plates of glass, which are made to glide in opposite directions. When this is done, we see a number of oily globules, and the remains of lacerated membranes, which assume great variety of shape and dimension. This experiment seems to the author a conclusive proof of the fact that the milk globule is composed of an oily nucleus enclosed in a membrane; but the reporters have confirmed the theory by experiments of their own, and cleared up some doubts which they were, at first, inclined to entertain. Thus, when the milk is pressed between the glass plates, and the globules ruptured, the thickness and length of the membranous shreds seem inconsistent with globules of so minute a diameter as the milk globules are. But on mixing a little water with the milk, and watching the effects of graduated pressure, it was seen that the pellicles were much finer and more delicate than when undiluted milk was employed, because in the latter case the pellicles stuck to one another. On extending the microscopic researches to the pollen of mercurialis, and other parts of plants which contain globules, it was found that pressure between glass plates sometimes gave rise to the same appearances as were observed in milk.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE INFIRMARY.

[Practice of Sir John Fife.]

(Report by Mr. Williamson.)

LITHOTOMY.

John Smith, aged fifty-two, a countryman, was received into the Newcastle-on-Tyne Infirmary on the 28th of July, 1842, under the care of Sir John Fife, with calculus vesicæ.

He states that about four years ago he passed a small red stone, having the form of a cherry-stone, and since then has felt more or less pain in making water, but he has not passed any more calculi since that period. His attacks recurred about once a-month, and he was obliged to have the stone forced back with a sound to enable him to void his urine. Previous to his being troubled with the disease, he used to pass sand in his urine.

The bowels open; he looks strong and healthy. He was ordered to take twelve grains of Dover's powder, with two of calomel, at night; an ounce of castor oil in the morning, and a warm bath.

Lithotomy was performed on the 2nd of August.

The staff having been introduced before the patient entered the theatre, bandages were applied in the usual way. The staff had a lateral groove; its handle was kept perpendicular to the abdomen. The first incision was made deep at the upper part, on the side of the bulb of the urethra, and gradually less deep as it reached the tuberosity of the ischium; the urethra was readily divided, with part of the prostate gland. On introducing the forceps and grasping the stone, it proved so large that a further division of the prostate became necessary, and this was done with a straight bistoury. The stone was again grasped in its smaller diameter, and gently extracted.

An elastic gum tube was then introduced through the wound into the bladder, and the patient taken to bed. The calculus looked like the lithate of ammonia, and weighed thirteen drachms.

August 3. Had no rest during the night; is feverish; pulse 100, and full. Ordered to be bled to fifteen ounces, and to take half an ounce of castor oil in an ounce of mint water immediately.

4. Had a good night's rest; the febrile symptoms have in a great measure left him; pulse 85, and soft; bowels free; the urine passes through the wound.

5. Did not rest well, as he had an opiate pill given him last night, and thinks that it was the cause of his restlessness; bowels have not been opened since yesterday morning.

Aloetic pill, twenty grains;

Calomel, four grains;

Oil of mint, two drops. Divide into four pills; one to be taken at once, and repeated every three or four hours if required. To have some broth.

6. Slept well; bowels open; water passes through wound; is doing well.

7. Rested well; pulse 76; rapidly improving.

8. Doing well.

9. Convalescent.

CATARACT.

Edward Slater, aged 58, was admitted into the Newcastle-on-Tyne Eye Infirmary, on July 26, 1842, under the care of Sir John Fife, with double cataract of twelve years' standing. As his general health appeared good, the pupils well dilated, bowels open, &c., Sir John thought better to operate immediately than keep him in suspense. The eyelids were held without any speculum, and the operator stood in front of the patient, using the left hand in operating on the right eye, and *vice versa*. The capsule of the lens was opened while making the puncture, so that the cataract rolled gently out as soon as the incision was completed. In each eye the flap was made upwards, but great care was taken to lay the edge of the flap smooth before closing the eyelids. A little ceratum cetacei on linen was laid over the cilia, and then a plaster of ceratum belladonnæ over the orbit. In the evening about sixteen ounces of blood were taken from the arm, and two aperient pills were ordered, consisting of aloetic pill, with a little calomel.

27. Free from pain.

31. The eyes were opened this morning, and the patient has some vision. To be dressed with ceratum belladonnæ spread on linen. The eyes to be kept closed.

Aug. 2. Omit belladonna; doing well; eyes allowed to be open.

8. He left the hospital this morning, and was ordered a solution of nitrate of silver to be dropped into the eyes twice a-day for a while, and also some aperient pills to take occasionally. Vision distinct; appearance of the eyes perfect.

