked, especially the domiciliary arrangement. I think with "P.V." that it would be a capital thing if before sending the list it could be found out who wished to accept his services and I quite agree with him as to the very large amount of work under the new regulations.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Feb. 20th, 1899.

ANOTHER "P.V."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Is it four marks, three marks, two marks, or one mark? As public vaccinator I have had to call on my brother practitioners' patients and offer to vaccinate and I am asked how many places. I say four and am told that they prefer to have their child done in two places by another medical man. Surely those who frame the law must see that such action must seriously affect the protective statistics of vaccination and play into the hands of the anti-vaccinationists I call these "half-breeds," as they will not take advantage of the conscience clause and yet are so-called vaccinated.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Feb. 15th, 1899.

PUBLIC VACCINATOR II.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—There is practising in our town an M.D. and J.P. who has recently been appointed parish doctor and public vaccinator. Would you consider it in accordance with the traditions of the medical profession for the above to be calling on the patients of other medical men who have been recently confined and asking them if they would care to have their children vaccinated by him or by their own medical attendant?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Feb. 14th, 1899.

M.B.

* * This correspondence touches upon many points which are receiving our attention.—ED. L.

THE MIDWIVES BILL OF THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The question of legislation on behalf of midwives is about to enter upon its last stage. From the very first the promoters of legislation have sought the protection of the woman of the diploma. Later, the opponents of legislation sought the control of all women who attended cases of labour whose names were not upon the Medical Register. The proposed legislation is a compromise. An experience of the subject which may fairly be claimed to be many-sided has led me more and more to the firm belief that if the public weal is to be considered of the first importance any legislation which invests uneducated women with a diploma entitling them to practise midwifery, even under restrictions, is fraught with very great danger; my own experience is further supported by the facts frequently published in the newspapers. It is perhaps of some utility to consider how the present state of affairs originated. The Obstetrical Society of London—or, to be correct, its council—has for many years sold a diploma to those who passed an examination. It has also been the main foment of agitation in favour of the midwife from the outset. The proposal for legislation has therefore come from the medical profession or from part of it. The society, judging from Dr. Cullingworth's address, has sold its diploma without any code of rules and regulations to be observed by midwives holding it until the present year.

It is a matter of difficulty to distinguish between the