MILITIA SURGEONS AND THE PEACE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The restoration of peace raises the question—What is to become of the militia?—a question of the utmost importance to the medical officers of that branch of the service. Many of them have relinquished long and well-established practices. This country having engaged in a war, from which statesmen shrank, and through which the most penetrating eye could not see, little did they think that two years would suffice to dispel the cloud, and restore the blessings of peace. This, however, having happily been the case, are they to be now sent adrift without remuneration for their services, or for the sacrifices they have made? Many of them have held their commissions little more than twelve months, and when they deduct from their pay the necessary expenses they have been at, how much will remain? Let us take the case of an assistant-surgeon. When he obtains his commission, and joins his regiment, he finds fifty days' pay stopped for mess and band funds, and twenty more during the year. He has then to procure an outfit, that takes nearly half his year's pay, so that when these are deducted from his year's income, the balance would not pay for his dinners. Now those who have left their practices, and gone where both glory and honour were to be won, (and where nearly every Englishman longed to be,) have been liberally rewarded, in consideration of the brief period their services would be required, and the sacrifices they had made; even the navvies have not been sent empty away.

Will not those in authority take these facts into consideration: or should not the militia medical officers memorialise the Government to allow them some further consideration for their services, as their pay since embodied has been nearly all swallowed up in expenses which the regulations of the service obliged them to incur?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

April, 1856.

AN ASSISTANT-SURGEON.

POISONING BY LAUDANUM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Amongst the cases of recovery of infants from large doses of laudanum, you may, if you think it of sufficient interest, record the following—viz., that of a child six months old, under my care last year, who, at that age, was given in mistake a teaspoonful of laudanum. I did not see the child until an hour after the administration of the opiate; it was already comatose. I emptied the stomach by large doses of sulphate of zinc, gave it coffee, and watched it for some hours as usual. It recovered perfectly, and is still alive. The laudanum was unfortunately thrown away, so that I was deprived of the opportunity of ascertaining the quantity of morphia it contained.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

Albany-road, Camberwell, April, 1856.

H. M. SIMMONDS.

POSITION OF THE TONGUE IN SPASM OF THE GLOTTIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—May not the impediment to breathing in what is termed spasm of the glottis depend upon the falling back of the tongue, as described by Dr. Marshall Hall in drowning?

A case of this affection occurred to me the other day, and acting as advised by Dr. Marshall Hall in cases of drowning, certainly whether "propter hoc" or "cum hoc," a much more instantaneous effect was produced than by the Perroquet mode of warm bath, cold water, &c. However, there would be no harm in such cases in turning the child alternately on its face and side.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

April, 1856.

R. CROSSE.

THE MEDICAL OFFICERS OF THE DORCHESTER AND WEYMOUTH UNIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It strikes me as somewhat singular that, whilst (I had almost said the majority of) the medical officers support Mr. Griffin's movement, those of the Dorchester and Weymouth Unions keep aloof from him. Surely this ought not to be, and I think those gentlemen are bound to their brethren to give their reasons why, if they do not openly oppose their neighbour,

they fail to give him their active support. This is due to themselves and to the profession, at least that part of it connected with the Poor-law Board.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Nottingham, April, 1856.

S. CARTER.

GRIEVANCES OF POOR-LAW SURGEONS.

MR. GRIFFIN'S MOVEMENT.

IN a circular addressed to the Poor-law Medical Officers, Mr. Griffin, in order that there should be uniformity and unanimity in the efforts made for the redress of grievances, says,—

"I have carefully collated the opinions of the Officers from one hundred and sixty-three Unions, and find that the majority are for—

"1. Petitioning Parliament to order the Poor-law Board to put in force the recommendation of the Committee of the House of Commons, obtained by Mr. Pigott in 1854.

"2. That a uniform scale of payment shall be adopted throughout the entire kingdom, varying only in proportion to the number of the poor, and their distance from the surgeon's residence, and even this to be arranged on a fixed basis, with no optional power on the part of the guardians.

"3. That the scale of extras, including midwifery, should be extended, and embrace many operations and bad cases in surgery not now paid for, a list of which will be drawn up by the committee; that the officer in charge of the Union house shall participate in this arrangement, and that there shall be no discretionary power to give a fixed salary instead of extras.

"4. That all medical appointments, not only now in force, but hereafter to be made, shall be declared permanent, and subject only to a re-adjustment of the districts, from time to time, as the Poor-law Board may think desirable.

"5. That a fixed salary being preferred to a per case payment, even though the former be founded on the latter, the calculation shall henceforth be made on the average number of orders for the last three years, at a sum not less than five shillings per case, with two shillings extra for each mile the patient resides beyond the medical officer's house.

"6. That a revision of salaries take place triennially, if desired by the Board of Guardians or medical officers.

"7. That no order shall continue in force longer than three months, and if renewed, be counted as a fresh order.

"Personally, I should prefer a removal from the Poor-law Board and Guardians, and being placed under a medical department of the Board of Health, with other changes; but I must candidly admit, the opinions of a great many are against this course altogether, and others object to it as involving the risk of postponing the amelioration of our present position for an indefinite length of time. To insure unanimity of action, I therefore think it right to recommend you to confine your resolutions to the opinions I now place before you. Let me once more entreat the officers in each Union, who have not already met, to do so without delay—appoint a local secretary, collect subscriptions, as expenses must be incurred, (5s. per quarter has hitherto been generally subscribed,) and forward them to me with their opinions, and we shall speedily be in a position to lay our grievances before Parliament.

"Allow me to remind those who think I ought to have called a public meeting ere this, that a month since I had only seventy Unions on my list; I now have one hundred and sixty-three—a convincing proof that the cause has not suffered from delay, but is advancing with giant strides. Even in the Crimea our appeal has been heard, and a warrior brother has sent home his subscription to support the cause, and I only wish he had given me authority to print his letter, it offers so many powerful arguments for the necessity of union amongst ourselves, and the claim we have to the support of the profession at large, 'as the good or injury of one is in various ways felt by all.' The officers of a Union, seven in number, have written to say, 'They will attend a London meeting, but think it rather early for one to be called, and trust the cause will not be damaged by precipitancy, an advanced movement should be well supported.'"

At a meeting of the Medical Officers of the Shaftesbury and Mere Unions, held at Shaftesbury, on the 16th inst.,—present, Messrs. Miles, Buckland, E. J. Miles, Barrett, Brine, and Chitty,—it was resolved—

1st.—That the Medical Officers of the above Unions cordially approve of the movement set on foot by Mr. Griffin of Weymouth, and promise him their co-operation and support.