grant of the Charter to the Victoria University were followed by the creation of a second University in London, the Senate believe that Her Majesty's Government would find it difficult from time to time to resist similar applications from other Colleges in the country. The Senate fear that the creation of numerous small Universities would be fraught with danger to the cause of the higher education, and that the competition of graduating bodies would probably, if not at once, yet in no very remote future, lower the standard of graduation in a way of which the history of Universities contains numerous examples.

The Senate believe that the work done by the University has been and is of the greatest value to education, not only amongst their own graduates, but even in the older Universities. The width of the subjects embraced, the thoroughness of the examinations, and, above all, the independence of the examiners from all undue influence of the teachers, have had a widespread effect; and the Senate would greatly regret if the extent of this good work were lessened in the future by the withdrawal of a large number of the students of the most eminent Colleges from the examination rooms of this University to those of smaller Universities, where the granting of degrees would be practically in the hands of the teachers, and where the evils which the system of this University has checked would be sure to reappear.

So far as the petition of the Colleges complains of the want of regular communication between the University and the teachers of the higher institutions, the Senate do not desire to call it in question. On the contrary, from a date long prior to the presentation of the petition, or any proposal to present such a petition, both the Senate and the Convocation of this University have been engaged on the consideration of a plan for giving to the professors in the institutions from which graduates proceed an organisation and a larger influence in the counsels of the University. The general approval both of the Senate and of the Convocation has been given to this principle, and both bodies are, as the Senate believe, in substantial accord on the point, though the matter has not yet sufficiently ripened to admit of the presentation to Her Majesty of a joint petition for a Charter to give effect to the plan.

The scheme, which has been generally approved by the Senate, but is still subject to further consideration, proposes to unite into a class, under the name of Associated Colleges, educational bodies, not only in the metropolis, but throughout the country, which from the age of the students, the character of instruction given, and the fact that the Colleges have sent students as candidates for degrees in the University, may be worthy of association with it. It also proposes that the professors of these Associated Colleges, or representatives of the professors, should be gathered together into four groups or Faculties, according as they are concerned with arts, with laws, with science, or with medicine; and each Faculty is to select a smaller body to constitute a Board of Studies, which should aid the Senate and their committees in reference to the subjects of its Faculty. The examiners of the University, or some of them, are to be *ex-officio* members of the Boards of Studies.

The motives of these suggested changes are not far to seek. It was hoped that by giving to the teachers in the Associated Colleges a direct influence on the course of the examinations and a part in the government of the University two advantages would accrue. It would, to use a modern phrase, bring the Senate into touch with the actual teachers, and thereby remove any sense of dissatisfaction which may have been felt on their part, and any difficulty which may now exist in keeping pace with the varying requirements of the higher education; and, secondly, it would, it was hoped, awaken in the teachers of the several Colleges a sentiment of interest in the University which is now too often wanting, and which if created would strengthen its hands.

Furthermore, the Senate believe that such a union of the professors would be very beneficial to the Colleges which they represented, and that the closer connexion between the University and the Colleges would conduce to the benefit of the latter as well as of the former.

The Senate trust that before any radical change is effected in the organisation of the higher education in London the effect of such a scheme as has been sketched in outline will be fully considered by Her Majesty's advisers. The Senate believe that the result of such a scheme would be to unite together in organic relation the teachers of many of the principal Colleges throughout England and Wales, and that the London teachers, by their numbers, their eminence, and their nearness to the seat of the University, would exercise a great influence in its Faculties and Boards of Studies. In this way the Senate believe that the University would still further realise Her Gracious Majesty's opinion, recently expressed, that "it is a body which is eminently qualified to promote the advance of learning throughout her realm." The prospect presented by the alternative scheme now put forward by the Colleges is, the Senate believe, far less hopeful for the interest of education. A number, probably an ever-increasing number, of small universities removed from the beneficial and controlling influence of a great institution like this University, would come to compete for students and graduates with more regard to their number than to the character of their studies and, if ever the present zeal for education should flag, would probably relapse into that condition of inefficiency into which even the great Universities of this country have at times fallen.

If the scheme for a modification of this University, to which reference has already been made, be carried into effect, the examinations of this University will be conducted as at present by entirely independent examiners, but the teachers will have a means of regularly communicating to the Senate their complaints, their wishes, and their views. If the petition of the Colleges be granted, a University will be constituted in which the whole power of conferring degrees will be in the hands of the teachers themselves.

The desire of many members of the Royal College of Physicians of London and of the Royal College of Surgeons of England to obtain for these bodies or for a body under their control the power of granting medical degrees has been a matter of notoriety for some time past. Though serious objections may be urged to such plan, it would be premature for the Senate to offer any observations upon a scheme which has not yet been put forward; and they only refer to it now as one of the elements of which account must be taken before the present demand of this University and King's Colleges can be properly considered.

