brother. Let the only strife and competition now be amongst the Union surgeons to co-operate at the present time with the Association and Mr. Griffin. No one has a right to isolate himself from the general movement for the general good; each gentleman in his district may use his leisure, spare money, and personal influence to press the cause on the provincial members of Parliament, that Sir John Trollope may have a loud voice raised up in the Commons to strengthen his promised advocacy in favour of the sick poor and the Poor-law medical officers.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Hampstead, January, 1857. CHARLES F. J. LORD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If every medical man practising in England and Wales would subscribe 5s. per annum to a fund for compensating practitioners who sustain a loss in upholding the dignity of the profession, by declining to accept the refuse of their more spirited brethren, the hitherto ill-treated few would ere long find themselves upon a level with the more fortunate majority of those who are not union medical officers. I am satisfied, from my experience, that nothing can beat *union*; but so long as such men as Mr. Taylor treat old fellow-students and colleagues in the manner stated by Mr. Fox, in your journal of last week, we must live much longer and suffer accordingly, ere we be made acquainted with what *strength* really is. Surely Mr. Griffin, the disinterested advocate of the profession's rights, but more particularly the reformer of union medical officers' wrongs, deserves a better return for his energy and talent. If Mr. Taylor was compelled, through necessity, to accept Mr. Fox's leavings, or, like the drowning man, had to catch at a straw, in order to save himself from sinking, one would not have wondered; but he is evidently independent of trifles, and ought, in my opinion, to have acted independently. However, there is no accounting for tastes. In conclusion, I can only say that, as a struggling country practitioner, I am prepared to subscribe my five shillings annually when others are found willing.

Yours respectfully,
January, 1857. AN UNION SURGEON.

THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE AND THE POOR-LAW BOARD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to call your attention and that of Mr. Griffin to a letter of Lord Courtenay, dated Feb. 15th, 1855, and inserted in THE LANCET, vol. i., 1855, p. 219, from which I will take the liberty of making some extracts. In it you will see that the Parliamentary Committee appointed by the House of Commons in the session of 1854, "to inquire into the mode in which medical relief is now administered in the different unions in England and Wales," after a careful investigation, adopted by a very large majority the following resolution:—"Your Committee recommend that every medical officer to be appointed after the 25th of March, 1855, should continue in office until he may die, resign, or become legally disqualified to hold such office, or be removed therefrom by the Poor-law Board."

Lord Courtenay then writes:—"With a view of giving effect to this resolution, the Poor-law Board have thought it their duty to issue the accompanying order:—'Art. 1. Every medical officer of a workhouse, duly qualified according to the regulations of the Poor-law Board in force at the time of such appointment, and every district medical officer duly qualified as aforesaid, and residing within the district in which he is appointed to act, (*mark these words!*) shall hold his office until he shall die or resign,' &c."

Now, Sir, what is the meaning of *residing within the district for which he is appointed*? It is simply an evasion, if not an almost entire abrogation, of the whole recommendation of the Select Committee of the House of Commons by the Poor-law Board. There are 570 unions in England and Wales; these are all divided into medical districts, some having two or three, and some as many as thirteen, districts. In almost all agricultural unions the medical officers live in the towns after which the unions are named, and consequently the medical officer of that town district is the only one "residing within the district for which he is appointed;" so that, out of about 3000 medical officers, some 700 or 800 only would reside within their districts; and although all might *reside within their own union*, yet none of them would hold their appointments "till they die or resign," &c., as recommended by the Committee of the House of Commons, and this has been laid down as a

dictum by Mr. Gulston, in one of the unions in the west of England, within the past week.

Surely this reminds one of Charles Dickens's "Circumlocution Office," and "How not to do it;" and I hope you will aid, Sir, with your powerful pen, in getting removed so great an injustice, ever remembering the object for which the recommendation was made, which is so well explained in the concluding paragraph of Lord Courtenay's letter.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Jan. 1857.

S. U.

PROPOSED "RELIEF AND EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Lately I received a "Prospectus" of a new Society, entitled as above, in which it is stated by the benevolent proposer, J. T. Hester, Esq., senior surgeon to the Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, "that the signal success which attended the efforts to endow an asylum for reduced medical men and the widows of medical practitioners, as well as the increasing usefulness of the Medical Benevolent Fund, might almost lead to a supposition that everything that had been required had been effected." And it is observed that, although there is a foundation scholarship in connexion with the Royal Medical Benevolent College, there are not any provisions made for the maintenance or education of the daughters of medical men; and, further, that widows are not eligible to be candidates until they are sixty. But, in all probability, I should not have addressed you had I not read, in the obituary of *The Times*, on Saturday last, (Jan. 17th,) the following:—

"On the 26th ult., of disease of the brain, brought on by intense anxiety, aged forty-eight, Mr. Gustavus Wm. Blanch, surgeon, of 23, Warwick-square, Southwark, leaving a widow and nine children, the youngest an infant ten months old."

