

POOR-LAW UNION MEDICAL OFFICERS AND THE POOR-LAW BOARD. The Board of Guardians of the Holborn Union having been waited upon by a deputation from a coroner's jury, held before Mr. Wakley, who informed the Board that the assistant of one of the medical officers of the Union was not properly qualified to act as medical officer, and that they considered he had been inattentive to a child of the name of Mary Murphy, who had since died; and that he had signed a certificate of the cause of death in the name of Mr. Whitfield, in which he stated that he had seen the child two days before its death, while he had not seen it for nearly three weeks before the day stated in the certificate, and had not seen the body after death. The Board thereupon instituted a full investigation into the circumstances; and, having heard the evidence of the parents of the child, of the medical gentlemen referred to, and of the relieving officers of the Union, passed a resolution, on the motion of Mr. Leadbetter, seconded by Mr. Gray, as follows:—

"That this Board are of opinion that the infant had not sufficiently recovered to justify Mr. Durrant, Mr. Whitfield's assistant, in discontinuing his attendance; and that, with reference to signing the certificate, his conduct was extremely reprehensible; and the Board are of opinion that Mr. Durrant is not a fit or properly qualified person to assist Mr. Whitfield in performing the duties of medical officer of the Union."

A copy of the notes of the evidence taken on the inquiry, and of the resolution passed by the Board, having been forwarded to the Poor-Law Board by their request, that Board have addressed the following communication to Mr. Whitfield on the subject.

"Poor-Law Board, Whitehall.

"SIR,—The Poor-Law Board having been favoured by the Guardians of the Holborn Union with extracts from their minutes, and with a copy of the notes of the evidence taken by them at the investigation which they have made into your conduct as a medical officer in the case of the late Mary Murphy—

"The Poor-Law Board regret to be obliged to inform you that you very seriously neglected your prescribed duty in this instance, not only by omitting to give any personal attendance upon the deceased child, but by permitting such attendance as was afforded to devolve upon your assistant, who was not legally qualified, and could not therefore have been properly authorised to attend on your behalf.

"The attendance of your assistant under the circumstances described neither relieves you from nor lessens your own direct responsibility, but it justly exposes you to the censure of this Board, who concur in the resolution which the guardians have come to respecting your conduct.

"Before finally deciding upon this case, the Board request you will inform them whether you will undertake henceforth to comply with the regulations by which every medical officer is bound to visit and attend personally upon the sick poor entrusted to his care; and when prevented by any sufficient reason from giving such attendance himself, to afford the requisite medical attendance through some legally qualified medical practitioner, expressly nominated to the guardians.

"I am, etc.,

"H. FLEMING, Assistant Secretary.

"To H. B. Whitfield, Esq."

IN-SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS IN PARIS. Incomplete and impure as is our water supply compared with what it should be, that of Paris is not to be compared with it; open to objection as the state of our drainage may be, that of Paris is a hundred times worse. Many of the best looking houses in Paris are, as relates to health, in a perfectly fearful and thoroughly abominable condition—whitened sepulchres literally and truly. At this moment the beautiful city contains a vast magazine of destructive materials, which may explode at any moment, carrying ruin and death into thousands of families. The danger to their brave troops from suspected mines in the Malakoff, when they first entered it, was not more imminent than it is to the home-staying citizens themselves from the unsuspected "sap" in Paris. You need not go into the low districts to prove it. Don't go there if you wish to keep a good opinion of Paris. We will travel no further than to the Rue de Richelieu. Well, we have before us the personal evidence of four separate persons who, previously in good health, were here attacked on the same day, and again afterwards, with violent diarrhoea, sickness, and acute pains, distinctly attributable to the want of proper sanitary arrangements. We looked into the circumstances ourselves, and can, therefore, speak positively. We have entered houses of a lower grade, so full of injurious emanations, that healthful life could not possibly be maintained therein, and we have

found, in such few inquiries as we were able to make, the people dying off, notwithstanding their out of door life, and other advantageous circumstances, at such ages as would prove the truth of the assumption.

