POOR-LAW GUARDIANS
AND
SURGEONS OF CORNWALL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—The eleven established medical men of this and the neighbouring towns included in this union, have, in accordance with certain rules of the Cornwall Medical Association, consulted each other upon the amounts of salaries which should be required for the medical offices of the union, for the purpose of avoiding discord among themselves, and escaping from the lowest tender system, which has been so notoriously forced upon the medical profession.

The guardians, however, are maintaining a most obstinate opposition to the stand which the medical men have, to their credit, assumed, by appointing a perfect stranger, a Mr. Bullocke, to all the medical duties of the union; but the poor-law commissioners having refused, in justice to the poor at least, to sanction this most extraordinary arrangement, an advertisement appears of this day's date for the introduction of other medical men to the pauper practice; notwithstanding the resident practitioners have so far been gratified as to receive the express opinion of the commissioners, that their terms, as offered, are reasonable, and even below the average rate of medical relief remuneration, and have even strongly recommended the guardians to comply.

That the members of the medical profession have a right, in every sense of the expression, to consult their united interest and advantage, no man possessing the shadow of a claim to liberality can deny; and this assertion is perhaps most decidedly tenable with respect to their position, as related to the managers of the poor.

Indeed, by way of showing the real opinion and feelings of the very man who has obeyed the guardians' call, I shall subjoin a copy of a letter received by the secretary of the Cornwall Medical Association, premising, that the most prominent of the rules contained in the circular bore upon the expediency and propriety of forming committees of practitioners residing in the same union, for the purpose of fixing upon such sums as ought to be paid for medical relief under the poor-law system. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A MEMBER OF THE CORNWALL
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

St. Columb, Cornwall,

June 4, 1841.

“Swansea, Nov. 10, 1840.

“No. 10, Somerset-buildings.

“Sir:—I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your circular, which was forwarded to me from Falmouth. I can only

say in reply that I highly approve of the rules, &c. of your association, and which, I trust, will be fully supported by my professional brethren of Cornwall. Had I not changed my place of abode for the principality of Wales, it would have given me great pleasure to have enrolled my name in your ranks. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“JOHN J. A. BULLOCKE.”

“To J. H. Nankivell, Esq., &c. &c.”

WESTMINSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY.
LETTER FROM MR. YEARSLEY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I trust you will afford me space for making a few comments on your report of the proceedings of the Westminster Medical Society, April 17th, and an anonymous letter that subsequently appeared in THE LANCET, both of which accuse me of misrepresentation, in stating that I was invited to read a paper on stammering before the members of the Westminster Medical Society.

To rebut the attack, I shall trust to the statement of what I believe to be the plain facts of the case, and beg to premise that from the *animus* exhibited I should, for myself, have been content to allow the matter to pass unnoticed, I am only induced to defend myself at the instigation of friends in whose judgments I place reliance.

On Saturday, the 13th of March, I dined with two or three of the most distinguished members of the Westminster Medical Society, who had witnessed a large number of the operations I had performed during the preceding week, and who asked me to go with them to the meeting, as they had no doubt the subject of stammering would be the topic of discussion that evening. I felt happy to accede to the proposal, and for the sake of accuracy prepared some brief notes, which I intended to read if called upon. At the time of our entering the room, one of the members of the society, Mr. Malyn, who had seen me operate, was addressing the society on the subject; and another member proposed that, as Mr. Yearsley was now present, it would be better to have some information from him personally. I rose at the call of the chairman, to comply with the proposal, when some member suggested, as the subject was very important, and evidently of great interest to the society, and the time remaining for that evening, previous to the commencement of Mr. Snow's paper, was very short, that Mr. Yearsley should read his paper on the following Saturday. At the same time Mr. Alcock rose, and politely offered to forego his own communication on “the pathology of bone,” which stood for the next meeting. Several members afterwards addressed the chairman,

supporting the suggestion; and, there seeming to be no difference of opinion, the chairman, Mr. Gregory Smith, did not put it to the vote, but for himself and the meeting expressed the pleasure they should feel at my attending the next Saturday, to introduce the subject of stammering, and the operations I had performed.

