

from the report of the British Medical Association* "Hitherto the poor-law commissioners, in their medical arrangements, had only contemplated the objects under their own authority, viz. paupers; but as if to complete the degradation of the profession which had been previously begun, the plans and remuneration, which were disgraceful even when applied to paupers, were to be extended to all the classes included between them and the middle ranks of society; mechanics, artizans, handicraftsmen, domestic servants, and independent labourers, were invited, entreated, and almost compelled, (for the wishes of the rich and powerful are too frequently laws to the poor,) to join the poor-law, (or, as they are named, the 'independent') medical clubs."

The medical attendance thus afforded would obviously emanate from the guardians, and form a part of the union contract; yet did the commissioners describe it as an effort of the poor "to provide, out of their own resources, good medical attendance in case of sickness." (4194)

But how could these "resources" be termed "their own," when the guardians prescribed both the duties and the terms of the medical attendance? "The actual means of obtaining medical relief do not come from the poor," (4280) when a certain system, to which they are virtually compelled to contribute, is forced upon their medical attendants.

The small sum, paid periodically by the "independent" members, was not the price of medical advice, but a sort of composition, which exempted them from the serious delay and annoyance of seeking an order from the relieving or parish officer, to which the other paupers were subjected. Their real dependence on the guardians and on the medical profession continued as before; "they were obviously still paupers, as every one must be who is dependent for assistance on the expressed or implied condition of a parish contract."

The guardians hoped to secure a twofold advantage from the establishment of a medical club: first, by admitting a class of poor subscribers, they might get rid of a number of applicants for medical relief; and secondly, by annexing the independent club to the pauper contract, they might increase the importance of the appointment, and reduce the terms of the contract. The working of the system, in its most obnoxious form, is well shown by Mr. Power's evidence, (4223) a part of which we quote.—"In the parish of Kirtling, the doctor's salary, including everything, was formerly 15*l.* per annum.† The union now only pays him 5*l.* i. e. 2*s.* per head for fifty individuals on the permanent sick list; but there are eighty families subscribers to the independent club, which, at 4*s.* per family, adds 16*l.* to the medical officer's stipend: he therefore gains 6*l.* by the alteration, and the parish 10*l.* There are other parishes where the plan succeeds equally well for all parties; and I observe that in those parishes where the medical officers are all paid, either no pains have been taken by the guardians and parish authorities to form independent sick clubs, or the poor have themselves formed them, and appointed the doctors to whom they had hitherto been accustomed, instead of the medical officers of the districts, who may happen to be most popular. This latter practice is cer-

tainly some drawback to the means of remunerating the medical officers of the union. The boards of guardians can, and of course do, recommend their own officers to the independent clubs; but beyond that, it would be very impolitic to interfere."

The contributions of the poor were thus appropriated by the guardians, to assist in making up the salary for their medical officer. It is clear, therefore, that they viewed the whole labouring population as entirely at their disposal, with regard to the provision of medical relief: yet they affected to consider them as "independent" subscribers!

EAST OF SCOTLAND ASSOCIATION.

THE following resolutions have been adopted at a recent meeting of this association.

1st. That the Council has observed, with extreme regret, the custom of publishing paragraphs in the newspapers for some time past, laudatory of the operations and mode of treatment employed by certain practitioners in various diseases; such means of making public their practice being calculated materially to injure the respectability of the medical profession.

2d. That, as one of the great objects of the association is the suppression of quackery in all its forms, the council would earnestly impress on all the members of this association, and the profession in general, the necessity of exerting themselves to discourage and prevent such proceedings for the future.

ASIATIC CHOLERA.

WE regret to learn that this disease, which it had been hoped had abandoned Europe, has just broken out in the environs of Trieste, where a report was current that the cholera had also made its appearance at Vienna.—*Exam. Med.* No. III.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Second Annual Report of the Eastern Medical Association of Scotland.

Medicinische Fragmente, &c.; or, A General History of Sea-bathing and Salt-water Baths, with Remarks on the identity of Cow-pock and Small-pox. By Dr. Carl Mühry. Hanover, 1841.

On the Application of the Collegiate System to the Medical Schools of the Metropolis. By the Rev. J. H. North, M. A. Churchill, London, 1841.

Catalogue of Plants collected in the Neighbourhood of Banbury. By George Gulliver, F.R.S. Tilt, London, 1841.

An Essay on the Chemical, Botanical, and Purulent Virtues of the *Secale Cornutum*. By T. H. Wardleworth. Simpkin and Co., London, 1841. pp. 69.

Printed by THOMAS IBOTSON, of 105, St. Martin's Lane, in the Parish of St. Martin in the Fields, and GEORGE JOSIAH PALMER, of 20, Regent Square, in the Parish of St. Pancras, at their Office, No. 3, Savoy-street, Strand, in the Precinct of the Savoy; and published by JOHN WILLIAMS RUMSEY, at his Residence, No. 6, Wellington-street, Strand, in the Precinct of the Savoy.—Friday, July 23, 1841.

* *Lancet*, p. 781. 1837-38.

† Not including suspended orders.