ger of the impurities of the soil passing unchanged into the water, and being a source of quick and certain injury. The water of the City wells is constantly changing—in fact, it is hardly the same from hour to hour; for the soil through which it passes is pierced in every direction with drains and sewers, and is charged with every species of corrupting refuse, which passes in variable proportions into the porous strata from which the water is pumped. This ought to tell us not only of the disgusting nature of the supply, but also of the dangers which lurk within it. Experience has shown that wells like these are liable at any moment to receive the leakings from a cesspool or a sewer, and thus to be the immediate cause of fatal disease."

He then cites the familiar instances of extension of the cholera where impure water was drunk at Broad-street, St. James's, South London, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Hull, and remarks upon the dangers to be anticipated from the water of the City pumps.

"Nor are the percolations from the graveyards of a city less injurious; experience has demonstrated that this also is a prolific source of disease. Sir James M'Grigor relates that when the British army was in Spain, about 20,000 soldiers were buried in a rather small space of ground; this was done in the course of two or three months, and soon the troops who drank the water from the wells of the neighbourhood were attacked with dysentery and malignant fevers. The cause of the mischief was clearly traced to the hardly-recognisable impurity in the water from the shallow wells. Here, however, in the churchyards of this city there are the remains of ten times such a buried army undergoing decay; and in the whole of this metropolis, in a space of not more than 218 acres of soil, there were buried not long since as many as 50,000 dead in the year. In a generation of thirty years this would give us 1,500,000 of decomposing bodies in the surface soil of London; and through these the water percolates to find its way into the porous stratum which supplies the shallow wells. At best, the change of this corruption is but imperfect, and the presence of ammonia and saltpetre tells of the process of decay, and indicates the dangers which accompany it."

AN EPIDEMIC TRACED.

A FRESH instance of the direct sequence of zymotic disease upon dirt and foul air has been afforded by the occurrence of a fatal epidemic at Over Darwen. It appears that during the past six weeks this township, which contains upwards of 20,000 inhabitants, has been visited with an epidemic of gastric and typhus fevers, which have caused upwards of threescore deaths, and temporarily invalidated about 1000 persons. Information of this outbreak of "preventible disease" having been received at the Public Health Office in Whitehall, Dr. Headlam Greenhow, Assistant-Physician to the Middlesex Hospital, and one of the Medical Inspectors of the Privy Council, made an official investigation of the township, visiting, in company with the local Board of Health, the houses in which death had occurred. All the material causes which can attract and foster epidemic fevers were found in active fruition. The whole place was in a filthy state: piggeries, cesspools, &c., in immediate proximity to the habitations, and the air saturated with foul organic matter. Prompt measures were taken to remove these friends of fever, and the cottage owners are required to make the necessary arrangements for the health of their tenants. The Waterworks Company have also been called upon to provide filtering-beds at their works. The epidemic is dying out; but it may be hoped that its lesson will be permanently treasured.

DIEFFENBACH'S PEGS.—M. Gemeti has published a case of non-union of fracture, in which the solution of continuity was situated at the inferior third of the femur, and in which no union had occurred after six months, in spite of a very carefully directed treatment. Dieffenbach's ivory pegs were introduced into the extremities of the upper and lower fragments; but the patient died of erysipelas. On a post-mortem examination, the ends of the fragments were found necrosed, and separated by a large bundle of muscular substance belonging to the vastus internus, into which bundle the upper fragment had penetrated. This interposed muscular substance had probably originally prevented union.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE REGULATIONS OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL AND OF THE LONDON EXAMINING BOARDS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I desire to address you upon a subject which must be of great interest to the medical profession, as well as to those gentlemen who are about commencing their professional studies. I allude to the great diversity which exists in the Regulations now issued by the Medical Council and by the various examining bodies in London. The subjoined extracts of the Regulations I have copied from the Students' Number of THE LANCET.

The most important points of difference are to be found in—

1. What constitutes the commencement of professional study.

2. In the periods as to when the first part of the professional examination can be undergone.

3. As to the time when the final examination may be passed.

The commencement of professional study is considered by the Medical Council to be the time of commencing studies at a medical school; by the Royal College of Surgeons the time of becoming a pupil of a member of a Royal College of Surgeons; and by the Society of Apothecaries the time of becoming apprenticed to an apothecary.

