inasmuch as they are specially provided for, under their own appropriate articles, cannot be brought under the application of Article 172.

I beg to apologize for again troubling you, and have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
Didsbury, Aug. 31, 1850.

RICHARD ALLEN.

Answer from the Poor-law Board.

Poor-law Board, Somerset House, Sept. 4, 1850.

SIR,—I am directed by the Poor-law Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st ult., referring to your claim to a fee of two pounds, under Art. 183 of the Regulations, for your attendance on Mary Linney.

The board do not concur in your observations on the regulations affecting this and similar cases, and they must leave the guardians to determine whether they will avail themselves of Art. 172, under the circumstances to which you have called their attention.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
R. B. CANE, (*for the Secretary.*)

Observations.—The points of interest in this case are two in number—viz., the erroneous construction of Art. 182, under which a fee of twenty shillings was awarded; and the application of Art. 172 to this and similar cases, by which decision the value of Art. 183 is materially impaired, and the option of awarding any intermediate fee, between ten shillings and two pounds, for difficult midwifery, is confirmed.—R. A.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In common with yourself, I deeply regret the tone of despondency adopted by the Convention of Poor-law Medical Officers, although I feel they have sufficient cause for it.

It is to me inexplicable, how, in the first place, Union surgeons can have been so backward in supporting, with heart, voice, and purse, so industrious, so painstaking a body; and, in the second place, how that body can have been able to do so much, when we consider the pitiful supplies which have been doled out to them—supplies more worthy of boards of guardians than of medical men.

Surely this apathy must be shaken off. Lend us your aid; fight for us, as you have done for our oppressed naval brethren; and once more let the Convention make an appeal, whilst we are under the stimulus of one of your powerful leaders. It will, it must, be responded to—the very respectability of our profession depends on it. And if there unfortunately should be no other requirements for the funds raised, let them be applied to aid in defraying the expenses incurred by medical men, when engaged in legally opposing the tyranny of the poor-law.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
K. Q.

September, 1850.

FALSE CHARGES AGAINST SUPERINTENDENT SURGEONS OF EMIGRANT SHIPS.

"He who allows oppression shares the crime."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Regarding you as the natural vindicator of the rights, and as the recognised guardian, of the special interests of every class of legally-qualified medical practitioners, I beg to direct your attention to a case of almost unprecedented injustice.

You are, doubtless, aware, that during the last few months, unfounded charges of neglect of duty have been recklessly preferred in Australia against several surgeons-superintendent of emigrant-ships, at the instigation of persons ill-informed and unreasonable, if they are not likewise guilty of being mere grievance-mongers, with some sinister objects in view!

The correspondence &c. which I submit for your perusal will show how such charges originate, and will also afford an illustration of the imperfect manner in which the Australian colonial officials and the land and emigration commissioners in this country perform their highly responsible functions!

It will appear from the evidence I shall adduce, that great carelessness is shown in the selection of emigrants, inasmuch as a great number of notoriously immoral characters succeed in obtaining a free passage from the commissioners.

I shall also be able to show that surgeons-superintendent are very liable to be treated with great injustice, whenever charges are made against them by any of the ignorant, misguided, or unprincipled individuals who are so frequently to be met with among "the county emigrants" in the vessels sent out by her Majesty's Emigration Commissioners. I shall prove that the governor of

Adelaide has sanctioned irregular and partial investigations of the alleged misconduct of a surgeon-superintendent, and that the colonial authorities have, in one case at least, been influenced by *ex parte* statements, and by an imperfectly-informed press, instead of instituting a full, impartial, and legal investigation, in obedience to the dictates of honour, justice, and duty.

The case I am now more particularly anxious to bring under your notice, is that of the surgeon-superintendent of the *Indian*. I will endeavour to make my statement as concise as is compatible with perspicuity.

The surgeon-superintendent alluded to was charged with conniving at the alleged immoral conduct of some of the inferior officers of the barque, *Indian*, of neglecting the sick, and of showing partiality in the distribution of "the medical comforts." The charges were made by some of the emigrants, whose varied motives can be more readily imagined than briefly described.

The principal complainant was a Caroline Arnold, who has been recently ascertained to have been, before leaving England, a notorious prostitute in the neighbourhood of Dover.

A few popularity-hunters in Adelaide, and one or two individuals connected with the press, got up the case against the surgeon in a spirit of partisanship, and, doubtless, for the furtherance of some political or party object! Two very noisy, irregular, and most unsatisfactory meetings to investigate the charges were held under circumstances most unfavourable to the surgeon (and other officers) whose conduct was impugned. The investigations were deferred until the more respectable emigrants were employing themselves more profitably than in brooding over grievances, which, so far as the surgeon was concerned, I can show to have been either imaginary, or to have been such as that officer had not the power of redressing, (even if he had been fully convinced of the existence of the grievances enumerated;) except through the instrumentality of the captain, respecting whom I shall merely state, that upon the surgeon differing with him about an emigrant in the hospital, he challenged the surgeon to fight a duel with pistols across the cabin table!

