ARMY MEDICAL OFFICERS.

Why have these officers been excluded from the advantages of the recent brevet?

"Flectere si neque superos, Acheronta movebo."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—This question is more easily put than answered. We cannot believe that our justly distinguished chief, Sir James Macgrigor, has not urged our claims with his usual "esprit de profession;" but we have heard that a brevet would remove to the *shelf* many of our time-honoured and ancient brethren, who now occupy staff and cavalry situations; and it has even been said, (although we can scarcely believe it,) that the naval surgeons have put an obstacle in our way, by pressing their claims to a similar promotion. Are the medical officers of the army inferior to their brethren in civil life, or acquirements, or neglectful of their duties; or *so well paid*, as to be unentitled to the advancement? Is it to be supposed that the members of a liberal military profession, ranking among its members men of education, many of whom have attained the highest literary distinction, can possibly remain silent under such injustice, or feel indifferent to the maintenance of their high professional character? A most appropriate opportunity of effacing the slight cast upon the military medical profession is about to present itself, namely, the anniversary birthday of the Princess Victoria, who, we have reason to know, is desirous of doing every thing to promote the welfare and happiness of the British nation, and, in an especial manner, the views and interests of a loyal, highly-distinguished, and meritorious class of public servants. We trust that the editor of the "United Service Journal," and every other military periodical, will endeavour to promote our views; and, relying entirely on your liberality and sense of justice to advocate our cause, I remain, Sir, wishing you a continuance of your merited popularity, and widely-spread influence, your most obedient servant,

AN OFFICER IN THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE.

Dublin, April 23d, 1837.

THE ERGOT OF RYE. SPEED OF ITS OPERATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In the last Number of your valuable Journal, Mr. Abraham expresses a doubt of the accuracy of my opinion respecting the *secale cornutum* producing uterine contractions, in 8 minutes after its exhibition. This was an error in copying from my

private note-book, the paper which I sent to you for publication. The statement should have been 18 minutes after the exhibition of the ergot, that contractions were induced. But I am of opinion, that contractions may, and I think do, take place in less than 15 minutes after the use of the *secale*. On referring to my case-book, I find notes of two cases wherein contractions came on in 12 minutes after the administration of the ergot; and I also find a case published in THE LANCET of September 20th, 1827-8, by Mr. J. C. Jerrard, where the pains increased in 10 minutes after the exhibition of the ergot; but much depends on the quality of the ergot, and the mode of preparing the decoction; if it be ground in a coffee-mill, with a little lump-sugar, and boiled in a *tin* sauce-pan, I have found it more certain in its effects, than when commonly produced in a mortar, and boiled in an *iron* pan. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHRISTOPHER BRADLEY,
M.R.C.S.L., &c.

Church, near Blackburn, Lancashire,
April 26, 1837.

WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL SCHOOL.—The prizes were awarded on Saturday, the 29th of April, to those gentlemen who distinguished themselves in professional attainments, when the following were declared the successful candidates. Mr. White, of the Westminster Hospital, presided:—

Physic, 1st prize, Mr. W. R. Warwick; 2d do., Mr. John Scott.
Anatomy and Physiology, 1st prize, Mr. W. R. Warwick; 2d do., Mr. John Scott.
Practical Anatomy, 1st prize, Mr. Thomas Yate; 2d do., Mr. W. R. Warwick.
Surgery, 1st prize, Mr. Gallwey; 2d do., Mr. Scott.
Midwifery, 1st prize, Mr. Wilkins; 2d do., Messrs. Gallwey and Parker.
Materia Medica, 1st prize, Mr. Ignatius Wilkins; 2d do., Mr. O. Mauger.
Chemistry, Mr. Ignatius Wilkins.
Botany, Mr. O. Mauger.

CALUMNIOUS INSINUATION OF A CLERGYMAN AGAINST MEDICAL MEN.—It would be difficult to match, in bad feeling and falsity of insinuation, a portion of the following remarks, by the Rev. ROBERT POLWHELE, in a criticism on "Temperance Societies," contained in a work entitled, "Reminiscences in Prose and Verse," lately published in London by the reverend gentleman, whom a reviewer in one of the high-church magazines for May, describes, as "generous, learned, wise, and venerable, elegant, and accomplished!"

