be at the "discretion of the interested party," especially armed (as we both suggest he should be) with an augmented power of ordering medical comforts. Who shall impugn in this matter the authoritative dictum of the professional attendant? I should think that not one of the whole Poor law medical body would desire his salary to be deduced from a basis which might for ever subject him to a most mischievous and injurious imputation.

It having been hinted that the course I have lately pursued is from antagonism to my friend, I am constrained in my own justification to state, that, *prior* to my last examination before the Select Committee, I made overtures of combination to Mr. Griffin, who felt compelled to decline them. Twice since *analogous* overtures have been proffered and declined. I have not, however, yet done.

There are now virtually *five* schemes of remuneration before the Select Committee; and whereas this controversy has prominently brought out the real working bees, surely it is not impracticable for a committee of advice to be formed, whose eliminative recommendations from the present chaos would at once obtain the confidence of the whole Poor law medical body, and not be too late to be of incalculable assistance to the eventual deliberations of the Select Committee.

I beg therefore to suggest that Mr. Griffin, Weymouth; Mr. Bulmer, Leeds; Mr. Wills, Crewkerne; Mr. Meredith, Bath; Mr. Lord, Hampstead; Dr. Rogers, Strand; Mr. Nicholas, Wandsworth; Dr. Ross, West London; and myself, be constituted such a Committee (with or without power to add to our number), to watch over the interests of the Poor-law medical officers.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
ROBERT FOWLER, M.D. Edin.

Bishopsgate-street Without, June, 1862.

MR. BASTICK'S PREPARATIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Lest it should be supposed by my silence that I acquiesced in the criticisms of the writer of an article on the Pharmaceutical and Chemical Products of the Exhibition in the last number of THE LANCET, with reference to the combination of cod-liver oil with quinine, first devised by me, I beg to state that his conclusions, so far as my preparations are concerned, are based on erroneous assumptions.

The writer in question states that "this is a preparation which is not always of the same strength," "for even when prepared by the same process, it will not be always uniform in its composition." Now, Sir, I venture to assert that these comments are utterly destitute of foundation as regards my combination of cod-liver oil with quinine. The writer then states that "in making it the oil is heated in contact with the quinine, by which treatment the quality of the oil is injured, and that of the quinine is not improved." Here are two purely gratuitous assumptions on the part of the critic. I do not employ heat in the manufacture of this preparation, for the simple reason that heat is superfluous. This fact alone involves a refutation of both assumptions; but allow me further to add, in contradiction to the dicta of the writer, that a *moderate* heat will neither injure the oil nor damage the quinine.

Trusting to your proverbial impartiality in giving insertion to these remarks,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Brook-street, June, 1862. WM. BASTICK.

THE PRIME MINISTER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your last week's issue you have favoured the public with an article headed "A Physiological View of the Premier;" and it may not be uninteresting therefore to you to know what I once heard a very eminent man, and former colleague of the Premier, say on the subject a little before his death.

The late Mr. John Wilson Croker, speaking of Lord Palmerston, said that he had necessarily known him intimately from their long services under the same Government, the one as Secretary to the Admiralty, and the other as Secretary-at-War; that the period at which they had served the country together had been, for the most part, one of great excitement and anxiety; but that he did not think (such was Lord Palmerston's happy temperament) that anything that had ever happened, even in the most difficult times, had interfered for a moment, in the slightest degree, either with his Lordship's appetite or sleep.

Mr. Croker instanced the late Sir Robert Peel as a man of a wholly opposite disposition, saying that whenever any matter of real importance was under consideration or in progress, his anxiety was always painfully intense.

I enclose my card as a guarantee of the authenticity of the anecdote, but shall subscribe myself here,

June, 1862.

A FREQUENT READER OF THE LANCET.

THE ASSISTANT REGISTRAR-GENERAL ON MEDICAL CORONERS.

The following important letter from Dr. Farr was written to a freeholder:—

SIR,—I attach the greatest importance to the office of Coroner, as, when properly filled, it prevents crime, dissipates suspicion, and discovers the causes of death.

Medical knowledge is necessary—firstly, in judging from the preliminary information whether inquests shall be held; secondly, in conducting the inquiry; thirdly, in deciding whether medical or scientific witnesses shall be called; fourthly, in instructing the jury; and fifthly, in returning the causes of death under the Registration Act. Death is in some cases an impenetrable mystery, and in nearly all cases its physiological causes are entirely beyond the ken of non-medical Coroners, who thus are liable to mislead or to misdirect, or to fail in aiding the juries to sift medical evidence, and to return in their verdicts the true causes of death. The object of the office is thus defeated. Inquests were held in England on 21,801 bodies, according to a recent return, and in only 482 cases was the verdict homicide. This shows how many of the inquests are purely medical.

The Coroner's jury instituting only a preliminary inquiry, the accused persons detected were tried by the judges of the land, and 109 were convicted. This part of the procedure is very properly conducted by the highest judicial authorities. The duties of a Coroner are of a totally different character.

Dr. Lankester, in my opinion, possesses all the knowledge of medicine and of jurisprudence which is required to enable him to fill the office creditably to his profession and usefully to the country. I hope to see him elected their Coroner by the enlightened freeholders of Middlesex.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

General Register Office, Somerset House, June, 1862. WM. FARR.

PARISIAN MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

AMONGST the various papers of interest communicated to the Academy of Sciences on Monday last was a memoir relative to the substitution of carbonic acid gas for chloroform as an anæsthetic agent. The author, M. Ozanam, four years ago suggested the employment of this gas in painful surgical operations, and stated that it was in action as effectual as, and less dangerous than, chloroform. The case which in the present memoir serves as a *cheval de bataille*, is that of a young man effected with deeply-seated abscess in the lower and inner part of the thigh. As it was found necessary to divide a considerable thickness of tissue before exit could be afforded to the pus, the patient was placed under the influence of an anæsthetic—in this instance, carbonic acid gas. An india-rubber bag was filled with a mixture consisting of three parts of gas and one of common air, which the patient was made to inhale by means of a mouth-piece held at a short distance from the face, so that the proportion of atmospheric air might be considerably increased during the process. At the expiration of two minutes, during which time the breathing became more rapid and the face covered with perspiration, insensibility was complete, and the operation satisfactorily terminated, consciousness returning the moment the anæsthetic inhalation was discontinued. To those who have witnessed the well known experiment on the dog in the "Grotta del Cane," at Agnano, near Naples, the insensibility will be no matter of wonder; but the question of the applicability of carbonic acid in a general way to surgery is quite another affair, and one the solution of which has been left to the judgment of MM. Andral, Velpeau, and Cloquet.

The abrupt termination of the late academical discussion on the origin of vaccine and its pointless conclusions have been ill-