For this and many other reasons the Senate believe that the petition of University and King's Colleges cannot rightly be regarded as an isolated subject; but should be viewed in connexion, on the one hand, with the past history and future prospects of this University, and on the other hand, with reference to the very complicated conditions of the higher education in London. The Senate are at one with the petitioners in holding that the various teaching bodies in London would greatly gain by union and co-ordination; but they believe that this would be

far more satisfactorily obtained under the supervision of such a body as this University than by the establishment of smaller and less responsible graduating bodies. If Her Majesty should think right to inquire into the working of this University, and into the condition generally of the higher education in London, the Senate of this University will do all in their power to assist in the solution of the complicated questions which would undoubtedly arise, and to make fruitful the results of the investigation.

The Senate has no desire to offer to the petition of the Colleges any selfish or captious opposition; but in the belief that issues of far-reaching importance are involved in the prayer of that petition, they desire the opportunity of showing cause before their Lordships why the prayer should not be granted.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ARTHUR MILMAN, Registrar.

THE ASSOCIATION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND THE PROPOSED DEGREE FOR LONDON STUDENTS.

THE following petition has been forwarded to the Privy Council by the Association of General Practitioners:—

To Charles Lennox Peel, Esq., C.B., Clerk to the Privy Council.

SIR,—We have the honour to ask you to lay before the Lord President and the members of the Privy Council an earnest protest on behalf of the Association of General Practitioners against some of the provisions of the Draft Charter for which the Councils of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons of England have petitioned. With the general object of obtaining for the students of the English medical schools and hospitals who pass their examination before the licensing bodies of London facilities for obtaining a degree which shall carry with it the title of "Doctor," the Association of General Practitioners is in entire accord. There is unquestionably a great hardship at present upon the licentiates of the London medical examining bodies, who, although possessing a curriculum equivalent to that of many of the British universities which confer medical degrees, have nevertheless no other facilities for acquiring such a degree than those afforded by the Universities of London. The standard of the University of London is expressly placed so high as to make it unattainable for more than a small minority of the London students. It is a degree of *élite*, and placed at so high a standard as to be altogether beyond the ordinary possibilities of the average student, even when thoroughly educated and carefully examined for all the necessities of general practice. In this respect, therefore, the English students are under a great disadvantage as compared with those especially of Ireland and Scotland, and this disadvantage is practically felt because, on the one hand, large numbers of students are thus attracted to the universities of Scotland and Ireland, where they obtain on reasonable conditions the title of M.D.; and, on the other hand, because Irish and Scotch students, who have received their degrees after an examination in no way more difficult than the average examination at present carried on in London by the examining bodies, settle in England, and practise alongside the London licentiates, with the added prestige of the degree and title of M.D., and thus claim a superior social and university status.

While, therefore, heartily concurring in and supporting the petition of the Colleges in principle for facilities for the licentiates of the London examining bodies to obtain the title of "Doctor of Medicine" under reasonable conditions, the Association of Practitioners earnestly protests against the attempt which is manifest in the petition of the two Royal Colleges to secure for themselves alone, and for their licentiates alone, a monopoly for such degrees which would operate most unjustly and injuriously to the interests of the public and of the profession in respect to the total exclusion from the further examinations which the Royal Colleges ask to be allowed to institute for the title of M.D. of all those members of the profession who for excellent reasons prefer the licence of the Society of Apothecaries. It must be remembered that the Society of Apothecaries, under the recent Medical Act, applied to the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons to be included in the combination which these two Colleges have formed for giving licences in Surgery, Medicine, and Obstetrics. A constituency of the Royal College of Surgeons assembled in annual meeting earnestly called upon the College to take that application into consideration, and it is a matter of universal knowledge that the whole voice of the profession was in favour of such a course. It should be remembered also that at an earlier date the two Colleges had, in conference with the Apothecaries' Society, settled a scheme for a conjoint board of examination, by which such combination of these three bodies, and of other examining bodies in England, would have been effected; and after such negotiations had been carried to that point, the Apothecaries' Society, at the instance and with the approval of the two Royal Colleges, applied to Parliament for a special Act, which was accordingly passed, to enable them to take part in such combination. Nevertheless, the Councils of the two said Colleges, who are two small and irresponsible bodies wholly composed of the class of consulting physicians and surgeons, resolved to exclude the Apothecaries' Society from any such combination. The General Medical Council of Education and Registration, after considering the subject, passed resolutions and made representations to the said two Colleges to induce them to alter this most unjust decision, as being contrary to the interests alike of the public and of the profession; but the two Councils once more abruptly declined.

