

## POOR-LAW MEDICAL RELIEF.

Mr. Griffin has addressed the following letter to the Poor-Law Board:—

"12, Royal Terrace, Weymouth, June 29th, 1857.

"**MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,**—As one of your medical officers, I shall feel obliged by your informing me if 'the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them being poor and not able to work,' are the only persons I am, by virtue of my office, bound to attend; and what course I am to pursue when the relieving officer sends me orders to attend persons not coming under the class above named. I need scarcely remind your honourable Board that your reply is one of vital importance, not only to your medical officers, but to about four millions of the labouring classes, who for a long time past have been attended by orders from the relieving officers.

"The majority of the Union patients I now attend are the wives and children of men in employment, and even men themselves who are in the receipt of wages up to the hour of sickness, and one at this very time actually has ten shillings a week from a club during his illness.

"In the *Justice of the Peace* for June 27th is a leading article on 'Medical Relief to the Poor, and the Poor-law Medical Officers'. In one part of the article is the following:—

"Perhaps much of the grievances of which the medical officers complain is caused by the too great facility which is afforded to the labouring classes generally to obtain medical aid at the cost of the poor-rates when they, or any members of their families, are sick. Generally speaking, this species of parochial relief is not looked upon by the poor in the same light as direct eleemosynary relief; and, on the other hand, the guardians and their officers, as it is to cost nothing to the parish beyond the salary of the medical officer, too readily grant medical orders. It may be urged that they do so to prevent the whole family becoming paupers by the death of the head of the family; but we think that this is a very shortsighted view of the question. In no case can the poor-rates be lawfully applied by the guardians to prevent a person becoming destitute. It is only when he is actually destitute—that is, destitute of the means of obtaining from his own resources that which he applies to the guardians to be supplied with at the cost of the ratepayers—that he can be relieved; and the principle is the same, whether the application be for medical or any other kind of relief. In either case, the sole question for the consideration of the guardians is the fact of the then destitution of the applicant, and not the likelihood of his becoming destitute if that for which he applies be withheld. Unless the poor—and by that term we mean, not those only who are usually reckoned paupers, but the labourers generally—are made to rely upon their own resources in sickness as well as in health, it is in vain to look for a continuance of the diminished pauperism of the country.

"In the petition of the Poor-law medical officers, the fifth resolution is, 'That the class of persons entitled to medical relief be defined, and not left to the discretion or caprice of relieving officers.' This, however, we have already disposed of, by showing what class of persons only are entitled to medical relief, namely, the *really destitute poor*; and we do not understand in what way they could be more clearly defined. Perhaps the legislature will be asked to define more particularly than it has already done the class of persons entitled to ordinary relief from the poor-rates—'the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other amongst them being poor and not able to work,' appears to us to be a tolerably clear definition; and *none other are entitled to medical relief at the cost of the poor-rates.*"

"The foregoing quotation, coming as it does from a periodical edited by three barristers-at-law (one of them, W. C. Glen, Esq., well known in connexion with Poor-law), is entitled to grave consideration. That it will have due weight with your honourable Board in giving your decision, I have little doubt. Your medical officers cannot go on attending the labouring classes indiscriminately, as they have hitherto done, unless they are legally bound to do so, or their salaries are increased in the same ratio as their labour.

"I have the honour to be, my lords and gentlemen,  
"Your obedient servant, "RICHARD GRIFFIN.  
"The Poor-law Board."

KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL. A meeting was held on Friday, July 3, in the board-room of the hospital, attended by Earl Howe, Sir Thomas Phillips, and several of the leading members of the council, for the purpose of presenting a testimonial to Mr. J. W. Cunningham, the secretary of the college, who

has rendered most important honorary services in the foundation and building of that part of the hospital which at present exists. The testimonial, consisting of Mr. Cunningham's portrait by Richmond, and two handsome silver salvers, was presented by Sir Thomas Phillips, and appropriately acknowledged.

TESTIMONIAL TO A. EMSON, Esq. At the recent festival of the Dorchester Tradesmen's Benefit Society, a piece of plate was presented to Alfred Emson, Esq., the surgeon of the club, in acknowledgment of the kindness and attention the members had experienced at his hands during the many years he had been their medical adviser. The testimonial consisted of a chaste silver inkstand, including two beautifully cut bottles with silver tops, and bore the following inscription:—"Presented to A. Emson, Esq., by the Members of the Dorchester Tradesmen's Benefit Society, as a mark of respect for his attention as their Surgeon. June 29, 1857." Mr. Emson made a feeling response to the kindness which had thus been shown to him; and the remainder of the evening was spent in a most convivial and pleasant manner.

TESTIMONIAL TO FERGUSON BRANSON, M.D. A handsome silver inkstand was on Thursday, July 2nd, presented to Dr. Branson, of Baslow, on his retirement from practice in Sheffield, by some of his medical brethren in that town, to testify their high estimation of his character, and sincere regret at his departure from amongst them.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NOTICE.—Dr. WYNTER will feel obliged if the Associates will address all Post Office Orders in payment of Subscriptions, to the Publisher, Mr. THOMAS JOHN HONEYMAN, 37, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W. C., "Bloomsbury Branch"; and he would also feel obliged by their sending all communications respecting the non-receipt of the Journal, to the same address; as both these matters are out of the province of the Editor.

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENTS should always enclose their names to the Editor; not for publication, but in token of good faith. No attention can be paid to communications not thus authenticated.

A POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICER. Your letter on the Single Qualification has been received, but you have not communicated to the Editor your name and address.

MR. A. KEMPE is referred to the JOURNAL for June 27.

Communications have been received from:—Dr. G. G. ROGERS; MR. W. I. COX; DR. H. H. VERNON; DR. H. COLLET; DR. H. HANCOX; DR. M. DAVIS; DR. COCKLE; M.R.C.S.; DR. J. G. DAVEY; THE EDITOR OF THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF DENTAL SCIENCE; DR. J. M. COLEY; A MEMBER; DR. D. NOBLE; MR. J. A. LOCKING; MR. RICHARD GRIFFIN; MR. H. TERRY, JUN.; DR. W. WEBB; MR. GEORGE MAY, JUN.; DR. KINGSLEY; MR. SOLOMON; MR. A. KEMPE; MR. W. F. FAVELL; MR. S. BERRY; J. R.; and MR. O. PEMBERTON.

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

Metropolitan Counties Branch of THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.—The Fifth Annual General Meeting of this Branch will be held at 37, Soho Square, on Tuesday, July 14th, at 3 P.M.

The Members and their Friends will dine together at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, at Six o'Clock. Tickets for the Dinner, including Dessert and Tea and Coffee, 10s. 6d.

June 25, 1857.

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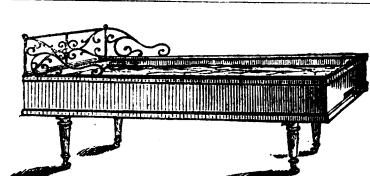
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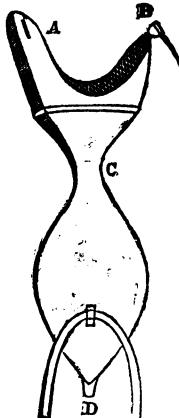
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