In December the Council, in pursuance of its usual practice of negating everything desired by the Members, passed the following:—

That the mover and seconder of the third resolution be informed that the Council are not prepared to make a general pronouncement respecting the connexion of Fellows and Members of the College with medical aid associations, but are willing to consider evidence which may be submitted to them respecting the connexion of any individual Fellow or Member with an association which canvasses for patients to the injury of private practitioners and allows the well-to-do classes to take advantage of rates of payment arranged to meet the necessities of the poor.

On Jan. 13th, 1898, I was informed by letter that this resolution had not been confirmed and was still under the consideration of the Council. On Feb. 10th the Council determined not to confirm the resolution adopted on Dec. 9th, 1897, but adopted the following in its place:—

That the mover of the second and third resolutions carried at the annual meeting of Fellows and Members be informed that on June 10th, 1897, the Council passed a resolution to the effect that they were willing to consider any evidence which might be submitted to them respecting canvassing for patients directly or indirectly by any individual Fellow or Member of the College, with a view of determining whether or not such Fellow or Member has been guilty of a breach of the by-laws. To this resolution the Council adhere, but in their opinion, whilst so many different and dissimilar institutions are included under the denomination of "medical aid associations," many of them, such as the friendly societies, being legalised institutions; the Council cannot make any general pronouncement respecting the connexion of medical men with these associations.

Now, Sirs, what any plain man would like to discover is the difference between the resolution which the Council refused to confirm in January and that which it passed in February. The only distinction which I can see is that in the latter the Council gives an extremely feeble and fatuous reason why it will not make the pronouncement asked for. The Council apparently imagines that friendly societies or other "legalised institutions" are at liberty to advertise, tout, or canvass for members with impunity to their medical officers. Does it not know that some of the worst offenders are the amalgamated friendly societies in various parts of the country and such "legalised institutions" as the London and Manchester and the Victoria and Liverpool Insurance Companies? This is just another example of the ignorance shown by the Council concerning the interests of those whom it repeatedly asserts that it represents. It was asked, as one of the chief ethical authorities of the profession, to condemn the practices of advertising and canvassing now being largely carried on by employers of medical men; it endeavours to evade this obvious duty because some of these employers happen to be legalised institutions. It could make a "general pronouncement" in 1883 condemning the connexion of Fellows and Members with "trading institutions for the treatment of disease," such as the Harness Belt Company, because the Members—whom it represents—expressed no anxiety about the matter, but it cannot in 1897 publicly condemn a far worse evil because Fellows and Members in all parts of the country have asked it to do so. One of the members of the Council has said that "anything more disgraceful than this commercial compact with medical aid associations it would be difficult to imagine." Until the Council makes the pronouncement so frequently asked for I shall repeat what I said at the annual meeting—that it has tacitly but deliberately sanctioned this disgrace to our profession.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Feb. 22nd, 1898.

W. G. DICKINSON.

HOSPITAL REFORM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I beg to send you a copy of the recommendations as amended by the committee of the Hospital Reform Association.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. That in the casualty department of the general hospitals only cases of urgent importance should be attended to.
2. That in the out-patient department patients bringing notes from medical men should have *ceteris paribus* a prior claim to treatment. That a resident physician should be appointed whose duty it shall be to see all out-patients in the first instance and select those that require immediate treatment and decide which do not require hospital treatment. That after patients have received "first aid" their circumstances shall be inquired into by a competent officer. That the honorary medical officers shall not be required to treat more than twenty new cases at one sitting.
3. That the circumstances of all in-patients, with the exception of cases of accident, &c., should be carefully inquired into before admission.
4. That in the case of well-to-do people who are admitted to hospitals in consequence of accidents, &c., the hospitals should have the power at their discretion of recovering adequate fees for attendance.

5. In the case of small provincial hospitals that the plan adopted at the Oldham and Dorchester Infirmaries be recommended for trial.

6. That both in the large general hospitals and in the smaller ones out patients coming from outside districts should be requested to bring notes from medical men before being treated.

7. In the case of special hospitals (a) that payments by patients should cease; (b) that the eligibility for free treatment should largely depend on the recommendation of private practitioners; and (c) that some provision should be made outside the hospitals for people who are in a position to pay a reduced fee but are not in a position to pay the ordinary fee of specialists.

I only have to add that the association will gladly welcome any criticism that members of the profession may think proper to make. It is quite evident that hospital managers will have to take some practical steps to reduce the amounts now expended in the working of the casualty and out-patient departments, and it is to be sincerely hoped that they will not be induced to adopt the objectionable system of payments by patients as a remedy. The charging of a fee of a few pence for medicines and appliances will be certain to increase the amount of abuse and will also inevitably tend towards increasing the number of cheap dispensaries.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Cardiff, Feb. 19th, 1898.

T. GARRETT HORDER.

"INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ORGANIC CHEMISTRY."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the notice of my book, "Introduction to the Study of Organic Chemistry" in THE LANCET of Feb. 12th your reviewer asks: "Would five lines on the preparation of the important substance ethylene dibromide enable a first M.B. student to prepare the compound?" As a matter of fact the preparation in question is fully described in the text (p. 103) and the five lines referred to (p. 422) are merely notes dealing with details of quantity and manipulation not essential to the understanding of the subject. It is specifically stated at the commencement of these laboratory notes (p. 411) that they are to be taken in conjunction with the text and not independently. May I ask you in fairness to insert this correction in an early issue of THE LANCET? Thanking you for your otherwise complimentary notice,

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

JOHN WADE.

Medical School, Guy's Hospital, S.E., Feb. 15th, 1898.

"DR. CLIFFORD ALLBUTT'S 'SYSTEM OF MEDICINE.'"

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have brought the letters in THE LANCET of Feb. 5th and 19th concerning a reissue of the articles on Tropical Disease in my "System of Medicine" as a separate volume before Messrs. Macmillan. They regard the proposal as one which may well occupy their attention early next year. During this year our attention must be wholly directed to the completion of the work. The fifth volume would have been in the hands of the profession at the beginning of this year had it not been for the grievous delay of one contributor who has kept the fifth volume at a standstill for some months at too late a stage for his place to be supplied.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

T. CLIFFORD ALLBUTT.

St. Radegund's, Cambridge, Feb. 18th, 1898.

"HYSTERICAL ISCHURIA: VICARIOUS ELIMINATION OF UREA."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The annotation in THE LANCET of Feb. 19th on the vicarious excretion of urea reminds me of a case under the care of the late Mr. J. Marshall in University College Hospital when I was house surgeon there in 1864. I regret that I cannot give more than an outline of the case, as I gave the notes I then made to Mr. Marshall and of course these are not now available. The case was one of amputation of the lower extremity, either the thigh or leg, I am not quite sure which. After the operation the patient had suppression of urine three times, each occasion being marked by the vomiting of large quantities of clear fluid.