

to read lectures bearing directly on a disease to which he seems to have given much attention, he must not wince when facts are brought forward which he is not acquainted with. This championship on my part is quite justifiable; and Dr. R. G. Mayne will perhaps allow me to observe, that the question is not whether this character of champion is *newly donned* or not, but whether the same is, or is not, sustained in a becoming manner. I hope, in conclusion, that in performing my task, I shall never so far forget the dignity of our profession as foolishly and pettishly to attack any member of it.

I remain, yours much obliged,
VICTOR DE MERIC.

Upper Baker-street, Regent's Park, Oct. 1848.

THE UPTON-ON-SEVERN UNION.—RESIGNATION OF THE MEDICAL OFFICERS.

COMMITTEE OF POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

Office, 4, Hanover square, Oct. 24th, 1848.

SIR,—The Committee will feel obliged by your publishing in the next number of THE LANCET, the accompanying copy of a memorial, which has been forwarded to the president of the Poor-law Board, on the subject of the recent resignation of the medical officers of the Upton-on-Severn Union.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,
HERBERT WILLIAMS, Assist. Sec.

(COPY.)

To the Right Honourable Charles Buller, M.P., President
of the Poor-law Board.

The Memorial of the Committee of the Convention of
Medical Officers of Poor-law Unions in England and
Wales,

Showeth,—That your memorialists, being deputed and authorized at a convention of delegates, representing nearly three thousand medical officers of unions, assembled at the Hanover-square Rooms on the 27th of October, 1847, to act in their behalf, with a view to obtain an amelioration of the present system of poor-law medical relief, feel it their duty respectfully to draw the attention of the Poor-law Board to the following statement:—

Your memorialists have watched with deep interest the circumstances connected with the recent resignation of the medical officers of the Upton-on-Severn Union, and the subsequent appointment of others by the guardians of that union to fill the vacancies thus created; and the feelings entertained by your memorialists on this subject are so strong, that they do not hesitate to address your honourable board to the effect, that the case may be thoroughly investigated prior to those appointments receiving its sanction and confirmation.

Your memorialists, in thus calling attention to the subject, desire, in the first instance, particularly to state, that they have taken no part whatever with the medical officers of the Upton Union, as respects any special grievance which they may have laboured under, and that their resignation has emanated from themselves, without any bias or influence being exercised by your memorialists, who make this appeal upon public grounds, considering the following reasons amply sufficient to justify their doing so:—

1st.—That although the total amount of the salaries paid to the medical officers of the Upton Union may not be below the average paid to medical officers of agricultural districts, the scale of remuneration which is made the standard is so miserably degrading and inadequate, as to give general offence to the medical profession, and both jeopardize the interests of the sick poor, and prove a short-sighted economy to the rate-payers.

2ndly.—That the order limiting the extent of the districts of medical officers, as ordered by your board, has been violated by the guardians of the Upton Union, in assigning to their officers two districts exceeding the prescribed acreage.

3rdly.—That, as your memorialists are credibly informed, one at least of the medical officers appointed by the said union, is not qualified, in accordance with the judicious order of your honourable board for securing efficient medical aid for the sick poor, and that another of the medical men submitted for your approval was once suspended, when holding office on a former occasion, and was even set aside by the very board of guardians which now considers him eligible to fulfil the onerous duties which his appointment necessarily imposes upon him.

4thly.—That the circumstances of the whole case are such

as to foster dissensions amongst the members of the medical profession, and seriously to obstruct their cordial co-operation for the benefit of the sick poor.

For these reasons your memorialists pray that you will be pleased to withhold your confirmation of the said appointments.

(Signed)

THOMAS HODGKIN, M.D.,
Chairman of the Committee.
CHAS. F. J. LORD,
Hon. Sec.

Sept. 1848.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Since our last communication to you of August 15th, events have occurred in this Union which it is now our duty to report. On the 17th of August, Mr. Greaves, the assistant-commissioner, was here for the purpose of investigating the recent appointments made by the board of guardians. The result of this investigation was not fully known until the 28th of September, when a communication was received by the Upton board of guardians from the poor-law board in London, and Mr. Greaves was again present. The poor-law board cashiered the appointment of Mr. Marsh, for the Kempsey district; of Mr. Nelson Thomas, for the Eldersfield district; of Mr. West, for the Powick district; and ordered the board of guardians to re-advertise these districts, the salaries to be increased twenty per cent., unless a satisfactory reason could be given for not doing so! A loop-hole was thus left with an obvious intention. The guardians rejected this order by a majority of nine to seven, and determined on re-advertising the districts at the late salaries. Mr. Mearns tendered for the Powick district, and Mr. White did the same for the Kempsey district, at the twenty per cent. increase, to meet this concession of the poor-law board; and on Thursday, Oct. 12th, the appointments were filled up: Mr. Waddam, of Malvern, was appointed to the Powick district—a Mr. Crosse applied for, and secured, the Kempsey district. Mr. Crosse has been brought forward as a new importation, under the auspices of Mr. H. B. Marsh, the "sympathizer with the too numerous victims to medical relief injustice,"* and is now placed at Kempsey, with the express and only object of opposing Mr. White in the centre of his neighbourhood, where there has been only one resident medical man for many years past. A threat of this kind was long held out as the inevitable punishment of Mr. White's obstinacy in rejecting the district at the advertised salary. Thus the *crime* of upholding the dignity and honour of the profession has been revenged, and official favour secured.

