

(COPY.)

Poor-Law Board, Somerset House,
August 1st, 1849.

Gentlemen,—I am directed by the Poor-Law Board to acknowledge the receipt of the communication signed by you on behalf of the "Committee of the Convention of Poor Medical Officers," and to inform you that the suggestions contained in the communication shall receive the best consideration of the Board.

The Committee are, however, so well acquainted with the subject of Poor-Law medical relief, that it is unnecessary for this board to point to it the difficulties which exist to any immediate and general alteration or modification of the present system.

As regards the suggestion of the Committee, "That a special provision be forthwith made to secure a just compensation for the enormous extra labours which are entailed upon the union surgeons through the Board of Health under its general powers and regulations, more particularly during the presence of cholera and other epidemics," I am directed to state that the Poor-Law Board are not empowered to lay down any prospective scale of remuneration for such services, but that of granting a reasonable compensation on account of extraordinary services is vested in the guardians with the approval of this Board, by the proviso to article 172 of the general consolidated order, and that such power has already been acted upon in several instances.

I am gentlemen, your obedient servant,

W. G. LUMLEY, Assist. Sec.

To Thomas Hodgkin, Esq.

Charles F. Lord, Esq.

It should be observed, that no "prospective scale of remuneration" was sought from the Poor-Law Board by the Committee. The memorial and application for relief arose less from the additional labours which an alarming epidemic like the cholera must induce, than from the vexatious returns and reports of cases for the public advantage, and the liability of the union surgeons, under orders from the General Board of Health, to examine nuisances, and report as officers of health.

The provisions of article 172 of the general consolidated order, certainly might be sufficient to provide adequate remuneration to medical officers; but experience has proved, over and over again, that merely permissive clauses will not reach the existing evil, admitted by all concerned to be very great.

The answer from the General Board of Health in reply to the Committee appeared in the *Lancet* of July the 21st; it throws the onus of providing for the medical officer upon the Poor-Law Board; this Board politely hand the case over to the Boards of Guardians. Mr. Mitchell's experience may be considered an average sample of the mode in which these functionaries will deal with applications for advanced payment to medical officers. "Mr. Mitchell had been the medical officer to the parish of Lambeth for eighteen years. Three half-pence per cholera case whether occurring night or day! He made equitable propositions to the Board, but the Lambeth guardians paid no attention; in consequence he sent in his resignation, which was accepted!"

Seeing the union surgeons thus banded about from one board to another, and as a body redressed by none,

the simple adage of "a fall between two stools" occurs to the mind; and even a saying of the quaint William Cobbett, about John Bull being persecuted by two sets of thieves,—the Whigs on one side and the Tories on the other.

It is gratifying, however, to turn for a moment from this dark shadowing, to the light which breaks in from the union to which Mr. Vallance, the intrepid advocate of a better system of poor-law medical relief, is the well-tried medical officer. He reports, to the credit of the Board of Guardians of the West Ham Union, that a sense of justice has impelled them to pay £1 per case of cholera to whomsoever the professional attendant may be; as also fifteen per cent. (for six months) upon the annual amount of the salaries paid to their medical officers, as some remuneration for their services as officers of health. If other boards would obey the injunction of Ancient Writ, "Go, and do thou likewise," there would be less cause to trouble you with these details.

I have the honour to be, Mr. Editor,

Your very obedient servant,

CHARLES F. J. LORD, Hon. Sec.

Hanover Square, August, 1849.

EMPIRICISM AT CHELTENHAM.

[We are requested by Dr. Boisragon to publish the following correspondence relative to the use of his name, by a chemist, at Cheltenham.—Ed. J.]

Sir,—It has come to my knowledge that you have been in the habit, for some time past, of affixing Dr. B's name to various placards posted round the town and neighbourhood of Cheltenham, as well as on wrapping-bills lying on your counter, purporting to announce or recommend the sale of a prescription of his, whether as directed by him in his public duties as physician to the dispensary or prescribed in private practice, and thus being, without his sanction, improperly published. Now, as the giving his name would be derogatory to the character of a physician and gentleman, and as not only his, but my name, where I practice, may be degraded by such a transaction, I have to request that you will immediately withdraw Dr. Boisragon's name from the above-mentioned advertisements, and state in the papers, that you have heard from me that you have been mistaken, and that no sanction has been given to the same, or we shall be obliged to take such notice of it as you may find very inconvenient to your progress in making a respectable connection. Dr. Boisragon has the honour of being Vice-President of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, and he will be under the necessity, if I inform him of your persisting in your present practices, of calling in their powerful aid to repress such improper conduct towards one who has ever kept himself free from empiricism of any kind.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. B.

Mr. Beetham.

P.S. An answer at your early convenience will oblige.

Cheltenham, July 24th, 1848.

