

with the progress of medical science." This exposure and annoyance has been brought to the notice of the authorities very recently, who have in consequence directed that in future staff and regimental assistant-surgeons shall share the duty alternately (by weeks) at all stations. But this does not remedy it, but only causes *all* assistant-surgeons to be exposed to *this great annoyance* instead of individuals as formerly.

5thly. That we should not be mulcted of our small pittance, and compelled to refund money for extras ordered by us *conscientiously*, and in the due performance of our duty to our God, our fellow men, and the service generally, as well as in accordance with the solemn obligation we owe the universities and colleges from which we have obtained our degrees and licences—not to speak of the absolute necessity there exists for their issue to the sick and dying, many of which cases would prove fatal only for their issue. In the name of common sense and humanity, Mr. Editor, when will the authorities cease such oppressions?—and how can they expect professional gentlemen to enter the service when such a state of things exists? After the disasters of the Crimea, it was hoped medical officers would be less fettered in future. But, instead of this, a code of *ten* diets have been recently framed by a set of War-office clerks, termed "Purveyors," to save themselves trouble, and a medical officer must confine himself to those diets in prescribing for his patient, although there may not be a single one applicable to the case. Should he transgress, and order an extra on a diet not authorized, he is ordered to pay up to the War Office, perhaps a year or two afterwards, when all connected with the case has gone out of his head, and he can only consult books and diet rolls for an explanation! The "Purveyors" in question, instead of being assistants to the Medical Department and under their orders (as it was originally intended they should be, to perform the rough clerical work), are no such thing, but the greatest bugbears to the department, and delight to assert their independence and give medical officers every kind of annoyance whenever they can possibly do so.

6thly. That when we consider it necessary to order wine, arrowroot, &c., (as allowed by regulation,) to the wives and children of soldiers under our care, we may be saved the degradation of being obliged to get the commanding officer's *sanction and signature* before we can issue them; as nothing can be a greater insult than this, which implies we are not worthy of trust. Further, that when we do make such issues (under similar circumstances as the cases of soldiers already referred to), we may be saved the unnecessary annoyance of being obliged to enter the cases at full length in the "Case-book," and then detail our reasons for ordering them.

7thly. That the above may be cancelled, as well as a heap of unnecessary clerical work which we daily have to perform. Every venereal case has to be detailed, as well as every case where we deem it necessary to order even such an inexpensive drink as lemonade or *barley water*; so that a medical officer is so worried and disheartened that he has not time to read-up, study, or register really important cases, which would be not only a credit to himself, but interesting and useful to the public and profession generally, if published in the medical journals.

8thly. That the second assistant-surgeons of the regiments at home and of those in the colonies, which were withdrawn within the last three years, should be forthwith re-appointed, as it does not appear on what grounds an unfortunate assistant-surgeon should be a slave, and daily and hourly on duty. Even on Sunday, when tradespeople, mechanics, shopkeepers, &c. not to speak of the private soldiers of the regiment, are off duty, he has his visits to pay without any relaxation whatever, in contradistinction to all other branches and classes in the service of her Majesty.

In conclusion, I feel confident that the above represent the real causes of discontent in the Army Medical Department; and until they are redressed, I think the authorities cannot expect to get first-class professional men to enter the service. Under the present *régime* the pay, the position, the promotion, and the retirement are not at all adequate to talent, or the forfeiture of the twenty-five best years of a man's life.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

March, 1864.

CONSILIO MANUQUE.

## MORTALITY OF PARTURIENT WOMEN.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having frequent occasion to inquire into the medical history of members of the labouring classes, I have long been struck with the fact that a very large number of women die in giving birth to their children, or from diseases that are the

immediate consequences of parturition. Desirous of making some accurate computation of the comparative numbers of deaths from this cause, I have for some time past noted down the causes of death of the mothers of those candidates for employment in the minor establishment of the Post-office, whose certificates have been sent for my inspection.

I find the proportion of women who died in childbirth so large that I think the fact should be brought to the knowledge of the profession generally. It should be stated that all the women whose cases I refer to lived and died in the country—none of them in London. They relate entirely to the mothers of those young men who have, through the interest of members of Parliament or other influential persons, obtained nominations for employment in the provincial post-offices. The statement of the cause of death was always made in writing by the candidate—the son of the deceased.

I commenced taking the notes on the 20th of November, 1861, and have continued them up to the present day—the 18th of March, 1864, a period of two years and five months. I have kept no account of the total number of the other candidates examined during that period—that is, of those whose mothers were alive. It would, perhaps, have been as well to have done so. I merely registered the cases of all those mothers who were dead from any cause at the time the sons obtained a nomination. Where the cause of death was "unknown," I placed it in every instance amongst those who did not die in childbirth.