On Monday evening, the 16th of October, we called on Mr. Crosse, for the purpose of ascertaining if he were fully cognizant of the peculiar circumstances which had induced the resignation of the late medical officers of this Union. We saw Mr. Crosse, and with him Mr. Marsh. In reply to our question to Mr. Crosse, whether he had accepted his appointment with a full knowledge of *all* the circumstances connected with the recent movement of the medical officers, Mr. Crosse replied that he felt himself quite taken aback, that he was much fatigued, and would rather waive any discussion then, but would be happy to afford us an interview on the following day. We said that there really appeared to us no necessity for delay, as we only desired a plain answer to a very simple question. After much hesitation, (and the introduction of much extraneous and irrelevant matter most intemperately intruded by Mr. Marsh,) Mr. Crosse stated that he *was* aware of all the circumstances of the case. We asked him if he had read our published statements in the medical journals. He replied he had not, and professed himself too much of a sceptic to place much reliance on the statements of the press; he preferred the public rumour of the neighbourhood, and had heard all particulars from Mr. Marsh, whose word he could not doubt.

We deemed it our duty to have an interview with Mr. Crosse from the circumstance of his being a stranger to the neighbourhood, and possibly unacquainted with the peculiar nature of the case. We here call upon Mr. Crosse, as a gentleman, to explain his conduct; and we publicly ask him to reconcile it with his duty to the profession.

Mr. Charles Sheward, notwithstanding his public repudiation of a previous nomination, has now thought proper to accept the Eldersfield district, and thus the Upton board of guardians has been successful in obtaining upon their own terms, from some quarter or another, a sufficient number of officers to undertake the duties of the different medical districts. Truly was it said of old, "a man's enemies are chiefly they of his own household;" a "heavy blow and great discouragement."

* See Mr. Marsh's letter in THE LANCET, Sept. 2, 1848.

ment" have been inflicted on the prospects of union surgeons throughout this kingdom by the disgraceful conduct of the profession. We say profession, for until the whole body adopts a summary mode of ridding itself of such unworthy members as have sold themselves individually to do the work, and obey the behests, of those who oppress them generally, the crime and its consequences must be charged on the whole profession. Four men have been found capable of betraying their brethren, and of sacrificing a great cause for the sake of a few paltry pounds. As long as the profession exhibits such examples, of what possible use are representations to Government, expostulations with poor-law boards, or memorials to boards of guardians? The more the question is agitated the more notorious does the degraded state of the profession become. We invoke on our own heads the contumely of the many, and win by our own exertions and personal sacrifices the disrespect and reproaches of the public. The utter hopelessness of any appeal to the poor-law board for the redress of our grievances has been rendered apparent by the Upton case. We have appealed to that board. It has admitted the justice of our claims, and yet allows the guardians to continue to perpetuate their injustice; the poor-law board recommends, without the power, or, at any rate, the courage, to enforce its recommendation. It orders, and yet lacks the spirit to compel obedience to its mandates. Where, then, is the remedy? It lies in the hands of the profession, and there only. We were aware of this at the onset, and we tried the experiment, the experiment of appealing to our own body, and truly it has been an experiment, and one which has signally failed. The partial countenance and support which were at first afforded us have been withdrawn. The medical officers of the Upton union have been defeated, and by their defeat the deepest possible injury has been inflicted on the cause of poor-law medical reform. A more insane act of suicide (to the destruction of the best interests of the profession) was never perpetrated than has just been committed by Messrs. Marsh, Sheward, Waddam, and Crosse. To the medical profession we say, and we say it emphatically, "Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!"

We remain, Sir, your obliged and faithful servants,

CHARLES BRADDO, Wm. TODD WHITE,

The deputation of the late medical officers of the Upton-on-Severn union.

Oct. 17th, 1848.

