observed a large piece of the false membrane, which had extended all over the previous redness, quite loosened from the surface, and, with some difficulty, I got it away, leaving a bright, raw, and red condition of the parts behind. This false membrane had the appearance of thin tripe after maceration in hot water for several hours. Its removal was followed by great relief in breathing and restoration of deglutition; but typhus symptoms soon set in, death of the lower extremities, up beyond the knee, was apparently complete, and death followed in about six days from the commencement.

I judged these dreadful cases to be scarlatina anginosa, in two instances; scarlatina maligna, in the girl aged thirteen; and this last-mentioned case to be scarlatina anginosa, with the addition of true diphtheria.

Since that time I have had many opportunities of seeing both diseases, separately and combined. The ulcerated throat, in the worst cases of scarlatina, is quite different to the fungoid membrane of diphtheria; the slough of the former often leaves an indentation upon the tonsil, and is also mostly confined to the tonsils, whereas the false membrane of diphtheria, when detached, leaves the surface, to which it has been adherent, of a bright red, with an appearance not unlike raw meat.

I have used various modes of treatment in this terrible disease—diphtheria; I believe, nearly all that have been from time to time thought of by medical men, but the best line of action I find to be as follows:—After a clearance of the bowels with calomel and rhubarb, I order strong beef-tea, wine, and, above all, Bass's pale ale; the patients express themselves much relieved in the throat as it is swallowed, and feel greatly exhilarated after taking it. One gentleman drank twelve pint bottles of it in the course of a night. The medicine I find of most use is an ounce of the compound tincture of quinine, taken in wine-and-water, every four hours. As a local application, (and it is to the personal inspection of the throat, and the personal use of the applications, that we may hope to benefit the sufferer,) I find the best and most efficacious is equal parts of honey and concentrated muriatic acid, applied with a probang to the whole of the false membrane, about every sixth hour. As a gargle, borax and honey, mixed with a little brandy-and-water, is very useful; and, after the stripping off of the false membrane, a gargle made with tannic acid and water, affords great comfort.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Bristol, November, 1858.

J. P. M'DONALD, M.R.C.S.

[LETTER FROM H. LAMB DEN, ESQ., M.R.C.S.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having read with deep interest the valuable paper "On Diphtheria," by Dr. Kingsford, in THE LANCET of the 5th inst., and having had upwards of a hundred cases of that fearful disease, in all its varied phases, come under my treatment during the last few months, I have much pleasure in bearing my testimony to the correctness of the views therein enumerated as to the nature of the disease, its symptoms, and treatment generally.

I find, as a topical application, the nitrate of silver in substance indispensable, wherever the disease can be reached by it; and where the pharynx and other parts more remote are implicated, a strong solution of that substance (say a drachm to an ounce) must be applied, by means of a camel-hair pencil, or piece of sponge; a gargle, composed of a strong solution of chloride of soda being, at the same time, used with great frequency. In children too young to use it properly, I apply it by means of a small glass syringe.

As an internal remedy, I look upon chlorate of potash as the sheet anchor; and this, combined with hydrochloric acid, according to the following formula (in use, I believe, at St. Thomas's Hospital), I have found invaluable:—Chlorate of potash, two drachms; hydrochloric acid, one drachm; water, eight ounces: half an ounce for a dose, every one, two, or three hours, according to the urgency of the symptoms. The chlorate of potash should be first finely powdered in a mortar, the undiluted acid be poured upon it, continually stirring, and as soon as the whole of the powder assumes a yellow colour, and the fumes of chlorine begin to arise, dash in the water, by which the escape of chlorine is at once arrested, free chlorine being thus retained in the solution. I have administered chlorate of potash, in this form, from the first appearance of the disease, in my practice; and such has been the good effect attending its administration, and such is my confidence in it, that I have never felt justified in resorting to any other medicine. I have, in many instances, combined the sesquichloride of iron; but I really cannot say that I have found any benefit

arise from its admixture. Wine, in full doses, oft repeated, beef-tea, and, in fact, every kind of nutritious matter that can be got into the system, are essentially requisite.

I cannot agree with Dr. Kingsford "that mercury is especially contra-indicated." I am of opinion (and my experience of its administration bears me out in it) that where the disease extends to the larynx and the trachea, and the symptoms become "croupal," calomel, with small doses of antimony (one grain of the former with one-eighth of a grain of the latter), is imperatively demanded, even in those cases which look most unpromising for its exhibition; the system being of course, at the same time, supported by stimulants, &c. I consider too great stress cannot be laid upon the injurious effects of blisters and mustard poultices, especially in the more severe forms of the disease; they cause immense suffering to the patient, adding greatly to the nervous depression, and I much question whether death, in some instances in children, may not have been accelerated by their application. Apologizing for trespassing so far upon your space, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Coningsby, Lincolnshire, Nov. 1858. H. LAMB DEN, M.R.C.S.

P.S.—Mr. Cammack, in the postscript to his letter published on the 30th ult., says he has never seen a full description of this epidemic. A very succinct account appears in the *Cyclopædia of Practical Medicine* for 1834, vol. iv., p. 176, in a paper by Dr. Tweedie, "On Throat Diseases."—H. L.

POOR-LAW MEDICAL REFORM ASSOCIATION.

[LETTER FROM MR. GRIFFIN.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The minds of medical men have lately been so engrossed with discussions respecting the election of the Medical Council and the formation of Registration Societies, that I have refrained from troubling you on the subject of Poor-law Medical Reform; but the time is drawing near for work to be resumed, as you will gather from the accompanying letter of the secretary to the Poor-law Board, which I shall feel obliged by your inserting with this in your journal. The return therein mentioned, which contains millions of figures, will have to be carefully calculated, condensed, and arranged under certain heads, if it is to be made available for our guidance, and for the purpose of pointing out to the members of the Legislature the present system of Poor-law medical relief and the necessity for reform. This task it is impossible for me, or any one person, to perform in a reasonable time; I must, therefore, employ others, the expense of which, with printing, postage, and the distribution of upwards of 4000 copies, writing petitions to Parliament in support of our views and sending them over the country for signature, will be attended with considerable expense, and it will rest with the union medical officers themselves how far this work shall be carried out. Of late, very little money has been sent me, and I have only £73 6s. 9d. in hand, of which £5 was forwarded last week by Mr. Young, of Reading, as a subscription from eighteen union officers and two friends to the cause in his neighbourhood; but a large sum will be needed during the next six months if the work of reform is to be carried on with vigour. I therefore trust that every Poor-law medical officer will send his contribution, and that the local secretaries, where already appointed, will urge all their colleagues to join the Association. Surprise has been expressed that Mr. Estcourt has not yet forwarded his promised draft-bill for our consideration; but when it is known that Lord Elcho's return, on which so much will depend, is still in the hands of the printers, this delay may be accounted for.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

12, Royal-terrace, Weymouth,
Nov. 16th, 1858.

RICHARD GRIFFIN, M.R.C.S.

"Poor-law Board, Whitehall, S.W., Nov. 13th, 1858.

SIR,—I am directed by the Poor-law Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, and to state in reply that the return relating to medical relief, moved for by Lord Elcho, is not yet printed, although it has been in the printers' hands for a considerable time. The return is in the course of being printed, and upwards of fifty pages of it are already in type. The Board, however, understand that in consequence of the peculiar nature of the return, the printers will not find it practicable to complete it before the close of the ensuing month.

I am desired to add that the Board will take care to forward a copy of the return to you as soon as it is published.

I am, Sir, &c.,

R. Griffin, Esq."

COURTNEY, Secretary.