Passing of the first part of the Professional Examination.—The Medical Council order it to be after the termination of two years of study. Thus, if a student began his professional studies at a medical school on the 1st of October, 1861, he cannot pass this examination until after the 1st of October, 1863.

The Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, however, allow him to pass this examination at the termination of the second winter session, as in April, 1863, or at least six months before the Medical Council permit it.

The Society of Apothecaries allow the student to pass the examination after the second summer session, as in August, 1863, or two months prior to the time specified by the Medical Council.

Passing of the Final Examination.—All the Regulations agree as to twenty-one being the earliest age at which the examination may be passed.

The Medical Council direct that four years of professional study must be completed before passing this examination. Thus the student commencing in October, 1861, ought not to obtain his diplomas or licence before October, 1865.

The Royal College of Physicians require four years of professional study, of which only three years need be passed at a medical school; and as eighteen months must expire after the passing of the first examination, the student entering in October, 1861, could pass his final examination in October, 1864.

The Royal College of Surgeons require also four years of professional study; but as only three winter and two summer sessions need be passed at a medical school, the student entering in October, 1861, can go up for his final examination in April, 1864.

The Society of Apothecaries require four winter and four summer sessions to be passed at a medical school, as well as five years' apprenticeship, so that the student who has commenced in October, 1861, cannot pass his final examination before August, 1865.

The regulations of the Society of Apothecaries approximate more closely to those of the Medical Council than those of either of the Royal Colleges; the Royal College of Surgeons giving its diploma eighteen months, and the Royal College of Physicians granting its licence twelve months, previous to the time directed by the Medical Council.

The importance of these differences in the various regulations is shown by the following question:—Will the Medical Council recognise and permit to be registered diplomas or licences granted to gentlemen who have not completed four years of professional study, commencing from the date of their first entering at a medical school?

The sooner this question is decided in the affirmative or negative the better, for a non-registered diploma is of but little value at the present day. The regulations of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons permitting a student to pass one year out of the four years as a pupil to a surgeon, are, in my opinion,

decidedly to be preferred to those compelling the whole four years to be passed at a medical school and hospital. The studies of the fourth winter and summer sessions, as required by the new rules of the Apothecaries' Society, are not needed, but could easily be incorporated as formerly in those of the three previous sessions.

Every student ought to be obliged to pass one year, at least, with a surgeon or general practitioner in seeing the common cases of disease, and in learning those little minutiae which it is quite impossible for him to be taught at a large hospital. Having drawn attention to this subject will, I hope, be the means of causing some distinct regulations to be issued for the guidance of the student.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,
Highbury, Oct. 1861. GEORGE THOMAS KEELE, M.R.C.S.

Regulations of the Medical Council.

That four years of professional study be required, after the examination in general education.

That the time of commencing professional studies shall be understood to be the time of commencing studies at a medical school.

That the professional examinations be divided into at least two distinct parts; that the first be not undergone until after the termination of two years of study, and the final examination not until after the termination of four years of study.

Regulations of the Royal College of Physicians.

Of having been engaged in professional studies during four years, of which at least three years shall have been passed at a recognised medical school.

The first part of the professional examination is to be undergone after the termination of the second winter session of study at a recognised medical school.

The second part to be undergone after an interval of at least eighteen months from the first examination.

Regulations of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

The following will be considered as the commencement of professional education:—1. Attendance on the practice of an hospital, dispensary, or other public institution recognised by this College for that purpose. 2. Instruction as the pupil of a member of one of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons in the United Kingdom, or of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. 3. Attendance on lectures on Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry, or Natural Philosophy, by lecturers recognised by this College.

Of having been engaged during four years in the acquirement of professional knowledge.

The first part of the professional examination may be passed after the termination of the second winter session of their attendance at a recognised school.

The second or pass examination may be undergone after the termination of the fourth year of their professional education.

Regulations of the Society of Apothecaries.

Of having served an apprenticeship or pupilage of not less than five years to a practitioner qualified by the Act of 1815.

Every candidate must attend lectures and medical practice during not less than four winter and four summer sessions.

The first part of the professional examination may be passed after the second summer session.

The second examination may be passed after the fourth summer session, if the five years' pupilage be completed.

