absurd, for a person whose life is rejected must be very thick-headed indeed, if he has not a shrewd guess of the name of the individual who has stopped the progress of the negotiation; his memory must be very defective if he does not remember the party he gave as his medical referee. I may, in conclusion, observe, that a surgeon incurs considerable risk, in giving an honest opinion in cases of life assurance, and I would suggest to my professional brethren the propriety of their insisting, on all occasions where the life has been accepted, on the fee of one guinea; and where the life has, by their instrumentality, been rejected, a fee of five guineas should be claimed as justly due from the office which may require their services.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The question of giving answers to the inquiries of insurance companies seems to me to admit of a natural division into two parts: first, what is due to my patient; and secondly, what is due to myself.

To my patient I owe the same implied secrecy on the subject of his personal health which a lawyer owes to his client on the subject of his personal affairs, and I should never think of answering any inquiries about him without his express permission.

To myself, I owe the right of obtaining a reasonable remuneration for my trouble in furnishing to the insurance company my professional assistance, and thus enabling them to decide on the fitness of my patient as a subject for life assurance.

I have therefore adopted the subjoined form of answer to the inquiries of insurance offices, and I shall be happy to join any gentlemen who approve of such form in having a number of them lithographed.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Half-Moon-street, Piccadilly,
Sept. 1850.

CHARLES R. WALSH.

(FORM OF REPLY.)

SIR,—I have received the permission of ———, to answer any questions which may be put to me, in confidence, respecting his health, for the purposes of life insurance.

I am ready, therefore, on receiving the usual fee, to place at the disposal of your office whatever information I possess on this subject.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

To the Secretary of the ———
Insurance Company.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I send you a copy of a letter which I forwarded to one of the life insurance offices. If you think fit to publish it pray do so.

(Copy.)

"26, Farringdon-street, Jan. 16, 1850.

"SIR,—When public companies speculate on life and death, with a view to profit, they should pay well for that information which best assures the safety of the speculation and profit.

As in Mr. W——'s case, I will not answer these questions unless you pay me my fee, £1 1s.

You have your own medical men, let them decide for you. You have no right to ask my patient to pay for a secret report possibly inimical to his objects, nor have you the right to claim from me the unpaid benefit of twenty-five years' experience.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

"J. Marsh, Esq."

FRANCIS BULLIN.

You will perceive that this is not the first application from the same company with the like result.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

FRANCIS BULLIN.

CHOLERA IN JAMAICA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As the accompanying extracts from letters from Jamaica, on the subject of the cholera, may interest your many readers, I am happy to be permitted to furnish them to your publication.

I remain, yours faithfully,

JAMES BOWEN THOMPSON, M.D.

5, Suffolk-place, Pall-mall East, May 2, 1851.

I am indebted to the Lord Bishop of Jamaica, now in town, for the accompanying note and report, in which his lordship says, "that in Dr. Stewart's returns of the cholera at the

churches and schools in the archdeaconry of Surrey there are a few remarks, which, I think, may be useful to you. I wish they were of a more statistical value. It will be very difficult, if at all possible, to obtain any such correct return, at a time when from sixty to seventy uncoffined corpses were being buried in one large pit. Our friend the Rev. Mr. ——— had often to perform this heartrending duty, surrounded by agonized friends and survivors; and in many places the negro huts are so scattered, that it is scarcely possible to render them all the necessary attention. I subjoin the extract and statistics. They are as follow—viz.

Cholera in Jamaica—1851.

"Kingston, $4\frac{1}{2}$ square miles: The population of this district is estimated at 35,000; the city and parish lost about 4000.

Port Royal, 57 square miles: About 180 were carried off by cholera in the Penitentiary. Port Royal suffered very severely from the disease.

St. Andrew's, 120 square miles: The cholera was very destructive in this parish also.

St. David's, 24 square miles: This parish suffered likewise very much from the last visitation of cholera.

St. Thomas-in-the-East, 215 square miles: The population of this parish greatly reduced; 900 deaths are reported from one district.

Portland, 139 square miles: The curate reports the loss of several of his congregation.

St. George, 120 square miles: Many lives were lost in this parish.

Metcalfe, 61 square miles: The cholera visited this parish also.

During the prevalence of the cholera on the island, the Rev. Dr. Stewart deemed it necessary to suspend the operations at several of the schools, such as Portland, St. Andrew's, St. David's, St. Mary's, &c."

