

and their unanimity in this part of the country was most striking."

From ISAIAH BURROWES, Esq., Surgeon, Stonehouse, Plymouth, Dec. 5th, 1836.

"I beg to state that I have experienced no difficulty in procuring the fee for my attendance on an inquest held within this parish since the passing of the late Act, but, singularly enough, not one demand has been made upon the parochial authorities at Plymouth; and I find that no obstacle has offered itself at Devonport; but whether any difficulty may arise when these towns are placed under the operation of the Poor-Law Amendment Act is yet to be seen.* Although no public expression of feeling has been displayed by the medical men here, they regard the Medical Witnesses' Act as a great boon."

DECISION OF THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS ON PAYMENTS UNDER THE MEDICAL WITNESSES' ACT.

"Poor-Law Commission Office, Somerset-House, Nov. 26, 1836.

"SIR:—The Poor-Law Commissioners for England and Wales have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th instant, enclosing an order by the Coroner to the Overseers of the Parish of St. Mary, Reading, for the payment of a fee of one guinea to a medical witness for his attendance at an inquest, and requesting to be informed whether that sum was chargeable on the poor-rates.

"The Commissioners have to inform you in reply, that by an Act passed last Session, a medical practitioner, legally qualified, on attending to give evidence at any coroner's inquest, where no post-mortem examination is made by him, is entitled to a fee of one guinea, and where such post-mortem examination has been directed by the coroner and performed by the medical man, he is entitled to receive a fee of two guineas, both of which are legally payable upon the production of the coroner's order for payment, out of the rates collected for the relief of the poor of the parish or place in which the death occurred.

(Signed by order of the Board)

"E. CHADWICK, Secretary.

"To Mr. John Brain, Overseer of St. Mary, Reading."

[Acting on this opinion of the Poor-Law Commissioners, Mr. G. May, of Reading, informs us, that the overseer, Mr. Brain, has paid the demands which, in his letter last week, he stated had been made upon two orders of the coroner for the borough of Reading.]

* The letter of the Poor-Law Commissioners, which will be found at the close of these extracts, will set the question at rest in the mind of our correspondent.—ED.

THE medical jobbers are hard at work in Dublin to obtain the appointment of surgeon to the *Meath Hospital*. "POOR MACNAMARA is dead. Who is to succeed him?" Not one of the corruptionists, of course, ever thinks of answering this question by replying,—“Why, he who can best instruct the pupils, and cure the patients.” The grand query is,—Whether Mr. CRAMPTON shall nominate another of his polite but incompetent *protégés*, or whether a clever politician shall have the *éclat* of securing the office for some noodle of another family. Alas! for both patients and students. Some of the latter have addressed us on this occasion, with fearful forebodings of the future. The last expectation which they entertain is, that a person will be appointed who is capable of fulfilling the duties of clinical teacher in the hospital, although for “instruction” they pay so extravagantly. They fear being left to the mercy of “the rapid and uncertain Surgeon-General,” in consequence of the deficiencies of his new colleague. But what movement have the students made in favour of the concours?

The *Meath Hospital* is the County of Dublin Infirmary, and the surgeons are thereby entitled to receive a county salary, as officers of the institution. But this they have surrendered to the hospital treasury, in exchange for permission to nominate the medical officers. The contract is made between them and the rest of the governors, and the rule has been, to appoint as surgeons none but those who have served an apprenticeship to one of the hospital surgeons; consequently, in one shape or other, large sums of money are obtained, as a result of the privilege of appointment by the hospital surgeons,—much larger, indeed, than the county salaries would yield. Mr. CRAMPTON has already nominated three of his apprentices to the hospital, and two more are waiting for promotion. This excites the jealousy of the non-apprentice men, who are bent on endeavouring to introduce a new order of things, which will turn the channel of fortune to *their* doors also. There is some chance, they say, of obtaining appointments for money only. A pretty set are they all! A correspondent, however, who labours under an impression that their efforts can be consummated only by *illegal means*, and who believes that the Governors have “no right, now, at all events, to enter into any arrangement

"of the kind," advises the parties to look beforehand into the New Grand Jury Act, which decrees that no money shall be given in the case of appointments to County Infirmarys. How scandalous are these sacrifices of the welfare of patients, the interests of medical students, and the claims of science, at the shrine of base gold! But the day of corruption in medical government is near its close. Yet a little while, and the demands of humanity will be satisfied in the hospitals both of Dublin and of London.

