

Observations on the arrangements connected with the relief of the sick poor : addressed in a letter to the Right Honourable the Lord John Russell, Secretary of State for the Home Department / by John Yelloly.

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*from Royal College of Physicians,
from the Author. 2*

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
ARRANGEMENTS CONNECTED WITH THE
RELIEF OF THE SICK POOR;

ADDRESSED
IN A LETTER
TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD JOHN RUSSELL,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT,

BY JOHN YELLOLY, M.D. F.R.S.
PHYSICIAN TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER;
LATE PHYSICIAN TO THE LONDON HOSPITAL, &c.

THE SECOND EDITION WITH ADDITIONS.

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The Author has much pleasure in complying with the kind and flattering wish expressed by the Council of the PROVINCIAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, that his Letter should appear in the fifth volume of the Transactions of that respectable and influential body; and he has availed himself of the opportunity which has thus been afforded him, of making some alterations and additions.

As a Committee of the House of Commons has been appointed to inquire into the operation of the New Poor Laws, the Author has every expectation, that through their means, and under the auspices of the distinguished individual to whom his Letter is addressed, a very material improvement will be made in the medical arrangements connected with the sick poor of this country.

April 8, 1837.

THE HISTORY OF THE

The history of the world is a vast and complex subject, encompassing the lives of countless individuals and the events that have shaped our civilization. From the earliest times, when our ancestors first gathered in small groups, to the present day, when we live in a global society, the human story is one of constant change and growth. This history is not just a record of events, but a reflection of the human condition, of our hopes, fears, and dreams. It is a story that we all share, and one that we must understand if we are to live our lives to the fullest. The history of the world is a tapestry of many threads, each representing a different culture, a different people, or a different era. Together, they form a rich and diverse picture of our world, one that is constantly evolving and expanding. As we look back on the past, we can see the many challenges that our ancestors faced, and the ways in which they overcame them. We can learn from their experiences, and apply their wisdom to our own lives. The history of the world is a source of inspiration and guidance, one that we should all cherish and study. It is a story that we must never forget, and one that we must always keep close to our hearts.

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

MY LORD,—

I AM induced to trouble your Lordship, with some observations on the arrangements connected with the relief of the Sick Poor in this country, from a high sense of the importance of the subject, and a firm conviction that it is very imperfectly understood.

I am quite aware that your Lordship's attention has been already directed to the inquiry, by a great variety of publications and appeals; and am sensible too, that a Statesman engaged in managing the affairs of a great nation, has little time for an examination of details, and must often be satisfied with transferring the investigation of them to others.

To these circumstances I may add, that so much has been already written on the subject, as to leave little of novelty for observation or remark. But in the face of all these consider-

ations, I venture to think, that it may be serviceable to the cause of fair and candid inquiry, that a person who has been in no way mixed up with the previous discussions; who has never been connected with the management of workhouses or houses of industry, and may therefore be supposed to be in a considerable degree free from the prejudices to which such a connection is often imagined to give rise; and who has no sort of personal interest in the question, should take a general view of the whole matter of investigation.

These are the grounds on which I take the liberty of addressing your Lordship; but there are one or two additional points, which it may not be unbecoming or irrelevant to notice. Many years of Dispensary and Hospital practice, as well as the habit which I have pursued all my life, of seeing poor persons at my own house, have afforded me ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the character and necessities of the more indigent classes of society, and in some degree with their modes of thought and action. I have likewise had the satisfaction of enjoying a very extensive acquaintance with all classes of practitioners, both in town and country; and have possessed more than ordinary means of becoming conversant with their merits and qualifications. Entertaining therefore, as I do, very strong feelings as to the necessity which exists for some improvement in the management of the Sick Poor; and thinking, likewise, that as a part of such improvement, a more liberal procedure to the professional persons who are engaged in attending them, would be both politic and just, I consider it as in some degree approaching to a duty on my part, to endeavour to assist, in the evening of life, and retirement from practice, in correcting what appear to me mistaken ideas, in that very important department of the public service, which relates to the administration of medical relief to the necessitous. I likewise indulge the hope, that if your Lordship, in the high station which you occupy, as regulator of the domestic affairs of this kingdom, should be induced to devote your attention to an examination of the subject in all its bearings and relations, the result would

be eminently favourable to the interests of humanity, as far as the poor are concerned, and particularly gratifying to the feelings of the large, useful, and influential body of men, who form the medical practitioners of the United Kingdom.

I have long been of opinion, that much ill-judged parsimony has attached to the medical arrangements connected with the Sick Poor; and that, while the expenditure of parishes was conducted on a large and unrestricted, if not, (according to the common opinion), a profuse and lavish scale, the medical department, in which the interests of humanity are so much involved, and which formed only a very small item of the general account, was regulated with inconsiderate and inconsistent penuriousness. Under such disparity, it may well be said,—

*“Vehemens in utramque partem, Menedeme, es nimis,
Aut largitate nimiâ, aut parsimoniâ.
In eandem fraudem, ex hâc re, atque ex illâ, incidēs.”*

I took the liberty of offering a strong opinion on the subject, in my examination before the Committee on Medical Education in the early part of 1834, having long previously wished that the subject might be brought under the cognizance of Parliament, by some well-informed and public-spirited Member.*

* With reference to medical attendance on the poor in the country, is there any information you wish to give to the Committee?—I think nothing can be worse than that which is adopted in parishes very generally; it would be exceedingly desirable if legislative measures could be adopted which would enable the poor to have more efficient advice than they can have at present.

Is the point to which you allude that of farming out the medical attendance upon the poor to the lowest bidder?—It is.

Does that prevail extensively in that part of the country in which you reside?—There is an incorporation which comprises above forty parishes, and four medical men attend ten parishes each, at the rate of only £4 per parish. Even in opulent parishes near London, the surgeon is sometimes beat down by competition, to a stipend which could not admit of his doing the duties properly.

When the new system of poor laws was introduced, I indulged the expectation, that, under their influence, the plan of medical attendance on the poor would be rendered more efficient and satisfactory. This has not however been the case, and I regret that the Commissioners, for whose talents and character I entertain the highest respect, have early appeared to me, to have fallen into some misconceptions relative to medical men and medical practice, which it is the more necessary should be the subject of temperate and dispassionate observation, because the same views are sustained in the second report which has lately appeared, and which comes forward with that augmentation of force and authority, to which the increased experience of its authors may naturally be supposed to entitle it.

Anxiety to obtain professional employment has occasionally led young and efficient men, but much more frequently the ill-educated and ignorant, to unworthy compromises of the respectability of the profession. Previously to the year 1815, when the Apothecary's Bill came into operation, any one might call himself a surgeon and commence practice;* and as we know how imperfectly even the best informed members of

Have any of those points ever come under your own observation in any parishes?—Certainly, I have known many inadequate payments. I have seen now and then inattention; but generally I am very happy in saying, that I think the profession at large do themselves great credit by giving more attendance and medicine than the amount of stipend at all remunerates them for.

Is it generally the practice in your part of Norfolk to farm the poor?—It is always the practice if there are not hundred-houses; but when there are hundred-houses, which unite many parishes together, the surgeon is remunerated better by the number, than if he had one parish only at the same rate of payment.

Is the price paid very often such as will not more than pay for the medicines?—Decidedly. I have heard of £5 being given at some miles distant: some of the medical men of Norwich have had parishes to attend at a distance of some miles, for not much more than that rate.

