

## COMPULSORY SICKNESS RETURNS.

WE confess to a feeling of astonishment, not unmixed with indignation, at the receipt of a circular letter which announces a meeting of the profession resident in the borough of Halifax, in order to take into consideration Clauses 37 and 38 of the contemplated "Halifax Water and Extension Bill", which subjects every medical man in attendance upon epidemic and contagious diseases to a penalty of £5 in default of reporting the same to the sanitary authorities within twenty-four hours. We are not of those who would throw any difficulty in the way of securing that earliest information should be afforded to the health authorities as to the existence of preventable diseases in our large towns; indeed, we have persistently advocated the necessity for sickness returns, if the health of the community is to be preserved; but that which we have in the past urged on the sanitary authorities is a widely different thing from what is proposed in this contemplated Bill, and the attempt to make the failure to furnish information a penal offence must inevitably lead to so determined an opposition from the profession as will not only be fatal to the success of the measure, but will considerably throw back the cause of sanitary reform in this borough. We are aware that it may be urged that opposition to compulsorily furnishing information could only arise from the feeling, that the pecuniary interests of the profession would suffer by the information which would be obtained. This we can afford to disregard; for the members of our profession were the first to point out the necessity for preventive measures, and have always been in the van in urging on the public and the legislature amendments in our sanitary enactments. We write also in the interest of the families in which such epidemic outbreaks occur among the humbler classes, whose opportunities for isolating their sick are practically *nil*. It is absolutely necessary that information should be supplied to the sanitary authority, to enable it to cut short such disease; but, in the case of the well-to-do tradesman, school proprietor, and others, whose means admit effective isolation of their sick, it might, and probably would, be most injurious to their interests were it publicly made known that epidemic disease had broken out. That such feeling exists we have had ample means of ascertaining over and over again; we have noted how keen were the fears of such parties lest the fatal secret should be divulged that John or Mary was down with the fever. In cases where isolation was practicable, we contend that information might be justifiably withheld. In speculating on the motives which have induced the framers of this Bill, while introducing penal clauses, to abstain from any mention of payment for the information sought to be obtained, we feel that it is due to that singular apathy which was exhibited by the great bulk of the Poor-law medical officers at the time when Mr. Lambert's circular letter was issued, directing them to furnish similar information gratuitously to their respective sanitary authorities, ignoring altogether the extra labour and responsibility involved.

The Bill is, after all, characteristic of Halifax; for is it not that Yorkshire town which rejoices in a representative who, as President of the Local Government Board, offered the keenest affront to our profession in wholly ignoring the distinguished medical sanitarians of his department, and that, too, whilst he was engaged in the arduous task of drafting a Public Health Bill?

## POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION.

STR.—Would you kindly make known to the members of the Association, through your columns, that in consequence of the great addition to our ranks, in response to the appeal of Dr. Lush, M.P., our President, I am unable to forward the receipts by return of post, but will do so as soon afterwards as possible?—Yours truly,  
J. WICKHAM BARNES, Hon. Sec.

N. B. (Brighton).—We have no doubt that a "M.R.C.S.E.", with their medical certificate, can hold an appointment under the Poor-law Board. If, however, our correspondent feels any difficulty on the subject, he should address the Secretary of the College, who will, no doubt, assist him to remove it.

## POOR-LAW MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS.

BLAKISTON, A. A., M.R.C.S.Eng., appointed Medical Officer for the Benden District of the Cranbrook Union, *vice* R. Minors, M.R.C.S.Eng., resigned.  
CARR, Copley J., L.R.C.P.Ed., appointed Medical Officer for the West Drayton District of the Uxbridge Union, *vice* A. Hamilton, L.R.C.P., deceased.  
CROSS, Philip H. F., L.R.C.S.I., appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for Nos. 3 and 8 Districts and the Workhouse of the Woodbridge Union, Suffolk, *vice* G. W. Tailor, deceased.  
DUKE, Robert K., L.R.C.S.I., appointed Medical Officer for the Western District of the Cerne Union, *vice* J. Ewens, L.R.C.P., resigned.  
HALL, Frederick, M.R.C.S.Eng., appointed Medical Officer for the Wragby District of the Horncastle Union, *vice* J. W. Wrangham, M.D., deceased.  
HILL, George, M.D., appointed Medical Officer for the Eastham District of the Wirral Union, *vice* J. W. Ball, M.D., deceased.  
KENNY, Joseph H., L.R.C.C.Ed., appointed Medical Officer for Birmingham Parish, *vice* C. B. Suckling, M.D.