The number, then, of the mothers who had died from all causes was 225. Of these 90, or exactly two-fifths, had died, according to their sons' information, in childbirth, or from some disease immediately following and directly connected with that event.

As these statistics relate exclusively to provincial candidates, not seen and examined by myself, but by local medical men, by whom the statements are transmitted to me in regular course, I have had no opportunity of inquiring into any details connected with the deaths. If I had had such opportunity, I should have been anxious, among other points, to ascertain what proportion of these women had been attended in their confinement by properly qualified medical practitioners, and what proportion by women acting as midwives, &c. From inquiries I have made on this subject, however, from candidates of similar class and position, I am inclined to think that a large proportion must have been attended by midwives. Let the causes, however, be what they may, I think the fact that so large a proportion as two-fifths of all the deaths of the mothers occurring from an event which is normal, and should be the cause of death to few or none, deserves the notice of the profession at large.

I am, Sir, very faithfully yours,

WALLER LEWIS, M.R.C.P.,

Medical Officer-in-Chief, General Post-office,

Medical Department, General Post-office, March, 1864.

## "LITHOTRITY WITHOUT INJECTIONS."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I can, with confidence, add my testimony to the value of the practice, advocated by Mr. H. Thompson in THE LANCET of the 20th ultimo, of performing lithotritry without the preliminary injection of the bladder. This practice is, however, more extensively adopted than Mr. Thompson seems to be aware of.

In THE LANCET of the 12th inst. Mr. Pollock has shown that in his own practice he has for some time discontinued the use of injections before introducing the lithotrite.

In a paper which I published in a contemporary journal of December 10th, 1859, the following passage occurs:—"In the fifteen cases (of stone treated by lithotritry) in Table 3, the number of 'sittings' in fourteen is recorded, the smallest number being two, the largest, twenty-two, and the average number in each case about six. In all these operations the utmost gentleness of manipulation was practised, and this was much promoted by using a screw lithotrite, as small and light as was consistent with sufficient strength. The patient was generally laid on a couch, the pelvis being raised by pillows. Before the operation the patient was desired to allow the bladder to become as fully distended with urine as it could easily bear. By observing this precaution I have very rarely had to inject the bladder with water. The irritation caused by the introduction of a second instrument was thus avoided, and I have imagined that the bladder is more tolerant of the presence

of urine than of the foreign fluid water. For this practical suggestion I am indebted to the writings of Mr. Syme."

I have, moreover, in all cases of stone which I have treated by lithotripsy, invariably abstained from washing out the bladder to bring away the fragments, and have allowed the bladder, unaided, to expel them. I am well aware that cases may occur in which the contractile power of the bladder is so deficient as to render necessary the employment of the catheter and syringe. I have long discontinued the use of the pillow under the pelvis as being unnecessary.

It is desirable, as stated by Mr. Pollock, that the inaccurate word, "sittings," as applied to the several operations, should be discontinued.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Leeds, March 15th, 1864.

THOS. P. TEALE, F.R.S.

## POOR-LAW MEDICAL REFORM ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I perceive by last week's LANCET that Mr. Prowse, of Amersham, has very kindly proposed a subscription not only towards the funds of the Association, but also "as an acknowledgment of my past services," and that you should "become the recipient of the fund." To him personally I feel greatly obliged for the proposal, but I should infinitely prefer that all subscriptions went towards the general funds of the Association, as we may have need of them should the Select Committee on Poor Relief make their report to Parliament in favour of our views, as then active measures either on the part of Government or ourselves, ought to follow, and for the latter we should be prepared; but should it be unfavourable—which, however, I can scarcely credit, as it would be contrary to all the evidence laid before the Committee, excepting that of Mr. Cane,—then I should feel that I could no longer be of service to my medical brethren, and that the time had arrived for me to retire from my present position as chairman of the Association, and give a final account of my stewardship.

I see by "Knight's Official Advertiser" that the Select Committee on Poor Relief have had three sittings, and it is understood that they have determined not to examine any further witnesses, and are now considering their report.

Since March 9th I have received the following subscriptions: J. G. Dorge, Launceston, 5s.; Joseph Toynbee, Savile-row, £1; J. A. Ledgard, Wetherby, 5s.; G. Pound, Ash, 5s.; W. Pritchard, East Relford, 10s.; J. T. Barrett, Ashton-under-Lyne, 5s.; H. B. Harris (Watton post-mark), 2s. 8d.; W. S. E., 1s.; C. Mott, Chertsey, 10s.; G. Bury, Barnet, 10s.; A. Benine, St. Thomas, 2s. 6d.; R. Roe, Barton-upon-Irwell, £1; D. Dorming, Barton-upon-Irwell, £1; H. Adye, Barton-upon-Irwell, 10s.; J. L. Fletcher, Barton-upon-Irwell, 10s.; J. Rogers, Strand, 10s.; T. F. Greenwood, Southwell, 2s. 6d.; F. J. Brown, Rochester, £1 1s.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

12, Royal-terrace, Weymouth, March, 1864.