I do not know the worldly position in which this widow and family are left; but there is presumptive evidence that the intense anxiety, followed by the brain fever, are symptomatic of excessive efforts and extreme disappointments. The prospectus of the Relief and Educational Society published forty-eight similar cases; many lost to their family, being sacrificed to the duties of their profession, during an epidemic. For such urgent and painful cases there seems to be a necessity for an institution similar to that proposed by Mr. Hester; for surely, if the sons of deceased practitioners excite sympathy, the daughters of such men should command still greater, for their fragile forms are not fitted for any laborious employment, and hence could only apply themselves to qualify for the task of teaching. But at present there is not any provision for them. They must sink into pauperism (if they have not wealthy relatives) or depend on promiscuous, eleemosynary aid. If you think the proposed Relief and Educational Society would provide for such exigencies, I feel that you will use your powerful influence in maturing it.

I am, Sir, yours most respectfully,
Dorset-place, Dorset-square, Jan. 1857. J. L. LEVISON.

CANVASSING FOR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I wish, by your permission, to draw the attention of the profession to the existence, in my opinion, of a most iniquitous system, usually acted upon in filling up public medical appointments.

We find when a vacancy for a house-surgeon to a hospital, dispensary, or other institution occurs, that the want is duly advertised—that gentlemen, properly qualified, are invited to come forward as candidates—and that a day is set apart for a committee to examine and compare the various *testimonials*; but, notwithstanding all this apparent plain sailing, in five instances out of six, I affirm that the election of a given candidate depends upon his local interest, the committee not being determined one iota by the testimonials—if, indeed, they read them. Is not this hard, I ask, upon men whose means are small, and who, perhaps, have gone to some considerable expense for them, vainly expecting that merit alone will carry weight?

I will briefly relate a case in point, and I hope it may deter some, as inexperienced as I then was, from hoping to gain an appointment merely because they happen to deserve it:—

In a certain cathedral town, a house-surgeon was required at the hospital. I heard of the vacancy, and was advised to send

out proofs of my competency to discharge the duties of the office. I did so, as my testimonials were excellent, and as I was known by many in the neighbourhood to have been diligent in the study of my profession, my chance of success appeared very promising; but, oh, the vanity of human hopes! at the eleventh hour, a gentleman came into the field, related to one of the hospital surgeons, and contrived to be chosen one of five, although I firmly believe that he was the least of all qualified for the post.

With respect to myself I may state, that I happened to be taught at the same hospital with my successful opponent, and that—let it be said with all humility—I gained honours in my pupillage, but I never heard that he was so fortunate; and as I passed my examinations before him, and since that period have been constantly and variously engaged in the practice of my profession, I do not see upon what principle I was to be considered inferior. I am not writing, Sir, from any ill feeling towards the committee in whose hands the appointment rested (although the members were, for the most part, clergymen, and ought to have been doubly scrupulous), but because I think it unjust and useless to invite competition, when those without acquaintances amongst the voters will stand no chance of success, but only waste time and money, gaining in return, perhaps at the commencement of their professional life, nothing but disappointment and heartburnings. Although, in my particular case, the not being appointed was, as I know now, a most fortunate occurrence for me, yet still I contend that the favouritism, nearly always displayed on such occasions, is highly reprehensible.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Brixton-hill, January, 1857. G. Y. HUNTER, jun.

"PHANTOM" TUMOURS OF THE ABDOMEN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to communicate the following case as illustrative of Dr. Headlam Greenhow's designation of "phantom" tumours of the abdomen.

About nine months since, I was consulted by an unmarried lady, aged thirty-two. Both herself and friends appeared very much alarmed at the almost sudden enlargement of one side of the abdomen, which she felt but little of unless when taking active exercise, when the breathing was impeded and considerable pain experienced in the region of the swelling. Her female relatives had examined her, and were certain that something was growing in her abdomen. On making an examination I found a tumour the size of my fist in the left iliac region, not easily defined and moveable. I had the greatest difficulty in overcoming their fears as to its being very serious. The subject was a tall, anæmic-looking person; she had not much otherwise than the tumour to complain of. The bowels were generally constipated; the urine is at present scanty, and she has suffered from menorrhagia for five years. I at first gave her purgatives, and afterwards the tincture of muriate of iron, combined with acetate of potash, for two months, when the tumour entirely disappeared. She has felt nothing of it since, and the general health is very much improved.