LACE, James I., L.R.C.P.Ed., appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for the Lamplugh District of the Whitehaven Union.  
LLOYD, William, M.B., appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for the No. 1 District and the Workhouse of the Carmarthen Union, *vice* David Lloyd, M.R.C.S.Eng., deceased.  
MADDEN, Henry M., L.R.C.S.I., appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for No. 5 District of the Royston Union, Herts, *vice* T. Markby, M.R.C.S.Eng., resigned.  
MAGUIRE, Thomas S., appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for Nos. 1 and 2 Districts and the Workhouse of the Potterspurty Union, *vice* W. C. Daniell, M.R.C.S.Eng., deceased.  
MAHON, Charles J., L.R.C.Q.C.P.I., appointed Medical Officer, Public Vaccinator, and Registrar of Births, etc., for the Easkey Dispensary District, and Medical Officer to the Workhouse of the Dromore West Union, Co. Sligo, *vice* T. H. Scott, L.R.C.P.Ed.  
MARKBY, Thomas, M.R.C.S.Eng., appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for No. 4 District of the Wells Union, Somersetshire, *vice* T. M. Edwards, M.D., resigned.  
MATHEWS, James S., L.R.C.P.Ed., appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for the Cloghan Dispensary District of the Stranorlar Union, Co. Donegal, *vice* R. A. Keyes, L.R.C.P.Ed.  
MAWSON, Thomas W., M.B., appointed Medical Officer for the Messingham District of the Glanford Rigg Union, Lincolnshire, *vice* W. Richardson, L.R.C.P.Ed., resigned.  
MEREDITH, John E., M.D., appointed Medical Officer for No. 1 District, and Public Vaccinator for Nos. 1 and 2 Districts, of the Maidstone Union, *vice* H. C. Smith, M.R.C.S.Eng., deceased.  
MEHGAN, Nicholas J., M.D., appointed Medical Officer, Public Vaccinator, and Registrar of Births, etc., for the Oulart Dispensary District of the Enniscorthy Union, Co. Wexford, *vice* M. O'C. MacSwiney, L.R.C.Q.C.P.I., resigned.  
MORRIS, David W., L.R.C.Q.C.P.I., appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for the Skenfrith District of the Monmouth Union, *vice* J. Lane, M.R.C.S.Eng., resigned.

## MILITARY AND NAVAL MEDICAL SERVICES.

## SURGEON-GENERAL CURRIE, C.B.

WE regret extremely to learn that Surgeon-General Currie, C.B., has been compelled by ill health to retire from active service. His loss will be deeply felt in the department to which he has already given forty good years, and more especially at Aldershot, where his personal qualities and administrative tact had made him no less popular than respected; and should he be unable to resume the performance of full-pay duties, we trust that the impairment of health not unaturally following thirty years of tropical service, may speedily disappear under the influence of rest and care.

## DR. HAMILTON'S RECENT PAMPHLET.

WE have been favoured by a correspondent with some interesting remarks on Dr. Hamilton's recent pamphlet, on the respective advantages and disadvantages of army medical service as a life career. Although we felt it our duty to correct some errors which had crept in Dr. Hamilton's tables, we freely admit the spirit of justice in which he has treated the subject, and the large amount of useful information which he has brought together. Our correspondent is anxious to obtain the system of promotion after twelve years, which already exists in the Indian portion of our service; and this would prove a great boon to the junior ranks, many of whom begin to look forward to their ultimate chances of advancement with somewhat gloomy eyes. We fear that financial difficulties may continue to stand both in the way of this, and of any substantial increase to the present actual pay of the army medical officer, and it is also pretty evident that any addition to their emolument would raise serious complications with their military brethren, whose compensation for the dangers and discomforts of soldiering is absurdly inadequate. It appears to us, that the great goal to which all our energies should be directed, is the privilege of more early retirement; and if a surgeon be permitted to proceed on half-pay of £1 *per diem* after twenty years, with unimpaired energies, then the department might be conscientiously recommended as an admirable opening for young men. In the meantime, and in anticipation of the coming examination, we would warn intending candidates to pause before they connect their destinies to a service in which confusion and dissatisfaction are now so freely expressed. By withholding their applications for the present, they may have the satisfaction of seeing the authorities more willing to make certain popular concessions; but, so long as the supply comes anything nearly up to the standard of the demand, we fear that things will continue to be "as they were". It is satisfactory to see that Irish students have lately been so effectually warned against rashly rushing into Whitehall Yard, for, it must be well remembered, how on one remarkable occasion when something like a strike had almost taken place, the charge of the Hibernian Brigade, under the command of a well-known Dublin surgeon, bolstered up the wavering credit of the department, and postponed necessary reforms.