EPIDEMIC CHOLERA.—RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE WESTERN MEDICAL SOCIETY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to forward for insertion in THE LANCET, a copy of resolutions unanimously agreed to at a special meeting of the Western Medical and Surgical Society, on the 13th inst.*

The object which the Society has in view is so fully set forth in the foregoing resolutions, that it does not appear necessary to enter into a very lengthened explanation. It is quite obvious, that if we can only obtain a faithful record of every case of cholera which may occur, the careful analysis and comparison of such records will not only yield us a complete history of the epidemic,—perhaps the most complete history ever afforded of any epidemic,—but will in all probability lead to certain and positive results, throwing light on the pathology, and thereby on the rational treatment, of this fearful and hitherto obscure malady. The greater part of our profession is, however, so unceasingly occupied, and on that account so little in the habit of recording cases, that it would be scarcely possible to obtain from them the reports desired unless their labours be facilitated by a plan in which attention is called to the various points to be noted. But with such a plan to help them, and with the good spirit which I know to prevail in the profession, the object in view does not appear to be difficult of attainment. The committee of this Society is at this moment engaged with great care and anxiety in the preparation of this plan, on the fitness of which for its purpose much depends; for it must be sufficiently simple to be easily filled up—sufficiently comprehensive to comprise everything necessary to be observed. As soon as it is matured, it will be submitted, through you, to the profession, for imitation or for correction.

It is to be remarked, that epidemic cholera is a disease peculiarly favourable to investigation of the kind proposed. Frightfully fatal as it is to those whom it attacks, it does not, like influenza, invade the majority, or even a large proportion, of the population. Each practitioner is not overwhelmed,

therefore, with a multiplicity of cases, and the phenomena in each case are of a striking and obvious kind.

The investigation which the Western Medical and Surgical Society is about to attempt within its own district, (Chelsea, Pimlico, Knightsbridge, Brompton, Kensington, Putney, and Fulham,) can only be carried out to its full extent by the zealous co-operation of the profession throughout the United Kingdom. Such co-operation can be easily brought to bear. The various metropolitan medical societies—the London Medical, the Westminster Medical, the South London, &c.—can, if they will, obtain returns, each within its own district, from the rest of the metropolis, and tabulate and analyze them by committees of their own. In most large towns there are already societies capable of undertaking the same work; where such societies do not exist, let voluntary associations be formed for the purpose. Even in villages and outlying places, let the record of every case—if cases occur—be kept, and let it be sent to the society or association of some neighbouring town, or to our own Society, if it be preferred, for tabulation; for it is one of the merits of this scheme, that by it a single isolated case, useful otherwise only as a means of experience to the individual observer, will have its scientific value.

In the discussion in our Society on these resolutions, a most useful suggestion was thrown out—that it would be desirable, if possible, in every district, to have the post-mortem inspections conducted by the same person—one well familiar with morbid appearances. This cannot, of course, always be done; but in London, and in large towns, there must be many men well competent to the task, having sufficient leisure to undertake it, and sufficient zeal to make them glad of an opportunity of acquiring experience in a disease offering so wide a field for investigation and discovery.

I am induced to send these resolutions and this letter to you, without waiting till our plan for case-reporting is matured, because it is necessary that the attention of the profession should be stirred up betimes, unless they are willing to let this epidemic slip by, like the last, without deriving from it the scientific results it is capable of yielding. If a similar plan to this had been adopted in 1831-2, how much more positive and precise would our knowledge have been! At present, not a great deal of time has been lost. The cases which have occurred hitherto, undoubted cases as they are, can hardly be considered more than sporadic ones—the precursors, the merciful warnings, of that outbreak which sooner or later will surely come.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your faithful servant,

EDWARD CATOR SEATON, M.D.,

Sloane-street, Chelsea,
Oct. 17, 1848.

Hon. Sec. of the Western Medical
and Surgical Society.

ON THE PATHOLOGY AND TREATMENT OF CHOLERA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—At a period when the cholera is a subject of great moment, I am inclined to make a few remarks, for the purpose of accelerating a more advanced or a better plan of treatment for this disorder; and I have been more induced to do so, by remembering that after the return of the late Sir David Barry from Russia, he candidly confessed to me that his knowledge of the treatment of this disorder had been but little increased, even after having seen many thousand cases. A more active inquiry should now be made, and every investigation ought to take place, for the purpose of benefiting science and the public at large. The composition of the blood varies under certain circumstances, according to the matter absorbed from the intestinal canal, the skin, and other membranes, all which matter immediately mixes with the venous blood, and consequently, that fluid varies according to what has been absorbed. Upon analysis, the blood has been found to contain alcohol, ether, camphor, and salts, which do not usually enter into its composition, and this has resulted after these agents have been administered. Now this knowledge becomes of use to us at a period when we are visited by the cholera. Everybody is fully aware of the antiseptic properties of camphor, and some other chemical agents, such as chlorine, carbon, &c. It has been stated that camphor and other matters have been detected by the analyses of the blood—does it not become reasonable for us to suppose that when the blood has entering into its composition such a disinfecting agent as camphor, the body should be less likely to become affected by such a distressing disease as the cholera? Carbon and carbonic acid gas have been already recommended as means for the prevention of cholera, and the tincture of angelica has been esteemed of use by some foreign physician. The effect produced upon the

* The resolutions referred to were published in THE LANCET of last week.
—ED. L.