

DR. LYON PLAYFAIR'S REPORT ON THE SANITARY CONDITION OF THE LARGE TOWNS IN LANCASHIRE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND
SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

Your correspondent, who signs himself a Lancashire Practitioner, appears to me to have strangely misconceived the purport of the passage which he quoted from Dr. Playfair's report, on the sanitary condition of the towns of Lancashire. I happen to be one of those medical men to whom Dr. Playfair acknowledges his obligation for assisting his investigations; but it never would have occurred to me that my services, for instance, were unvalued by him, because he states, with almost literal correctness, that a vast sum of money is spent, and a large body of men maintained, to secure the treatment of disease when it occurs, and nothing is done, not one person specially employed to watch over, so as to remove or to mitigate the causes by which much of that disease is produced, and fostered, and aggravated. It is not, indeed, literally true, that *nothing* is done, but it is almost precisely true that nothing *systematically* is done; and when we compare the little that is effected towards the removal of the enormous evils which are, to a great degree, under our control, with what might be, and ought to be, accomplished, we shall scarcely quarrel with him who regards it as nothing.

It is quite true, as your correspondent states, that medical men can and do effect much by private injunctions and public reports; but it is in their power to do much more by enforcing upon all whom their opinions will influence, the importance and necessity of the appointment of officers, whose special duty it shall be to watch for, and direct the removal of, the causes of insalubrity which exist in all our large towns, of the nature and extent of which the public and the public authorities have very imperfect conception, and the removal of which will never be systematically enforced, until superintended by men who know their nature, and justly estimate the frightful consequences of neglect. Let them succeed in this, and so surely as effects follow causes, and cease when causes are removed, will disease become less rife, and more manageable,—will death diminish the number of his victims,—will life be increased both in duration and desirableness; and bereavements of parents, of their children, and early widowhood and orphanage be less frequent. Let the members of our noble profession exert themselves to promote the *systematic* adoption of sanitary precautions, among which medical inspection is the most important; and they will add another to their many claims to the gratitude of their country and of mankind.

ANOTHER LANCASHIRE PRACTITIONER.
Manchester, May 29, 1845.

VACCINATION UNDER THE VACCINATION ACT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND
SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

In the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal* of the 21st ult., "Inquirer" asks if the appointed vaccinators of the several Unions are to vaccinate all that

apply to them, and charge the same to the parish in which they are vaccinated. I will briefly relate what has occurred to myself. Soon after the passing of the act, there was a general vaccination throughout the Unions, and numbers applied without distinction of union or parish to the nearest vaccinator. One of my stations was in the Union in which I reside, but just on the confines of the adjoining one, so that in my return of cases, consequently some were entered who applied and had been vaccinated that did not reside in the Union. These cases were all struck out by the Board of Guardians, and I got no redress from the next Union; since which I have been careful to vaccinate none who lived out of the Union.

I am, Sir,

Your's obediently,

F. W. PITTOCK.

Sellinge, near Ashford, Kent,

June 3, 1845.

NORTHAMPTON DISPENSARY.

The election of surgeons to this newly-established Institution has just taken place. There were eleven competitors, and the following gentlemen were the successful candidates:—William Percival Esq.; John Faircloth, Esq.; Charles Dodd, Esq.; J. M. Bryan, Esq.; Henry Terry, Esq.; and George Grant, Esq.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

A Guide to the use of the Buxton Waters. By William Henry Robertson, M.D., Physician to the Buxton Bath Charity. London: D. Boyne. 1845. pp. 32.

Chemistry, Meteorology, and the Function of Digestion, considered with Reference to Natural Theology. By William Prout, M.D., F.R.S., Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians. (Bridgewater Treatises No. VIII.) Third Edition. London: Churchill. 1845. 8vo., pp. 515.

Practical Notes on Insanity. By John Burdett Steward, M.D., Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, &c. London: Churchill. 1845. post 8vo., pp. 122.

On the Present State of Therapeutical Inquiry. By James Arnott, M.D. London: Churchill; and Brighton: King. 1845. pp. 57.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications have been received from Mr. E. Daniell; the Sheffield Medical Society; Mr. W. W. Cooper; Mr. T. P. Teale; Mr. D. Edwards.

Mr. Butler Lane's letter is in type, but is unavoidably postponed until next week.

A Licentiate of the Apothecaries' Company will be allowed to register as a General Practitioner in Medicine and Surgery under the new bill, and consequently to practise surgery, and give evidence in surgical cases. He cannot assume the name of surgeon unless he is also a member of the College of Surgeons.