* It may be proper to state, that by *surgeon*, I here mean the *general practitioner*, who practises all the branches of the medical profession.

society are often able to appreciate the merits of medical men, it not unfrequently happened, that the more worthy practitioner was either supplanted, or obliged to lower the terms of attendance on parochial patients to such an extent, as did not admit of his doing them justice without a great personal sacrifice.

The vulgar and ignorant practitioners, who had insinuated themselves into the profession previously to 1815, are, it is true, fast wearing out; for no one is now permitted to practise, without a proper education, and a due examination into his qualifications; but the feeling of keeping medical remuneration for parochial services as low as possible, still continues; nor does it appear that the amount of such remuneration, is ever determined by the sort of estimate, which the common sense of mankind leads them to employ in the regulation of their ordinary expenses.

In matters of common business, men generally consider the *quantum meruit* of him whom they employ. The labourer they regard as worthy his hire; and while they feel it to be their duty to resist imposition, they have no kind of disinclination to pay fairly for efficient services. But in parochial medicine the case is different; for the only point aimed at, seems to be that of having the care of the sick poor undertaken as cheaply as possible, without its being a matter of consideration whether the contract can defray the expense of proper medicines, still less that of affording anything like an adequate remuneration for time and trouble. But medical men are found to attend parishes on the low and inadequate terms mentioned; and the regulators of the affairs of the poor are generally satisfied, to refer this circumstance to the legitimate operation of competition, of which they perhaps consider themselves bound to take advantage.

The principle of competition, and the contracts to which it gives rise, are considered by many, as applicable to every sort of public arrangement. I venture, however, to call in question the justness of the reasoning in reference to a great variety of concerns; and feel it, therefore, to be an important object of my present address, to submit to your Lordship some consi-

derations, with a view to shew that the position is inaccurate, and its practical operation, as far as medical affairs are concerned, unsafe and inexpedient.

When the question relates to articles of known and palpal character, proposals and contracts afford the means of obtaining them at the lowest possible rate. There can therefore be no objection to such modes of effecting business; for while we may be sure that the parties will not go below the rate which will allow them a reasonable profit, the honest fulfilment of the contract is capable of being ascertained, by a moderate degree of attention and judgment on the part of a principal or his agents.

If a work of magnitude is concerned, as the erection of a house, or the building of a ship, a contract is equally applicable; but in this case, as the principal has rarely the time and the judgment necessary for enabling him to ascertain whether justice is done to him or not, he generally finds it necessary to employ some one to watch over his interests. In such an example however, my Lord, it would be considered as altogether out of the question, to look to the lowest terms at which inspection and superintendence could be obtained, instead of selecting a person on whose judgment and assiduity dependence could be placed for efficient assistance and protection.

Nor would any one, I am sure, make ^{the} competition and low charges ingredients in his choice of a solicitor, who is to be entrusted with the management of his most important private affairs; or of an engineer, who is to devise or carry into effect momentous operations, whether of a public or private nature; or of the fabricator of that nice and curious machinery, which, in the trackless ocean, enables man to pursue his way with confidence and accuracy; but his aim would be, by a judicious selection in the first place, and liberal treatment in the next, to ensure the full exercise of the most faithful, and most able services.

In all these cases it is not a common operation which is required, or an article of obvious character which is to be

provided ; but it is the intellect, the spark of divine essence, which we wish to enlist in our service ; the exercise of unfettered zeal, assiduity, and talent, which would be chilled and repressed by any thing like illiberality and suspicion. To propose that pecuniary competition should be allowed to operate in appointing the officers of our fleets and armies, in providing for the sacred duties of religion, or in filling up the departments of the State or Diplomacy, would be just as objectionable as is the plan now so frequently adopted relative to attendance on the sick poor ; where the usual principles which actuate human proceedings in all the ordinary concerns of life, are so singularly and entirely overlooked.

If a tradesman or artisan were to offer to provide an article of known value, at a rate at which it could not be afforded, there would at once appear to be something underhand and suspicious in the transaction. The proposition would be viewed as offensive and disreputable ; for though competition may be employed to ascertain the lowest value at which a thing can be provided, the greatest stickler for economy would never think of offering a sum which he knew was totally inadequate to procure the article in question. There would thus be the appearance of a temptation to obtain it in a fraudulent way.

And yet with regard to the parish surgeon, he is required either to accept a sum which the least consideration or inquiry will evince to be totally inadequate ; or he is desired to give in his proposals, which he knows must be within certain prescribed limits ; or he is threatened with a competition, by the introduction of some new practitioner into his district, which must in some degree risk a still further reduction of his hardly earned income, than the crowded state of the profession has yet occasioned. There is no disposition to reward according to services, but the ungenerous feeling is too generally entertained, to employ the very hardships under which the profession labours by the numbers who enter it, as a means of still further depression. I have remarked that the parsimony is inconsistent, and that it applies to an article of comparatively small amount. This appears from the appended statistical

notices, to which I request your Lordship's attention;* and from them I think it may be fairly inferred, that if medical

* At NORWICH with 61,118 inhabitants, the poor-rates have varied within the last few years from about 20,000*l.* to 29,000*l.* per annum; and for the last year were 15,700*l.* The expenses of medical attendance during the same period have remained at about 300*l.* per annum, the medicines being made up by an apothecary, at a salary of 100*l.* per annum, (which is included in this sum,) in a house hired for the purpose; but the poor being attended by medical gentlemen gratuitously. If the four gentlemen in attendance had an allowance of 50*l.* per annum each, which would make the whole expense relative to the poor of all descriptions about 500*l.* per annum, the system would, I understand, be very efficient and satisfactory.

In former times, when the annual expenditure was seldom less than 30,000*l.*, four medical gentlemen gave attendance and medicine by contract at about 80*l.* per annum each, besides an allowance for vaccination, and the power of charging for suspended orders.

In an Union in my own neighbourhood, consisting of the two Hundreds of LODDON and CLAVERING, in Norfolk, having a population of 13,680, containing 86 square miles of surface, and paying poor-rates of about 9000*l.* per annum, which have been reduced, as appears by the Commissioner's reports, to 6494*l.*, the attendance and medicines were long contracted for by four gentlemen at 40*l.* per annum, or 160*l.* in the whole, with the payment of at first 2*s.* per mile, which was reduced to 1*s.* for visiting distant poor, (that is poor out of the Hundred) and 2*s.* 6*d.* each for vaccination; but the whole sum is now made 210*l.* per annum, without any other sources of emolument. This is at the rate of 15*l.* per 1000 of population, and 12*l.* for every 5 square miles of surface.

In a contiguous Union, that of WANGFORD, in Suffolk, consisting of 27 parishes, having a population of 13,058, containing 55 square miles of surface, and expending, on an average of three years, up to 1835, 9852*l.* per annum, exclusive of migration and emigration expenses, a sum which was reduced last year to 5720*l.*, three medical gentlemen received 172*l.* per annum in the whole, for medical attendance on all paupers in the Union, whether they belonged to it or not, without further emolument, and to find every thing except trusses, which is the case with all the other contracts mentioned. This was at the rate of 13*l.* per 1000 of population, and 15*l.* for every 5 square miles of surface. But the terms have lately been reduced to 158*l.* per annum, which is at the rate of 12*l.* per 1000 of population, and 14*l.* for every 5 square miles of surface. I am acquainted with the Chairman

attendance were even adequately remunerated, it would still form but a small item of general parochial expenditure.

and several of the Directors of the last two Unions, and their report of the success of the arrangements adopted under the new poor laws, is very favourable.

