

acted injudiciously in, perhaps unintentionally, giving "a heavy blow and great discouragement" to the newly-formed association, which, there is every reason to believe, will prove highly beneficial to the profession in this neighbourhood; and that he will in future be more careful to satisfy himself that he is acquainted with the real circumstances before he jumps to a conclusion which he will find himself unable to support. An ardent temperament will occasionally slightly overstep the bounds of discretion, but a frank acknowledgment of error can never incur the charge of pusillanimity. I am, Sir, yours obediently,

THE SECRETARY TO THE BRENTFORD
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

Isleworth, July 2, 1842.

CIRENCESTER UNION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The letter of "MEDICUS" which appeared in a late Number, points out the impropriety of admitting anonymous communications in a respectable journal devoted to the furtherance of science and to the protection of the rights of an honourable profession. Concealment of the name furnishes too tempting an opportunity for little minds to revenge their disappointment by slander, and thus pettishly strive to annoy those whose success they envy, and whose abilities are beyond their imitation, while it deprives the records of experience of that confidence which would otherwise be given them. As there are several medical officers connected with the Cirencester Union, it would only be honourable in "Medicus" to state to what portion of the union he refers; if, as his letter implies, he means the *whole* of the union, then is his letter scandalously, if not maliciously, false. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. HITCHMAN, M.R.C.S.L. and L.A.C.

June 27, 1842.

INSUFFICIENT REMUNERATION, AND MEDICAL CLUBS IN THE UNIONS.

At a meeting of medical practitioners held at Colchester, on Tuesday, June 28th, it was resolved unanimously—

1st. That the remuneration afforded to medical officers under the Poor-law Act is insufficient and unequal; and the system of attaching medical clubs to unions, at very low rates, is an oppressive and unconstitutional interference with the just rights of the profession, which loudly calls for alteration and redress.

2nd. That the following petition, embodying these sentiments, be presented to the House of Commons, soliciting the enactment

of a determinate scale of remuneration, upon fixed and equitable principles; and that the members for the county be requested to present and support the same:—

"To the Honourable the Commons, &c.

"The humble Petition of Medical Practitioners residing in the Northern Division of Essex, &c., sheweth,

"That, in the opinion of your petitioners, the medical regulations lately issued by the poor-law commissioners are exceedingly defective, inasmuch as they contain no determinate scale of remuneration for medical officers, but leave this entirely to the arbitrary appointment of the different boards of guardians, by which, in many instances, great injustice and inequality exist.

"That it appears, from returns made by your honourable House, that the average amount paid to medical officers of unions in the metropolitan districts is about 1s. 5½d. per case; that in rural districts it rises to 3s. 3½d. only; while it has been ascertained, from accurate calculations made upon an extensive scale, that in dispensary and hospital practice (which form a just criterion in the matter) the cost of medicines alone, independent of any remuneration for skill and *loss of time*, amounts to about 4s. 3½d. each case.

"That, in addition to the inadequate payment thus afforded for medicines and attendance for the *pauper* population, your petitioners have further to complain that a most oppressive and degrading system has been imposed upon them under the denomination of '*Medical Clubs*,' by which medical officers become bound to extend the same privileges to a large class of the community, upon terms so low as most essentially to interfere with the just remuneration for their labours, to which, as citizens of a free country, and members of an enlightened profession, they feel themselves entitled.

"Your petitioners, therefore, approach your honourable House, respectfully but earnestly soliciting your attention to this subject, convinced that a full consideration of the same must lead to the adoption of such measures as shall secure for the medical profession in England and Wales a fair and equitable remuneration for their services to the poor, and a freedom from all unconstitutional restraint in the practice of their profession.

"And your petitioners, &c."

3rd. That the following memorial be presented to the honourable the poor-law commissioners, calling their attention to the same subject, and requesting their interposition in putting an end to the absurd inequalities in the salaries and remuneration of medical officers, and in the establishment of a fixed scale of payment for the whole country:—

"To the Honourable the Poor-law Commissioners.