CLINICAL APPOINTMENTS AT KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Whenever the list of clinical surgical appointments at this hospital is published, an amount of dissatisfaction is expressed by the students which would surprise anyone who was not acquainted with the cause. This dissatisfaction is the result not merely of that legitimate feeling of disappointment which we might expect to meet with in the defeated candidates of a properly-conducted examination, but is the expression of a long-felt and deep-seated idea that these examinations are not fairly conducted. Certain glaring cases of injustice have just come to light at this hospital, to which I need not further allude here, as my only object is to draw attention to this matter with the view of improving the present system; which is, briefly, as follows:—

The house-surgeoncy and assistant house-surgeoncy are said to be obtainable purely by merit, provided that the candidates have filled certain junior offices in the hospital. I will not allude further to these appointments, as the case of one gentleman is still, I believe, *sub judice*. For the in-patient dressership there is a pass examination in anatomy and surgery. Those who pass are then placed in order of seniority; thus those who got their names down first on the hospital books are appointed. This system, bad as it is, might be tolerated if the standard were fixed sufficiently high to exclude those who are notoriously incompetent. But the examination is adapted to the "meanest capacity;" more particularly that in anatomy. The following are fair examples of the questions put to the candidates for in-patient dresserships and for the assistant house-surgeoncy:—"Which is the head of the fibula?" "Point out the subcutaneous border and surface of the tibia." The result of this system is, that anyone going round the wards with one of our senior surgeons may see him followed by dressers, of whom one is an industrious and deservedly successful student, while his fellow is one of the most idle and comparatively worthless, but whose good fortune it is to be of the same year as his more energetic and talented companion. If this system were equitably carried out, it would be as fair for one man as for another; but when the regulations are twisted to suit either the convenience or the caprice of individuals, it excites universal disgust. These remarks apply equally to the dissecting-room as to the hospital.

Surely, Sir, it behoves the surgeons of a large school of medicine to take more interest in industrious and distinguished students, than in those whose only recommendation is that they have passed four or five years at the hospital, and have done absolutely nothing.

In conclusion, allow me very briefly to contrast with the above account the mode in which appointments are bestowed on the medical side of the house. Merit carries the day here as it should, while in cases of equality the senior student takes the appointment. In consequence of this system, which is strictly carried out, we all feel towards the physicians of this hospital, not only that respect which we owe to our teachers, but far more than these, that genuine esteem and admiration which can be accorded only to strictly honourable men.

October, 1861.

A STUDENT OF KING'S COLLEGE.

THE LATE MR. PITTARD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Excuse me if I trespass unnecessarily on your time and space. I enclose a list of subscriptions which I have received up to this date, to be inserted, if you think fit, in any corner of your journal.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
British Museum, Oct. 29th, 1861. RICHARD OWEN, F.R.S.

Sums received for the Widow and Children of the late S. ROOD PITTARD, M.R.C.S.

Sir Daniel Cooper	£5	5	0
Professor Owen, F.R.C.S., F.R.S.	5	0	0
THE LANCET	5	5	0
John Simon, Esq., F.R.C.S., F.R.S.	10	10	0
William Bowman, Esq., F.R.C.S., F.R.S.	5	5	0
G. M. Humphry, M.D., F.R.C.S. (Cambridge)	3	3	0
Peter Allen, M.D., F.L.S. (Yealand Conyers)	1	1	0
J. O. M'William, M.D., F.R.S.	1	1	0

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Professor Owen has generously made an appeal on behalf of the widow and eight children of the late Mr. Pittard, and I trust with you that this appeal will be responded to by many. But I venture in particular to call the attention of old King's College men to this endeavour to relieve the pressing need of his widow and children. There were few amongst us who were his fellow-students from 1842 to 1846 who, amidst all his eccentricities, did not appreciate his genial qualities and generous heart, and admire the fertility of his intellect and the originality of his mind. Many of his fellow-students are prospering in the world, and I feel assured that to them and to Mr. Pittard's old teachers Professor Owen's appeal will not be made in vain. I have thought it both my duty and a pleasure to send a remittance to Sir D. Cooper, of 20, Princes-gardens, Knightsbridge, who has kindly consented to receive subscriptions.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY SMITH, F.R.C.S.

Caroline-street, Bedford-square, Oct. 1861.