REQUESTS. The late Mr. Henry Lawson, of Lansdowne Crescent, Bath, has bequeathed the following sums to charitable and scientific institutions:—Baths and washhouses, Bath, £300; Bath General Hospital, Bath United Hospital, Eastern and Walcot Dispensary; Royal Society, Somerset House; Royal Astronomical Society; Royal Meteorological Society, London, £200 each; Ear and Eye Infirmary, Bath, and Spectacle-makers' Company, London, £100 each; Montrose Natural History Society, £50. The above are all free of legacy duty.

MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON. On Saturday next, October 20th, a paper will be read by F. Hird, Esq., "On Certain Forms of Fistula in Ano, with reference to their Cure without Division of the Sphincter Muscle."

MRS. BROUGH. This unhappy woman, who was tried at Guildford for the murder of her six children, and who was acquitted on the ground of insanity, and respecting whose state of mind there was much discrepancy of opinion, has, since her confinement in the criminal department of Bethlem Hospital, been under the constant surveillance and care of Dr. Hood, the intelligent resident physician to that institution. Dr. Hood has frequently stated to persons visiting Bethlem, that he entertains no doubt of Mrs. Brough's brain being diseased, and her mind deranged. Since her confinement in Bethlem Hospital, her insanity has clearly shown itself to all the officials and nurses. The justice of her acquittal is thus conclusively established. This must be satisfactory to all who were engaged in that painfully anxious and responsible investigation, but particularly so to Dr. Forbes Winslow and the other medical witnesses, who, in consequence of their evidence in favour of Mrs. Brough's insanity and moral irresponsibility, were exposed at the time to much animadversion. (*Lancet*.)

THE MEDICAL DIRECTORY. The Editor of the "London and Provincial Medical Directory" wishes us to draw the attention of the members of the Association to the annual return papers. As it is of importance to the medical profession that a correct list of all qualified medical practitioners should be published, their attention to this hint is desirable.

THE YELLOW FEVER AT NEW ORLEANS. The deaths from yellow fever from the 23rd of June to the 15th of September were 2,355.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LETTERS and other COMMUNICATIONS for the JOURNAL should be directed to the private address of the Editor, 39, Curzon Street, May Fair.

TO CONTRIBUTORS. The Editor would feel glad if Members of the Association and others, would cooperate with him in establishing as a rule, that in future no paper for publication shall exceed two pages of the Journal in length. If the writers of long communications knew as well as the Editor does, that lengthy communications always deter the reader from commencing them, this great evil would never arise. Brevity is the soul of medical writing—still more than of wit.

MR. R. LEY will see, that by a late order of the Executive Council, his letter is ineligible for publication. Mr. Ley will, on second consideration, also agree with us perhaps, that its contents are not calculated to further that conciliatory spirit which has clearly set in, and which he must feel inclined to further, in common with the great mass of the Members of the Association.

A MEDICAL STUDENT, MANCHESTER. There are twenty-five Appointments as Assistant-Surgeons to the East India Company's Service, open for competition to all comers this year. The subjects in which the Candidates are to be examined, and the time when the examination will come off, are advertised in the *Association Journal* this day.

DR. HARRINGTON Tuke's interesting account of the Mental and Physical Conditions of the late Feargus O'Connor, Esq., during the three years preceding his death, shall be inserted next week.

BOOKS RECEIVED. [* An Asterisk is prefixed to the names of Members of the Association.] 1. * BIRD (James, M.R.C.S.) The Medicinal and Economic properties of Vegetable Charcoal. pp. 82. London: 1855. 2. General Board of Health. Appendix to Report (No. 1.) of the Committee for Scientific Inquiries in relation to the Cholera Epidemic of 1854. p. 322. 3. Report (No. 2.) on the Results of the different methods of Treatment pursued in Cholera in the Provinces throughout England and Scotland. pp. 24. 4. MACKENZIE (Donald, M.R.C.S.) On Caries of the Teeth and the Cure of Toothache. pp. 56. London: 1855. 5. HUSK (Magnus, M.D., Stockholm.) Translated by Ernst Aberg, M.D. Statistics and Treatment of Typhus and Typhoid Fever. pp. 200. London: 1855. 6. WARREN (T. Forbes, M.D.) On the Sanitary Application of Charcoal etc., and on Ventilation. London: 1855. 7. Transactions of the Pathological Society of London. Volume Sixth. London: 1855.