

## MEDICO-PARLIAMENTARY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Wednesday, March 15th.

*Irish Prisons.*—Mr. FORSTER, replying to Mr. T. Dickson, said a very careful inquiry had been made into the state of Omagh gaol by an eminent Dublin physician, whose report he had only before him that day. He did not think there was any ground for putting the country to the expense of a general inquiry into the sanitary condition of the prisons of Ireland. Statistics showed that the death-rate in them was remarkably low, and that it contrasted very favourably with the general death-rate. Under the peculiar circumstances connected with the incarceration of prisoners under the Protection Act, he had directed a special inquiry to be made into the sanitary condition of those prisons where these prisoners were confined.—Mr. GRAY asked the right hon. gentleman whether the Local Government Board would permit their medical officers to make an inspection of Kilmarnham?—Mr. FORSTER said in the absence of some special reason he did not think he ought to do that.

## MILITARY AND NAVAL MEDICAL SERVICES.

THE Army Medical Returns for 1880 show that of 46,108 men who offered themselves, 18,794, or 407.61 per 1,000, were rejected as medically unfit.

DEPUTY Surgeon General E. M. Sinclair, M.D., who has been serving for some time past at the Cape of Good Hope, has been appointed Principal Medical Officer to the Forces in South Africa, in succession to Deputy Surgeon-General James Sinclair, M.D., who returns to England.

SURGEON HORATIO R. O. CROSS, Army Medical Department, has been appointed assistant-instructor to the Army Hospital Training School and Depot at Aldershot, in succession to Surgeon Crofts. Mr. Cross has recently returned from South Africa. He was sent to the Transvaal with reinforcements in January, 1881.

BRIGADE-SURGEON S. B. ROE, M.B., C.B., late in medical charge of the Gordon Highlanders, has been appointed medical officer to the Dublin Recruiting District. Dr. Roe gained his C.B., for his services as medical officer of the 92nd Highlanders in Afghanistan. He was highly spoken of by Sir Frederick Roberts for good service rendered with a Field Hospital at Sherpur, and again by General Macpherson for his devotion in attending to the wounded in the field, when his conduct under fire was mentioned as being most admirable.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

AND

## POOR-LAW MEDICAL SERVICES.

- COMPULSORY NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—A paper on the Bills before Parliament for the Notification of Infectious Diseases will be read by Mr. Hastings, M.P., at a meeting of the Social Science Association on Monday next, the 20th instant at 8 P.M. The chair will be occupied by Dr. Cameron, M.P., President of the Health Department of the Association.

At a recent meeting of the Okehampton Board of Guardians, Mr. Bird, the medical officer of health, drew attention to the want of a ward for the reception of infectious cases. He pointed out that the room at present used was not sufficiently isolated, and that measles, which were now prevalent in the Tavistock Union, might at any time spread to the Okehampton Union, with its inadequate state of preparation for such a visitation.

### THE BOLTON IMPROVEMENT ACTS.

Sir,—In your impression of March 4th, you give the gist of what you say you learnt from the *Bolton Chronicle* as to the opinions of two opposite parties in the profession in this town, whose opinions with regard to the Bolton Improvement Acts, present and prospective, are widely different. It is a pity that a medical paper should take up a matter like this from a biased statement made in a strongly party paper, and therefrom generalise. Here are a few facts.

A general meeting of the medical men was called, at which two-thirds of the medical men of the town were present, Dr. Livy amongst them. The objections to the manner in which the sanitary clauses of "The Bolton Improvement Act, 1877" have been carried out, and the objections to the sanitary clauses of the Act now being applied for were freely discussed *seriatim*. They were read to the

Sanitary Committee of the Corporation by a deputation appointed at the above meeting, and the Sanitary Committee requested that a copy of the objections then read be sent to them. The reply from the Sanitary Committee was received by the deputation before a copy of the objections was sent.

Dr. Livy was at the general meeting, but did not state his objections openly; but went afterwards to a few who were not at the meeting, stated views to them to which they assented, and then stated to the Sanitary Committee that he represented three other medical men. The majority of these gentlemen are displeased that Dr. Livy should have used such a liberty with their names; for they decidedly object to the spirit of the Acts, and the manner in which the present Act is carried out, and are afraid that further powers will mean further interference. Indeed, the profession in this town are so unanimous, that Dr. Livy is the only one who has spoken in favour of the sanitary clauses of "The Bolton Improvement Acts"; and, not content with speaking in their favour, he expresses his sorrow that the objections to the Acts on the part of his medical brethren are the offspring of sordid motives.—Yours, etc.,

TRUTHFUL JAMES.

