

medical attendant, to the exclusion of one of much greater standing.

Ever since the formation of this Union has the election of surgeons been influenced solely by political feeling, to the total exclusion of merit, and the majority of the Guardians have taken office for the accomplishment of such unworthy objects, consequently there has usually been a change of surgeons every twelve or eighteen months. Is it not high time, Mr. Editor, that Boards of Guardians were either constituted of gentlemen, superior to such corrupt feelings, and capable of duly estimating the attainments of candidates, which I affirm in boroughs few of them are, or the power of electing the medical officers removed entirely from them, and vested in the hands of Government, when men of proper qualification and standing could be alone chosen, far better paid for their services, and the sufferings of the sick and injured poor materially alleviated.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,  
MEDICUS.

Cambridge, Sept. 15, 1846.

[There is but one effectual remedy for the abuse of which our correspondent complains, and for a multitude of others connected with the administration of medical relief to the poor, and that is the placing of the entire department under the control of competent persons. By competent persons, we mean members of the medical profession, who alone are, and can be, acquainted with the duties required, and at the same time that they are officially responsible to the Government, will also be responsible in the professional estimation of their medical brethren for the manner these duties are discharged by them.]

#### WATER-BEDS IN PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

The medical officers of the Lunatic Asylum for the county of Lancaster, which contains between *six* and *seven hundred* inmates, have published a short but very excellent report of that establishment for the last year, wherein we find it stated, that "the most beneficial results have arisen from the use of the water-bed, which has now been adopted for the last two or three years, and by its agency, a large amount of suffering has been obviated, more especially in the case of bed-ridden patients, where there has been a strong tendency to sloughing, or sores on the back." It is well that medical superintendents, and others concerned with similar establishments, should have their attention turned to the propriety of providing the water-bed—a most valuable appendage—for which the inventor has never received sufficient honour from the public, and none from the Government.

The same report contains a tabular view of the proportion of insane paupers to the whole population of the county of Lancaster, from which it appears that there are 1331 lunatics, or one in every 1252 inhabitants. Of the 1331 pauper lunatics thus recognized, 675 are in asylums, and 656 in other situations.

The following extract from this report is also deserving of consideration:—

"It is to be regretted, that at a time when the amount of accommodation for the insane poor of this county is so very limited, a large proportion of persons suffering from mere imbecility of mind should be forwarded for admission. Such individuals remain from infancy to death in a state of harmless quietude; and although none of the higher mental faculties have been developed, yet the instinctive attachments are strong, and they are capable of appreciating the fostering care of relations, and of feeling acutely a separation from home and friends. To remove such parties, and to place them in confinement, must at all times be an act of doubtful expediency; but at the present period, when others, by their admission, are prevented from deriving that benefit which the asylum was destined to afford, there can be no hesitation as to the course most desirable to be pursued."

#### PATENT MEDICINES.

It is a popular error to suppose that the quack nostrums, so abundant in the present day, are in any way protected by Royal Letters Patent, or, indeed, enjoy any protection at all. It is a fact that *not one* of the so-called "Patent" medicines in present vogue is protected by patent. The only protection (and this is too much,) which the state affords to Morrison, Holloway, and Co., is the red stamp round the box or bottle, for which three half-pence are paid, and which serves merely to protect the name of the proprietor, without having any reference to the contents of the box or bottle. This pseudo-protection, however, which in reality amounts to nothing at all, gives to the quack an excellent plea to boast that he and his delectable compounds are under the special care of government authority; and a great parade is made about "Honourable Commissioners of Stamps and Taxes,"—"red stamp," to imitate which is felony, and, it might be added, the penalty for which is the same as for taking the physic—death.—*Patent Journal*.

#### SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES.

Gentlemen admitted Licentiates, Thursday, September 10th:—Wm. Forster Fotherby, Sheffield; Richard Lowe Webb, London; William Edward Wright; Gordon Kenmure Hardie; George Burnside Bryden, Kirkby Stephen; William Hanks Day, Norwich.

#### PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ASSOCIATION.

##### NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

Members of the Association having suggestions to make for the improvement of the publications of the Association, are requested to communicate with Mr. Bree, the Secretary of the Committee appointed at Norwich to consider this subject.

#### ERRATA.

In the heading of Dr. Roberts' paper, p. 441, col. 2, l. 19, for "INGUINAL" read "STRANGULATED;" p. 442, col. 1, l. 11, for "INGUINAL" read "FEMORAL."