be selected what becomes of the mediocrity of the profession? Are they to compete outside with the State doctors? The choice of an intelligent patient of his own doctor is at least as good as that made usually by a public board on his behalf. In either case a mistake can be made and often is, but it can be corrected much more readily in the former than the latter case.

In the picture Sir John Collie draws of a National Medical Service, it is easy to detect a glamour similar to that thrown on their pictures by confessed socialists when endeavouring to point out the advantages of the socialistic state. Sir John Collie says the changes he proposes will be to many practitioners "highly distasteful." I must reckon myself among that number, but not simply because the changes are "distasteful," but because in my opinion they are bad both for the public and the profession. If I believed in Socialism, that is in the State undertaking everything for everybody, and individual enterprise and independence being relegated more and more to the background, it might be otherwise. As it is, I regard honest competition with one's fellows, with all its drawbacks, as a more honourable position for a medical practitioner than to become a unit in any National Medical Service; and I am of opinion that medical science will be best promoted, and the welfare of the nation best maintained in the future, as in the past, by an independent profession of medicine.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Hackney-road, N.E., Jan. 18th, 1914. MAJOR GREENWOOD.

THE TREATMENT OF GRANULAR KIDNEY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I regret that owing to my not having been able to get the corrected proof of my letter on this subject¹ returned to the offices of THE LANCET in time for the press an error has crept in. Where the letter (in the second line from the top of the right hand column of page 210) states "in 24 hours the pulse was 94," it ought to read "in 48 hours," &c.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

A. GRAHAM-STEWART.

Cliftonville, Margate, Jan. 19th, 1914.

¹ THE LANCET, Jan. 17th, 1914, p. 209.

ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE. — The president and council of the institute will entertain Professor Baldwin Spencer, C.M.G., F.R.S., of Melbourne University, at a complimentary dinner at the Café Monico, London, W., on Jan. 27th, at 6.30 P.M.

SOCIETY FOR RELIEF OF WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF MEDICAL MEN.—A quarterly court of directors of this society was held on Jan. 14th, Dr. Rigden, senior vice-president present, being in the chair. Fifteen members of the court were present. Since the last court two of the vice-presidents of the society had died—Dr. Clement Godson and Mr. H. W. Kiallmark. One of the widows in receipt of grants had also died; she came on the funds in 1875, and received in grants the sum of £2300. Her husband had paid in subscriptions £37 16s. The sum of £1260 was voted to pay the usual half-yearly grants to the widows and orphans, and £392 10s. were voted for special grants to be paid out of the Brickwell Fund. The invested funds of the society now amount to £139,500. Membership of the society is open to any registered medical practitioner who at the time of his election is resident within a 20-mile radius of Charing Cross. The annual subscription is 2 guineas. Special terms for life membership. Further particulars and application forms for membership may be obtained by applying to the secretary at the office of the society, 11, Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, London, W.

THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.

THE STATE MEDICAL SERVICE QUESTION.

IN delivering the first of a series of lectures arranged by the Faculty of Insurance, dealing with various aspects of National Insurance, Sir John Collie took as his subject "The Medical Profession and National Insurance," and after criticising severely what he indicated as the defects of medical service under the panel system, advocated strongly recourse to a National Medical Service as a remedy. Sir John Collie regarded as a mistake the admission to the panels of all proposing themselves, irrespective of character and qualifications. He spoke of men who had never established themselves in practices of any value as having now large numbers of insured patients, and contrasted with this system that which provided practitioners for the army and navy, and for appointments such as those offered by the Poor-law Service or the Post Office. He also called attention to the competition between medical men which was encouraged by the system, and referred to it as producing touting and other unprofessional practices. He was of the opinion that excessively large panel lists were producing scamped and inferior work, giving as an instance the experience of a panel practitioner who had told him that he had to see 50 or 60 patients every evening. He considered that a State Medical Service was the best remedy for this state of affairs and the best means for bringing the advantages of medical science within the reach of the insured. He considered that such a service would be more economical than the present system, and that without interfering with private practice would offer opportunities to those in its lower ranks to rise to eminence, its members doing their best to keep themselves abreast of modern science. We referred in a leading article last week to one great argument against a State Medical Service—at any rate, in the present position of medical practice. When the combination of a choice of doctor by the insured with a regimented service is considered, the path advocated by Sir John Collie is seen to be difficult, while some of his criticisms on the working of the Act are being directly contradicted.

MEDICAL REFEREES AS UNDERSTOOD BY SOME APPROVED SOCIETIES.

A letter to the *Daily News* recently recommended the formation of "complaints committees" as a solution of "the difficulty as regards satisfactory attendance by panel doctors," and went on to call attention, surely somewhat inconsequently, to a practice for which panel doctors are in no way responsible. According to the writer "a large number of persons who have claimed sick pay on the certificate of their panel doctor are sent to another medical gentleman appointed by the Approved Society. The panel doctor says the person is unfit for work. The referee examines the patient and reports to the society that the person is not unfit." The writer, after illustrating the hardship which is thus inflicted upon the sick person by reference to an instance which occurred within his knowledge, continues: "This is happening all over the country. Whose word are we to take—that of the panel doctor who administers to the patient, or the referee appointed by the society?" The point raised is a very important one. It was referred to in THE LANCET of Dec. 13th last, p. 1734, in connexion with a case which