The Hundred of FOREHOE, in Norfolk, consists of 22 parishes, has 13,533 inhabitants, comprises 60 square miles of surface, and in former years expended about 7500*l.* per annum on the poor. The medical attendance was long contracted for at 120*l.* per annum, with one medical gentleman, who engaged some assistance in executing the business. This was at the rate of 9*l.* per 1000, or 10*l.* for 5 miles of surface. The district has been lately put under the charge of four surgeons, who are paid 160*l.* per annum, or in the ratio of 12*l.* per 1000, and 13*l.* for 5 square miles.

The Union of ST. FAITH'S, near Norwich, consists of 32 parishes, of 11,126 inhabitants, of 70 square miles of surface, and pays 10,833*l.* poor-rates. The medical attendance is contracted for at 170*l.* per annum by four surgeons, two of whom live at Norwich. This is at the rate of 15*l.* per 1000, and 11*l.* for 5 square miles.

COSTESSEY, four miles from Norwich, with 1098 inhabitants, 3150 acres, or near 5 square miles of surface, used to be attended by a Norwich surgeon for 6*l.* per annum. It is now united with the Forehoe Union.

DEPWADE Union, in Norfolk, consists of 43 parishes, has 24,678 inhabitants, 110 square miles of surface, pays 24,008*l.* to the poor-rates, and is attended by four medical gentlemen at 100*l.* per annum each, which is at the rate of 16*l.* per 1000 inhabitants, and 18*l.* per 5 miles of surface.

THETFORD Union, in Norfolk, has 34 parishes, 16,198 inhabitants, 174 square miles of surface, pays 10,833*l.* of poor-rates, has three medical gentlemen who contract for medical attendance at 270*l.* per annum, which is at the rate of 17*l.* per 1000, or 8*l.* for every 5 square miles. The Contractors, with the permission of the Guardians, have five other medical gentlemen associated with them, in the performance of their duties, which is found to be in every way advantageous.

SWAFFHAM Union, in Norfolk, consists of 32 parishes, 12,632 inhabitants, 125 square miles of surface, pays 12,545*l.* poor-rates, and has two medical gentlemen, who receive between them 230*l.* per annum, or 18*l.* per 1000 of population, and 9*l.* per 5 square miles of surface.

The very opulent parishes of WOODFORD, WALTHAMSTOW, LEYTON, WANSTEAD, CHINGFORD, and LOUGHTON, in Essex, have a population

Though no reluctance is exhibited to trust the health of hundreds, or of thousands of poor persons, to the care of gentlemen very imperfectly remunerated, yet I am persuaded that matters stand somewhat differently, when the health of a man's own family is concerned. There is little probability, that in such case, he would look out for his medical man, as he would for a parish surgeon, on the sole or principal ground of cheap-

of 13,764, have 30 miles of surface, and paid 8118*l.* of poor-rates. The medical attendance was formerly contracted for at about 280*l.* per annum, of which about 225*l.* were for the four first named parishes. But this last mentioned sum has been reduced to 155*l.* since these parishes were put into the West Ham Union; this is at the rate of 13*l.* per 1000, and 33*l.* for every 5 square miles.

For a short time the drugs in one of those parishes, containing a population of above 4000 persons, were purchased by the parish, a dispenser engaged at a small salary to make them up, and attendance on the patients given by the resident surgeon gratuitously; but yet, though the expense of the drugs alone amounted to near 70*l.* per annum, the Guardians, I understand, have felt themselves justified in contracting for drugs and attendance together, at 50*l.* per annum.

In the Metropolitan parish of ST. LEONARD SHOREDITCH, consisting of 68,564 inhabitants, and having an expenditure of 22,888*l.*, three gentlemen are engaged to attend the whole poor at 80*l.* per annum each, including midwifery and suspended orders.

From a consideration of the statements now made, though only approximating to accuracy, it is clear that the sum employed in the medical department bears a very small proportion to the whole annual expenses; that a fair and proper recompense for medical services would make too trifling an addition to such amount to be at all felt; and that as the rates have been much diminished, and have the prospect of being much more so, such an addition could be the better spared.

In the instances given, the population amounts to 248,441, and the sum paid for medical services to 2293*l.* At this rate, in the whole of England and Wales, containing a population of near 14 millions, the annual payment for the sick poor would be about 128,000*l.* per annum, and therefore, at the present reduced amount of the poor's-rate, as given in the Commissioners' report, (5,526,417*l.*) to a forty-second part of the whole. Supposing, however, that the calculation made is considerably below the truth, I am still justified in saying, that the medical expenses, if fairly and considerably paid, would be only a small part of the annual expenditure.

ness, without his conjugal or parental solicitude being exercised, to inquire whether justice could be done them on the terms offered; and if he made a contract, and at the time of illness and anxiety had the least idea of its not being sufficiently liberal, there is no reason to imagine, that a considerate husband or father, would suffer the letter of an engagement to interfere with making such an alteration in the terms of it, as might insure to his family every exercise of skill and attention, of which the practitioner employed by him was capable. In a question of mere property, there can be no doubt what would be the procedure; and that a cow doctor or a horse doctor would be desired to do every thing possible for the recovery of a sick animal, by the most efficient curative processes, without reference to the expense. I may remark, too, that when slavery existed in our colonies (now, to the honour of our nation, fortunately abolished for ever), feelings of interest and humanity united in procuring every possible attention to the health of the unfortunate subjects of it, which the most liberal and efficient medical arrangements could produce.

But there is, I presume, a feeling common with guardians and parish officers, that if a medical gentleman can once be induced to make a contract for parochial attendance, on terms ever so unfavourable, he will execute his duties conscientiously and efficiently. To the credit of the profession, I believe that the exertion will always go beyond the remuneration, and very often far beyond it; but this must have a boundary, and it does not appear to me humane to the patients, or proper to the practitioner, to make it the interest of the latter to be as sparing as possible of his medicines, and particularly of the more expensive descriptions, and of every medicinal assistance which it requires much time or trouble to impart.* It may

* It is impossible to expect that the ill-paid practitioner will employ the more powerful and expensive medicines in the execution of his contract; as for example, quinine, Peruvian bark, iodine, sarsaparilla, castor oil, citric acid or lemon juice, tinctures, or aromatics; and he has therefore the continual temptation before him

be known whether a man has made a professional call; but though his attendance may be sufficient to satisfy the expectations or demands of the church-warden, overseer, or guardians, it still may not be what a man of zeal would bestow, who feels that confidence is reposed in him, which he is proud of possessing, and anxious to merit. As to medicines, it is clear that as matters at present stand, there is no check whatever in relation to them, except in the sentiments of honourable obligation possessed by the party employed; and

to make cheap substitutions. Lint, though so valuable as a dressing in surgical cases, is expensive, and is therefore sparingly used; but as for leeches, for which there is no proper succedaneum in many serious affections, it cannot be expected that he will incur the heavy expense of providing them, if at all, in the adequate number and frequency; nor can he afford the time to do many little personal offices, which may be eminently conducive to the comfort and well doing of the sick, and which, if his sympathies were not in some degree affected by the hard bargain forced upon him, humanity and professional feeling might induce him to exercise.

