a non-paying office, and that you have allowed him to flounder in your pages for the purpose of showing him up; and I have no doubt under your paternal care it will be done effectually.

Let us be true to ourselves, and all offices must soon pay us for our opinions; but if we submit to oppression from public bodies, our profession will soon become a trade, and a very low one.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Montgomery, Dec. 1849.

J. P. WILDING.

ON THE "PARISH-DOCTOR" SYSTEM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Amongst the foremost of the discontented are what are significantly called the "parish-doctors;" men, who, with a suicidal determination, have sealed their own doom, degraded the profession, and tacitly submit to the insults of a grinding, and in many instances, an "ignorant board of guardians!" (what a misnomer as far as the poor medicals are concerned.) Now, Sir, what do these men deserve but to be valued according to their own measure? They accept, and in many cases eagerly seek, the appointment of surgeon to the union; they are previously acquainted with the ridiculous remuneration—with eyes wide open, they see the vast extent of ground, the immense population, whom they undertake to attend for a certain paltry amount—to call it a remuneration would be absurd—by doing which they acknowledge their services to be worthless; how can they expect an extra pittance for extra duty. No, Sir, their verdict must be "felo-de-se," *ex nihilo nihil fit*.

For pity's sake, whilst there is a stir made in medical reform, let us, one and all, try to upset such an iniquitous system, which is degrading to ourselves, murderous to the poor, and disgraceful to us as a nation. Those entitled to reward are they who have been obliged to attend to the poor without any remuneration; for the former undertake to do so, whilst with the latter, it is only their philanthropy and humanity that urged them to it. But, Sir, let us away with rewards; they are seldom bestowed in the right quarter; they are generally a mixture of favouritism and humbug. Let us take care of our own interests, combine as one to demand our own rights; defy the boards of guardians, and then we shall have no need of the humiliating cry of "rewards to cholera doctors."

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Erith, Kent.

G. WIGAN.

DISLOCATION OF THE SHOULDER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have to thank Dr. Selkirk for the handsome manner in which he has mentioned my name. Last week's LANCET contains a paper from that gentleman, in which he refers to one of mine, also published in your journal, upon "Reduction of Dislocated Shoulder-Joint."* To be brief, the method in question consists in placing the heel in the axilla, and instead of the surgeon making traction with his arms, he ties the towel behind his back, over the lumbar region, thereby gaining any amount of power necessary for reduction. Dr. Selkirk observes, that "the operator's limb fails to keep up a sufficient amount of counter-extension;" but, I would submit, is counter-extension absolutely required? I have reduced this dislocation some eight or nine times in the last dozen years, but have never had recourse to it; although in a very athletic person, such as his patient, it might possibly be required. If necessary, it could easily be employed in conjunction with this method, by passing a towel round the shoulder, previously placing a pad in the axilla, and tying it to some fixed point, in a line with the extending power; extension being made by means of one limb, with the heel in the axilla, and counter-extension with the other, placed against some immovable object. I have received so many assurances of the success of this method, that I cannot help thinking Dr. Selkirk is somewhat singular in his opinion.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Faversham, Dec. 1849.

W. N. SPONG.

NOTE FROM MR. WOOD, OF OXFORD, IN ANSWER TO MR. WADDINGTON, OF MARGATE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was much surprised, by a statement made by your correspondent, Mr. Waddington of Margate, in his letter published in THE LANCET of Dec. 8th, that he did not believe that the cholera had any premonitory symptoms; in fact, that there

was no connexion between diarrhoea and cholera. Now, this point I take to be one of the most important connected with the late epidemic, and one on which it is most essential that the profession should be fully satisfied; for it is in the stage of diarrhoea that this awful disease can be most effectually combated, as was shown by the great diminution in the number of cases of cholera in many towns, as soon as house-to-house visitation was adopted, and the very numerous cases of diarrhoea thus discovered were submitted to treatment.

In the county prison here the two diseases appeared simultaneously; every case of cholera, fourteen in number, was preceded by diarrhoea of longer or shorter duration, varying from six hours to four days, while nearly all the prisoners suffered from the latter disease, fifty-nine of them in a form sufficiently severe to render it necessary to record their cases. The disease varied in severity from a slight bilious purging to a very close approximation to true cholera, being attended with cramps and rice-water evacuations.

As a proof of the identity of the cause of the two diseases, if not of the diseases themselves, I may mention, that after the lapse of a week without a new case of either, no less than seven prisoners were attacked with diarrhoea on the night between the 30th of September and the 1st of October; one of them passed into cholera in the course of a few hours, two others had the diarrhoea in its most severe and threatening form, while the remaining four were set to rights by a dose or two of ordinary diarrhoea medicine. I find also from the returns in the hands of the honorary secretary of the Oxford Board of Health, that nearly all the cases of cholera which occurred in Oxford—one hundred and forty-four or thereabouts in number—were preceded by diarrhoea, of which latter disease, no less than three thousand cases were attended at the expense of the Board.

Of course I do not for a moment doubt the correctness of Mr. Waddington's statement, as far as his own observation goes; but his experience clearly differs from that of the profession generally; and, in my humble opinion, the importance of the subject is so vast, and the necessity of a clear understanding of the intimate connexion ordinarily existing between the two diseases so urgent, that I have ventured to trouble you with these few remarks.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Oxford, Dec. 1849.

JOHN F. WOOD, M.R.C.S.

ASSISTANT-SURGEONS IN THE NAVY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Allow me to send you some extracts from a letter received by me, a few days since, from a fellow-student at University College, now serving in the Royal Navy as an assistant-surgeon.

I inclose my name and address, and can certify you of the *bond-fide* nature of the communication.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

December, 1849.

M.D.

The writer excuses himself for neglect of correspondence, and adds:—

"H.M.S. ———," "Bashika Bay," Nov. 18. 1849.

"Knowing my character so well as you do, how easily it is acted on by any unpleasantness in the gun-room mess, I am certain you would wonder how I could have gone through all I have had to suffer for the last six months. Sometimes I fall into quite a desponding state, and wish I could by any means obtain some other employment, for this, without a doubt, is the most disgusting service a medical man, or any one in that line, could enter. If I had my time to go over again, I would sooner beg my bread from door to door, than enter a gun-room mess as an assistant-surgeon." . . . "Something must surely soon be done for us. It cannot last much longer as it is at present. Men of spirit, like Englishmen, cannot surely be found to enter the service in spite of all the warnings they have received."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am desirous of offering a few remarks on the unfair treatment accorded to the medical officers of the Navy, by the Lords of the Admiralty, as respects promotion for special service. It is scarcely credible, yet it is true, that the medical officers of the Polar expeditions receive no promotion on their return to England, whilst the other officers, for the most part, are advanced in rank. It is not, therefore, surprising that Dr. John Robertson, Mr. Robert Anderson, and Mr. E. Adams, the surviving medical officers of Sir James Ross's expedition, are allowed to occupy the same rank which

* THE LANCET, vol. i. 1848, fol. 607.