

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

SMALL-POX TWICE IN THE SAME PERSON.

Reported by G. H. LOVE, Esq., M.R.C.S., Edinburgh.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having noticed a letter in your valuable journal, signed Edwin Bishop, (p. 448,) reporting the case of a girl having had two attacks of small-pox, I am induced to send you for publication a case somewhat similar. I was called to a youth, aged fourteen, whose parents reside in Rose-street, St. Luke's. He had complained of intense pain in the back and limbs, accompanied by sickness; the next day a slight eruption appeared on the skin, which I soon perceived to be variola. The parents doubted my assertion as to the disease, stating that he had had small-pox nine years previously, which was verified by several marks about the face and body; he had also been vaccinated when an infant. The disease soon appeared, and was of more than ordinary severity, and he was completely blind for nearly eight days. He has, however, recovered.

Old-street, 1850.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
G. H. LOVE.

ARMY SURGEONS AND MILITARY DUTIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As a contribution to the Appendix to the excellent Summary of the claims of military and naval surgeons to military rewards and distinctions, I send you the following, the authenticity of which may be relied on:—

Surgeon Edward Johnson, M.D., half-pay, 39th Foot, served at Copenhagen, Vimiera, Corunna, Walcheren, and Tariffa. In September, 1810, he proceeded with his regiment from Gibraltar to Tariffa. In January, 1811, the 28th Regiment marched from Tariffa to Medina Sidonia, Dr. Johnson being left behind in charge of the hospital. Lord Lynedoch having changed his plan of operations, sent dispatches to Tariffa by sea, "to be forwarded by a British officer," to the officer commanding the 28th, then nearly surrounded by the enemy, directing that regiment to fall back on Tariffa. As there was no other British officer present to perform that service, Dr. Johnson volunteered. In the execution of this duty he fell into the hands of guerillas, from whom he received, it is said, thirty-two wounds, his skull and arm being fractured. He was rescued by his own regiment, and notwithstanding the dangerous character of his wounds, he delivered the dispatches with which he was intrusted, and the regiment in consequence fell back in safety to Tariffa. In 1816, Dr. Johnson retired on half-pay, having received from the King of Spain the honour of Knight of the Order of Charles the Third; but no honour or reward from the British monarch, one of whose regiments he had saved in an emergency, at the risk of his own life!

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
A MILITARY SURGEON.

* * We may observe of the hero of this letter, that Assistant-Surgeon Johnson is a Knight of the highest Spanish order of knighthood. Lord Gough is a knight of the same order. In this country the surgeon cannot aspire to the honours shared by his commander, but in others personal conduct obtains more consideration, apart from questions of rank.—ED. L.

THE REGISTRATION OF DEATHS, AND BEADLES' CERTIFICATES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The letter of Dr. Brown, in your last number, exhibits a state of things so radically wrong regarding "medical certificates in cases of death," that it behoves all whose experience enables them to assist in seeking a reform. The following case, I think, will be deemed worthy of notice:—

I was recently called to see an infant, but when I arrived it was dead, and I believe had been before I was sent for. I made minute inquiry from the mother and another woman present, and found the infant was seen as well as usual, and asleep, one hour before its death. Under these circumstances, and the infant being livid all over, I could not give a certificate of death, and considering the coroner alone was the person to decide on the course to be pursued, I desired them to acquaint the beadle in

the first instance. Three days having elapsed, and having heard nothing except a message by a person from the house, and not feeling satisfied, as on all previous similar occasions the beadle had called on me himself, I went to the house, and whilst there the beadle came in, and so far from requiring any information from me, I could get none from him about this, to me, unprecedented course, except that "he knew his business, and had served three apprenticeships;" so setting himself down, called for pen, ink, and paper, adding "*He* would show them how to get the child buried without further trouble." And so he did. I obtained a copy of this document from the registrar, and he informed me it was conclusive—viz.,

"SIR,—Mr. Bedford thinks an inquest not requisite in the case of Mrs. —'s child.

"Your obedient servant,

"T. HODGSON."

If the coroner knew anything about the matter, he could only know what the beadle was pleased to tell him; and if I am to form an estimate of that functionary's position with the coroner, by his contempt for me, which was truly ludicrous, Mr. Beadle Hodgson has indeed arrived at the summit even of *his* official power, since he can really "show how to bury people without trouble."

I have merely to remark that to depute such authority to such officials is fraught with objections so palpable, and of so grave a nature, that the subject demands, and must receive, the attention both of the profession and the public.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Conduit-street, April, 1850.

F. J. JOHNSTON.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THE ASSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

Kent Mutual Life Assurance Society, 6, Old Jewry, London.
April 15, 1850.

SIR,—I have much pleasure in informing you that the directors of this Society entertain precisely the same views which you have so ably advocated in the pages of your journal, relative to the payment of medical referees for their opinions and certificates, and if you will read the prospectus of this Society, you will perceive a by-law, which provides for the payment of fees to medical gentlemen, which I, together with my brother directors, consider to be their *right*, as their information must be of the utmost importance to the societies requiring the same.—I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

THOMAS BURR.

* * Two advertisements, explanatory of the principles which regulate the government of this Society, will be found in the columns which are appropriated to that class of announcements. The regulations of the Society appear to be not only just, but generous, and deserve the attention and support of the profession.—ED. L.

Medical News.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—The following gentlemen having undergone the necessary examinations for the diploma, were admitted members of the college at the meeting of the Court of Examiners on the 19th inst.:—

BROWN, EDWARD ADOLPHUS, Chelmsford.

CATHCART, JOHN EDWIN, Hon. East India Company's Service, Bengal.

CLARK, JOHN, Derby.

COGGINS, ISAAC, Lower Hayford, Oxfordshire.

CULHANE, PATRICK, Glin, Limerick.

DYER, FREDERICK JOHN, Blackheath.

FORSTER, JOHN ERRINGTON, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

JEKEN, JAMES, Dover.

HEWETT, WILLIAM, Reading, Berkshire.

MOORE, ALFRED WILLIAM, Pimlico.

POTTER, JEPHSON, Manchester.

PRATER, WILLIAM, Exeter.

VOSS, HOWELL WALTER, Swansea.

WATKINS, JOHN, Hon. East India Company's Service, Calcutta.

THE MURDER OF DR. PARKMAN.—The trial of Professor Webster for the murder of Dr. Parkman has just terminated in the conviction of the professor, who has been sentenced to death.