The unworthy higgling process, to which a medical man must therefore subject himself, before he can succeed in getting a contract to attend the poor, are unheard of in other liberal professions; and the methods which he must adopt to make his contract answer, risk the production of an unfavourable effect, as well upon his own personal character and feelings, as upon those of the young men under him, by shewing to the latter, that there is one set of medicines, mode of prescription, and kind of attendance in operation for those who can afford to pay for themselves, and another for such as are dependent on the public for relief in sickness.—One of the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners, Mr. POWER, describes well the necessary consequence of inadequate remuneration, at p. 267 of the Second Annual Report on the Poor Laws, when he says, "*that the low scale of remuneration given, in proportion to the services exacted, has formed, in some instances, the excuse for defective attendance, and the supply of a worse description of drugs than could safely be applied to the private patient;*" and "*has made it difficult to the medical man, without great sacrifice, to attend properly on the parish patients.*" Mr. Power makes these observations on the presumption of a greater demand for professional services than was contemplated on making the contract; but they are equally applicable under whatever circumstances the effect may have been produced.

yet the conduct exercised to him, is not usually of that flattering description, which conveys the idea of much of that sort of feeling being presumed to exist.*

I am aware that the Poor Law Commissioners are disposed, in their last report, to consider the principle of competition, as "strictly, and to the fullest extent," applicable to the supply of drugs for the parish poor; but I would beg leave respectfully to state, that this can only be the case, when means are afforded of judging whether such supply is correctly provided. If an hospital or a dispensary purchase drugs by competition, they have proper officers to see that the articles furnished are good. In this case, and under such circumstances, the principle of competition strictly and fully applies; but it does not appear to me that it can do so with parochial attendance, when there is no check, and can be none, on the medical man, as to the quantity or quality of the medicines dispensed by him.

I have thus endeavoured to point out the inapplicability of competition to provide sufficiently for medical attendance on the poor; and I may add, that the inadequate terms of remuneration, give a lower rank to parish employment than it ought to possess, and often prevent the more established and best estimated practitioners of a district, from wishing to have any share in it.

Of this circumstance I know, personally, several examples; and cannot help feeling it to be a subject of great regret, that any want of liberality in medical arrangements, should risk

* A singular method has been adopted by the Guardians of an Union in the county of Norfolk, for the purpose of securing the attendance at the workhouse, of one of the medical gentlemen, a man of great merit, who has the charge, at 50*l.* per annum, of 8 parishes out of 32, containing about 3000 inhabitants, at the distance of from two to six miles from his residence. This is by a stipulation that he must attend at such workhouse, (about four miles from his residence,) *one hour regularly* every day, whether there is any duty requiring such frequent attendance, or such a period of it, or not. How far the thralldom and want of confidence that any such stipulations evince, will be favourable to the interests of the sick poor, is well worthy the particular attention of the Poor Law Commissioners.

depriving the poor, of the best advice which their locality affords them.*

In comparing the plan which is adopted relative to the sick poor, with the mode of conducting many of the other public operations of the country, there are some singular and striking incongruities, to which I request your Lordship's attention. It was no unusual thing, in former times, for parish poor, and parish lunatics, to be farmed out; but though much pains were taken to see that justice was done them, the practice is very properly almost entirely done away. The Government and Parliament have long set themselves against any arrangements, whether medical or general, by which the full effect of those provisions which they may think proper to adopt for the public benefit, has not every chance of being received.

The medical attendance on prisons was formerly conducted very much with a view to cheapness; but when an enactment

* In my own neighbourhood, in the small towns of BECCLES and BUNGAY, the principal practitioners do not take parochial employment; and this is likewise the case at Norwich.—It is not the habit of the profession, either in London or the country, for men of long standing, great reputation, and large practice, to be the candidates for even the most honourable public appointments; and it would be very difficult to fix on any rate of pecuniary recompense, which would be a sufficient inducement for persons thus circumstanced to accept such situations, supposing that they could even be obtained without the labour and inconvenience of a canvass. It must be observed, too, that from various circumstances, there is much difference in the feelings of practitioners in relation to parochial employment, and in the urgency of the endeavours to obtain it.—If, however, sufficient inducements to undertake official attendance on the poor, both as to moderate pecuniary recompense, and honourable and liberal treatment, are held out to young and middle aged men of superior education, and good prospects in life, such persons would be likely, from habit and attachment to their duties, to retain those appointments, (as is often the case with regard to hospitals among the first men, both in London and the country) far beyond the time at which they would think of either soliciting or accepting them. In this way, the ultimate effect would be, to augment the credit of parochial appointments, and to ensure, as long perhaps as the complete period of active usefulness might continue, the services of the most efficient and respected men.

was made, which showed that it was the wish of the legislature to have efficient services, and to pay for them adequately, the visiting magistrates raised the terms of remuneration to a fair extent, and have by this means, pretty generally I believe, now rendered the appointment of surgeons to prisons, one that the most respectable members of the profession feel desirous of obtaining.*

But the cases which I most wish to submit to your Lordship's consideration, respect the medical and surgical departments of the army and navy.

It was formerly the practice, for the surgeons to provide their medicines, in both departments of the public service, with a certain, and I have no doubt an adequate allowance for the purpose; Sir JAMES MACGRIGOR, the Director General of Military Hospitals, does me the favour to inform me, that this practice was discontinued in the army about the year 1793; and Sir WILLIAM BURNETT, the Physician General of the Navy, is so obliging as to state, that from the year 1796, some of the most important medicines were furnished

* By the enactment of the 4th Geo. IV, c. 64, Justices have the power to direct "a reasonable sum to be paid *as salary*" to the surgeon, "and also such sums of money *as shall be due* for medicines, and other articles for the sick;" by which the principle of giving a proper remuneration for services, separately from the value of the medicines, seems to be completely recognized.—The salary to the surgeon of NORWICH CASTLE, (the county goal) including medicines, was formerly only 40*l.* per annum. It was then made 80*l.*, and subsequently, I believe, to the passing of this law, was increased to 120*l.*, with a very kind intimation from the visiting magistrates, that it would be further increased if necessary.—At BURY ST. EDMONDS, the salary was formerly only 40*l.* per annum; it was afterwards made 60*l.*, and is now 100*l.*—The surgeon to the House of Correction and the New Prison, at CLERKENWELL, receives 300*l.* per annum salary, and 100*l.* for medicines.

I may state likewise, that the stipends of clergymen to goals, were very properly made more liberal by the same act; but I have regretted to see only 80*l.* per annum offered by some Unions for double duty, when, under such circumstances, the ordinary payment to curates would be 120*l.* per annum, and of chaplains to prisons, in a graduated scale, from 150*l.* to 250*l.*, or even more.

by the then Sick and Hurt Board; and that from the year 1805, the whole of the drugs were provided by Government, and the pay of naval surgeons regulated by an order in Council as it now stands.