James Scott, aged fifty-eight, has been a patient of Sir John Fife's for these last three years, but was admitted into the Eye Infirmary on the 26th of July, 1842, with cataract, complicated with amaurosis. He states that, about eighteen years ago, he got a severe blow upon the back part of his head, ever since which he has been troubled with more or less pain in the head; a year or two after he found his vision become more affected, and has gradually got worse up to this period.

Before the operation was performed he could scarcely distinguish the flame of a candle in a dark

room. The bowels are open; pupil contracted, although he had belladonna applied previously. His left eye being the worst, was operated on, as in the former case.

Sir John ordered about twelve ounces of blood to be taken from the arm, some opening pills, and the eye to be dressed daily with ceratum belladonnæ.

July 30. Can see light; continue belladonna; doing well.

August 2. Omit the belladonna.

6. Dismissed this morning. Ordered to take some opening pills, and to drop the solution of nitrate of silver into the eye twice a-day. He can see when anything is held before his eyes, but cannot distinguish minute objects without the assistance of a lens.

ASSURANCE OFFICE FEES.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—It appears to me that the question at issue between life assurance offices and the profession has never been fairly stated and weighed, and that the ill-feeling which has been engendered has arisen from a misunderstanding of the real bearings of the case.

I will endeavour briefly to state the case, which, when candidly considered, will I think relieve the offices from unmerited reproach.

An individual applies to the directors of a company to effect an insurance upon his own life, or on that of another, which they consent to grant upon the following conditions:—

1. That a certain annual payment be made to the company during the continuance of the policy.

2. That a medical certificate be produced to prove that the life is insurable.

The production of this certificate is an *essential* part of the contract, and it is as incumbent on the person wishing to insure a life as the payment of the annual premium. If this be attended with expense, the applicant must defray it.

That the medical referee is entitled to payment for his services there can be no doubt; but he must look for it to his employer, not to the office; for although the letter of application, together with the usual questions, issues from the office, they are only the *agents* of the individual wishing to insure the life, and this letter issues from the directors, both to prevent collusion between the parties, and to give the medical man the opportunity of speaking freely without the possibility of his communication being known.

If life insurance offices consented, or were liable, to pay for medical certificates, a door would be open to the grossest imposition; for nothing would be easier than for an unworthy intruder into the profession to get an unlimited number of persons to make applications for insurances on their lives; the certificate is obtained, the fee paid, and nothing more may be heard of the matter.

There is, however, an apparent want of fairness, on the part of the directors of a company, in availing themselves of our services without at the same time of their applying for certificates, pointing out the source from whence we are to expect payment, and

I think that some good effect may be produced by the public announcement of a resolution of the great body of practitioners, that "No answers will be given to questions proposed by life insurance companies, unless at the same time the directors state from whom the medical referee is to obtain payment for his services." Such a resolution would obviate the necessity of anything like a pledge that no notice will be taken of letters from life insurance offices, unaccompanied with a fee; for there are many circumstances which would induce us to forego the claim of which the medical man alone is a competent judge, and experience has taught us that in the long run we are no losers by acts of kindness and liberality extended to our neighbours.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

W. SWEETING.

Abbotsbury, July 27, 1842.

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—In justice to the profession to which I belong, I lay the following glaring case before the public. Had it been a single instance from the same quarter, I might not have noticed it; but as it is only one out of many, equally bad, I select it as of most interest.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

WILLIAM REEVES,

Surgeon to the Carlisle Dispensary.

Carlisle, August 8, 1842.

A young man, a dispensary patient under my charge, labored under stone in the bladder, for which I advised him to submit to an operation. I stated to him that I would perform the operation in his own house, or, if he preferred it, he might go to the infirmary, where more conveniences would be provided than he could otherwise have. This, the young man said, he would decide upon in a short time. However, in the meantime, the apprentice to a general practitioner in this town, Mr. Elliot, met the young man in a joiner's shop, on leaving which the patient said, "I must go and see Mr. Reeves at the dispensary." The apprentice asked what ailed him, and the patient answered, "I have got a stone in the bladder." The apprentice then advised him to call upon Mr. Elliot, and the lad did so. After the patient had answered Mr. Elliot's questions, and stated that Mr. Reeves had advised him to submit to an operation, Mr. Elliot intimated that if he allowed himself to be operated on he would surely die, and at the same time read to him some statistical table, showing that almost every one died after an operation for stone. Mr. Elliot then proceeded to examine him—stated that there were two stones, and that he could cure him without cutting, or any danger. This the man gladly listened to, and came and told me what I have above stated. I told him I never discovered more than one stone, and if Mr. Elliot had persuaded him to the contrary, he