with which it keeps asunder the tarsi, must exhibit advantages far superior to the fingers of the assistants pressing unequally on a wire speculum, the convex point of which making its hold on a point only; and, lastly, is applied to meet another convex surface, the barbarous hooks, of which we have an endless variety, and which, to be of any service, should take hold of a considerable portion of the conjunctiva, to prevent the possibility of their slipping or tearing out.

With the speculum I have here introduced, the operation is one of ease and expedition both to patient and operator, when compared to the hook system, which it is now time to explode as unnecessarily painful. The operation I perform thus: Place the patient on an easy chair, with the head reclining back, a good light falling on the eye; opening the tarsi, the speculum is placed between the tarsi upon the naked eye. The speculum is then left to the care of an assistant,—who stands behind, supporting the patient's head on his chest,—directing him to draw the eye from the canthus, and keep a steady pressure on the eye. A small pair of forceps, scalpel, and a probe, with an obtuse point, *without bulb*, and bent at the end about half an inch, are all the instruments required; then pinch up a portion of conjunctiva with the forceps, and make a bold incision of half an inch, pass the probe under the tendon, and separate it with the knife, the whole not requiring more than thirty seconds; the probe having no bulb is not so likely to entangle itself, and the knife will be found to divide the tendon with less pain than scissors. I have thus endeavoured to render the operation easy and expeditious, the instruments *few*, and of less formidable character. Your correspondent, Mr. Mackmurdo, p. 784, in support of Mr. Adams's hook, *states that the incision into the conjunctiva, if large, heals slowly and unsatisfactorily*. In all the cases I have operated on the healing has been rapid, and no bad symptom has occurred. I think it preferable to make a bold incision at once, than be under the necessity of enlarging it. If the speculum be made of silver the edges would have to be turned back, to make up for the thickness which is necessary to support the tarsi.

101, Piccadilly, Manchester,
Aug. 31, 1840.

THIRD CORONER FOR CHESHIRE.

OUR contemporary, the *North Cheshire Reformer*, takes upon himself to assert that there is a general feeling amongst the freeholders against the appointment of a medical coroner. This we can contradict from our own knowledge; and we dare venture to say that if the freeholders, in this early stage of the business, entertain any fixed

impression at all, it is decidedly in favour of a medical coroner in preference to a legal one.—*The Stockport Advertiser*.

The following letter—addressed to Mr. W. H. BELLOTT, surgeon, of Millgate Hall, Stockport, in reply to an application from that gentleman to the medical coroner for Middlesex, for information relative to the statements contained in the posting-bill issued by the lawyers of Cheshire—was published in the *Stockport Advertiser* of Aug. 28. There are two medical candidates in the field, Mr. BELLOTT and Mr. W. TINKER, of Hyde, against two attorneys:—

MR. WAKLEY'S REPLY.

35, Bedford-square, London,
August 26th, 1840.

Sir:—In THE LANCET of Saturday next will be found a very brief notice of the false allegations which have been published in a posting bill, relative to the election of a coroner for the county of Cheshire. You will find in the figures contained in that short notice, an ample and most complete refutation of the wilful falsehoods, which the silly author of the posting bill has had the stupidity and temerity to commit to paper. The difference in the expenses of the inquests held in the two divisions of Middlesex, wherein the medical coroner and the attorney coroner respectively discharge their duties, has been so striking, that the Committee of the House of Commons took especial notice of the subject, and the Committee of Magistrates appointed to inquire into that and other matters, referred to the diminution of cost on the part of the medical coroner, as compared with that of his colleague, in terms of marked approval. Since the medical coroner has been appointed, the following facts have been proved—indisputably proved—before a Committee of the House of Commons, and a Committee of the Magistrates, viz.:—

1st. That the *medical* coroner had taken a less average number of inquests than his predecessor, who was *upwards of ninety years of age at the time of his decease*.

2nd. That a *less* sum of money has been paid for the attendance of medical witnesses.

3rd. That a *less* sum of money has been paid for *post-mortem* examinations.

4th. And that the disbursements of the medical coroner, for the expenses of inquests, have been less in amount by *one-third*, than in the other division of the county, where my respected colleague, the attorney coroner, presides.

