

when the proportion of deaths out of the 3054 still to be treated are added to those already lost, the fatal cases will certainly amount to more than fifty per cent.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

SUPPRESSION OF UTERINE HÆMORRHAGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I was glad to observe, in THE LANCET of Jan. 13th ult., the suggestion of Dr. Slyman on the suppression of uterine hæmorrhage by a mechanical contrivance.

As the plan, however, which he proposes is identical with the one suggested by me, a year ago, in a "paper" which has not yet appeared in THE LANCET, I feel assured, on your being made aware of the fact, that you will do me the justice, either to insert this note, or the paper referred to.

I am, Sir, yours very truly,

Braunston, Northamptonshire,
Jan. 25, 1849.

THOMAS CATTELL, M.D. &c.

** Agreeably to the request of Dr. Cattell we publish this note. We have no recollection of receiving the paper to which the doctor refers; nor, although a vast number of communications remain unpublished in our hands, have we, so far as we are aware, any which were entrusted to us so long as "a year ago." As we have before remarked, *cæteris paribus*, priority of receipt mostly governs our choice of articles for insertion in the successive numbers of THE LANCET; and by keeping such a principle continually in view, we are pursuing a course equally fair toward each member of our crowd of correspondents.—ED. L.

MEDICAL FEES AT ASSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg leave to enclose you the copy of a letter written recently to two London life assurance offices, with the answers, all of which you are at full liberty to use or not, as you may think best for the interest of the medical profession. The insurance offices have it in their power to dispense altogether with the report of the private practitioner, and I think therefore that they are bound to pay for his opinion when they require it. A case strongly illustrative of the importance to them of securing the good offices of the proposer's medical attendant has just occurred to myself. A gentleman who is anxious to insure his life for a considerable amount, spoke to me on the subject a day or two ago, proposing to offer himself to the Minerva, and possibly has done so ere this. I am, however, acquainted with points in his medical history sufficient to render an insurance on his life most hazardous, but of so peculiar a nature as to baffle the inquiries of the most careful medical referee. These circumstances are scarcely known in their true character to the patient himself, and would not therefore appear in his statement on the proposition paper, and unless the information be obtained from myself, or another practitioner who also saw him during the illness to which I allude, the life would most certainly be accepted, to the great risk and almost certain loss of the office. Would the statement of these facts, in confidence, to the office be supporting my patient's statement? On the contrary, their disclosure would be to defeat his purpose, to the great advantage of the office. If life insurance offices are unwilling to pay the medical referees of proposers for information which is often so valuable to the office, it is but fair they should run the additional risk of insuring lives without such information—a plan I find many offices are now adopting.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

January 24, 1849.

OBSERVATOR.

P. S.—I leave my name on the letters to authenticate them, but would feel obliged by its being omitted: if you think it worth while, use them, as well as the names of the patients.

SIR,—I have received from the agent of the National Loan Fund Life Assurance Society a letter of inquiry respecting the state of health of Mr. —, and the eligibility of his life for insurance, and informing me that my answer will be considered as a strictly confidential one; conceiving, therefore, that the directors consider the information to be obtained from me

as necessary for the security of the Society, I beg to say that I shall be very happy to furnish answers to the questions on receiving the fee usually given to their medical referee.

I am, Sir your obedient servant,

National Loan Fund Life Assurance Society,
Cornhill, December 27, 1848.

SIR,—In reply to your letter, I have instructed our agent to pay your fee for the report on the health of Mr. —. This fee is not paid usually by other offices, and I would take the liberty of suggesting, that those who have conceded it to the claims of the medical profession are entitled to such influence as the medical men can use in their favour, and remain,

Sir, your obedient servant,

To —, Esq.,
Tynemouth, Northumberland.

SAMUEL MURRAY, Chairman.

Minerva Life Assurance Office, King William-street,
Mansion House, London, January, 1849.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 29th ult., requesting a fee for answering the queries addressed to you relative to the health of Mr. —.

In reply, I beg to state that it is not the practice of this office to pay fees in such cases, the evidence of medical gentlemen referred to by parties proposing to assure being required in support of the statements made by such parties.

I have written to Mr. Hoyle, the agent at Newcastle, and requested him to see Mr. — on the subject.

I remain, Sir, your very obedient servant,

To —, Esq., Tynemouth.

W. T. ROBINSON, Actuary.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

Engineers, Masonic, and Universal Mutual Life Assurance Society.
345, Strand, London, Jan. 27, 1849.

SIR,—Mr. Edward Evans's letter in this day's LANCET does not alter the statement that this was "one of the first offices" which admitted the principle of paying the medical profession for their opinions. I have only replied to Mr. Evans's letter that my silence may not create an impression that the statement in the official circular was incorrect.

If the point required confirmation, I need only refer to the very able article in THE LANCET of the 13th inst., which shows that there are now but twelve offices out of upwards of one hundred that have done this act of justice to the medical profession.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,
FREDERICK LAWRENCE, Actuary and Secretary.

Royal, Farmers' and General, Fire, Life, and Hail Insurance
Institution. Strand, London, Jan. 31, 1849.

MR. SHAW presents his compliments to the Editor of THE LANCET, and will feel obliged by his noticing the fact of this office having determined to allow a fee to the medical attendant of the life proposed for assurance.

ON THE TREATMENT OF CHOLERA, AND OF MEDICAL ATTENDANTS ON CHOLERA CASES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I see that the Board of Health recommend guardians of the poor to pay medical officers for attendance on cholera patients. One of your contemporaries has thrown out a hint, that those gentlemen will be somewhat likely to shirk the payment altogether. I can illustrate this rather feelingly, and in so doing I shall put some of my younger brethren on their guard. In 1833, on the second visit of the cholera to this town, before its arrival the overseers of the poor proposed to me and my official colleague, that we should attend the patients who might become affected with the disease, both at their own homes, and at a temporary hospital at the work-house; and as it was impossible to say what amount of disease would exist, so also the arrangement of pay could not be accurately portioned until after the expected epidemic. I cannot just now state the numbers which we attended; but they might be reckoned by hundreds. I felt my pockets swelling with £50 in perspective; but, alas! the gentlemen were just going out of office. I reminded them of the understanding, lest I should be losing this imaginary sum which I had set in my mind's eye against various little memoranda which young medical men are seldom without, (nor old ones, either, I grieve to say;) but, *mirabile dictu!* the epidemic having passed, so with it had passed all recollection of promise or understanding of pay, and I and the other officer never got one farthing; and yet these were "honourable men," and