

If patronage is to be exercised as it has been by Mr. Redgrave in the case at Oldham, a serious question must sooner or later arise between our profession and the civil service. Subordinate officers will educate their sons with a certainty of preferment; the workshop and the foundry will give up their youth; some complaisant member of our profession, holding or expecting to hold a factory appointment, may be found willing to accept them as pupils without a fee, and a gross professional wrong, maturing for years, may find its consummation so soon as the fortunate neophyte has crossed the portals of the medical profession. It behoves all of us, therefore, to watch narrowly subsequent nominations emanating from the same quarter. The whole tribe of incompetent mediocrities and subservient hangers-on may, in this instance, sing a pæan over our failure; but if any future Redgrave or Coles, trusting to this as a precedent, should contemplate the perpetration of a similar injustice, there shall at least be found on record the indignant protest of an outraged profession. I am, Sir, yours &c.,

Oldham, March, 1863.

BETA.

## THE RECENT DISCUSSION UPON SYPHILIS

AT THE

## ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—At a recent meeting of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society a discussion occurred upon a paper by Dr. Marston, which has since attracted some attention.

As I had the honour of presenting that paper to the Society, I much regret that I was unavoidably prevented from attending on the second occasion upon which it was brought under the notice of the meeting. The discussion turned chiefly upon the mercurial and the non-mercurial plans of treatment; but no attempt appears to have been made to distinguish between the different kinds of disease to which these are respectively adapted.

It would scarcely be in accordance with the character of a scientific society, aided by the light of modern investigations, to discuss a remedy for "fever," without an attempt to define what kind of fever was meant; nor is it more in accordance with the advance of science to consider the treatment of "syphilis," without some definition of the kind of syphilis in question.

Dr. Marston in his paper did not allude to the treatment of syphilis. Had he done so, he would, I doubt not, carefully have distinguished between the different forms of that disease; for I have reason to know that these distinctions are as carefully made in military as in civil practice.

In speaking of climate, Dr. Marston has not said that constitutional syphilis is more common in localities where the temperature is high; for the reverse is the fact. But he implied that constitutional symptoms were very difficult of cure in those places during the summer and autumn months; and that the enervating effects of a warm and moist atmosphere acted injuriously in such cases.

I am, Sir, yours &amp;c.,

Savile-row, March 2nd, 1862.

HENRY LEE, F.R.C.S.

## MEDICAL HEALTH ASSURANCE OFFICES.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Since my recent communication (with the insertion of which you favoured me in your valuable periodical) I have received letters from several gentlemen in different parts of the kingdom, showing that there is a widely-spread interest in the subject of a Health Assurance Society. I have also read a pamphlet from an Assurance Company established in 1855, containing a sick benefit table with scale of ages and payments, allowing £1 weekly in case of sickness or incapacity for the first six months, half benefit to sixty years of age, and one quarter after that time. For example: "For a person of fifty years of age the annual premium would be £4 2s.," so that I am disposed to think that with an annual premium of £5, or rather more, a society might safely be established; to which end I should be happy to act *pro tempore*, and to receive the names of those gentlemen who might feel disposed to join, with the understanding that rules should be formed, and satisfactory treasurer (or treasurers) and secretaries appointed; and it might then be seen how far it would be supported.

If you would kindly co-operate, and allow the names of correspondents to be inserted in your widely-circulated journal, you would be conferring a great boon on those of the medical

profession who are desirous at once to have such an association formed; and the benefits we must all admit to have accrued to us through THE LANCET lead me to hope that you will do so.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

JOHN M. BRYAN, M.D., F.R.C.S.,

Hon. Sec. and Treasurer to the South Midland Branch of the British Medical Association.

March, 1863.

RUSSELL *VERSUS* ADAMS.*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Certain statements having appeared in some of the medical journals in reference to the late action of Russell *v.* Adams to the effect that I was professionally engaged and my costs paid by Mr. Propert, I beg to state most unequivocally that my services were engaged by Miss Russell and her mother, with the latter of whom I had become professionally acquainted upwards of eighteen years previously. The action of Russell *v.* Adams was commenced so far back as the 21st November, 1861. It was not, however, until after incessant solicitations by Miss Russell and her mother that I consented, on the 22nd January in the present year, to become the attorney for the plaintiff in that action.

I have not directly or indirectly received, nor do I expect to receive, any portion of my costs in such action from Mr. Propert. And I may add, that I had no communication whatever with Mr. Propert with reference to my undertaking the prosecution of the action on behalf of Miss Russell.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Serle-street, Lincoln's-inn, March 4th, 1863.

F. C. J. PIKE.

## THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND LIFE ASSURANCE OFFICES.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Allow me to inform your readers that the London Life Association not only does not pay a fee to a medical referee, but upon his mild request for the promise of one, the secretary, without deigning to reply to his letter, writes to the assurer to inform him that his medical attendant refuses the required information until he is paid for it. It is readily conceivable that such a course as this is very liable to produce a disagreeable *contretemps* with some of our patients, and I think it right therefore to mention the fact.

As most commercial establishments are glad of publicity, I trust the London Life Association will feel obliged to me for this advertisement.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Great Marlborough-street, March, 1863. THOS. BUZZARD, M.D.

\* \* The proper course to pursue in all cases where a medical practitioner receives an application from a non-paying office is at once to communicate with his patient, informing him of the reason why he declines to give gratuitous information to the office. In this way the medical practitioner is secured against insidious representations by the company, and may be instrumental in suggesting to his friend the propriety of insuring in an office conducted upon safer and more honourable principles. —ED. L.

## THE ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—I append for your careful consideration, and more especially for the deliberate reflection of candidates who are thinking of entering the Medical Department of the Army, the following

*Twenty Reasons for not entering the Medical Department:—*

1. Because the present position of medical officers is invidious, ill defined, and obnoxious.
2. The position is relatively and prospectively inferior to that of medical men in civil life.
3. The duties are mostly non-professional, consisting in useless reports, profuse figures, and vexatious returns.
4. The duties are antagonistic to those of the officer commanding, who ignores his "doctor."
5. The prospects of advancement in the service are controlled by no proper regulations and no proper supervision.
6. The duties are often menial, the last order on this subject requiring doctors to attend the branding of deserters.