Sir JAMES MACGRIGOR mentions the old practice as being "fraught with evil consequences"; but if this were the case, where the pecuniary allowance was liberal, and the opportunities of inspection afforded, through the means of naval and military discipline, ample; much more is it likely to be so, under the present circumstances of medical attendance on the poor of the country generally. Cæsar's wife ought not to be suspected; and I have no doubt that it was felt to be highly desirable, to remove every possible opportunity of throwing out suspicions of interested or mercenary conduct, against naval or military medical gentlemen. Certain it is, that the additional encouragement given in both departments by Government; the kind protection afforded by naval and military chiefs; and the unwearied care and attention of the heads of the Army and Navy Medical Boards, have infused among the medical men of both services, so much enterprise, and so much eagerness for professional distinction, as to have forwarded much the scientific cultivation of the profession, and by this means greatly tended to promote the interest of humanity.—It is pleasing to see, in the medical profession, that men who have incurred perils, and endured hardships in the service of their country, should be able, on their retirement, to take an honourable position among the highest of their respective ranks, and bring into civil life, augmented energy, information, and experience.

Precisely the same plan is followed by the East India Company; and I am enabled to state, on the authority of Mr. MELVILL, the Finance Secretary, "that the medicines employed for the troops in India, and for the Indian Navy, are furnished wholly from the Government stores; the surgeons having no pecuniary interest whatever in the supply."

It is of great importance to the general advantage of the community, that the tone of feelings of the country surgeon

should be kept up, by a consideration of the elevated nature of his studies and pursuits; the important character of his duties; and by his having the example always before him, of the eminent men who exercise the same profession which he does, participate in the same feelings, and with whom he is very probably conjoined as a member of some college or corporation.

Under such impressions, he is far better prepared to maintain the professional energy on which his patients are so dependent for their safety, in what may happen to be the most sudden, dangerous, and difficult emergencies, than if he has the feeling invariably presented to him, of his services being inadequately estimated, and ungraciously and imperfectly recompensed.*

* Most country surgeons, even in the most remote districts, have not only the qualifications which the Apothecary's Act requires, but are members of the Royal College of Surgeons, a rank which it is not a matter of obligation, but which they feel to be creditable to possess. Notwithstanding the humble duties which a superficial view of the subject may induce some persons erroneously to attach to country practitioners, their education, (the medical part of which embraces the same objects in all the departments of the profession) the liberal objects of their studies and associations, and the habits of observation which their daily avocations produce, communicate to them very frequently, a respectable character for information and intelligence, and sometimes a well marked distinction for scientific and literary attainments.—It is little known out of the profession, that some of the most delicate and important operations of surgery, sometimes fall to the lot of country surgeons; and I particularly allude to *strangulated hernia*, in which they may be called upon at any moment, to operate; and in which the loss of time, in sending to a distance, might cost a patient his life.

Our provincial hospitals are well known to have furnished some of the most expert operating surgeons of this or any other country; but in prosecuting some statistical researches, several years since, into the tendency to calculous complaints, which were honoured with a place in the Philosophical Transactions, I had occasion to become acquainted with the expertness and skill, as well as the enterprise and courage, exhibited by many country practitioners, particularly in this part of the kingdom where stone is so prevalent, in the performance of the

As the attendant of both the rich and the poor, the medical man forms a useful medium of communication and reciprocity; and it would be very important, in the execution of the momentous duties which are entrusted to the Poor Law Commissioners, that they should have the co-operation of the medical profession throughout the country; for it is not to be forgotten, that on the humanity, judgment, and independence of that body, the poor must hinge entirely, for their comfort and well doing during indisposition.

With regard to the mode in which a change in the medical arrangements could be effected, it would not be difficult to assimilate the system of providing medicines for parishes, in some degree with the method pursued in furnishing them for the army and navy, or for hospitals and dispensaries. It would be important to banish entirely the present plan of making it the interest of a professional man to withhold the medical aid that is proper; and this, it appears to me, may be readily effected, either by providing parishes or unions with a certain supply of medicines, and awarding a remuneration for attendance separately; or if it be determined that one sum shall still cover the whole, by making a proper estimate of the value of the medicines necessary, and superadding a fair remuneration for attendance and trouble.

Such an arrangement would be most readily effected with the sanction of Government, through the means of the Poor Law Commissioners. But it is a matter of grave and important consideration, whether it would not be in proper conformity with other parts of our social system, that there should be a medical gentleman, of character and experience, connected with the Poor Law Commission, and possessing the confidence of the public and the profession, to study and

operation of lithotomy, when there is so much credit to be risked, and so little to be gained, unless in a large field of operative practice.

I have likewise much pleasure in adding, that the volumes of the PROVINCIAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, in the variety and excellence of the papers which they contain, afford a highly honourable view of the intellect, energy, and endowments of provincial medical men of all classes.

advise on the many subjects of a professional nature which must continually come before the Board. While parishes acted separately, such a plan was impracticable; but now that the management of the poor is centred in one body, it is difficult to see how the medical department can be efficiently, or satisfactorily regulated, without such aid. The Commander-in-chief of the Army, or the Lords of the Admiralty, would never think of trusting solely to their own knowledge of medical affairs, for managing concerns which relate to the health of our soldiers and sailors. They depute this duty to adequate and efficient men, who, while they leave the whole power of the general regulating body untouched, are the confidential advisers of the heads of departments, and are a guarantee to the public and the profession, for their having every species of professional information placed before them to direct their decisions. Your Lordship is by law the ultimate arbiter in all matters connected with the Poor Laws; but with every deference to your Lordship's knowledge, and to your anxious wish to do every thing which humanity can dictate for the good of those whose interests come under your especial protection as the Secretary of Home affairs, I cannot help being of opinion, that it would have been advantageous if some of the points submitted to your consideration in the annual reports, had previously come under particular professional cognizance.—I may deduce another instance of the same division of duty, from the Court of Chancery, in which, it is well known, that though the Lord Chancellor has the sole right of decision on every point which comes before him, he never acts on medical subjects, without medical advice.

I took the liberty, at the commencement of my letter, of stating my impression, that the Poor Law Commissioners had fallen into some misconception relative to medical men and medical practice. I feel it to be no impeachment of the highest fitness for exercising the most important public duties, that there should not be a familiarity with all the details of a purely professional nature, which may be connected with them. Such an acquaintance is certainly never expected of the high

public functionaries to whom I have just alluded. But more particularly I consider it desirable, that the Poor Law Commissioners, with the large mass of multifarious duties, which, from the instant of their coming into office, has most severely and constantly pressed upon them, should have had the means of knowing something of the character, feelings, and pretensions of the large, well-educated, and useful body of men, in whose affairs they found it to be their duty to legislate. In particular, they should have been minutely acquainted with various important circumstances relative not only to medical affairs generally, but medical attendance on the poor, which, with every deference to their talents, powers of observation, and experience, I consider it to be hardly possible that any one, who has not been called upon to make such affairs his particular study, can know with sufficient accuracy for important practical purposes.

I do not at all wonder, that from the first of their coming into office, the Commissioners should be impressed with the absolute necessity of making retrenchments in every quarter. To effect this object, appeared indeed to be a main and primary object of their formation. The gravamen of the poor rates has always been considered to be their magnitude, and this supposed to arise, as well from extravagance in necessary expenditure, as misapplication of relief to cases not requiring it. In correcting the former, it must have been felt difficult to act upon any other principle, than that every item should be closely looked to, and unsparingly cut down. It could hardly be imagined that parsimony and extravagance could ever co-exist; and that, while the great mass of expenses required curtailment, some particular ones were to be untouched, or even augmented.

