

our nature; his own eyes are witness to the truth or falsity of the narrations, and his purse being limited, if he has one at all, he gives an order for relief.

Secondly. The relieving officer, compelling him to this by his stern refusal, the consequence of his fettered hands, is also too glad to do so to save himself much trouble and a long account to the board, (an odious thing there, as he well knows.) All recommendations of the medical officer are neglected; nothing but his order meets with attention; and he, too truly knowing how, from bad habits and bad food, the poor are liable to be carried off very quickly by most trifling sicknesses, when he would meet with no tenderness, no acquittal from the public, or the surgeon-crushing guardians themselves, takes upon him the relieving-officer's duty too—for one thing, to save himself from the harsh judgments and unsparing criminations of the masses who are not union medical officers.

Thirdly. The guardians themselves, likewise, throw as heavy a burden upon the surgeon as they can. A man obtains, after repeated applications, an order to attend the board; he is "out of work"—"has a wife"—"she is under the doctor now," happy circumstance for the dismissal of the case! "Well, you must get work, or come into the stone-yard; the doctor will order whatever your wife wants." And so the business is disposed of, as though the guardians did not know that what are called the common necessities of life were necessities among the poor. They seem to think, "what is the least we can do?" not "what is the most we can do for those under our guardianship?"

Thus, Sir, you see, in this parish, if in no others (?), every obstacle is thrown in the way of the surgeon carrying on his heavy medical duties; and when, with such great reasons, he asks for an increase on £70 a year, (note it, £70 a year, for attending 2500 cases,) he is told, "No; you know what you took it at, and you must be satisfied." There is no higher court of appeal, Sir, against such infamous and taunting conduct than your journal. There is no means of redress but your support. The poor-law board are impotent; they cannot order an increase if they consider it desirable. The only pleasing reflection is, that with an enlarged knowledge of his profession, the surgeon applies it assiduously, unreservedly, uncommercially, to the benefit of his poorer fellow-creatures, not daring before God to deal with them as he is dealt by.

I might dilate, for much I have seen; but I refrain. Believe me, Mr. Editor, your constant reader, admirer, and obedient servant,

A. K. C.

#### APOTHECARIES' HALL.—NOTIFICATION TO STUDENTS.

EVERY candidate whose attendance on lectures shall commence on or after the 1st of October, 1849, must attend the following lectures and medical practice during not less than three winter and two summer sessions; each winter session to consist of not less than six months, and to commence not sooner than the 1st, nor later than the 15th of October; and each summer session to extend from the 1st of May to the 31st of July.

*First year.*—Winter Session: Chemistry; Anatomy and Physiology; Anatomical Demonstrations. Summer Session: Materia Medica and Therapeutics; Botany and Vegetable Physiology; Midwifery, and Diseases of Women and Children.

*Second year.*—Winter Session: Anatomy and Physiology; Anatomical Demonstrations; Dissections; Principles and Practice of Medicine; Medical Practice.\* Summer Session: Medical Practice;\* Midwifery, and Diseases of Women and Children; Forensic Medicine; Practical Chemistry;† Morbid Anatomy; Clinical Medicine.

*Third year.*—Winter Session: Dissections; Principles and Practice of Medicine; Medical Practice;\* Morbid Anatomy and Clinical Medicine.

Practical Midwifery, at any time after the conclusion of the first course of midwifery lectures.

The above course of study may be extended over a longer period than three winter and two summer sessions, provided the lectures and medical practice are attended in the order prescribed.

\* Medical practice must be attended during the full term of eighteen months—twelve months at a recognised hospital, and six months either at a recognised hospital or dispensary.

† By practical chemistry is intended, a specific course of instruction in the laboratory, with an opportunity of personal manipulation in the ordinary processes of chemistry, and of acquiring a knowledge of the various reagents for poisons.

#### REMARKS ON THE EFFECTS OF THE VACCINATION ACT, WITH PROPOSALS FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—The vaccination bill originally proposed that none except medical men should inoculate for the small-pox, and that would have met the case of Matthew Squires; but Mr. Wakley, on the second reading of the bill, carried as an amendment, that even medical men should not do so.

You are therefore in error in saying, in *THE LANCET* of the 31st of March, that to Mr. Wakley alone is due "the prohibition of inoculation." It is a poor compliment to suppose the profession would abuse any exception made to them; and I purpose showing why I cannot agree with you, that "Mr. Wakley has ample reason to be fully satisfied with his successful endeavours" in preventing medical men from inoculating.

Formerly, when small-pox was in a family, and there were children in the house unprotected, if the parents would not allow vaccination, I availed myself of inoculation, and it was invariably attended with the most satisfactory and successful results. In every instance, those inoculated recovered long before those from whom the disease had been taken. But since the passing of the amended vaccination bill, the following and many similar cases have occurred.