### THE COMPULSORY NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Sir,—In to-day's BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL I am glad to observe that, at a recent meeting of the South London District of the Metropolitan Counties Branch of the British Medical Association, several of the speakers expressed their approval of the suggestion that a fee of one guinea should be paid to a physician for each notification of an infectious case made by him to the sanitary authority, or for each certificate given by him to the person in charge of the patient, should the duty of notifying devolve on that individual and not on the physician.

When my paper on Compulsory Notification of Infectious Diseases was read before the Social Science Congress in Dublin, last October, a forcible argument in favour of the payment of a guinea fee did not occur to me. It is that such a fee would be practically a fine on the sanitary authority for the occurrence of each case of infectious disease within the district under their control. We can well imagine that the liability to pay a guinea in every case would act as a powerful incentive to the sanitary authority to take all possible measures to check the spread of epidemic diseases.—I remain, sir, yours faithfully,

JOHN WILLIAM MOORE, M.D. Dub., V.P. and F.K.Q.C.P.

40, Fitzwilliam Square, West Dublin, March 4th, 1882.

### WHAT IS A PAUPER?

THE guardians of the poor of the Isle of Wight union, at their last meeting, received a communication from the Local Government Board, enclosing a letter which had been addressed to the Board from Dr. Martyn Barker, district medical officer for Brading, in which the writer, after citing several cases of persons in receipt of good wages, and in no way encumbered, whom he was attending on medical relief orders, asks the central department to define what constitutes a pauper. The Board, in their reply, simply refer Dr. Barker to Article 206, General Consolidated Orders, September 18th, 1865, from which it appears that it is the duty of a district medical officer to attend any and every body to whom the guardians, the relieving officer, or an overseer, may have given an order, the only remedy left to such medical officer being, in cases like those cited by Dr. Barker, to report the facts to the guardians at their next meeting. The reading of the correspondence provoked a very lively controversy at the board meeting, and the conduct of Dr. Barker was loudly complained of; and, it seems, he is to be called on to explain his conduct. To our mind, the action of the relieving officer or overseer, in granting orders under such circumstances, needs equally to be inquired into, and, if proved, should be preemptorily checked.

## OBITUARY.

SIR C. WYVILLE THOMSON, LL.D.,

LATE PROFESSOR OF NATURAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

WE regret to announce the sudden death from an attack of paralysis of Sir Wyville Thomson, at his residence near Linlithgow. The deceased was born in 1830, and was consequently in his fifty-second year. He was, says *Men of the Times*, the only son of the late Mr. Andrew Thomson, H.E.I.C.S., of Bonyde, Linlithgowshire, by Sarah Ann Drummond, only daughter of Dr. Wyville Smyth, Inspector of Military Hospitals. He was born at Bonyde, March 5, 1830, and educated at Merchiston Castle School and at the University of Edinburgh, of which he was LL.D. In 1850 he was appointed Lecturer on Botany in King's College, Aberdeen, and the next year he became Lecturer on Botany in the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen. On the resignation of Mr. Hincks, Professor of Natural History in Queen's College, Cork, which occurred in 1853, Mr. Thomson was appointed his successor, but his stay at Cork was short, for the Professorship of Mineralogy and Geology in the Queen's College, Belfast, becoming vacant in 1854, Mr. Thomson was transferred from Cork to fill that chair. In 1868 and 1869 he went on scientific dredging expeditions in the *Lightning* and the *Porcupine*, which vessels had been lent by the Admiralty for this purpose. Many new forms of animal life were discovered, and much information obtained regarding ocean temperature and currents. In November, 1870, Mr. Thomson was elected Regius Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh. He was afterwards placed at the head of the scientific department of the famous *Challenger* deep-sea exploring expedition, which was sent out under the auspices of the British Government. After an absence of nearly three years and a half, the *Challenger* cast anchor at Sheerness May 27, 1876. On the 27th of