RICHARD GRIFFIN.

## DR. MACLOUGHLIN'S PAMPHLET.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—With reference to your notice of my pamphlet, entitled, "Proofs of the Non-existence of a Specific Virus," which appeared in THE LANCET of the 12th instant,—I am aware that when Dr. Harvey announced his discovery of the circulation, the Royal College of Physicians of London pronounced him to be a quack; when Dr. Jenner announced his discovery of vaccine lymph he was branded as an impostor; and when, with the valuable assistance of the Registrar-General, Major Graham, and the gentlemen of his department, it had been demonstrated that cholera is not a disease of sudden invasion, but that every individual has a warning by a diarrhoea for a few hours, or for a few days, or for a few weeks, that he is about to be attacked with cholera, and that if this warning stage is promptly cured, the developed stage is prevented, and life is safe; and that while cholera is epidemic, it is dangerous to administer one-half, or one third, or one-quarter of the usual dose of a purgative medicine, lest diarrhoea, too often followed by hopeless cholera, is induced; and that administering sixty-grain doses of calomel every hour, or every second hour, assisted the disease to destroy life,—the Royal College of Physicians of London ignored these researches, although they were proved to be correct by the researches of all the medical practitioners in charge of hospitals &c. in England and Scotland in 1854.

Like the Royal College of Physicians, you have judged of the value of the facts brought forward in the above pamphlet from

your point of view, and I have no right or wish to find fault with you; on the contrary, I have to thank you for what you have said relative to that pamphlet and relative to its author. You have done both an essential service, and medical science a greater. But as, from an interview, at his request, I had, on the 5th instant, with Mr. Romaine, the Secretary to the Admiralty, I have reason to believe that the Government will order an inquiry into the pathology of this so-called syphilitic disease, before going to the House of Commons for legislative measures; therefore, as you have but one object in view—the advance of medical science,—I trust that you will feel it but fair that I ask you to insert this letter, requesting the medical public to suspend their judgment on the question at issue till the Government inquiry alluded to has pronounced its verdict.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

DAVID MACLOUGHLIN, M.D.,

Member of the Legion of Honour.

Bruton-street, Berkeley-square, March, 1864.

\* \* Dr. MacLoughlin's statements and inferences are equally incorrect. His views on cholera have not been found to be correct, but, on the contrary, have been proved to be ludicrously wrong. Only one judgment can be passed on his pamphlet: it is a tissue of self-seeking and ignorant nonsense, ill-written, and without anything like ordinary reasoning power. Any commission appointed will of course be composed of competent medical authorities, and will arrive at reasonable conclusions; but, as a rule, commissions on subjects of scientific discussion add nothing to the stock of information or to the progress of science.—ED. L.

## ROYAL UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION.

On the evening of the 21st inst. Professor MACLEAN delivered a lecture at the above Institution "On the Influence of the Present Knapsack and Accoutrements on the Health of the Infantry Soldier."

Dr. Maclean introduced his subject by some observations on present errors in military costume, and the serious amount of suffering, sickness, and mortality that could fairly be traced to this cause. The lecturer then briefly touched on the prevalence of consumption and diseases of the circulatory system in the army. Confining his attention to the latter, he stated that nearly 900 men had been discharged from the service within the last three years at Fort Pitt and Netley alone under this head, a large proportion being mere lads of less than three years' service. Dr. Maclean then briefly passed in review the causes that might be supposed to influence the production of heart diseases to such a great extent among young soldiers. Adverting to rheumatism, intemperance, and excessive smoking, the Professor demonstrated that a large number of the cases could not be accounted for from the operation of any of these causes.

Taking up the skeleton of the trunk, the lecturer, in a popular way, gave a brief description of its construction and of the movements of the chest in respiration. Dr. Maclean then proceeded to inquire how far these movements were interfered with by the present knapsack and accoutrements, and, with the aid of drawings and a figure in the full costume of the Grenadier Guards, showed the mischievous constriction to which the chest of the soldier is subjected; how impossible it is for the chest to expand upwards, downwards, and forwards. From the pathological collection at Netley Dr. Maclean showed a preparation of a soldier's heart with a large circular white spot on its external surface, and mentioned that few soldiers whose bodies are examined post mortem at Netley are found without more or less of this white substance. So common is it, that it is usually designated in the Netley post-mortem rooms, the "soldier's white spot," or "corn," and that it is the opinion of the medical officers of that hospital that it is due mainly to friction and pressure.

The Professor then passed in review the different knapsacks in use in various foreign armies, particularly those in use in the French and Prussian services, and showed how superior they are in principle and construction to our own. He then examined in succession various packs suggested by different officers, giving a decided preference to the valise of Sir Thos.