At the same time it may be stated, that my division of the county occupies, in square miles, an extent of ground seven times greater than that of the eastern division, and a larger number of inhabitants, to the extent of upwards of two hundred thousand persons.

As you ask for information on these subjects, and as the writer of the anonymous

bill has been guilty of publishing so many gross falsehoods regarding the office of coroner in this county, you are at perfect liberty to publish the statements which are contained in this communication. I have the honour to be, Sir, your very obedient servant,

THOMAS WAKLEY, Coroner.

CONTRACTS FOR VACCINATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In reading the “Minute of the Poor-Law Commissioners on Contracts for Vaccination,” in *THE LANCET* for last week, the first thing that struck me as worthy of comment, is the periods at which attendance is to be given. Every one who is acquainted with the subject is aware that, in order to insure successful vaccination, it is desirable that the lancet should pass at once, and without loss of time, from a fresh pustule into the arm of the patient to be vaccinated. The time, therefore, which should elapse between the vaccination of one person, and of another who is to be vaccinated from him, should be just long enough to allow of the virus within the pustule being fully formed. This will generally take place about the eighth day; consequently, a person who vaccinates regularly once a-week, will have a good supply of fresh matter constantly, provided *he can get his patients to attend a second time to be examined*. There are, however, places, probably, where so few would be vaccinated, that a regular supply could not be kept up in this way. In this case, of course, the operator must depend for his virus upon a supply on glasses, &c., by which means he will frequently be foiled.

The next paragraph proposes to stipulate for the services of the contractor, *whenever he is personally applied to at his own house*. Had any *medical man* anything to do with framing this clause? If so, I think the sooner he is transferred to Hanwell or Bethlem the better. But what does it mean? By turning to the contract proposed by the Commissioners to be made between the vaccinator and the guardians, I find it stipulated that “he will vaccinate all persons resident within the said ———, who shall apply to him at any reasonable hour of the day at his own residence.” By reasonable hours, I suppose, is meant the hours during which business is usually transacted; say, from nine in the morning till six or eight o’clock in the evening. So that during this time the vaccinator, or his assistant, is expected to be constantly in attendance with a supply of vaccine virus.

Leaving out of the question the uncertainty of the result of operations performed, as in this case they always must be, with *dry lymph*. Is it to be expected that any medical man will keep a person constantly in attendance, to perform perhaps one or two operations in a week? Besides, what good end is to be answered by this plan? When a woman has a young child, she must attend to it constantly, or employ a nurse; and it appears to me strange, if neither the one or the other, nor any one else, can, before the child is six months’ old, take it to be vaccinated at the regular hour. Besides which, it is much better that the vaccinator should go to his patient when he happens to be in possession of good lymph, than be constantly kicking his heels at home, and, after all, perform the operation imperfectly.

The next subject to which I would revert is the remuneration; and the amount of this, it appears, is to be in great measure regulated by the “fees paid to medical men for examination and certificates in the case of factory children and recruits.” Have the Poor-Law Commissioners “made any provision for parading all the children of the poor before the vaccinators, as is done in the army, or will they be brought up like the factory-children? If so, I think 1s 6d per case will pay them very well; but if they are to be brought by their parents at their own will and convenience, I think I have already shown (see *Statistics of Vaccination*, *LANCET*, June 20th), that only two-thirds of the population will be vaccinated. The fact is, if vaccination is to become general, and small-pox thereby extinct, medical men must go among the poor, and persuade them to *allow* their children to be vaccinated. They must then go to the guardians or others for orders (where this is required), after which they must *call at the houses* of their patients, to vaccinate the children; and again, to see that the operation has been successful. Let any man, in his right senses, consider this, and then say if 1s 6d will remunerate the vaccinator.

The last point which I would notice, is the giving certificates to parents or others when the operation has been successful. What purpose this is to answer, unless it be intended to supply the fathers with pipe-lights, I cannot imagine; and the “Minute” is silent upon the subject.

Hoping that these matters will be thoroughly investigated by medical men, before they sign the agreement suggested by the Poor-Law Commissioners, I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH CURTIS, M.R.C.S., &c.

Camden-Town, Sept. 7, 1840.