

Should this instrument be brought forward, "Mat" will blush. The standard of qualification which would content me, is not the blushes of "Mat," but such a measure of tutoring as would satisfy the public and the consciences of the promoters of the New Medical Bill. Without this proviso, it will be next to impossible to carry the Bill, for right dealing will not be the base of the superstructure to be raised. With this proviso, I believe we should quickly see salaries of assistants increased from £15 to £150 per annum. The poor-law authorities would not then be able to take advantage of the competition now existing between professional men; charitable institutions would be compelled equitably to remunerate the talent they employ, and to distribute medical out-door relief with a more provident hand.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Camberwell, Dec. 1852.

J. W. EDMONDS.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND LIFE ASSURANCE OFFICES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—My experience of the last week enables me to assure your readers, that "The Royal Naval Military East India Service," and "The Caledonian" Insurance Companies may be (if not already) classed among the non-paying offices. In both instances the required information was not furnished.

Yours obediently,

Blackfriars-road, Dec. 17, 1852.

H. EVANS.

THE NEW MEDICAL REFORM BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In reference to the New Medical Reform Bill, Mr. Keith, in your number for Dec. 11, suggests an amendment on Clause XXIII. I beg to submit a still further amendment, referring especially to the oppressed Poor-law medical officers. Surely, Sir, some fair scale of remuneration ought to be insisted upon, instead of leaving us entirely to the merciful consideration of the Guardians, who, like attorneys, referred to by Mr. Keith, wise in their generation, carefully take into their consideration only £ s. d., and not the amount of work required. The scale of pay being always below the chaplain, the lawyer, and the relieving-officer.

Yours truly,

Lidgate, Dec. 1852.

THOMAS KERRY.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AT THE DIGGINGS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—My nephew went out to Australia last year; I send you an extract from a letter I have just received from him; it may be interesting to some of your readers who are assistants in the medical profession. After detailing matters, he goes on to say:—

"If you do find out Mr. S—, tell him how pleased I shall be if he will join us here; he is sure of first-rate remuneration, even as a medical assistant; remind him of that arrangement made before I left England. King is with Dr. Vipond, at a salary of £100 per annum, and apartments and servants, who are Chinese; he has light work in his profession; indeed, a medical man finds business in this delightful country a pleasant pastime; King, however, means to turn his attention to stock-farming very shortly, and wants me to join him.—I have met with two persons here whom I knew in Sunderland; one of them is just returned to Melbourne, rich from the diggings. I think, if assistants knew the good chances they have of doing well here, in so many ways, they would not be slow to give up their drudgery at home. I have known a young fellow refuse £180 a year for his services as an assistant, besides board and lodging, at Sydney, and that only a week or two before I left."

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

Shields, Dec. 1852.

A RETIRED NAVAL SURGEON.

DEATH FROM THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHLOROFORM.

A PERSON named Henry Hollingworth, a factory operative from Newton-moor, near Hyde, has fallen a victim, at the Manchester Royal Infirmary, to the use of chloroform, administered to nullify the pain consequent upon a severe operation. An inquest was held on view of the body by Mr. Herford, coroner for the borough, when the following evidence was given:—

Mr. John Wright Baker, house-surgeon at the Royal Infirmary, said the deceased was admitted on the 16th Dec., on account of a malignant tumour on the right thigh, to remove which an operation was performed, as it was looked upon as a cancerous

tumour, though enveloped in much doubt, as those tumours often are. He was in a bad state of health when admitted, and everything was done to improve his health previous to the operation. A consultation, as I understood, had been held previous to his admission, and it had then been determined that the operation should be performed, of course with the consent of the patient. The consultation was of all the medical men of the infirmary. The deceased the day before the operation said he was ready for it, but wished to have chloroform. Almost every patient takes it. I said he should have it if he wished it, and that he would feel no pain, and that I would do all I could to support his strength. I did not give him any caution. We have given chloroform frequently, and never had a fatal case before. At eleven o'clock on Friday, the 24th Dec. the operation took place. There were present Mr. Jordan, as the operator, Mr. Beever, as his assistant in the operation, Mr. Wilson, Dr. Renaud, and Dr. Wilkinson (all members of the honorary medical staff of the infirmary), and myself. Mr. Frederick Heath, a qualified surgeon, administered the chloroform. The man was very much excited, struggled, and talked fast. The chloroform was administered slowly, and every precaution was taken to prevent any danger; and the medical men remarked two or three times how very long it was in taking effect. He at last became insensible in about seven minutes at least. Mr. Jordan commenced the operation by an incision into the skin covering the tumour. I was assisting the surgeon when Mr. Heath directed my attention to the patient's face. This was about five minutes after the operation had commenced. I then observed congestion about the face, but there was no stertorous breathing. His pupils appeared almost to have ceased to act. His breathing was become exceedingly slow, and he seemed to be sinking fast. I directed the attention of the operator and other medical men to these symptoms. The operation was then suspended, and means resorted to for restoring animation, but the pupils had ceased to act, and had become fixed almost immediately. He gave one strong gasp, and then to all appearance was dead. In administering the chloroform successive doses were given until it took effect. Every dose consisted of a drachm, taken at intervals in an inhaler. Constitutions differ with regard to the effect produced by chloroform, but we use every precaution to prevent injury; and I am satisfied that the surgeons did their duty in the administration of the chloroform and in the operation.

Mr. Jordan was examined, and stated, in corroboration of Mr. Baker's evidence, that more time elapsed than usual before insensibility was produced, and then it was not complete, for after the incision was made, the man, more than once, said a cat was scratching him. Chloroform was generally administered in cases of operation, unless there were circumstances which, in the opinion of the surgeons, rendered it undesirable. Mr. Heath was a competent person to administer chloroform. The post-mortem examination showed that asphyxia, caused by chloroform, produced the death. There was a congestion both of the brain and lungs.

Verdict—"Died from the effects of chloroform."

It is, we understand, the determination of the medical staff in all cases requiring the use of this deadly though valuable agent, to have one person to administer it and another to scrutinize the effects upon the patients, in order to avoid a second fatality of the kind.

Medical News.

DR. HECTOR GAVIN AT BAHAMA.—It is with much satisfaction that we announce the arrival of Dr. Hector Gavin, Medical Inspector West India Colonies, by the last packet. It may be well to remind our readers that this gentleman, along with two other physicians, was appointed on the 1st January, 1851, by Earl Grey, in compliance with the urgent solicitations of the merchants and capitalists connected with the West Indies, for additional aid and assistance against the ravages of cholera, which at that time was devastating the neighbouring colony of Jamaica. Dr. Milroy, the colleague of Dr. Gavin, returned after a short stay in Jamaica, while Dr. Laidlaw, his remaining colleague, died lately in London, after protracted disease. Dr. Gavin is, therefore, the only medical inspector now in the West Indies engaged in this special service. The chief duty with which, we believe, the medical inspector is charged, are those of preventing, or diminishing, as far as practicable, the loss of life which, everywhere, sad experience has proved to attend this pestilence where it has developed itself, and of proposing new and efficient sanitary enactments. The colony is indebted to Dr. Gavin for the promptitude with which he has hastened hither in the midst of his important duties in Trinidad, and we look forward with some hope in our affliction, to the effect which may be produced by his labours among us.—*Bahama Herald.*