SIR WILLIAM MUIR, K.C.B.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your last issue you give an interesting account of the life of the late Director-General of the Army Medical Department, and mention he has just retired from the service, leaving the department “in a contented state, with greatly improved pay, retirement, position, and conditions of service.” I have been for some time expecting to see some proposal made through THE LANCET by which the members of the Army Medical Department might be enabled to mark their appreciation of the great services rendered to them by their late Director-General; and as I have looked in vain for such proposal, I trust you will publish this letter in your next issue, that the idea may be taken up and a committee formed to place the matter before the members for their approval.

Yours obediently,

May 17th, 1882.

F.R.C.S.

THE CARRIAGE TAX.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am very glad to be able to inform the profession (through your columns) that Mr. Harday, the member for Forfarshire, intends, after the second reading of the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, to put an amendment on the paper for Committee embodying an exemption for the medical profession, and I sincerely hope the medical members of Parliament will give him their support in his generous efforts on our behalf.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ROBERT SINCLAIR, M.D.,
Secretary, Forfarshire Medical Association.

Dundee, May 15th, 1882.

PARIS.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

DEATH OF SIR JOHN ROSE CORMACK.

THE English Colony in Paris have experienced a great loss by the death of Sir John Rose Cormack, which took place on the 13th inst. Sir John was the son of a Scotch minister. He received his medical education at Edinburgh, and took the degree of doctor of medicine in 1837. For many years he practised in that city, giving considerable attention to the scientific part of his profession, and holding the office of physician to the Royal Infirmary. It was then that he founded the *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, which was known familiarly at the time as “Cormack’s Journal.” Amongst Sir John’s writings may be mentioned an important treatise on the epidemic fever which prevailed in Edinburgh and other towns in 1843, different papers on cholera, nephritis, and various gynæcological questions. These, together with some dissertations on the reflex convulsions of infancy, on different questions connected with diphtheria, a graduation thesis upon air in the organs of circulation, and other subjects, were afterwards reprinted under the title of “Clinical Studies.” At a later period Sir John Cormack left Edinburgh and settled in London, but ill-health obliged him to abandon his practice, and for some years he resided at Orleans. In 1870 he came to Paris. Unlike the majority of English practitioners, Sir John Cormack did not feel that it was any indignity to be re-examined by the French School, for he knew that he was able to satisfy the examiners. As a result of his examination he became a doctor of medicine of the Faculty of Paris. Two years later the London College of Physicians elected him to the Fellowship. Soon after settling in Paris troublesome times arose. The Franco-German war broke out, and Paris was besieged and taken. Then followed the Commune with all the horrors of civil war. During these eventful times Sir John remained steadfast to his post, and rendered great services both to his own countrymen and to the French. He was an assiduous worker at the British Charitable Fund, and helped the poorer English through the difficulties and privations of the siege. Sir Richard Wallace having founded an English ambulance, the surgical section was placed under Sir John’s charge. He proved his capacity for the post by the success of his operations. The siege and Commune over, Sir John, at

that time only Dr. Cormack, received the honour of knighthood, and was made a Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur. For the last ten years Sir John Cormack has held the first place amongst the English members of the medical profession in Paris, and his merits were recognised by his appointment to the Physiciancy of the Hertford British Hospital, which post he occupied until his death. For some time past it was evident that his health, which had been sorely shaken by domestic affliction, was seriously impaired. Towards the end of the winter a change of climate was advised, and Sir John went to pass a few weeks in the South of France at Monte Carlo. After his return to Paris his illness increased, and a few days before his fatal termination he was taken with hæmaturia and symptoms of uræmia. Notwithstanding this, his mind was quite clear, and it may be mentioned as characteristic of him that the last time he saw his old friend and physician, Professor Ball, he greeted him with the words of the gladiator about to fight his last battle—“*Morituri te salutant.*” Sir John Cormack will not easily be forgotten in Paris. His honest, upright character, no less than his professional attainments, had earned for him the respect of all classes. By his friends and patients he will long be remembered as a good physician, and by the medical profession as a good *confrère*.

Obituary.

WILLIAM PRATT, M.D., F.R.C.S.

NEWTOWN, Montgomeryshire, has lost a talented member of our profession by the death of Dr. Pratt, which occurred, after a short illness, on the 6th inst. Dr. Pratt studied at Aberdeen University, of which he was M.A., taking the degree of M.D., with highest honours, at Liège in 1864. He became a Licentiate of the College of Physicians, London, in 1865, and in 1877 took the Fellowship of the College of Surgeons of England, besides holding other diplomas. He was Medical Officer of Health and Medical Officer to the Newtown District and Llanidloes Union, &c., and Surgeon to the Montgomeryshire Infirmary. He has from time to time contributed many articles of interest to these columns. His life was a thoroughly active one, and he died, as many other distinguished medical men have died, at his post, working in the interests of the profession he so dearly loved, until struck down by the disease which, there is little reason to doubt, was contracted in the discharge of his duty. For some weeks he had been unremitting in his attentions upon a severe case of pneumonia in a part of the town where the drainage was imperfect. This he was enabled to remedy to a great degree; but the anxiety and constant strain upon his mind led to much prostration of strength, and he was obliged to give up work for what his friends hoped would be a revigorating rest. But after a few days’ confinement to bed symptoms of pneumonia rapidly developed, and ultimately both lungs became involved. This, however, did not cause anxiety, as he took nourishment well, and did not lose ground until Saturday, when graver symptoms appeared, expectoration becoming most difficult, and within an hour he succumbed, apnoea being the immediate cause of death.

The infirmary in which he took a keen interest has lost one of its best supporters; for besides his medical duties, Dr. Pratt was ever ready to promote any scheme that suggested itself for the welfare of that institution. To him is due the establishment of “Infirmary Saturday” in the town, by which a considerable amount is annually raised; and in many other ways he showed that versatility of talent he so largely possessed and used for the benefit of others. He was a good, true, honourable friend, and to young men a kind, wise, and gentle counsellor; in him they have lost an example of what a man should be. He was a good scholar, loving knowledge for its own sake; and in the intervals of practice only changed the kind of work, not giving up work itself, but continually reading or writing upon some subject of importance. A favourite motto of his was “*Res mentem dicit*”; and by his actions he proved that a well-regulated masterly mind could accomplish many things that to others less able would present insuperable difficulties. He lived for a profession that to him was life, and he has died at the comparatively early age of fifty-one in full assurance that he has not spent that life in vain.