"There may be," says Mr. Polwhele, "some persons, who have been almost deluded by the confident mendacity of the Temperance Society impostors into supposing ardent spirits absolutely injurious in their own nature,

and in all cases. These gin-shop exterminators have, in fact, put forward the distinct proposition, that 'ardent spirits are absolutely poisonous to the human constitution; that in no case whatever are they necessary, or even useful, to persons in health; that they are always, in every case, and to the smallest extent, deleterious, pernicious, or destructive, according to the proportion in which they may be taken into the system.' And for this statement," says the rev. gentleman, "the Temperance Society profess to have 'high medical authority'! No doubt it is more profitable to the medical man to dispense aromatic spirit of ammonia, and expensive compound tincture, than to send a patient away for three-halfpenny worth of gin, and it is always unfortunate when extreme ignorance, or folly, and self-interest, may lead to the same result. In such cases it is safer not to attempt any discrimination of the motives from which the opinions, or conduct, may have sprung, but to meet the question fairly on its merits. Now, I defy any man of ordinary duties or talents, whether in or out of the learned profession, to deny that amongst the most ordinary cases of dyspepsia, are exposure, fatigue, and coarse food." The reverend gentleman then goes on to state, that the bad diet of the labourer leads to "disorder of the stomach, which forms no extraordinary case of rare occurrence, requiring the interposition of medical advice," but one which "experience, or judicious advice, soon teaches him that a glass of gin with his food supplies him at the cheapest rate with an effectual remedy."

The reader will be at a loss to decide whether the "generosity" or the "wisdom" of the reverend calumniator of our profession are most apparent in these comments.

LICENCE OF BARRISTERS.—A correspondence took place a short time since between Mr. George, surgeon, of Kirton, and Mr. Whitehurst, counsel, who, on the trial of the man Dimpsey, for the murder of Marshall and his sister, accused the surgeon of ignorance and impudence. Mr. George called on the "learned counsel" for an explanation, to which the barrister replied, that it was for the Judge and Jury alone to decide if his remarks in Court were well founded.

Dr. SIGMOND has been elected an Honorary Fellow of the Medical Society of Stockholm, in token of the high sense entertained by the members of that institution of the value of his labours in the promotion of the science of *materia medica*, a vacancy having arisen amongst the honorary Fellows by the death of Professor Geiger.

A public analysis of the quack Morison's pills is advertised to be made next week at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand, by a doctor who styles himself "an eminent chemist."

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Part IV. of Dr. Copland's Dictionary of Practical Medicine. Published by Longman and Co., London. "Fever" to "Heart," pages 300.

(From the Author.) A Treatise on the Diagnosis and Treatment of Diseases of the Chest. Part I. Diseases of the Lung and Windpipe. By Wm. Stokes, M.D., Meath Hospital. Published by Hodges and Smith, Dublin. 8vo. Pages 557.

First Principles of Surgery, being an Outline of Inflammation and its Effects. By Geo. T. Morgan, A.M., Lect. on Surg. in Aberdeen. Part I. Published by Highley, London, and Maclachlan and Stewart, Edinburgh. 8vo. Pages 210.

Second edition of Dr. Jonathan Green's Compendium of the Diseases of the Skin. Published by Whittaker and Co., London. 8vo. Pages 371.

Dr. G. F. Collier's Translation of the New Pharmacopœia; with Notes and Criticisms. Published by the Author, Spring Gardens, London. Royal 8vo. Pages 272.

(From the Author.) Observations on the Surgical Pathology of the Larynx and Trachea, chiefly illustrative of Affections which may require the performance of Bronchotomy. By W. H. Porter, A.M., Meath Hospital, Dublin. Published by Sherwood and Co., London. 8vo. Pages 280.

CORRESPONDENTS.

Not believing that Dr. L. could give a satisfactory answer to the question referring to the statement in the "Observer," we do not find a place for the letter of our chemical correspondent.

A Medical Assistant and a King's College Medical Student, should not have expected us to insert their letters without the usual authentication of allegations of facts.

W. J.—Surgeons do not usually occupy themselves by putting in artificial teeth; and with regard to the diseases mentioned, if our correspondent have neglected the usual opportunities of studying them at home, he should look to the teachers in the College for information on the subject of his inquiries.

Medicus.—The information shall in future be supplied.

A Constant Reader.—Such a proceeding is not enjoined by law.

The communication of *Mr. Darent* in our next number. A report of the proceedings at the Naval Medical Dinner next week, with some other reports, still unavoidably delayed.

ERRATA.—In leader, last week, page 202, line 3, for "as" read *of*. Page 203, col. 2, line 18, for "imperfection" read *imperfect*.