The bishop, in addition to furnishing me with the foregoing facts and extracts from Dr. Stewart's letter, kindly informed me that on this last visitation of the cholera to Jamaica it is remarkable that it is the only one of the West India islands visited; and on a former occasion, now some years ago, the island of Havanna was the only one visited. It is also remarkable, his lordship observes, that on this occasion the Coolies, or emigrants from Calcutta and India, generally appeared to be comparatively exempted from the invasion of the disease; whereas, when the disease visits and prevails in their own country, they suffer more from it than the Europeans. This latter fact is very interesting, and confirms the observations made by myself in the east, where it was found that natives of Circassia, Nubia, and Abyssinia, who are employed in the houses of the Turkish nobility and wealthy Moslem merchants, are comparatively less predisposed to the invasion of a prevailing epidemic in Turkey than in their respective climates. It is not easy to say to what we are to attribute this exemption in the latter cases, as also in that of the Coolies in the West Indies on this late occasion, unless to some influence the change of climate exerts on the constitution of these people, some change in diet, habits, &c.—J. B. T.

Extracts from Jamaica Letters, March 22, 1851.

From letters of the latter end of March, just received, it appears there were apprehensions entertained that this awful scourge was about to revisit the island. The disease did not by the latest accounts extend far into the interior of the island, and Westmoreland escaped, and was so far an exception. The writer of this letter says—"I this morning received by post a letter from a young clergyman in Spanish Town, and I send you the particulars, as the information will interest you:—'The cholera is raging fearfully in St. John's, (fifteen miles from us,) and at St. Thomas-in-the-Vale worse than it was at first. Great fears are entertained of its breaking out here again; and should it do so, it will, it is to be feared, decimate the poor people in their present condition. We are as yet all well, but we are having wet, damp weather, which is very apt to produce cholera.' This will show you it has not yet quitted the island; it lingers in Hanava, but the Cove estate has been also wonderfully preserved."

Extract from Letter from Black River, St. Elizabeth's, March 24.

"Poor Jamaica has been sadly afflicted; it is quite impossible for me to describe to you the dismay, consternation, misery, and destitution that the cholera has caused throughout the length and breadth of the land. Black River, with the exception of Savanna la Mar, has suffered less than any town or village in the island, although we have lost one hundred and nineteen out of a population of less than one thousand. Port Maria, St. Ann's Bay, and Lucia, have been almost depopulated."

"Hanover.—Lucia.—The cholera is abated, but we are apprehensive that it may break out again with the setting in of the spring rains. This seems to be the opinion of Dr. Parkin, who had charge of the cholera patients near St. Bartholomew's Hospital in 1849, and whom you probably will recollect. His mode of treatment has been with soda, or rather with carbonic acid gas, and apparently most successful, except in the more malignant cases, where the sufferers are carried off in from four to twelve hours. These cases I hold to be totally incurable by any means. Vast numbers were thus carried off during the visitation in this town and neighbourhood without any premonitory symptoms. Up to this date, March 10, there are still occasional cases in this neighbourhood. Montego Bay has been revisited with five or six cases."

Remarks on the foregoing extracts.—It appears that there are some lingering cases of the cholera still in Jamaica, and that the spring rains were likely to be accompanied or followed by a return of the epidemic. This has been the case on more than one occasion in tropical countries. It has been remarked to recur at the spring rainy season in Egypt and Syria on former occasions, more especially on the coast, and less so in the interior. In the spring of 1850 some cases appeared on the coast of Egypt and Syria, but it did not extend inland, though it prevailed in the towns and cities and villages in the interior in the previous autumn of 1849. The mode of treatment adopted by Dr. Parkin I hope to be more fully prepared to furnish shortly. It is worthy of remark that the cholera appears to have carried off many persons who had none of the premonitory symptoms, and so far simulates the cases reported by myself from the epidemic visitation of August, 1849, in Damascus, and published in the *London Medical Gazette* for March last. The symptoms of the disease noticed in this last visit to Jamaica appear as variable as those witnessed by myself in the East, and many persons died from an apparent shock to the system, and from which they could never by any remedial agent be got to rally, and rapidly sunk into collapse.

J. B. T.

IRISH EMIGRATION SHIPS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In consideration of your position as an influential member of Parliament, as a member of the medical profession, and editor of a powerful medical publication, I take the liberty of bringing before your notice the different ways in which emigration is conducted with respect to our poor Irish subjects and the "men and brothers" of the "coast." Often has it been said and written that the poorer class of Irish are worse off in point of all physical comforts and necessities than the Africans, either in Africa itself, in Brazil, or the West Indies; but in the instances I am about to give, you will see, Sir, how carefully and scrupulously the authorities watch over the cleanliness, the food, and health of African emigrants, and how grossly, shamelessly,—nay, sinfully, they neglect the poor Irish.

On the 17th of this month, the ship *Otillia*, from Liverpool, arrived at this port, having been obliged to put in here in consequence of a mutiny among the crew, twelve of whom refused to obey orders, in consequence, as they said, of bad provisions; however, this is partly foreign to the subject.

