XL. Additional note on the authenticity of the disputed passage in the treatise of Boetius de Geometria on numerical contractions

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which I have the honour to number so many scientific friends, could arise from no other motive than a desire that its authority and pre-eminent position in the scientific world might be permanent and undiminished, by allowing no analytical essays relating to physical problems to be ushered forth under its auspices, until, in all practicable cases, their accordance with the involved physical facts was ascertained. The notice of one such essay in my former paper was sufficient to show that such had not always been the case. Your correspondent prudently preferred leaning on his influence with you, to challenging me to the proof of my assertion.

I have also to ask at your hands an explanation of the editorial censure contained in your note. I fully bow to your claim of right to moderate any expressions in communications which may be sent to you for publication. The advantage of a review by an impartial editor is great to all parties in a controversy, who in their excitement and sensibility naturally see a poignancy in the expressions of their opponents which they do not suspect in their own. On the other hand, I maintain that it is an unheard of proceeding in an editor who has published a paper without remark or private notice to the author, to pronounce a censure such as is contained in your note; and I claim from you this admission, which I think you will allow to be due under the circumstances.

I remain, dear Sir, yours truly,

Queen's College, February 4, 1840.

RICHARD POTTER.

In inserting Mr. P's letter, we have only to state that the Editor's note was written in consequence of the remonstrance of the Member of the Cambridge Phil. Soc., and before the receipt of Prof. Forbes's letter, with which it had no connection; and was indeed intended to have occupied a distinct place in the Number.

We can assure Mr. Potter that his surmise respecting influence with us is unfounded; and willingly express our regret, that from having overlooked some portions of his communication, they should have become the subjects of public instead of private discussion.—R. T.

XL. Additional Note on the Authenticity of the disputed Passage in the treatise of Boetius de Geometria on Numerical Contractions. By J. O. HALLIWELL, Esq., F.R.S., F.S.A., F.R.A.S., &c.

I TRANSLATE the following extract from a letter which I have recently received from M. Chasles, because the view which he takes of this question is new, and his supporting arguments forcible:—"In a passage found in some MSS. at the end of the second book of Boetius, the expression *mensa geometricalia* occurs; and this calculus is mentioned as ha-

ving been employed chiefly by the geometers. This explains why Boetius introduced that passage into his treatise on geometry; and in his treatise on arithmetic, which treats on the properties of numbers, no mention of it is made. This latter work is indeed only a new version of the treatise by Nicomachus on the same subject."

This ought to be compared with what has been stated in the number of this Magazine for December, and it will be seen that it is quite destructive of M. Libri's principal argument. I may add, in corroboration of the opinion of M. Chasles, that Abelard's tract in the Leyden library is entitled *de Doctrina Abaci vel radii Geometrici*; the manuscript itself is thus described in the printed catalogue:—"Adolardus, qui statim in principio dicitur philosophorum assecla ultimus, de doctrina abaci, vel radii geometrici, ut ipse scribit quoque vocari. In fine legitur, *Regularum abaci nobilis arithmetici tractatus explicite feliciter.*"

And now a word with M. Libri. When he says, "Si l'opinion de M. Halliwell avait été aussi explicite que le pense le savant géomètre de Chartres, il semble qu'on n'aurait pas dû employer plusieurs pages pour tâcher de le prouver," he had forgotten that the *plusieurs pages* were the produce of his own pertinacity. When I had explicitly stated that the Bodleian manuscripts indicated a knowledge of the value of local position, and that one of them actually made use of the *sipos*, surely no one could reasonably accuse me of withholding my assent from the explanation given by M. Chasles. Much less, in that case, could there have been a necessity for occupying the attention of two meetings of the Institute on a mere question of opinion.

XLI. *On a Pseudomorphous variety of Iodide of Potassium*
By ROBERT KANE, M.D., M.R.I.A.

DURING the crystallization of a large quantity of iodide of potassium, in the manufacturing laboratory of Apothecaries' Hall, I observed a large group of long prisms to be formed, of great lustre and regularity. These prisms were in many cases terminated by four-sided pyramids, formed by the joining of four rhomboidal planes, by which the solid angles of the prism were replaced; and I succeeded in obtaining a series of specimens, in some of which the prism was simple and terminated by a single plane perpendicular to its axis; in others the solid angles were replaced by very minute triangular planes, rendering the terminal plane octagonal, and finally, as the triangular planes increased in size, square, the diagonals of the square being parallel to the sides of the