Hospital, and I hope that you will give me an opportunity of showing that the institution connected with the sister College is not conducted quite in the manner that it should be, and that reform is wanting there also. I believe it is a circumstance unique in hospital annals, that the governors and committee of King's College Hospital—the individuals who chiefly support that institution—have not the power of electing their own medical officers; but that another body exercises that influence which they (the governors &c.) ought to possess. I am not aware of its being generally known to the public and the profession that it is the council of King's College—and not the governors of King's College Hospital—who elect the officers of the latter institution. This must be looked upon as an evil by impartial persons generally—and my following statements will show some of the reasons why.

You are doubtless acquainted with the fact, that ever since the formation of the hospital there have been (or should have been) two assistant-surgeons. More than six months ago, however, Mr. Simon, then an assistant-surgeon, was offered the chair of pathology at St. Thomas's, and therefore resigned his appointment at King's College Hospital as well as that which he held in King's College, to the regret of many who had the welfare of these institutions at heart,—although he acted wisely, and performed his duty better to himself, inasmuch as he now obtains a fair remuneration for his services, whereas his appointment at the hospital brought him none. As yet, no one has been selected to fill his place at the hospital, although half a year has elapsed, and the duties of the office have been increased in consequence of a numerous afflux of patients. On the other hand, there has, until lately, been only one assistant-physician; but the council of King's College have thought fit to appoint a second within the last year—namely, Dr. George Johnson. Now, I do not wish to quarrel with this appointment, for that talented and laborious physician has deservedly earned his reward; but at the same time it does appear passing strange that they should have created a new appointment, (and that remunerative,) and not have filled up the old one!

According to a regulation, it is necessary that the gentleman who holds the situation of assistant-surgeon at the hospital should be as well a demonstrator of anatomy at the College. This must be considered as unfair, not only because it limits very much the choice of the appointment at the hospital, but also because the man who has held no appointment at all at the hospital, and has consequently not had the surgical experience so necessary to enable him to perform the duties of the office, may be called to it; while many others who have rigorously attended the hospital, and by holding surgical situations of responsibility, have gained a sufficient amount of experience, are entirely thrust aside. I hear that it is the intention of the influencing body—and this is the reason why it has remained so long unfilled—to give the appointment to one of the sub-demonstrators of anatomy at the college—a gentleman regarded with respect by all who know him, and who performs the duties of his present office with satisfaction to the students; but who has never held any surgical situation beyond that of out-patient dresser. This proceeding, Sir, cannot be looked upon as just towards many others whose claims are as high, or even higher; and the sooner this regulation be rescinded the better.

It is high time that this appointment should be filled up. It is true that the duties of assistant-surgeon are being performed—but by whom? Actually by one of the full surgeons to the institution, who ought to be content with his in-patients, thus making the staff of officers, which was always numerically poor, still poorer. As showing the badness of the arrangement more obviously, there is no assistant-physician for the women and children, great numbers of whom apply, and the care of whom might with more advantage be undertaken by two officers.

I would suggest that the best qualified man should be nominated by the medical officers of the hospital, and elected by the governors, or vice-versa, with strict regard to the celebrated maxim of Napoleon—"La carrière toujours ouverte aux talens," and that the choice should not rest with the council of the college.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

May, 1848.

AN OLD KING'S COLLEGE STUDENT.

PROFESSOR OWEN'S LECTURES ON COMPARATIVE ANATOMY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having heard an erroneous statement from Professor Owen, and seeing it further promulgated in THE LANCET of

last week, I cannot suffer it to pass without an observation. The Professor remarked, in speaking of the great cachalot, that its veins were without valves, and consequently it was an easy prey to the whaler, who, by wounding it slightly and superficially, caused it soon to bleed to death by the veins. This is beautiful in theory, but not true in fact. The whale does not fall an easy prey—its struggle with death is often long and furious; it receives numerous bodily wounds, from three to four feet in depth, and these are seldom destructive to life, the animal rarely dying until the lungs (or, as they are called by whalers, "the life") have been freely pierced by the lance, which is always known by the animal spouting blood. Should you consider these facts of sufficient interest, your insertion of them will oblige your humble servant,

CHARLES MUNDAY, M.R.C.S.

King-street, Snow-hill, May, 1848.

A Practical Whaler.

THE PROPOSED CHARTER OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, AND THE LICENTIATES EXTRA URBEM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some years ago, having been but a short time in general practice, I became a licentiate extra urbem of the London College of Physicians, with a view to confining myself to exclusive medicine, but unforeseen circumstances compelling me to abandon for a time my intended change of function, I continued in the same professional sphere, retaining my designation of "Mr. —, Surgeon," on my door, I never made the slightest use of the licence in any way.

It is my intention, however, at no distant period, to practise as a physician; but before I can do so, will the college, as they propose in the fourth or fifth clause of the projected charter, do me the intolerable, the monstrous, injustice of calling on me to contribute anew to their finances, and pass another examination? Another examination! Why what, in the name of common sense and common justice, should make this more necessary for the licentiate extra urbem than the licentiate intra urbem or the fellow? The folly of the thing is so extreme that one can hardly believe in the possibility of its commission. What a ridiculous, stultifying proceeding is it to call upon a body of men to go up for examination again, when the college has declared them already, many of them years ago, by its then very highest functionaries, competent and able physicians.

There are many licentiates, both extra and intra urbem, and scores of British graduates, in general practice, in the provinces, and it will be an act of common justice only, on their confining themselves at any future time to the precincts of the physician, to admit them associates, as the licentiates are to be called, at once and without examination. It is impossible to believe that the college, on reflection, could hesitate to deal thus fairly by British graduates and their own licentiates.

We all, Mr. Editor, owe you a deep debt of gratitude for the zeal and distinguished ability with which you are ever ready to advocate the true interests of the profession.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

April, 1848.

A LICENTIAE EXTRA URBEM.

CONVENTION OF POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In reply to a notice in THE LANCET of last week, I have to state that the Committee did not adopt the Report alluded to till Wednesday, the 26th ultimo, (the first day of meeting after the interview,) and that in less than an hour after the Committee's sitting, a copy was forwarded to THE LANCET office.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HERBERT WILLIAMS,
Assistant Secretary.

4, Hanover-square, May 3rd, 1848.

* * We can only repeat that the above Report was not found in the Editor's box at THE LANCET Office until eight o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the 27th ultimo.—ED. L.

PHYSICIANS WITH FOREIGN DIPLOMAS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am a licentiate of the Apothecaries' Company of some years standing, also the possessor of a physician's diploma, obtained, after a three hours' examination, at one of the continental universities. My medical education has been as good perhaps, as that of any M.D. of the London College of Physi-