It was perhaps not altogether unnatural too, with the impression which the commissioners seem to have early imbibed as to the mean and mercenary conduct of certain individuals of the profession, relative to suspended orders, that the general inference which they were disposed to form of the body at large, was not a little disadvantageous; and that they might

hence feel themselves justified in applying the tradesmanlike mode of contract and open tender, as a defence against selfish and interested conduct. If it could be at all imagined, that the habits and feelings of the profession generally, would condescend to make a property of suspended orders, and to fee "inferior officers"—"to search out" for them, no means of prevention could be conceived to be too harsh and too strict. But without at all questioning the existence of an occasional deviation from rectitude, from which even the sacred profession itself cannot, from the infirmities of human nature, be in every instance exempt, I must beg leave most respectfully, but most firmly, to deny the propriety of the generalization at which the commissioners have arrived on this subject, and the procedure which they have in consequence adopted. Nor does the result of my enquiries at all favour the supposition, that the charge for suspended orders is usually either excessive, or made at the highest rate of professional usage.* The suffrages of all classes of society, from the throne to the cottage, unite in stamping the feelings and conduct of the medical profession in all its departments, with an honour, and probity, a trustworthiness and decorum, which well merit the unbounded confidence which are reposed in it. Hence it is hardly a matter of surprise, that the profession generally should feel hurt, by gentlemen of the endowments and character of the Poor Law Commissioners, and of their elevated position in society, entertaining any disposition to give credit to, or act upon so unworthy an imputation as that which I have noticed.

By the second report of the Poor Law Commissioners it is

* Suspended orders in Norwich, when they were charged for separately, amounted, I understand, to 120*l.* or 130*l.* per annum. In many parishes and districts concerning which I had the opportunity of making inquiries, the charge was trifling. The difference in the expense of medicines to the rich and poor is principally in the form in which they are given; draughts being much more expensive than mixtures, and therefore appropriated to the more wealthy classes. I have every reason to believe, that in suspended orders, the more expensive form was not given, and that the charges were those usually made to the middle classes of society.

satisfactory to see, that in recommending the method of tender, they disclaim any proceeding at all derogatory to the character of the medical profession; but at the same time I think it must be fairly admitted, in justification of the feelings of annoyance which have arisen on the subject, that in adopting the practice in the first instance, in order to guard against the unworthy conduct of some particular men, it was difficult to view the proposition in the complimentary light in which the explanation of the Commissioners has endeavoured to put it.

With regard to the opinion of the Commissioners, that the office of parochial or district surgeon, is likely to offer inducements to obtain it, differing in degree, but similar in kind to those presented by the chief medical institutions in the country, I have every conviction that the united feeling of the profession is not in accordance with this idea.

Hospitals and Dispensaries impart a considerable degree of consequence to the offices connected with them, because those offices are generally held by physicians and surgeons of rank and estimation; but at present, certainly, the collateral inducements to hold the appointment of parochial medical attendant, cannot at all be viewed as superceding considerations of emolument. Most of the circumstances which give dignity to the great medical situations of the country are sufficiently obvious; and it may be stated as an additional ground of disparity between those offices and that of the surgeon to the poor, that the finding and dispensing, and at the same time sparing medicines, is a striking characteristic of the latter, with which hospital physicians and surgeons have nothing whatever to do.

But it may be remarked likewise, that independently of the credit which attaches to the great medical appointments in question, and which is supposed to afford a sufficient remuneration in the professional engagements to which it leads, there is frequently a large and certain emolument arising to the officers, and particularly the surgeons of charities, in the fees paid by pupils for hospital attendance, and in the lectureships with which hospital appointments are so often connected.

Since the Apothecary's Act of 1815 enlarged the education of the general practitioner, and in particular made it obligatory to have the benefit of seeing medical, as well as surgical practice, not only has the attendance on physicians become much increased, and their emoluments therefore augmented, but dispensaries have become, in many cases, extensive and valuable schools of instruction, and in this way of pecuniary benefit to the officers connected with them. The advantage derived from pupils, is not however confined to London; but takes place, to a certain extent, in all the hospitals, and some of the dispensaries of the country.

At the first establishment of hospitals, it appears indeed to have been the plan, to make some pecuniary recompense to their medical officers; and even at the present day, I am much mistaken if the original salaries are not still continued in some, or all the royal foundations of Edward the sixth. With the first formed dispensary of the metropolis, this was also a part of the original constitution; and whenever the finances have allowed it, the practice is, I believe, still pursued.*

There is, however, an important difference between charities which are dependent on the uncertainties of voluntary contributions, and such as are empowered by law to raise sufficient funds for their expenses.

In the former case, though it is often difficult to keep up the necessary pecuniary supplies, yet it is apparent that there are considerable means of compensation always in reserve, for the services rendered, independent of immediate and direct salaries.

There is likewise in the publicity of duties, in association with colleagues, but most particularly in the watchfulness of zealous, intelligent, and scrutinizing pupils, a strong stimulus

* The GENERAL DISPENSARY (which is still carried on, on the site of Shaftesbury House, Aldersgate Street,) was the first establishment of the kind in this country, and is only of the date of 1770. From having been some years physician to this charity early in life, I happen to know, that for a long period after its formation, a salary of one hundred guineas per annum was paid to its medical officers, which was only discontinued from a defect of funds.

to the exertion of talents and energy, and a powerful guarantee against sluggishness and routine.

But the exercise of regular and laborious duties, unaccompanied by the collateral advantages which I have had occasion to notice, cannot be long depended upon without adequate remuneration. There ought, as it appears to me, to be a complete feeling of responsibility on the part of official persons of every kind; and a perfect and practical power of control on that of their employers.*

This is the judicious principle on which parliament has invariably acted in relation to ordinary and indispensable duties; and I have every hope and expectation, that under your Lordship's auspices, the same humane and efficient arrangements will be introduced into the provisions connected with the sick poor, which pervade all the other parts of our social system, in which medical relief or inspection are concerned.† Much more difficulty has been anticipated in making satisfactory arrangements for parochial medical attendance, than it appears to me can be practically found to exist. Medical men are

* In NORWICH, as I have already stated, the medical attendance is gratuitous; but continual changes take place. At first these were the services of physicians, but no one of that class will now accept office; and the poor are made entirely dependent on the younger class of practitioners, who may be expected, like their predecessors, soon to throw up their appointments, though the addition of a very trifling sum to the annual expenditure, would render the attendance on the poor very satisfactory.

I regret to be informed, that in the very opulent parish of MARYLEBONE, with a population of 122,000, (where it appears by the parliamentary returns, that the estimate of real property in 1815, was near 510,000*l.* per annum, and the poor-rates on the average of the three then preceding years, about 40,000*l.* per annum) there has been the singular and discreditable parsimony lately introduced, of withdrawing all salary from the attending physicians, to whom 100*l.* per annum were, I understand, in the habit of being previously paid.