I must observe, that the opportunity of bringing forward evidence in disproof of the charges was very inadequate to the occasion. The conclusive evidence of the most important witness, a Mr. Stringer, and also that of the few other respectable emigrants who succeeded in making themselves heard in defence of the surgeon, was suppressed by the editor of the *Adelaide Observer*. The irregularity of the proceedings at one of the investigations, and the incompetency of the immigration agent who presided, may justly be inferred from the fact, that Earl Grey has dismissed him from his office, on account of the inefficient manner in which he performed his duty on that occasion.

I must observe that Earl Grey, in reply to a communication on the subject, candidly admits "he does not perceive any ground at all for any reflection on his (the surgeon-superintendent's) professional skill or attention, and that he does not consider that anything has been established against his moral character."*

The Colonial Emigration Commissioners in England admit that the authority of surgeons-superintendent over the emigrants is altogether nominal, and also that the surgeons' instructions do not indicate that they have either any real or even nominal control over the crew and officers of the ship.

After considerable delay, the governor paid the surgeon a portion of the gratuity due to him, and, by so doing, virtually admitted that the aforesaid charges were not substantiated!

After the full statement I have made, Mr. Editor, I think you will agree with me and many medical friends in thinking that the surgeon of the *Indian* has been very harshly treated, in having a large portion of the stipulated remuneration withheld from him, and in being most unjustly put to the expense and inconvenience of returning from Australia, to vindicate his character, and to endeavour to obtain redress.

I remain, Sir, your obedient humble servant,
Aug. 29, 1850. VINDICATOR, M.R.C.S., L.S.A., F.J.S.
N.B.—I enclose my address.

CHOREA AND HIP-DISEASE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is the part of a great mind to acknowledge an error when it has been committed—it is the part of a little one to adhere pertinaciously to it, however grievous the blunder, by whatever testimony refuted. In the affair of Mr. George Lewis Cooper's patient, when I pointed out to him at the consultation, and in private, in the most courteous manner, that

* A charge of immorality was recklessly made against the surgeon by an unscrupulous press, without the slightest justifiable pretext. The emigrants did not join in it.

the child was suffering from chorea, and *not* hip-disease, if he had agreed only to modify the treatment, as I recommended, the profession would never have heard of the case. Instead of this, he commenced blustering, and attempting to brow-beat me completely, thinking, no doubt, that a country practitioner would never be able to hold up his head against an honorary fellow (?) of the Royal College of Surgeons, and a surgeon to the Bloomsbury Dispensary. The result was, as stated in my former letter, that the child was taken to Sir B. C. Brodie, who, without at all knowing who had been in attendance, or any circumstances connected with the case, pronounced that the child was suffering from chorea, and treated her as such, under which remedies she was speedily cured. No doubt this will be a most instructive case to Mr. George L. Cooper, and that, at a future time, if he ever should meet a country practitioner in consultation, he will have learned a lesson that will teach him to conduct himself in a courteous manner, and pay some little respect to his opinion. He may then rest assured, that any little or great *faux-pas* that may be discovered in his diagnosis will not be exposed in the pages of *THE LANCET*.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

Sherborne, Sept. 7, 1850.

W. HIGHMORE.

LAXITY OF THE COURT OF EXAMINERS OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In July last, I called on the secretary of the Royal College of Surgeons, to inquire of what age a person ought to be when he obtained his diploma. I was informed that until within the last few years, the age required was twenty-two, and that a proof was required. I mentioned my suspicions that there was a name on the list for 1847, of a party who was only nineteen years of age when he obtained his diploma, contrary to the by-laws. I was told it was a very grave accusation, and was desired to procure a certificate, and enclose it officially, which I accordingly did, and found my suspicions well founded. The enclosed is the correspondence which has ensued, and you will perceive with what consistency the Court of Examiners keep up the honour and dignity of the profession, and the College. If you think fit to publish this, you are at liberty to do so. For the present, I subscribe myself,

Your obedient servant,

Sept. 1850.

CONSISTENCY.

I inclose my card.

P.S.—I also enclose a copy of the 17th section of the by-laws, from those given me at the time I obtained my diploma.

To E. Belfour, Esq., Secretary, Royal College of Surgeons, London.

