

not think that a yearly election is a good thing. The medical officer should feel as much permanency in his situation as the relieving officer or as the clerk, and he should hold his situation during good conduct."

Mr. J. M. Johnson, guardian, West London Union, in his evidence says,—“Then as to the medical officers, perhaps the Committee will be kind enough to follow me for a minute or two whilst I state my objection to giving the appointment and discharge into the hands of the guardians, subject to the exercise of their discretionary power, a term which has been very much abused in the course of this investigation. It is admitted by all, with regard to medical officers, that the chief point of their usefulness is their personal acquaintance with the constitution of their patients. A medical officer must first of all study the ins and outs of all the courts in the union; he must go into the dwellings of the patients who are receiving out-door relief; he has known them for years; he knows the diseases to which they are subject, and he treats them accordingly: that could not be the case with the medical officer if he is frequently changed. I think it is perfectly ridiculous to demand such a thing. All the officers would become the servants of the guardians instead of their officers. I cannot give my consent to that, and I objected to the proposition when the petition was discussed at the board. It was construed into a hardship last summer, when one of our medical officers was suspended by the guardians and a deputy appointed. The suspension was reported to the Poor-law Board, and in due course the district inspector came down and investigated the matter. He conducted his examination most carefully, and all parties were heard. The result was, that the Poor-law Board sanctioned the suspension of the medical officer under the circumstances, but, taking into consideration his very long services, and that there had never previously been a complaint against him (his services having extended over thirteen years), the Board, without commanding, recommended the guardians, in a very conciliatory manner, to remove the suspension. That was accordingly done; but the quarter had turned, and a little account came in from the deputy who had discharged the duties, and all officers, by the order of the Poor-law Board, being entitled to salary during the time of suspension, if such suspension is removed, the medical officer of course was advised to pursue his right, and accordingly claimed his salary; and with regard to the salary of the deputy, his right could not be disputed at all, and consequently the board had to pay two salaries (about £17); and that, which was an exceptional case, has been taken advantage of to claim for the guardians the right to dismiss their officers at once. If they had had discretionary power, they would have dismissed the medical officer, and there would have been no appeal."

F. J. Stretton, Esq., auditor, St. Pancras parish.—“The vestry, under the local Act, appoint all the officers of the directors; the directors may suspend, but the vestry alone have the power of dismissing the officers. I believe that is very pernicious; there is a want of independence in the officers that is lamentable. I believe that there have been, and are still, officers in that parish who are afraid to do what they believe to be right because of losing their positions. The officers must take their directions from those fluctuating bodies, and that, I think, is very pernicious, especially with reference to the officers in the workhouse, because the control and management and treatment of the poor in the workhouse vary very much according to the party who may happen to be in power. I have observed it (want of independence) in officers who have been almost absolutely compelled to take tickets for parochial dinners, because they have been afraid of being dismissed if they did not do so. I merely mention this to show how much the officers are themselves under the control of persons happening to be in power at the time. I believe the power of dismissal is very injurious."

Mr. Griffin quotes the opinion of the Poor-law Commissioners in favour of permanency of appointment, and says,—“Unless a medical officer is free to recommend meat and other necessities for the poor placed under his care, without fear of being displaced for so doing at a given time, the poor must suffer. These orders are the main ground of the guardians wishing medical officers to be annually appointed, or only for a short period. Do away with the permanency of the appointment, and the inevitable result will be an immense sacrifice of human life, as, whilst the dread of displacement hangs over the medical officer's head, he may look rather to please the guardians than to consult the good of the poor."

Robert Fowler, Esq., M.D.—“I am quite of opinion that medical officers should be permanently appointed; it tends very much to the advantage of the poor, and it is also but fair

to the medical officer. Why should not the pauper, whose only crime is poverty, have those advantages derivable from that enlarged experience resulting from uninterrupted medical supervision, and which are accorded to every criminal in a gaol?"

The Committee of Metropolitan Poor-law Medical Officers recommend, that in order to ensure to the sick poor the full benefit of medical aid, the appointment of the Poor-law medical officer should in all cases be made permanent. Frequent changes of the medical attendant act injuriously by precluding the sick poor from the benefit of that enlarged experience of their constitutional peculiarities which results from an uninterrupted medical supervision. In common fairness to the medical officer his appointment should be made in all cases permanent, in accordance with that just principle which makes tenure of office dependent solely upon the due fulfilment of duty, and which is adopted in all public appointments of the civil service, the naval and military service, and in almost all private cases also.

TREATMENT OF INDOLENT ULCERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Through the medium of your valuable journal, allow me to offer a few remarks on a new method (in the United Kingdom at least) of treating old indolent or callous ulcers generally, but more particularly of the leg. No doubt it is and has been introduced into foreign and continental practice, where I had very many opportunities of treating and seeing treated, not only with marked and undoubted success, but the healing process seems, or I may say does complete itself, in little more than half the time the ordinary treatment occupies. I therefore take the liberty of bringing it before the notice of the medical profession generally, and leave it in their hands to judge as to whether it is likely to meet their approbation or not.

The method is very simple, and within the reach of every one. Supposing you have a case of old indolent ulcer, for example, all you have to do will be to wash the leg well; after so doing, fill up the excavated ulcer with fine powdered carbonate of iron, afterwards applying a large linen pad, without any moisture coming near; then envelope the whole limb in a starched bandage, allowing it to remain for three weeks or so, according to the extent of ulcerated surface. Another feature in this method is, that the patient need not be confined to bed, or be enjoined absolute rest, but can even walk a little every day. The limb must be kept perfectly dry.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Lancaster Infirmary, Dec. 1861. J. MITCHELL, L.R.C.S. Edin.

ARSENICAL PAPER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your recent articles upon the dangers of arsenical pigments for colouring wall-papers might, I think, be well supplemented by directing attention to the injurious though still common practice of using such papers for the purpose of enclosing articles of daily consumption. Herewith I send you a wrapper which contained chocolate, manufactured by an eminent firm, and supported by a testimonial from Dr. Hassall, whose attention I am persuaded could not have been drawn to the noxious covering, which the usual tests amply prove to be an arsenical pigment. A thin glaze covers the colouring matter, totally insufficient to prevent its detachment upon the least crease or crumple. Now the use of a paper so highly charged with deleterious matter, coming (as this would) in constant contact with various other articles of the domestic economy, cannot, I am sure, be too greatly reprobated.

Hoping thus to bring an apparently unobserved evil under notice, I remain, Sir, yours obediently,

Park-place, Gloucester-gate, Regent's-park,
December, 1861.

EDWD. DYER.

PARISIAN MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

WHAT is the usual fee paid for medical attendance in Paris? is a question not unfrequently put to me by my English *confrères* who visit this capital, and one, moreover, which I have found considerable difficulty in answering. The Paris fees