

drawn, not only to cover, but to receive the pus and matter which may be drawn therefrom. The object of this apparatus is to nullify the necessity of applying poultices, and the inconvenience attending them to the patients; and the great advantage obtained, that the pus and matter may be drawn from the abscess almost without the patient feeling the operation of the machine. The cup at the end of the gutta-percha tube from the receiver may be made of a composition of gutta-percha or of glass, and may also have a hollow interstice round it, through which hot water, heated air, or vapour, may pass, to cause a warmth round the surface of the abscess. The cup at the end of the tube may, of course, be made removable by unscrewing, and any size affixed as required; and likewise sponges might prudently be fixed in the cup, also removable when desired. The principle I have here stated may also have the same effect as a blister—that is to say, in drawing the humours from the body, without irritating or creating a sore on the skin, or, in cases of apoplexy, in causing the egress of the blood which flows so sluggishly from the severed artery. The point obtained would be, that the power of exhaustion by air-pump is great, and the effect on the patient's feelings in the exercise of it almost imperceptible.

ASSURANCE OFFICES AND MEDICAL MEN.

A NEW QUESTION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The accompanying lithographed circular deserves our notice at this time. Can you oblige by giving it a place? Perhaps you would not, under the circumstances, think much of the trouble, if, after printing it, every member of our profession who wishes well to such a scheme as that proposed, and who has any remarks to offer, were to write to you his opinion, and, at the end of a month, you could perhaps favour us with your own judgment upon these replies? If time and inclination do not allow of your granting the second of the above two requests, oblige, at least, by printing the circular and this note, with the request that the Manchester and other Ethical Societies would receive the said remarks from us all, and communicate to you, for publication, the results of their deliberations.

With such opportunities as we now have for acting pretty tolerably in unison, we are, I think, much to blame, not to elicit, in every such case as the present, the opinion of the great majority.

Believe me, Sir, yours truly,

Feb. 13, 1850.

MEDICUS.

The Industrial and General Life Assurance and Deposit Company,
2, Waterloo-place, Pall-mall, London, Jan. 28, 1850.

SIR,—I beg to inclose a prospectus of this Company, and shall be glad of your co-operation in forwarding the objects contemplated.

Considering the desire of the directors to extend the benefits of life assurance to the industrial classes, it is hoped their medical advisers will accept a fee of 2s. 6d. for each proposal when the premium is payable weekly or monthly, or when the sum assured does not exceed £100, the usual fee of one guinea being allowed on all other occasions, whether the life reported on be accepted or not.

I shall be happy to forward a book prospectus, containing additional information.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM THOMAS WOODS,
Resident Director.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg leave to forward you the name of another of those Assurance Companies, whose "economy" denies a just remuneration for a medical opinion.

Enclosed are two of the questions in the "Medical Report;" also a portion of the printed letter addressed to me, with my reply, and the answer.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Halifax, Feb. 5, 1850.

THOS. HARRISON, M.R.C.S.

Halifax, Dec. 29, 1849.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of a form of certificate relative to the health &c. of a Mr. P. of this town, and shall feel obliged by your informing me whether any "conscientious" fee is allowed for my "conscientious" opinion.

I remain, your obedient servant,

THOS. HARRISON, Surgeon.

To the Secretary of the British Empire Mutual Life
Assurance Company.

British Empire Mutual Assurance Company,
December 31, 1849.

SIR,—In answer to your note of 29th, the office does not pay any fee to a medical referee of a person proposing to insure their life. The party referring should pay their medical referee, as the office pays their own.

Yours respectfully,

T. Harrison, Esq., Surgeon, Halifax.

JAMES INGLIS.

United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution,
39, Moorgate-street, London, Oct. 22, 1849.

SIR,—Mr. —, of Carlisle, having made a proposal to this institution for an assurance on his life, and having referred me to you for information as to his general health, I have to request, on his behalf, that you will kindly answer the enclosed queries as fully and correctly as your knowledge of him will admit. It is important, for the security of the party himself, that no material circumstance be concealed.

As communications of this nature are considered strictly confidential, a perfect reliance may be felt that the tendency of your answers will never be suffered to transpire.

I shall feel obliged if you will have the kindness to return the accompanying certificate, addressed as above, at your earliest convenience.

I am, respectfully,

THEODORE COMPTON, Secretary.

. Medical men and others are respectfully informed that this is not a trading company, but a society of mutual assurers.

Carlisle, 26th Oct. 1849.

SIR,—Yours of the 22nd I received, and I learn from it that your office, "United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution," declines giving the usual fee to the medical referee of the applicant. Your office is not alone in this reprehensible and suicidal conduct; nor do I deal differently by you from what I do by certain other offices,—some of which have learned wisdom. I decline giving you a certificate: my fee is one guinea; and in return for it, or the engagement to pay it, I shall, in any case, certify; not otherwise. The gentleman named by you was amazed at the idea of his feeing me for doing your work, as much as I was at that of doing your work gratuitously. In vain I reasoned with him. Even the following illustration failed to convince him: "Suppose," said I, "that a retail tradesman wished you to supply him with £200 or £300 worth of stock. You think that you know him; and, favourably impressed, you are inclined to let him have the goods on the usual credit. I come in; I signal you to the back room; you are aware of my perfect access to your customer's most private affairs; I apprise you that commercially he is a broken reed; you decline the order." Actually, Mr. M. could not see that, in this supposed case, my advice was for the benefit of his would-be customer! Nor did he seem able to understand on what grounds I could claim a fee from the disappointed man! He seemed positively to think that he, in such case, would be the person indebted to me for protecting him from needless loss, and that, if any one remunerated me, that one should be himself! You will doubtless show him the folly of this.

Your "communications being strictly confidential," and their "results never suffered to transpire," highly diverted him, the ingenuousness, the John-Bull-like character, seemed so very striking. His amusement arose out of the reference to concealment in the latter part of the sentence. Do you know, he really thought if, in the case as above supposed, I had followed his would-be customer, beckoned himself too aside, and apprised him of his risk, and if the would-be customer knew that I was in communication with him, and that I alone of all men besides himself knew of his tottering circumstances, and that, after my communication, he, the wholesale dealer, so immediately before ready, very ready, to deal with him, had suddenly withdrawn, and declined further negotiation—he, Mr. M., would have it, that no power on earth could prevent the applicant from ascribing all to me! Could you have believed it? I think that, with your candour and liberality, your touching consideration for the interests of others, ("not being a trading company,") it would only be to give you the hint to supply the profession with facts and arguments to meet such people with. I have often met with people like Mr. M.—very often. I think that they are fearfully on the increase. Send your arguments to THE LANCET; they would constitute, I assure you, quite a treat.

Believe me, Sir, yours obediently,

ROBT. ELLIOT, M.D.

Theodore Compton, Esq., 39, Moorgate-street, London.

SUGGESTIONS FOR AN AMENDED CHARTER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your impression of Saturday, January 5th, contains "Suggestions for an Amended Charter," submitted by Mr. Bottomley to the president and vice-presidents of the Royal College of Surgeons of England; also some editorial remarks thereon.

Do I understand rightly, "that members of the college of ten years' standing, if they do not keep open shops, or carry on a retail trade, shall be eligible for election as fellows"?—"that all the members of the College shall be the electors of