says that the term evolution "must be restricted to the living world"; but would geologists, astronomers, and chemists admit this? could they not point to many evolutions of non-living things? and what is this earth of ours to-day but one vast evolution from chaos into cosmos?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

D. HOOPER, M.B. Lond.

Trinity-square, S.E., Nov. 27th, 1898.

THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL: A CORRECTION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your report in last week's issue of one of the inquiries heard before the General Medical Council it is stated that I said "that the practice [of the Council] had been ever to consider the neglect of patients, and neglect of patients came within Section 29 of the Medical Act." This is an error. My statement was to the contrary effect. What I stated to the General Council was that in my experience neglect of patients had *never* been considered by the Council as a subject matter of inquiry under the disciplinary jurisdiction established by Section 29 of the Medical Act, 1858. The point is an important one, and I venture therefore to ask you to insert this correction.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Temple, E.C., Nov. 28th, 1898.

M. MUIR MACKENZIE.

THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT AND CERTIFICATES FROM HOSPITALS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The Board of Management of this hospital have desired me to inform you, as a matter of possible interest to your readers, that in reference to the new Workmen's Compensation Act they have, in accordance with the recommendation of the honorary medical staff, passed the following provisional resolution: "That a fee of 10s. 6d. be charged for filling up certificates in connexion with the new Act, and that for the present the hospital residents be responsible for the certificates and retain the fee."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Nov. 26th, 1898.

POOLE GABBETT,
Secretary, Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

MEDICAL GRADUATES' COLLEGE AND POLYCLINIC.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Will you allow me to draw the attention of all members of the profession to the advertisement relating to the College and Polyclinic in your issue of this week? The College will commence work towards the middle or end of January and the coöperation of all interested in making London the centre for post-graduate teaching of the empire is cordially invited. We have lagged too long behind other countries, but we now hope to make up for lost time.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

c. 1st, 1898.

J. FLETCHER LITTLE, M.B., Hon. Sec.

"THE REJECTIONS AT THE EXAMINATIONS FOR THE SERVICES."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I ask why you include Aberdeen University in your list of the bodies whose candidates show a heavy percentage of failures at the above examinations when your own report of the proceedings of the General Medical Council shows that Aberdeen had three candidates and three commissions? I believe that my old *alma mater* has always had a fair amount of success at these examinations.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Nov. 26th, 1898.

M.D. ABERD.

* * Peccavimus.—ED. L.

NOTES FROM INDIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

*The Plague Commission.—A Pasteur Institute for Hyderabad.—
The Decline in the Plague Epidemic.*

THE composition of the Plague Commission as well as the objects for which it is said to have been appointed have given rise to considerable comment. A pertinent question was asked in one of the leading Indian papers, "How was it that in the estimation of the Secretary of State the whole body of the Indian Medical Service were disqualified from taking part into the inquiry into plague in India?" The explanation of this may be that an independent investigation for many reasons is most desirable. It is impossible that officers in the Indian Medical Service could approach the administrative side of the subject with anything like a free hand. Themselves officials, they might be calling in question the dicta of their superiors and advisers of the Government—a position impossible with any safety. What is to be wondered at is that the Indian Government has not long ere this appointed a commission or committee of investigation from the officers of the Indian Medical Service into the scientific aspects of the question. One may legitimately ask whether the appointment of this commission is the reply of the Government to a petition for a Plague Congress asked for by the Bombay Medical and Physical Society. It is known that the idea of the congress was very favourably received by the Government of Bombay, but of course such a congress would have no official weight and the Commission may to a certain extent take the place of it. The objects of the Commission have been previously reported, but the exact scope of the inquiry is not very clearly defined. If the purely scientific and medical aspects of plague are to be worked up then the two civilians are out of place, and there seems no reason why two officers in the Indian Medical Service should not have been appointed in their stead. It is remarkable that the services of the so-called Imperial bacteriologist should not have been utilised. For the post of secretary it might have been anticipated that someone within the Bombay Presidency, where plague has almost exclusively raged, might have been selected. This officer, however, has been brought from Simla. If, on the other hand, the administrative work of the past is to be considered with a view to better order in the future, then bacteriologists are not required so much as men like Sir Richard Thorne, Dr. Parsons, and others, who are accustomed to deal with the investigation of outbreaks of infectious diseases. For experimental work pure and simple assistance could have been obtained from men in India. All the energies of the service seem to have been spent in disinfection, isolation, segregation, and quarantine, with little or no provision for original investigation. Even prophylactic inoculation has had very little encouragement, and although its value has been shown by late statistics the nature of the fluid used stands practically where it was nearly two years ago. If any spirit for investigation had been fostered we might have had by this time an attenuated culture instead of a mere dose of toxin, or we might perhaps have discovered a vaccine. It is not known how long the protection of prophylactic inoculation lasts and the fluid still remains very far from being properly standardised. Again, the incubation period of plague is still unknown and upon the duration of the infection there are very vague opinions and nothing has been definitely established. Towards the discovery of a curative serum, again, nothing apparently has been done.

The Nizam's Government has sanctioned the immediate construction of a complete and thoroughly equipped Pasteur Institute for Hyderabad. It will adjoin the hospital and medical school and will be available in about six months for patients.

The record of plague for the past week is 5907 cases and 4388 deaths. There has been a great increase at Satara but a decrease elsewhere. In Bombay the cases have declined to 92 and the reported deaths during the past week are only 66. In the Madras Presidency there were 22 seizures and 16 deaths and in the Mysore province 529 seizures and 332 deaths. Inoculation is still being carried on at Dharwar and Bangalore with great popularity and the results are reported to be striking.

Nov. 11th.