

least of it, not more unphilosophical than it was unsafe; and well may the mortality in this town have been so great, when the opinion that collapse is incurable has been thus entertained and acted on.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Hull, Nov. 1849. JOSEPH AYRE.

FURTHER REMARKS ON THE PROPOSED NEW SOCIETY FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF CHOLERA AND OTHER EPIDEMIC DISEASES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg to acquaint you and your readers, that in order to carry out the views of a correspondent in your journal for Sept. 15, 1849, p. 301, with respect to the formation of a new medical society, to take into consideration a systematic investigation of epidemic diseases, that a few medical men formed themselves into a committee, have occasionally held meetings on the subject, and after due consideration, have come to the conclusion that such a society is greatly needed, nay, almost absolutely demanded.

Every one who has read the medical journals up to the present day, and noticed the difference of opinion that still exists as to the nature and mode of treatment of cholera, must be convinced that some systematic plan must be adopted to ascertain what means have proved the most successful in its treatment, up to the present period.

It is considered that no existing medical body, medical society, or otherwise, can carry the objects of your correspondent fairly out, not from want of inclination, which has been shown by the zeal displayed in the discussions on cholera, and by the exertions of the cholera committee of the College of Physicians—but for the want, it is presumed, of pecuniary power. The medical institutions and societies in this country are self-supporting—how, then, can it be expected by the public that medical men can “grapple with the whale,” unaided by the public purse, or by government.

There never has been a medical society in this country which has devoted itself solely to the investigation of epidemic diseases; had there been such an one before the late visitation, some more settled plan of treatment might long since have been resolved upon; those who had never seen cholera before might have been spared much anxiety, as they would have been enabled to act on more fixed principles, and on recent and good authority; the public could then not have said that the profession “knew not what they were about.”

Can it be said that the cholera has left us? Where is it now! Even when it is no longer heard of, may it not be lying in ambush, awaiting a fitting opportunity to attack us again!

After having lost so many thousands of our countrymen by the devastating foe, we must first learn with what weapons we have been beaten before we can well prepare ourselves for another attack.

It is painful to have to confess, that up to this day we neither know the real cause, the means of prevention nor cure of this awful malady; but, it is hoped, by the combination of talent in all branches of the profession meeting together under one roof, formed into one body for one good, one national cause, that what is possible for man to effect shall not much longer “remain a mystery.” Having accomplished as much as this (aided by other countries) can effect with respect to Asiatic cholera, we shall still have to combat with other enemies to the human race, which at this moment are thought but little of—scarlet fever, typhus fever, small-pox, measles, &c. are said to have slain 12,000 annually, in London alone.

There also are diseases which require further investigation and discussions on the various modes of treatment, so as to test which are the most effective.

It is thought that the formation and working of such a society would give the highest satisfaction to the public, who anxiously look to the profession for knowledge in these matters, and that it would ere long prove a better bond of union with the public and the medical profession, than any society which has ever existed.

It is the intention of its proposers, to advise that all grades of the profession throughout the land, who may contribute any information, practical or theoretical, shall be admitted members, free of expense.

It is also contemplated to call upon the public to aid the profession in this national undertaking, by subscriptions and contributions, and that the public so acting shall choose from among themselves a treasurer, and part of the committee to watch the funds and their due appropriation.

Previous to a call upon the profession to assemble at a meeting to hear other views on the question, and before

calling on the public, it is earnestly hoped that those gentlemen who have proved themselves so zealous at the medical societies and elsewhere, and anxious to investigate cholera, will consent to unite with the few who have commenced this work, that the cause may be strengthened and enlightened.

These views do not bind as to the ultimate organization of the society, which is at present only under consideration.

The committee have requested me to act as honorary secretary, *pro tem.*, also as treasurer, *pro tem.*, for preliminary expenses.

I trust, therefore, to be favoured with the opinions of the profession as to the merits of the proposed society, as also with the names of those gentlemen who may feel inclined to unite in the undertaking, to whom due notice shall be given of further operations.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

Berners-street, Nov. 17, 1849.

J. H. TUCKER.

ASSISTANT-SURGEONS IN THE NAVY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Knowing the interest you take in that much-to-be-pitied class of men, “the Assistant-Surgeons, R.N.,” I take the liberty of sending you an extract from the letter of one of them, now off the coast of Africa. If you can insert it, I shall feel obliged. I can vouch for the authenticity of the extract, and enclose my card as a guarantee.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Westminster, Nov. 1849.

A MEDICAL STUDENT.

“H.M.S. C—, St. Pauls de Loanda, August, 1849.

“We are extremely disgusted out here at the position of class in the service. The want of a cabin is an intolerable nuisance; and then, to be the companion of boys the most noisy, mischievous, sky-larking, practical-joking set of young fellows that you could possibly meet with. I don't mean to say that I have not been as bad in my young days as most of them; but there is a vast difference between twenty-five and fifteen years of age; and the marked assumption of superiority in young lieutenants of twenty-one or twenty-two years old, who have cabins, servants, and ward-room rank, is most galling. I have thought sometimes of going to the commodore, throwing up my commission, and telling him that I would no longer occupy a position marked by insult and degradation. Time will decide whether or not things are to remain in their present unsuitable state.”

THE GUARDIANS OF THE HONITON UNION, (SIDMOUTH DISTRICT.)

[FROM B. T. HODGE, ESQ., SIDMOUTH.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In requesting you will insert the following lines in your valuable journal, I feel that I am somewhat intruding on its pages with grievances of a private nature; nor would I do so, but that the profession may know that the insults offered by poor-law guardians are not confined to those medical men who are in their ordinary employ.

On the 24th of October, I was requested to attend, at a distance of three miles from my residence, for the purpose of examining a pauper, and delivering a certificate before a justice of the peace with regard to the state of the patient's mind. The parish medical officer (who, in this instance, happens to be my brother) cannot legally do this, in consequence of which I was summoned, and attended. The case had afforded some cause for doubt at first; but the conclusion arrived at was, that he was of unsound mind, and I delivered my opinion accordingly. The relieving-officer, by whose request I had attended, was furnished with an account of my demand, (one guinea,) which he said he would submit to the board of guardians, and pay me on his next day of visitation. To my great surprise, however, he brought a verbal message from the board of guardians, “that they could only allow fifteen shillings,” which of course I declined to accept.

Now, Sir, I ask, on what authority the board of guardians have taken the liberty of curtailing the usual fee for professional services of this nature? and whether they have the power of regulating the charges of medical men not connected professionally with their establishment. Even if I had made an exorbitant demand, I should have expected to receive an official communication by letter—a compliment due to any member of the profession to which I belong; but a verbal message, with the word “allow” most prominent, evinced the polite breeding of the Honiton board of guardians. Did I not know of there being several clergymen and gentlemen present at that meeting, I might have feared that an importa-