SIR,—Perceiving the name of — in the list of members for 1847, as having taken his diploma in 18—, I beg to enclose an extract from the baptismal register of the parish of —, in the county of—. I will thank you to lay this before the council.

Your obedient servant,

July, 1850.

—, M.R.C.S.

Answer.

College of Surgeons, July 16, 1850.

SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, and will lay the same before the Court of Examiners the first opportunity.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

To —.

EDMUND BELFOUR.

To Edmund Belfour, Esq., Secretary, Royal College of Surgeons.

SIR,—On the 16th ult., I enclosed an extract from the parish register of —, of the date of baptism of —, which you duly acknowledged. I shall be obliged by your informing me whether you laid my letter and the enclosure before the Court of Examiners, and also what steps they have directed to be taken on the subject, or if none, whether it is the intention of the Court of Examiners to pass such an occurrence over in silence. It was my intention, by sending the extract, that it should be strictly investigated.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

August 12, 1850.

Answer.

College of Surgeons, August 13, 1850.

SIR,—I am desired to acquaint you that your letters of the 15th ultimo and the 12th instant have been laid before the Court of Examiners of this College.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

To —.

EDMUND BELFOUR, Sec.

To Edmund Belfour, Esq., Royal College of Surgeons.

SIR,—Not having heard from you, as I expected, relative to any steps the Court of Examiners may have taken with regard to Mr. —, I beg to call the attention of the Court of Examiners to the seventeenth section of the by-laws of the College, which fully provides for the case. I shall therefore request that the said by-law is put in force. I also beg respectfully to say that I do not intend to allow the subject to drop until a searching investigation has taken place. Should the Court not consider it their duty to pursue such investigation, I shall be obliged by your returning the certificate of baptism.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Sept. 2, 1850.

Answer.

College of Surgeons, Sep'tember 5, 1850.

SIR,—In compliance with your request, enclosed I return the certificate of baptism transmitted with your letter of the 15th of July last.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

To —.

EDMUND BELFOUR, Sec.

COPY OF BY-LAWS, SECTION 17.

Violation of by-laws relating to the admission of members.

If at any time after the admission of a member he shall be found to have violated any by-laws of the College relating to candidates for the diploma, or to have been guilty of any fraud, false statement, or imposition, in any matter required by the College, his admission shall be wholly null and void.

NAVAL ASSISTANT-SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—THE LANCET of the 27th of July contained some observations from me on the subject of the statement made by the First Lord of the Admiralty regarding the removal of a portion of the assistant-surgeons to the ward-room. I felt at a loss to determine whether the profession and friends generally, who for years have been endeavouring to obtain for these officers their proper position in the service, ought to acquiesce in, or at least be silent about, the miserable condition which the Admiralty had attached to their admission to ward-room rank, or whether the agitation of the subject should be kept up till the claims of the assistant-surgeons should be conceded fully, unqualifiedly, and unlimitedly.

Well, Sir, having seen the Admiralty order, and having given it the most earnest consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the subject ought not to be allowed to rest, but that it should be kept before the public mind till it shall be finally and satisfactorily settled. The Admiralty order has ridiculously, and most nonsensically, attempted to divide the assistant-surgeons into two classes, making a service of three years, and the subsequent passing of an examination for full surgeon, the qualifications for class No. 1, which alone is entitled to ward-room privileges. Now, Sir, in the name of common sense, I ask, what grounds are there for this absurd division of these gentlemen into two classes? The examination to which a candidate submits on his entry into the service, first before Sir W. Burnett, and afterwards at the College of Surgeons, is such as must test (as far as examinations can test) his ability to practise surgery, medicine, and pharmacy; and the second examination which he undergoes, after three years' service, can be but a repetition of it—indeed, I have been told by a gentleman who passed both, and is now a full surgeon in the navy, that, of the two, the examination which he underwent for an assistant was the more difficult. In the army, no second examination is required, that passed on entering the service being alone necessary. Not that I disapprove of this second examination in the navy; on the contrary, I am of opinion that a periodical testing of the competency of naval and military surgeons is most desirable, and I consider it the sole and solitary regulation connected with the medical department of the navy which the army might imitate. Well, Sir, the Admiralty require, that after a service of three years, the assistant-surgeon shall pass his second examination, and during these three years they place him in the midshipmen's berth, where it is utterly impossible he can keep up the medical knowledge he brought with him into the service. I believe it is notorious, that every assistant-surgeon, after his three years' service, applies for, and obtains, some months' leave on half-pay to enable him to prepare himself for this examination. I do say, that if, on his entry into the service, the assistant-surgeon becomes at once a ward-room officer, he would have such ample opportunities of keeping up his medical knowledge, that he ought, and I am sure he would be able, at the expiration of his three years, if in England, to get a