† I have already adverted to provisions which respect medical attendance on prisons; and may also notice an example of a similar kind, in the medical arrangements connected with the insane, for which the public are under so many important obligations to Mr. GORDON, the member for Cricklade.

represented as being the best judges of the value of their own time and services, and so they certainly are; but this is likewise the case with persons in other professions and lines of life; and it does not prevent those who may have occasion for the services of the latter, from employing the usual means of inquiry and observation, to satisfy themselves as to the proper and reasonable extent of remuneration. The salaries of auditors and relieving officers have been determined on this principle, without tender, and without competition, except as to fitness for office; though there has been as much apparent disparity in the positions, and much more in the ranks of life of candidates for the former appointments, (one of them in this county being a baronet,) than can be expected to exist in the medical profession. It would certainly have been satisfactory and appropriate to consult independent members of the profession itself, as to what might be regarded as fair elements for fixing on remuneration; but I would submit whether it is not somewhat ungracious to appear to pay medical men a compliment by inviting them to fix their own terms, when the opinion is to be employed, not in order to communicate information for the purpose of assisting the judgment of their employers in fixing on a fair and proper remuneration, but to place gentlemen in opposition to each other, that their services may be obtained at the smallest possible amount. It is stated, indeed, that there is no actual obligation to accept the lowest offer; yet there is, unquestionably, an implied one, unless for an adequate reason to the contrary, which the good character and fair pretensions of most candidates will necessarily make a very rare occurrence. But even then the advantage is entirely with the employer; for the candidate contends in the dark, and without the usual benefits which attach to competitors for ordinary contracts; for he is generally made to understand that his proposals are not to be beyond a certain fixed, and sometimes very inadequate amount.

In considering the means by which any satisfactory conclusions can be arrived at in respect to the expenditure necessary

for administering medical relief, it seems to be perfectly clear that attendance and medicines stand upon totally separate and distinct grounds. The difficulties which appear to attach to the subject, have very much arisen from not making this separation. Gentlemen may be variously remunerated for their time and trouble; but the *full value* of medicines must be paid for, if they are expected to be given. When that most estimable man, Sir EDWARD PARRY, was an assistant commissioner, and met a large assemblage of persons in one of the principal towns of this county, to elucidate the nature and provisions of the poor laws, he was appealed to, I have been informed, as the son of a very enlightened physician, to use his endeavours to protect the profession, of which his father was a distinguished ornament, from the degradation which seemed to be preparing for it in some parts of the country. Sir Edward felt the appeal very strongly, and in reply was stated to have expressed the assurance, that it was far from his wish to press harshly or injuriously on the medical man, but "that the Poor Laws' Act was one of *economy*, and therefore the profession must conform to it, as well as other classes of society." But what, I would venture to ask, is economy? If, according to the expression of a distinguished writer, it is "the parent of liberty and ease," it can only become so by properly regulating, not by withholding necessary expenditure.

Should it be the intention in providing the medicines which are to supply the poor, to continue the mode of contract, there are still the means of obtaining information from hospitals and dispensaries, and from gentlemen who have no interest in making inaccurate statements, as to what the lowest provision of proper drugs, for a certain extent of demand, may fairly amount to.* There is hardly a town in the kingdom, which

* It may be proper to state, that in hospitals, and very generally in dispensaries, a set of prescriptions is in common use, which form what is called a *pharmacopæia pauperum*. This little digest of pharmaceutical practice, is useful in saving time; but its object is likewise to bring together cheap formulæ, as far as cheapness and efficiency can be conjoined.

contains five thousand inhabitants, where there is not now a dispensary ; and as institutions of this kind are managed with every proper regard to economy, there could be no difficulty in ascertaining what their expenses are, and in making such modifications of their arrangements, as may at once accord with the convenience, and be subservient to the efficiency of parochial practice.

But I would submit that it would be in every respect better to adopt the plan which has been long invariably followed in the army and navy, where drugs are supplied in certain specified quantities to ships and regiments, under the sanction, and by the authority of high and responsible professional advisers, by which means there has been a regularity and precision universally introduced into the service, which are eminently favorable both to the scientific and humane exercise of the profession.

The total interdiction of tender, and the determination to allow the full value for medicines and curative applications of every description, would be a great improvement in parochial practice ; and though it would still leave an important arrangement to be determined upon, that of compensation for attendance, yet the consideration of this circumstance would be rendered comparatively easy, when it was once unfettered by the various collateral matters with which it has been usually encumbered.

It is only under particular circumstances that parliament fix the amount of salaries ; but if they would condescend, as in the case of chaplains to prisons, and medical inspectors of lunatic establishments, to point out the extent of remuneration for parochial medical duties, according to some particular scale, this would, without doubt, be the most satisfactory mode of proceeding. If, however, in defect of such absolute appointment, they should direct a reasonable and adequate stipend to be paid for parochial attendance, and leave it to the Home Secretary, under his responsibility as a minister of the crown, to fix the precise amount, I have no doubt that the surgeon to the poor would, in this way, be fairly and honourably remunerated. In all matters which concern medical attendance,

as far as the Court of Chancery is concerned, the Lord Chancellor himself determines the details, under such advice as he may require; and there seems to be no reason why the Home Secretary, as having peculiarly the care of all the domestic interests of the country, should not be authorized to follow the same plan.

I have already noticed the circumstances which seemed to show that the Poor Law Commissioners, at the time of their appointment, did not enter with perfect precision into the character of medical men, and medical arrangements. And had this not been the case, I have no doubt that they would have been full as successful in giving satisfaction, when medical gentlemen were concerned, as in the case of relieving officers, auditors, and assistant commissioners; but, under the present circumstances, they would hardly feel it delicate or satisfactory to have any concern with the direction of medical salaries; though I have no doubt that they would, under a strong indication of the feeling of parliament as to the necessity of adequate remuneration, put aside any peculiar opinions of their own on the subject, and carry into effect such indication, with scrupulous honour and good faith. Least of all, however, does it appear to me proper to entrust to Boards of Guardians, the appointment of medical salaries; for with every sentiment of humanity with which I believe them to be possessed, as far as the interests of the poor are immediately concerned, and with the most correct and liberal feelings in their individual capacity, they often seem disposed to consider it in perfect accordance with the honourable discharge of their duties, to look to the trifling savings withheld from the clergy, or from the medical attendant on the poor, as matter of much self gratulation, and great public benefit. They do not seem to bear in mind the highly important and interesting duties attached to the former, and that the liberal provisions of parliament in respect to them, should be made as much as possible a subject of imitation; nor do they appear to be at all aware how much the interests of humanity, in what concerns the poor, are dependent on making a reasonable and proper, as well as respectable return, for the services of the latter.

But when measures are brought forward which will occasion any considerable augmentation of expense, I am aware that financial difficulties, of a nature hardly to be overcome, will sometimes oppose themselves to the most wise and benevolent intentions of the statesman. I have already mentioned my belief, that a fair and proper recompense for medical services, would make a very trifling addition to the amount of the poor-rates. I may state as a proof of this opinion, a fact which has come within my own immediate knowledge, namely, that in order to *double* the stipends of the medical officers of an union in the county of Norfolk, (and which in no way differs from the average of the county) it would only cost the principal ^{inhabitant} owner, and principal occupier of a particular parish, the sums respectively of 5*s.* 10*d.* and 17*s.* 6*d.* per annum; and this when the poor-rates have been reduced about one-third since the introduction of the new poor laws.*

And yet it is such trifling savings that have been made to interfere with the interests of humanity, and with the credit of an honourable profession.

I trust, therefore, that your Lordship will be of opinion, that no financial difficulties can be expected to present themselves in the way of effecting such changes as it may be thought proper to adopt, for any real and substantial improvement in the medical arrangements connected with the poor. But there are a few other considerations, to which I am desirous of directing your Lordship's attention, in an attempt to render medical attendance more effective. One is, that districts should not be too extensive; for there is necessarily a limit both to bodily and mental exertions.