Sir,—I am in receipt of yours of the 20th inst., and beg to state that you have been misinformed respecting

my having placarded the town and neighbourhood of Cheltenham with placards bearing the name of Dr. Boisragon. I deny ever having done so. I certainly have circulars on my counter, a copy of which I have enclosed, so that you may see that I only state that they are prepared from a prescription of Dr. Boisragon's. I think you will not find anything that will lead any person to conclude that Dr. B. has anything to do with them, therefore I cannot see how they have a tendency to degrade either you or Dr. Boisragon. I can only say that hundreds of individuals have tried the pills and spoken in the highest terms of them and the doctor, and had I have known his address, it would have been to his advantage, as numbers of both ladies and gentlemen have inquired after him and would have consulted him.

You will perceive that I do not state that they are introduced under his sanction, therefore I do not see any necessity of inserting anything in the papers about the matter. I am only sorry that it should have caused you so much uneasiness.

In haste,
I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
W. BEETHAM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

Be pleased to allow me to correct an error in the report of the proceedings at our meeting at Worcester, in the last number of the Journal, in reference to the place of meeting next year. What I said was to the following effect:—

That I was the bearer of an invitation from a hundred and twenty members of the South-Eastern Branch, including the town of Brighton, to the gentlemen assembled at Worcester, to meet next year at Brighton. But learning that a previous invitation from Hull had been received by the Council, strengthened by private letters, earnestly soliciting the honour for 1850, a proper complaisance and a due deference to this prior invitation, induced me on behalf of my friends in the South-Eastern District, to waive our pretensions for the present. And although the Worcester meeting could not pledge itself for 1851, the gentlemen present clearly understood that our invitation should apply to that year, with our hope that we should have the pleasure to receive them at Brighton, at the Annual meeting in 1851. With this understanding, I did not hesitate to move that the next meeting of the parent or entire Association be at Hull.

I remain, Sir, your very faithful servant.

THOMAS MARTIN.

Reigate, August 9th, 1849.

Resolution unanimously adopted at the South-Eastern Branch Meeting, 27th June, 1849.

“That on many considerations, the annual general meeting of the entire Provincial Medical and Surgical Association at Brighton the next year, would be, in the estimation of all present, a very agreeable and desirable event; and that an invitation from this meeting, to that effect, be presented to the Council of the Association at the ensuing meeting at Worcester.”

NOTICE OF DR. THACKERAY.

The following tribute to the memory of our late lamented Associate Dr. Thackeray, appeared in a local paper. It is so evidently the production of one well acquainted with his character, that we have great pleasure in transferring it to our columns.

It is with unfeigned regret we have to announce to the public the death of Dr. Thackeray, who, after a long and most painful illness, died at his house in Nicholas Street, Chester, on Sunday morning, July 29. He was born at Cambridge on the 15th of April, 1770.

An eminent physician naturally holds a high place in the society of a provincial town; and if that influence is increased by the personal qualities of the individual, and extended by a protracted life, it is hardly possible to conceive any one, round whom the combined feelings of gratitude, regard, and veneration, will collect a larger amount of interest. Such has been the case in Chester in days still remembered by its inhabitants,—and such in no ordinary degree was the case with the lamented subject of the present notice. Beyond the respect due to his professional skill, and the influence which was gained by the liberality in which it was exercised, Dr. Thackeray has established claims on the good will of his fellow-citizens by a long series of services rendered to the public, and by a spirit which rendered him able to every call where the good of the community might be promoted. To his fostering care, and to the prudence with which he managed its concerns, that excellent institution the Blue-Coat School owes its present prosperity, if not its present existence. Unwearied in his exertions, he was always at his post when the Monthly Board required his attendance; and he exhibited as much attendance to the details of internal management as he did to its general maintenance. In all the other charitable institutions of the city, he took the same lively interest; and at a period when most men would have pleaded, and many would have felt, that increasing infirmities and aggravated pain justified absence, he seemed resolved to labour while life lasted, and to devote the little strength that was left to the cause which he had originally promoted in his more vigorous days.

For all these varied offices he possessed peculiar qualifications. A warm heart, and a strong mind, found in him a frame capable of great labour; a voice that could always make itself heard, and a constitution which proved its strength by the protracted struggle it sustained with agonizing pain; and if his warm feelings ever carried him beyond that limit which the strict letter of courtesy requires, those feelings were sure to redress the apparent wrong, and to soothe the spirit which had been borne down by the vigour of his address, by the frankness of his apology.

In those hours of retirement from professional duties which he had the wisdom to claim, Dr. Thackeray entered largely into the pursuit of agriculture. As a scientific planter he ranks high amongst those who have contributed to that branch of national wealth. He lived to see a wide extent of the hilly country near Mold covered with trees raised from acorns of his own sowing; and had reason to pride himself on the success of a