ATTENDANCE OF SURGEONS TO GIVE EVIDENCE IN CIVIL ACTIONS.

On Wednesday, Nov. 30th, was tried in the Court of King's Bench, the case of "Simmons v. the Sheriffs of Middlesex." The defendants subpoenaed Mr. Curtis, surgeon, of Oxford Terrace, Edgeware Road. On being called upon to be sworn, Mr. Curtis refused, when the following conversation took place:—

Clerk of the Court.—Upon what grounds do you refuse?

Mr. Curtis.—My Lord, I have not been remunerated for my attendance to give evidence on this trial, and this is the fifth day on which I have been present.

Counsel for Defendants.—You must be sworn; you cannot refuse; you reside in London.

Counsel for Plaintiff.—Mr. Curtis is a professional man, and is entitled to payment for attendance here, and he can refuse to be sworn.

JUDGE.—*I cannot compel him to be sworn.*

Upon which the next person on the list of "witnesses" was called into the box.

To the Editor.—The above statement I forward to you, in proof of the important fact, that medical witnesses are entitled to receive remuneration before being called upon to give evidence in certain proceedings in a court of law. One point remains to be established, and upon that I may probably hereafter address you again, namely, that remuneration can be demanded for attendance, and not for evidence given. I have, therefore, applied to the Sheriff for the payment of those fees which, if they had been paid before I was called on in court, would have obliged me to take the oath. I am, Sir, yours truly,

THOS. V. CURTIS.

2, Oxford Terrace, Dec. 3, 1836.

CHARING-CROSS HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I have reason to believe that the statement in your last Number, of Dr. Sig-

mond and Mr. Pettigrew having given notice to the Director and Honorary Secretary of the *Charing-Cross Hospital* of their determination to move for a mandamus to reinstate them in their offices, *is not strictly true*. I challenge you, and every one else, to produce a copy of such notice, thus said to have been given. Mere assertion from a quarter whence have already issued so many false statements, are not, you must be well aware, entitled to much credence.

I cannot but smile at the attempt to make the members of our profession, sensible, well-educated men, believe, even for a single moment, that it is *seriously intended* to move the Court of King's Bench, or that the threatened mandamus can, by any possibility, be obtained. 'Credat Judæus, &c.'

Northampton-square, I am, &c.

Dec. 5, 1836. W. SHEARMAN, M.D.

P.S.—I recollect seeing, in the *Morning Post*, some weeks ago, a paragraph to the effect, that as Dr. Sigmond and Mr. Pettigrew were so well satisfied with the *unanimous* verdict of the medical profession in their favour, all legal proceedings on their part would be discontinued. How is this? Are not these gentlemen quite so comfortable as they professed to be in the estimation in which they are at present held by the members of the medical profession?

* * * We take this opportunity of saying, in reply to another note with which we have been favoured by Dr. Shearman, that the above communication is the first which has been addressed to the Editor of this Journal by any one of the medical gentlemen of Dr. Golding's party. We long since gave notice, that no letter from any person but a principal in the affair would find insertion in our pages. We have refused many from the friends of Dr. Sigmond and Mr. Pettigrew.

THE BEST POSSIBLE MEDICAL ADVICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I am a man of rank and large property, having no wife nor any children, so far as I know, and having, in fact, nothing to do but take care of myself,—in the accomplishment of which important duty I avail myself of the best medical advice which can be obtained. My society, indeed, is courted by medical men of all grades and denominations. A few days since, I started for the continent, in the hope of improving my health by change of climate. I slept at Dover on my journey, intending to travel by easy stages. Late the next morning, after a comfortable night's rest, I was comfortably seated