

DR. COPLAND'S MEDICAL DICTIONARY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—The observations, in your last Number, of a "Constant Reader," on the treatment which the subscribers to "Copland's Medical Dictionary" have received from either the author or the publishers, are far too lenient to affect those who may meditate a similar "speculation" by similar means. A pledge was given, in the Prospectus of 1833, that its completion might be relied upon in a few months. Seven years have elapsed, and one-third only of the initial letters of the alphabet have been yet reached, a fact which the proprietors must very much blush or chuckle at. The author must have known, or the publishers ought to have known, that this pledge was a delusion practised upon themselves, or on the subscribers; and as the first and early numbers of the work were, of course, purchased upon the faith and warranty of respectable names, it would seem to follow, from the disreputable delay, that the author was (from, possibly, other engagements) incapable of fulfilling his self-imposed task, or that the speculation, *per se*, has been a failure. Whichever is the fact, my purse has been so far squeezed, and the circumstance somewhat nettles me, for no man likes to be "pigeon'd."

The only counsel I can offer to your Welsh correspondent, and to other fellow-sufferers, is to know their loss at once, as I intend to do, and no longer contribute to the rickety existence of a work which, although it has reached "I," and may now go to "L," is still, in the casualties of life, uncertain of completion. I have the honour to be your most obedient servant,

DUNNE BROWNE.

London, April 7, 1840.

REMUNERATION OF MEDICAL OFFICERS TO UNIONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Allow me, through your widely-circulated columns, to draw the attention of surgeons, in charge of rural districts, to the "Petition" of the Gloucester Practitioners, about to be presented to Parliament. That Petition recommends, that in districts not exceeding sixteen square miles in area, the minimum payment per case should be about eight shillings—the maximum about twelve shillings.

Such a recommendation (if acted upon) would have the effect, in many places, of considerably reducing the at present inadequate remuneration. The sum per case must greatly depend upon certain points for consideration; for instance, the average number of cases per annum; the proportion

of cases to be within a moderate distance (say two or three miles) of the surgeon's residence, &c. Extensive districts, with a thin, widely scattered population, require a greatly-increased amount of time, physical labour (and, let me add, expense in horses) for their due attendance. Moreover, cases occurring under these circumstances are more generally of a serious nature (and consequently frequently require a long attendance), as the poor will not trouble themselves to come for medicine four, six, or eight miles, unless the case is serious.

It is very easy to recommend that districts should not exceed certain limits; but were the surgeon, in many parts of the country, to practise within defined limits, he could scarcely exist, the population consisting, almost exclusively, of the agricultural poor. Until the terms of payment for medical services, offered by Boards of Guardians, will enable a surgeon to exist in decency, he *must* reside in a neighbourhood where the private practice will keep him, whether his residence be or be not within prescribed limits.

In giving the Gloucester Practitioners every credit for their exertions, I am surprised that points so evident, and so necessary to be considered, in arranging a scale of remuneration, have not been alluded to by them. I am, Sir, yours,

March 27, 1840.

JUSTITIA.

P.S. Chronic cases should receive renewed orders at stated intervals, according to the nature of the case, distance, &c.

BITE OF A VIPER.—TRACHEOTOMY.

A MAN who, from his youth, had been accustomed to catch and tame vipers, brought two, on the 24th March, to a shopkeeper. While playing with one of the animals, he put it in his mouth, and was immediately bitten by the viper, in consequence of a bystander having pinched its tail. The tongue at once became enormously swollen, and during the night the man could hardly breathe. A medical man was sent for next day, and found him in a very dangerous state,—the face swollen and anxious; the salivary glands tumefied; the tongue enormously swollen; and the pulse small. The tongue was immediately scarified, but the swelling soon returned again, and, as the man was about to repair to the hospital, he fell on the ground in a state of asphyxia. The respiration and pulse were now completely suspended; the face became purple, and the neck swelled to such a degree, that its circumference exceeded that of the head. The operation of tracheotomy was at once had recourse to, and the patient was bled; the blood, at first, flowed slowly, but, after