The ship *Otillia* had 429 adult Irish emigrants on board, or 470, including men, women, and children; and I assure you, Sir, there was not one medical officer on board, because, it was said, it was only an eight weeks' voyage; such being the case, no attention whatever was paid to their health, comfort, and cleanliness. The lower deck, upon which they ate and slept, had never been washed since they left England (forty-three days), and what is more, would not be washed until they were landed at New Orleans! And why? Forsooth, because there was a cargo of loose salt below it, which cargo was more valuable to the owners than the live cargo above; consequently, it was of less importance that the crew should be dirty, than that the salt should be clean.

The poorer class of Irish are never proverbial for cleanliness under the most favourable circumstances; but here dirty and slovenly habits are actually forced upon them. Fancy, Sir, 470 people, men, women, and children, eating, drinking, and sleeping on a deck which had never been washed, or on bedding which had never been aired, or in clothing which had never been changed. In the hold of that emigrant ship, men and women, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, boys and girls, the sound and the sick, were huddled up *promiscuously* in cribs of eight or ten during the night; and in the same place, among the remnants of broken meat and stale pipes, with uncombed hair and naked feet, they lolled,

rolled, or strolled about during the day, except when they were started on deck by the seamen when they happened to be in their way; and on deck, probably their lazy listlessness might induce them to remain until they might again be started down.

Whether this vessel lost any hands coming out, I know not; it is more than probable that she did. This I know, however, that three died during the short time that she remained here (five days), and that these three never received any medical advice; that one old man was sure to die soon after she left; that many appeared to be suffering and feverish when I made my casual visit, and that one poor fellow, an Italian, was likely to be a ghastly nuisance for life from the want of timely surgical assistance.

So much for the way in which Irish emigrants are cared for. Now let us see how the Africans fare.

On the 27th of March, the *Glentanner*, a 650-ton ship, arrives here from St. Helena, in thirty days, with 374 negroes, men, women, and children. They are *not* cribbed in to sleep upon frousy beds, but sleep upon clean mats on the *clean* deck; they have provisions on the scale of the royal navy; they are made to wash every morning; they enjoy an airing every day; they have a medical officer, vested with power to make them comfortable, and whose interest it is to keep them healthy. The women and children are separated from the men; the sick are separated from the sound; they have "hospital comforts;" and they all look clean, fat, and happy. Here you see plump African beauties, with diadems composed of beads and shells, encircling a head of hair which is beautifully curled, if not combed; here you see lively black urchins, who bow, grin, and show their white teeth, when you look at them, and smile and say "Yes, sir," when you speak to them, and might say more, if they knew how. How different this from the abject listlessness, the vacant, gaping stare, the matted locks of the poor, the despised, the neglected, Irish emigrants who were brought over for one pound sterling per head, to die of fever and starvation at New Orleans, the worst sink of disease and depravity under the face of the sun. The Government, I believe, provide in some way that these emigrants should be fed, but one pound for an adult, or for two children, is all that comes into the owner's pocket; yet six pounds or six pounds ten shillings is the contract price for each adult black who is landed under the auspices of the "Colonial and Land Emigration Company." Only ten blacks died during the passage, and I was assured these were sick when they came on board.

Vouching, Sir, for the truth of what I have above stated, and hoping it may receive your consideration, and that through your better treatment and attention may be afforded for poor English and Irish emigrants, I beg leave respectfully to subscribe myself,

Port Royal Jamaica, March, 28, 1851.

A NAVAL SURGEON.

PHTHISIS AND THE STETHOSCOPE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As the reviewer of my little book, bearing the above title in the last number of *THE LANCET*, has, no doubt unintentionally, misrepresented my views in respect to the movements of the chest in phthisis, I trust you will allow me a small space for the following extract from my work, which is a quite sufficient answer to the comments made upon it.

"I am satisfied that at the *very commencement* of phthisis, no information can be gained by watching the movements of the chest, as the thoracic walls, from long habit, are pretty equally expanded, although perhaps one lung may have rather less power of distention than the other." To this statement is appended the following note at the foot of the page. "Some may consider this impossible; but I am sure of its truth. There is more than one way in which it may be accounted for."

I may here remark that no "active" power of distention is attributed to the lung, and that a passive one is manifestly implied; whilst the character and object of the book did not admit of any explanation of the matters referred to in the note.

The subject is thus continued:—"But as *certain* as any portion of the lung is permanently disabled in its function by tubercular deposit, sooner or later, will there be diminished movement of the thoracic walls over that region—more conspicuous during forced respiration, but often sufficiently evident in the ordinary breathing." * * * *

"As the case proceeds, the loss of healthy movement