* The district is that of Loddon and Clavering, and the parish is that in which I reside. The whole rates amount to 649*l.* per annum, according to the last report of the Poor Law Commissioners; those of the parish to 254*l.*, and the medical salaries to 210*l.* of which 8*l.* 4*s.* are the share of the parish in question. The assessment of the two parties mentioned, are reciprocally about 100*l.* and 300*l.*, the whole parish assessment being about 2900*l.*, and the number of acres about 2100.

Long and fatiguing journeys over large tracts of country, and hurried visits to very numerous patients, may satisfy the superficial observer as to the attention and assiduity of the practitioner, but offer little real advantage to the patient, in cases which call for thought, discrimination, and skill. Such sort of practice, instead of schooling the mind to accurate observation, on which so much of the efficiency of medical practice depends, is very likely to do it the most essential injury, and to convert the best endowed, and best intentioned student, very speedily and irretrievably, into the superficial and inefficient routinist.

The experienced practitioner will see, at one view, the essential points of a case; but a young man, however well educated he may be, can only obtain this facility of apprehension, by great attention in early life, and in particular by having his observation at first directed to only a small number of cases.

A point in some degree connected with this, I would likewise beg leave to notice, which is, that parochial duties should, as much as possible, be confined within the limits of ordinary professional avocations, for then the character of medical gentlemen is well known; and it is a gratification to poor persons who may have been in the habit of looking up to particular individuals with respect and regard, to have the benefit of their advice and attendance.

The smaller may be the district, the smaller must necessarily be the extent of the remuneration; but it never need be so small as not to afford sufficient scope for the public duties of a practitioner, who must still be expected to look to private practice for his proper and effectual recompense.

If, therefore, the Poor Law Commissioners would employ the influence of their high situations to improve the state of the profession, and to promote its successful cultivation among the junior practitioners, I would respectfully submit these particular points to their serious and attentive consideration. I have suggested, in a previous part of my letter, the propriety of having a medical gentleman of experience connected with

the Poor Law Commission, as in other public departments, when medicine is at all concerned. I beg to add upon this subject, that if any such measure were approved by your Lordship and Parliament, it might be rendered subservient to much public benefit, by affording the means of turning to some public account, the great mass of important observations to which well regulated parochial practice might be expected to give rise.

The report given of the successful establishment of independent medical clubs, in a great number of Unions, is particularly gratifying; but I cannot, I must own, view the exhibition of medical relief to poor persons, any more than giving them the advantages of education, as productive of the evil consequences, which from some observations contained in the Commissioners' Report, appear to be feared from them.*

* A very zealous, and able Poor Law Commissioner, with whom I have the pleasure of being acquainted, Dr. Kaye, attributes, in a very interesting memoir on Suffolk and Norfolk, which appeared in the second report of the Poor Law Commissioners, a very unfavourable influence to the facility of obtaining medical relief, which well supported hospitals, and other means of providing it, afford; and he regards medical relief as "a form of pauperism, which is the more dangerous, since it habituates the poor to dependance, under circumstances which cloak the tendencies of the system." He states that in Manchester, and its adjacent townships, (the population of which, in 1831, amounted to 230,000 inhabitants,) there is at present an annual medical expenditure of 18,000*l.*, which has much increased of late years, and is still likely to go on increasing, and he adduces some other places in corroboration of his views.

The careful examination of Dr. Kaye's conclusions, relative to the effects of medical relief, in which I have the misfortune, but with every feeling of respect, very much to differ from him, would carry my appended observations too far. I must satisfy myself, therefore, with remarking, in addition to what I have said ^{above} at page 487, that the disposition to seek for medical aid may arise from other causes, in a flourishing town, than a tendency to pauperism. It may be connected, for example, with an augmented estimate of the utility of the profession, a dislike to empiricism, and an increased value for the skill of the physicians and surgeons who exercise it in medical charities, and who occupy, generally, the first rank in their profession.

With regard to the apparent magnitude of the sum raised, in proportion to the population, it does not appear to me by any means equal

I am very averse to consider as paupers, persons who merely receive medicines or instruction from the public. Nor ought the noble hospitals, and other medical establishments of which our country has so much reason to be proud, to be viewed as at all accessory to the demoralizing operation of pauperism.

The means of having medical relief and education, should, I would submit, be as little narrowed as possible; and with all the advantages which sober habits, strict economy, and a general elevation in the scale of social beings will produce, it is difficult to conceive that an agricultural labourer, earning at most 9s. per week, of which he pays 1s. or 1s. 6d. for his cottage, can be beyond the necessity of receiving, in sickness, medical as well as other aid. Under such circumstances, I have every reason to believe, that the Poor Law Commissioners will give their complete sanction to the relief being adequate to the occasion; and I am happy in having it in my power to state, that I have never, either in town or country, applied to Overseers or Guardians on behalf of sick persons, or such as from age or infirmity were unable to do any thing for themselves, without the most humane attention being paid to my representations.

The various means now in operation, for elevating the condition of the labourer, will, I trust, have an extensive and beneficial result; but time is required for the object, and I would also say, a greater increase of wages than has yet taken place.

But there is one subsidiary point to which I am anxious to direct your Lordship's particular attention, and that is the increase of appropriations, (for I dislike the perverted term of allotments) of a small quantity of ground, as a quarter of an acre, for a cottage garden. A labourer would be willing to pay even double the ordinary letting value for such a portion of ground, and the advantages produced by it would be incalculable, in filling up his spare time, employing his family, and furnishing himself with work in uncertain weather, or

to the medical expenses of London, which, with its population of 1,400,000, would, at this rate, have an expenditure in medical charities under 110,000*l.* per annum; nor do I apprehend it is much, if at all greater, than that of most other provincial towns.

when he cannot procure it elsewhere. He would thus be enabled very effectually to assist the endeavours now in operation, for bettering his situation, and increasing his independence; and would have it in his power, more readily, and more effectually than by any other means either in use or prospect, to provide the funds necessary to prevent him from ever having occasion for parish relief.

It would be of great importance that the Poor Law Commissioners should give their powerful aid, to the furtherance of this object; and if the assistant Commissioners, under their auspices, would avail themselves of their visits to unions and parishes, to impress on landholders and farmers, how subservient distributions of small portions of land as gardens, at almost any rent which could be set upon them, would be to the comfort of the poor, and the favourable operation of the Poor Laws, the measure (which with its other recommendations, would be exceedingly popular among agricultural labourers,) would have the prospect of being soon very generally adopted.

I am sensible, my Lord, of having trespassed too much on your time, by the extent of my observations, and I would therefore, in conclusion, merely express the hope, that an opportunity of obtaining medical relief should still be allowed to the labourer and workman, to the full extent of the demand, without too nicely balancing any mixed considerations, relative to the ultimate effects of the practice. When the position of the lower orders becomes more elevated, their feelings of independence increased, and the success and advantages of medical clubs more generally known and experienced, the necessity for having relief from the parish surgeon, and at the expense of the parish, will necessarily cease, or be much diminished.

I have the honour to be,

With high respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's faithful and obedient servant,

J. YELLOLY, M.D.

Woodton Hall, Norfolk, Feb. 11th, 1837.



