much less frequently required than it was before that period. Your remarks on parish surgeons, in your last leader, are but too just. To escape censure is hopeless. Attention to a coroner's summons is the foundation for a charge of base and unworthy motives; inattention to it would involve more serious consequences. I am, however, quite sure that principles so mean and degrading as those obtruded into your journal by Mr. Redford would never sustain a parish surgeon in his office for seventeen years.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
 Marlborough Street, Jan., 1848. J. G. FRENCH.

ON THE POSITION OF POOR-LAW SURGEONS.

[LETTER FROM MR. GARLICK, OF HALIFAX.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am very desirous that you should just turn over the pages of a Poor-law Day-book, and therefore I humbly request that you will permit me to forward mine for your inspection.

I had first intended favouring the poor-law commissioners with a sight of a medical officer's labours; but as there is just now considerable pressure from without, I for one am determined that the cause shall not flag for want of evidence.

The "orders," which I inclose with the book, will give you a correct idea of the liberal manner in which they are distributed by the relieving officer of Halifax; but, without any further opinion of my own, I will leave you to judge.

I have been gratified in the extreme with the perusal of the leading article in THE LANCET of Saturday last; and I feel sure every medical officer will duly appreciate your noble and manly defence of poor-law surgeons. Every word in that article struck home to my breast; and in my own person I could establish the truth of the whole. I trust the dawn of better days for union medical officers is now at hand.—With every feeling of respect, I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Cheapside, Halifax, Jan. 31, 1848. FREDERICK S. GARLICK.

** The book forwarded by Mr. Garlick has reached our office; we have not yet had time to examine it. We thank him for sending it to us, and for the manner in which he has expressed his opinion of our efforts in the good cause.—[ED. L.]

NAVAL ASSISTANT-SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I humbly request the insertion of this letter in answer to a Captain R.N., who "challenges contradiction" to three vile assertions he has considered it his "duty" to make in your extensively circulated journal of January 1, 1848. He openly states, that no such under-current as executive prejudice delays assistant-surgeons' grievances being redressed; that the whole body of naval surgeons are, without exception, opposed to their equally well qualified brethren messing with them; and lastly, that Sir W. Burnett is opposed to any change being made in our present position.

To adduce, at this period, any prolix proof of the bitter and envious feeling entertained towards us by the fighting officers of H. M. navy would be an useless waste of words. The fact of there being a deep-rooted prejudice against us is too generally understood to be contradicted. Let any one endowed with common perception and clear judgment, only peruse a letter in THE LANCET of January 15, 1848, the production of a Captain R.N., to be convinced of its melancholy and general deficiency in sense, common decency, and truth. The junior medical officers of the navy are called by this vulgar, ill-conditioned writer, "sucking doctors." What construction can be put on this expression, but that it is glaringly emblematic of an ignorant and a prejudiced mind—characteristic of the class.

Can there be a more gross and glaring falsehood, that surgeons of the navy are averse to our joining them in the same mess? Certainly not. This Captain R.N., who attempts to be their spokesman, says, that such close intimacy would render the assistant-surgeon less obedient to the surgeon's orders: he may be assured the junior medical officers of the navy are much better conducted than an humble individual of his limited pretensions can bring himself to believe.

If a subordinate officer is disobedient, are there not means of maintaining discipline? Most assuredly, and means the most arbitrary and despotic! In a line-of-battle ship, where the commander messes with the lieutenants, do the latter class of officers question their senior's orders? No.

The medical officers of the navy are a united body. Our surgeons give us the best advice; they wish us to be active in asserting our claims, which are just and proper, to ward-room

accommodation. They deem our present and disgraceful treatment a stigma to the naval authorities, at this advanced period of the nineteenth century. These are the liberal and manly sentiments of the surgeons of the navy, as I hear them. As to Sir W. Burnett being opposed to our increase of comfortable privileges—it is an untruth—a decided misrepresentation. Finally, allow me to thank you for the zeal and application you have ever displayed in advocating our cause.—I am, Sir, yours,

January, 1848.

AN ASSISTANT-SURGEON R.N.

SOURCE OF HÆMORRHAGE IN PARTIAL SEPARATION OF THE PLACENTA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I request permission to acknowledge, through the medium of your journal, a courtesy from Dr. Radford, expressed in a letter to yourself.

Dr. Radford's letter, in explanation of a passage quoted by me in THE LANCET, 1848, vol. i. p. 96, proceeds to say—

"It was originally written in my 'Essay on the Human Placenta,' &c., and as it there stood with the context, indicated what I meant; but isolated from its original connexion, not by Dr. Chowne, but by myself, it is indefinite, and calculated to make an erroneous impression of my meaning.

"Dr. Chowne observes," Dr. Radford says, "I was led to draw from a number of selected cases (of 'collected facts') the following inference—that the child continues to live in cases in which the placenta is completely detached from the uterus and excluded from its cavity, provided its organization is not broken up."

"It ought to have stood as follows:—'That the child continues to live for at least a short time in cases in which,' &c. &c.

"If Dr. Chowne had read the sentence he has quoted in its original place, he would have seen my meaning, and the objects I intended to serve by it."

I have to express my regret that I have not had the advantage of seeing the original, and that I have, in consequence, been instrumental in causing the repetition of a passage which gives an imperfect expression of Dr. Radford's opinion.

You will greatly oblige me by affording this acknowledgment a place in the ensuing number of THE LANCET.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
 Connaught-place West, Hyde-park, Feb. 1848. W. D. CHOWNE.

OPERATION OF LITHOTOMY AT KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In answer to the letter of Mr. Prowse, in your late number, respecting the operation of lithotomy performed by Mr. Fergusson in King's College Hospital, I beg to refer him to the report of the case, where he will find mentioned the date of the operation, (December 12, 1846.) At that time, I am not aware that Mr. Fergusson, or any other surgeon in this country, was acquainted with the beneficial properties of chloroform, or even of ether, in producing insensibility under surgical operations. In order, however, that no misunderstanding may exist with regard to the practice of Mr. Fergusson, I beg to state, that that gentleman has been, and is constantly, in the habit of employing these agents, both in his operations at the hospital and in those which occur to him in private practice; and I expect to have the pleasure of reporting in some of the forthcoming numbers of THE LANCET, operations of lithotomy and others performed by him under the influence of ether and chloroform.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

HENRY SMITH.

Caroline-street, Bedford Square, Jan. 1848.

A COMPLAINT FROM ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR.—Your readiness at all times to lend your assistance in the redress of the student's wrongs is proverbial; I trust, therefore, that the following facts, relating to a serious abuse at our hospital, may, through the medium of your valuable journal, lead to the acquisition of my own and my fellow-students' rights.

It is ever customary here, during the visit to the female syphilitic ward, to examine the patients in a private room—all students being excluded, with the exception of dressers and hospital apprentices, so that our main body have only to study the position of the fire-place, or the number of bed-posts in the ward. I have, in common with the other students, attempted to gain admission into their sanctum, but have invariably been pushed aside by a woman, not the most genteel in form or manners; and on one occasion during the present week, having