A woman had the small-pox; and there was a child at the breast, unprotected from the disease. She would not have it vaccinated: for, said she, "the two diseases will meet, and kill my child: for the small-pox must already be in the blood; but if you like, you may cut it for the small pox."

I used every argument in favour of vaccination, but all to no purpose. The same day I saw Mr. Power, the then assistant poor-law commissioner, and called his attention to the case, pointing out the advantages of inoculation, compared with taking the disease naturally, and the impossibility of spreading the contagion by inoculating the child, for it would be well long before the mother. All he could say was, the child must take its chance; and with equal propriety he might have added, the law must take its course; and so it did. Shortly after the mother had got well, the child had the small-pox; and after ten days of intense suffering, a fine healthy boy, of a year old, fell, like many another, a victim to Mr. Wakley's amendment in the vaccination bill.

Distressing, as in these instances, the operations of the bill must be to private individuals, yet they fall into utter insignificance when compared with the effects of the same bill in the following and similar cases.

An isolated case of small-pox occurred three miles from this town, and as there were only twelve houses near, I immediately vaccinated all in the neighbourhood who were unprotected, excepting the children of a publican, who would not have them vaccinated, even though I offered to vaccinate them direct from a cow, within a few yards of the door. The only reply I could get was, "You may cut them for the small-pox; for they shall have the real thing itself, or none at all." This was in November. In December, one of the children had the disease, then a second, and a third, and it was the middle of February before the fourth and last had it. Thus in this house alone the public were exposed to the disease for three months.

A man living near this town, called in January at the house, and caught the disease. Some children had it from him, and going to the Sunday-school long before they should have done, were sent home, but not till it was too late. I traced the infection to seven families, who that day caught the disease; and as they lived in various parts of the town, it spread in every direction; and before it ceased the following autumn, I attended above three hundred cases; and the orphan, the widow, and many a parent, have to attribute their loss to this single instance of Mr. Wakley's amendment in the bill. I have no doubt Mr. Wakley thought, that by preventing all from being inoculated, all would be vaccinated; but that is not the case. For in the year 1844, (four years after the passing of the bill,) 14 per cent. of my district, a population of 11,443—that is, 1788 persons—were unprotected, or unaccounted for; and in that year I had only *six* cases of small-pox, and *twenty-three* vaccinated. But in the following year, when I had 314 cases of small-pox, (a number almost equal to that of the births, 349,) I vaccinated 1163, (equal to the average births of three years and a quarter,) leaving few or none unprotected or unaccounted for.

But again: the average numbers of the last three years are, births, 349; small-pox, 8; vaccinated, 38,—leaving at the close of last year 907, or nine-tenths of those born in the last three

years, unprotected or unaccounted for. Doubtless the number will keep on increasing, till it becomes so great, that, on the occurrence of small-pox, the amount of misery and deaths will again be alarming; then, and not till then, will they seek for protection. They are heedless to the facts, that all persons take the small-pox before they are twenty, and four-fifths before they are ten, if unprotected. That the number of deaths from small-pox after vaccination, I estimate, is only one in 5580; after inoculation, one in 250; but after the disease naturally, by the Edinburgh return, 1 in 4. Vaccination and inoculation modify the disease itself, in an equal ratio, as they diminish the number of deaths. Hence there is a proportionately less frequency of disfigurement, blindness, deafness, glandular swellings, and other constitutional diseases, following vaccination and inoculation, than after the natural small-pox.

By being unprotected, persons not only endanger their own health, but that of those who have been vaccinated. For it is worthy of remark, that persons who have been vaccinated seldom or never take the disease from those who have it after vaccination. When the protection of vaccination does fail, the disease is invariably taken from those who have it in the natural and more malignant form. Then, if there was no other reason, in common justice to those who are vaccinated, others should be compelled to be so likewise. How desirable it is, therefore, that all children should be vaccinated before they are two years of age; and that a certificate of vaccination be kept by a registrar. That a copy of such registered certificate be the only legal evidence of vaccination having been performed; and any parents or guardians neglecting to have their children vaccinated, as above, should be subject to a fine of five shillings, to be re-enforced as often as the magistrates think proper, till they comply. That on a medical man certifying it is desirable a person should be vaccinated, a magistrate may enforce immediate vaccination.

The importance of the subject is, I hope, a sufficient apology for the length of my remarks.

I am, my dear Sir, yours respectfully,

Bromsgrove, 1849.

T. S. FLETCHER.

\* \* The marked and extraordinary diminution of the mortality from small-pox, since inoculation for that disease was made a penal offence, furnishes the best practical answer that could be offered to the objections of our correspondent, against the amendment of the law, as introduced by Mr. WAKLEY.