The tumour remained in the same situation and of the same size, for one month, when the patient returned to her home, continuing the medicine. A few weeks afterwards, she informed me by letter that the tumour had entirely disappeared, and that her uterine symptoms were much relieved.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,
Yealmspton, Jan. 18, 1857. J. E. ADKINS, M.R.C.S., &c.

A MEDICAL GRIEVANCE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—When a medical practitioner in this country examines a recruit for the Queen's or the H. E. I. Co.'s Army, he receives a fee of 4s. if the man passed is ultimately approved, and 2s. 6d. if he rejects him. For the same service in the Navy he gets 1s.; and for the Irish Police, 0!! If he applies for payment for the last service, he is told, at one time, that there are no funds from which to pay him; at another, that it is his duty to perform the service. If he has anything to do with the last-named "Force," he has to attend the wives and families of the married men without any remuneration from the public, and to submit to be snubbed by the authorities on all possible occasions.

I enclose my card, and am, Sir, your obedient servant,
January, 1857. AN IRISH SURGEON.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND LIFE ASSURANCE OFFICES.

DR. WIBLIN has forwarded us the following "specimen of liberality" to medical practitioners on the part of the directors of the Metropolitan Life Office. It deserves the widest circulation:—

"Metropolitan Life Assurance Society,
No. 3, Princes-street, Bank, Jan. 2nd, 1857.

SIR,—The Directors having been referred to you as the usual medical attendant of ———, for information as to his general state of health, I am desired to request that you will, as early as convenient, favour them with answers to the several questions annexed.

I beg to inform you that any communication you may be pleased to make will be considered as strictly confidential.

Should any fee be required, I beg to refer you to Mr. ——— as the Directors decline paying the same.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ARTHUR PEARSON,
Assistant-Actuary.

Dr. Wiblin."

"Southampton, June 5th, 1857.

SIR,—I was astonished at the presumption of your Directors in authorising you to send to me for my opinion on Mr. ———'s health, without sending me a fee. They have as much right to do so as I should to pick their pockets of a guinea. Do the Directors give their attendance for nothing?—Yours, &c.,

JOHN WIBLIN.

I threw your letter and its penny stamp on the fire.—J. W.

MILITARY SURGERY.

MR. BLENKINS, Surgeon, Grenadier Guards, gave his introductory address to a course of lectures on Military Surgery, on Tuesday last, at the School of Medicine adjoining St. George's Hospital. He commenced by stating that, a very general opinion having been expressed of the want of such a course of lectures in this large metropolis, he had responded to it, and presented himself before them for the purpose of delivering a complete course on the nature and treatment of gun-shot wounds, and all the special duties of the military medical man. His having been a regimental surgeon for nineteen years, and having acquired extensive experience of gun-shot wounds in the late Crimean war, as well as having been a lecturer on anatomy for many years, constituted his claim to present himself before them. He then referred to the curriculum of education required by the Army Medical Board, the Navy Board, and the Hon. East India Company, where such a course was provisionally included, yet no opportunity had hitherto offered itself of their complying with this requisition. After exposing the fallacy and groundlessness of the objection some had urged to making military surgery a special study, he passed in review the names of many eminent men who had spent their lives as army surgeons, both in this and other countries, and showed the advantage the State had derived from their services, and the influence they had acquired in consequence. He sketched out the important special duties of military medical men, the high attainments requisite for the position, and how much the efficiency of a regiment depended on their zeal, activity, and intelligence. Alluding to the services of the Medical Department in the Crimean war, he showed how triumphantly their claims had been established for improved position and emolument; and concluded by recommending all who were qualifying themselves for medical appointments in the Army, Navy, or East India Company's service, to acquire strict and accurate anatomical knowledge, and to avail themselves of the subsidiary sciences—botany, geology, and natural philosophy, an acquaintance with which might be eminently useful to them, and give weight and importance to their periodical reports from the various stations in the colonies.

SCOTLAND.

(FROM OUR EDINBURGH CORRESPONDENT.)

THE ROYAL INFIRMARY.—It will be remembered that in July last THE LANCET drew attention to the state of the Royal Infirmary—to the number of beds which were then shut up, and the disadvantages which were likely to accrue from such a