"The undersigned medical practitioners of the northern division of the county of Es-

sex, in public meeting assembled at Colchester, the 28th day of June, 1842, having taken into consideration the interests of the profession as affected under the Poor-law Amendment Act, resolved respectfully to memorialise your honourable board upon the following points:—

“First. It appears to your memorialists that by establishing, in place of the present varying rates of remuneration adopted by the several boards of guardians, an adequate and uniform rate of payment, much dissatisfaction and contention among the members of the profession would be prevented; that the intentions of the Legislature to provide efficient and immediate medical attendance upon the sick poor would be more satisfactorily carried out; and that, by this means, the assistance of the best qualified practitioners in the immediate neighbourhood would be insured.

“Second. It is considered objectionable and injurious to the honour and welfare of the profession, that in the formation of poor sick clubs the rate of payment of each member should be fixed by the boards of guardians, and that the acceptance of such clubs should be compulsory. In confirmation of the points of this memorial, your memorialists beg to call the attention of your honourable board to the late proceedings of the Tending Hundred Board of Guardians, which are at present before the board, and which your memorialists consider degrading and oppressive.”

4th. That the medical officers of the Tending Union feel deeply indebted to the Colchester Medical Society, and to those gentlemen present unconnected with the unions, for the promptitude and warmth with which they have espoused their cause, and beg to offer them their sincere thanks, and request the Colchester Medical Society will continue to watch over the interests of the medical departments in the different unions of the northern division of the county.

R. NUNN, M.D., Chairman.

PHTHISIS IN THE METROPOLIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your correspondent Mr. Jeffs has fallen into an inaccuracy, in stating the average number of deaths from phthisis in London to be from two to three hundred weekly. The average has only been one hundred and forty-one weekly for the last four years in the registrar-general's metropolitan district, which not only includes London, Westminster, and the out-parishes within the bills of mortality, but the parishes of St. Marylebone, St. Pancras, Kensington, Fulham, Hammersmith, Chelsea, Paddington, Stoke Newington, Bromley, Bow, Camberwell,

Greenwich, Deptford, and Woolwich. The population of the above district, as enumerated in 1831, was 1,594,890, and in 1841, 1,870,727. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

THOMAS ABRAHAM.

49, Old Broad-street,
July 4, 1842.

MEDICAL PRACTICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I think it right that the attention of the profession should be particularly directed to the trial of *Little v. Oldaker*, which took place in the Court of Queen's Bench on Thursday last, and was reported in the newspapers of the day following.

The plaintiff is described as a “surgeon and physician,” of Finsbury-square, and brought his action to recover 26*l.* for attending the defendant whilst suffering from a certain complaint. The defendant considered the charge to be exorbitant, and therefore refused to pay the whole of it. The jury thought so too, and by their verdict ordered him to pay 15*l.*, or about three-fifths only of the demand. The plaintiff brought his action as a *surgeon and physician*, consequently Lord Denman overruled the legal objection taken to the proceedings.

I wonder what Dr. Little's colleagues, the pures of the London Hospital, think of his poaching on their manor; and I ask this surgico-physician what course he thinks the general practitioner ought to take when requested to meet him in consultation? I object not to physicians undertaking the treatment of what are called surgical cases, whether they be in the nature of club-foot or syphilis, but I strongly condemn their hypocrisy in professing to confine their practice to what are considered to be purely medical cases. Perhaps, however, Dr. Little is opposed to the tripartite faculty. If so, the inconsistency pointed out is more apparent than real; but did he so declare himself when he became a candidate for the appointment of physician to the London Hospital, and was so strenuously supported by the dubs and pures of that institution? I shall be gratified, Mr. Editor, to see your own opinion of the conduct referred to annexed to this communication. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER BY
PROFESSION.

July 4, 1842.

*** Being advocates of “one faculty,” we cordially approve of thoroughly-qualified medical practitioners always undertaking to treat any branch of disease that may be presented to them for cure, advising all such gentlemen, whether calling themselves “general practitioners” or not, to act as “surgeons” or “physicians,” precisely as the law permits.