These are the grounds on which I considered, and still consider, that I was invited by the members of the Westminster Medical Society to read the paper I have since published. In dedicating my pamphlet to the society (with all fitting respect to its members collectively and individually), I did not conceive I was appropriating any distinguished honour to myself, much less did I imagine I was laying myself open to the charge of dishonesty. Not being a member of the society, I cannot understand what their books would consider an invitation; but from the account I have given, which I declare to be rather an under than an over-drawn statement, I am sure no one can correctly term it a permission, which implies that the wish to figure before the society originated with myself, which was certainly not the case. If the term *invitation* be objected to, I was certainly *asked* to read my paper by the chairman, with the concurrence of what I have been told was a full meeting of the society.

Without meaning the remotest disrespect to the Westminster Medical Society, I may state that if I had ever held the least intention of asking permission of any society to read a paper before them, I should assuredly have selected that which holds the highest rank in the metropolis, which I believe is generally conceded to the Royal Medico-Chirurgical.

Those members of the Westminster Society whom I have conversed with since the close of the discussion, upon asking them the question (and from being present during the whole proceedings they were competent to judge), have told me that they certainly considered I had been invited, and that the term *permitted* applied to members of the society, who send in their papers for the approval of a committee, previous to their being submitted to the society at large.

I am quite willing to have my conduct and statements canvassed in an open and honourable manner, but I trust you will see the unfairness of giving place to anonymous attacks on my reputation and character by parties who admit that they are not members of the society, and did not witness any of the proceedings, yet do not hesitate to publish their own crooked conclusions as being irrevocable. I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

JAMES YEARSLEY.

29, Sackville-street, May 28, 1841.

** No reply that is anonymous need be forwarded to us for publication.

OPERATIONS FOR STAMMERING.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Allow me to offer a few remarks on the results of the operations practised by Mr. Yearsley for the cure of stammering. The first authorised announcement of his "discovery" appeared in the "Medical Gazette" of the 12th of last March; and Mr. Yearsley, in his letter to the editor of that journal, stated that in the previous December he operated on two children for deafness, and some time after, "as the cure of deafness advanced," he learned from their parents "that both children had been stammerers from their infancy, but that the cure of stammering had ensued immediately on the excision of the tonsils." He also stated, that since the cases above-mentioned he had operated on upwards of forty, "all of whom immediately felt themselves relieved of their impediment:" a sort of damper, however, on the benefit of the discovery was subsequently added, viz., "that after their relief patients have yet to learn the proper use of the vocal apparatus."

Mr. Yearsley having premised in his letter that he was actively engaged at that time in collecting materials for a more lengthened explanation of his views upon the subject, I waited for his promised publication, being determined to put in force his recommendation for the cure of the unhappy affection in question, provided his theory proved correct, and his practice decidedly successful; but of both I entertained great doubts, having for the last fourteen years pointed my attention to impediments of speech in general, treating these nervous affections, as the profession is well aware, medicinally, and partly philologically. Upon carefully perusing his publication, I found he offered no other solidity, as to theory, except the two cases above alluded to, and another of a Mr. Butler, who was "one of the earliest cases he operated on;" and whose formidable case, and next to miraculous cure, appears in Mr. Yearsley's publication, page 8. In order, therefore, to personally satisfy myself as to these theoretic cases, I visited Mr. Butler, who, so far from being cured, is as bad as before he was operated on: his letter, which I inclose, acknowledges that while his throat was sore and inflamed he spoke with ease; "but no sooner had the part healed" than his old habit returned.

I also called on the two boys, named William Russell and John Toplis, whose parents, as above stated, informed Mr. Yearsley that they had been stammerers from their infancy, but were cured immediately on the excision of their tonsils, and to my very great surprise, the uncle and aunt of the former declared the boy never stammered; and, to use the uncle's words,