### PROPOSALS FOR AN IMPROVED SYSTEM OF MEDICAL RELIEF,

AS FAR AS REGARDS PAUPERS, AND THE CLASS OF POOR PERSONS NOT STRICTLY ENTITLED TO PAROCHIAL MEDICAL ASSISTANCE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is not my intention to occupy your time in detailing the evils of the present system of poor-law medical relief, they being at the present time too well and generally known to require further illustration. I will therefore at once proceed to direct your attention to the system I wish to advocate. The causes of the dissatisfaction evinced by medical men are,—

1stly. The remuneration given being insufficient to repay even the expense of medicines and dispensing, as proved by hospital and dispensary expenditure.

2ndly. The free distribution of medical orders to persons not justly entitled to them.

3rdly. The difficulties experienced by paupers (properly so called) in procuring orders, in cases involving additional medical remuneration, as accidents, midwifery, &c.

4thly. The non-permanency of medical appointments, and the possibility of motives, professional treatment, &c., being canvassed and called in question by persons incompetent to form correct opinions.

5thly. The gross favouritism and partiality sometimes shown in conferring union appointments.

6thly. The insinuations that we make these appointments valuable by administering insufficient or cheap remedies.

The system, therefore, which I have to propose, as obviating these various causes of dissatisfaction, is,—

1stly. That every union be divided into a sufficient number of medical districts: that the medical officers be appointed for a permanency, and strictly with reference to their qualifications for the office: and that a fair salary be awarded, regard being had to the acreage, and numbers of pauper inhabitants.

2ndly. That the duties of the medical officers be, to visit

and prescribe for the sick, and to make entries of their visits in a book kept for that purpose, as, for instance, the present medical weekly return book.

3rdly. That a dispensary be attached to every workhouse, with a dispenser resident thereat, whose duties would be, to dispense the prescriptions brought to him by the paupers, and to copy them into a book kept for that purpose. The medicines to be provided by the guardians, and the dispenser's salary, &c., to be paid by them.

4thly. That inspecting medical officers be appointed to hear complaints (if any), to inquire into the qualifications of candidates for poor-law appointments; to examine the quality of drugs, &c.; to ascertain the competency of the dispenser; to inspect all books connected with the medical department, and to assist the workhouse medical officer, in matters relating to diet, drainage, ventilation, &c.

Next, as regards the class of poor persons not strictly entitled to parochial medical relief. Let a list of the names of such medical gentlemen as are willing, be kept at the dispensary; and on a fixed day or week in every year, let those persons who wish to avail themselves of the system call and enrol their names, together with the number, names, and ages of their families, and deposit a certain sum, to be paid to the medical gentleman whom they may select as their attendant for the ensuing year; who, on his part, binds himself to visit and prescribe for them during that period, the prescriptions to be carried by them to the dispensary, where the medicines will be provided at a trifling advance on cost price, the profit to be applied in aid of the poor's-rate, in defraying the expenses of the dispensary.

The system thus proposed would, I feel confident, be of incalculable benefit to the paupers; a boon to the medical profession, as placing them above suspicion of improper conduct; a charity and just measure towards the poor but honest man, by providing proper attendance, and good medicines, at a cost within the reach of his small capabilities.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

March, 1849.

B. W.

### CONSULTING AND GENERAL PRACTITIONERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I fear your correspondent "Sperando," is not a friend to the general practitioner, and I believe he is as ignorant of general practice in England as he is of the state of the profession north of the Tweed. For an account of the latter I refer him to Dr. Crisp's recent pamphlet, and if the statements therein are correct, the Southerners will never desire to cross the border, to acquire "dignity and peace of mind." I fancy, Sir, that consultations are held in Scotland as in England. The junior practitioner feels bound, to a certain extent, to give way to the senior, in most cases, especially (as it too often happens) where there is doubt and obscurity. In the instance alluded to, if "Sperando" had read Dr. Crisp's pamphlet, he would have found that Dr. Todd observed the same rule; for although he thought the patient in an anæmic condition, he, at Dr. Bright's dictation, ordered a grain of calomel every four hours. It is not unlikely that Dr. Christison has thought proper, on some occasions, to "succumb" to Dr. Alison and others of his seniors. That there is a great deal of humbug connected with medical and surgical consultations, and that the whole system of medical government in the United Kingdom is bad, and rotten at the core, I am willing to admit, but I think "Sperando" might have been more fortunate in his illustration.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

MEDICUS.

### THE EXAMINATION IN BOTANY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As the first examination for the degree of bachelor of medicine in the University of London is now approaching, I am desirous of calling the attention of the examiner in botany to the style of examination hitherto adopted, which, in my humble opinion, is not only defective, but inappropriate; and this I do for the purpose of saving the candidates much useless drudgery. In the programme of the examination published in the "Regulations," a long list of orders and genera is exhibited, with the distinctive characters of which the candidate is expected to familiarize himself. Thirty natural orders and nearly one hundred genera constitute that part of the list; the remainder consisting of a large number of botanical terms. I do not quarrel with the natural orders or the