Under these circumstances the Apothecaries' Society completely remodelled their examinations, the General Medical Council appointed its own examiners to supervise and complete the examinations of the Society in all departments, and such examinations are now carried on under the direct supervision and with the assistance of examiners directly appointed by the General Medical Council, in such manner as to afford a complete examination in all the departments of Medicine, Surgery, and Obstetrics.

The Royal Colleges are now asking the Privy Council to do by a side wind that which it directly refused to do in the framing of the Medical

Act, and that which the General Medical Council, following the voice of the great mass of the profession, also refused to do—namely, to treat the Apothecaries' Society with such injustice as effectually to exclude their licentiates from their just rights and privileges, and, in fact, to destroy the efficiency of the Society as an examining body.

The medical students who present themselves at the close of their career for examination at the Society of Apothecaries, and who become its licentiates, undergo a like preliminary examination with the licentiates of the two Royal Colleges, and such preliminary examination must have the like approval of the same authority—the General Medical Council—in order that they may all be entered on the "Register of Medical Students," which is kept by the General Medical Council. The conditions as to age and preliminary education are the same; the curriculum of education is the same; they are educated during the same number of years, in the same schools, the same hospitals, and by the same lecturers as those who take up the licence of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons. The examinations are conducted by Fellows and Members of the said Colleges, and with the aid of the Fellows and Members of the Society of Apothecaries, and of examiners specially appointed by the General Medical Council. They must, therefore, all alike fulfil the now fully adequate State requirements of a uniform minimum qualification.

The Association of General Practitioners ask, therefore, that the serious, inequitable, and unjust action shall not be perpetrated of excluding these gentlemen, similarly educated, similarly examined, and equally qualified, from any further examination for the degree and title of "M.D." in London, such as that for which the petition is now before the Privy Council. They earnestly and respectfully pray that in any Charter which may be granted for that purpose clauses shall be inserted that shall give to the licentiates of the Society of Apothecaries in Medicine and Surgery the same right to present themselves for examination, and if found duly qualified, to receive the title and degree of M.D. as the Royal Colleges ask for their licentiates. It should be noted that in neither case is any further educational curriculum to be imposed, and the only application of the two Colleges is for permission to create a further examination for the new degree. It is submitted that to exclude the licentiates of the Society of Apothecaries, who have passed through the same curriculum with the same teachers for the same time and at the same place as those whom the Royal Colleges propose to examine, would be a totally indefensible attempt to create a special monopoly for these two Colleges for their own benefit alone, and one altogether contrary to public right, public justice, and public interests. The Association of General Practitioners it is proposed to establish, and which it is proposed to call a Senate, is one altogether contrary to the general principles of constitution of such bodies which ought not to be permitted. Under the Draft Charter which is now submitted to the Privy Council it is proposed that the governing body shall be composed of the Councils of the College of Physicians and the College of Surgeons. Now, the Council of the College of Physicians is composed of an entirely self-elected and irresponsible body of members, wholly composed of the class known as consulting physicians, and in this body even the provincial consulting physicians are very slightly represented. The Council of the College of Surgeons is also a body representative only of a very small minority of the great body of licentiates of the College, the members, numbering 15,000, being wholly excluded. In the new governing which it is proposed to set up, these two inadequately constituted and unrepresentative Councils propose to assume to themselves the whole management of the University.

The general practitioners of England are at present totally debarred from representation on the Council of the College of Physicians, and practically debarred from representation on the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons, and it would be most unjust and altogether contrary to precedent that they should, as is now proposed, be also debarred from any representation on the new Senate, which is avowedly created for the express and sole purpose of granting adequate degrees to general practitioners. For the class of consulting physicians and surgeons, of whom the existing Councils are made up, and of whom the new Senate, according to the Draft Charter, would be made up, are fully provided with adequate facilities for graduating at the Universities of London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and the new Charter and new Senate are avowedly asked for with the sole purpose of creating facilities for graduation in medicine for general practitioners. Nevertheless it is proposed that the whole vicious constitution shall be maintained, and that general practitioners, for whom alone this new Senate or University is to be created, shall be wholly debarred from any share in its government or representation on its Council. The new graduates, however capable, however eminent, will in no way be represented. Once given their degrees, they cease to have any voice or vote in the management of the University of which they are graduates. Even if the Councils out of which it is proposed to elect the Senate were more satisfactorily constituted, it would be totally inadequate and unsatisfactory in constitution, but it is especially so considering the extremely unsatisfactory character and constitution of those bodies.

In this respect, also, your petitioners pray that the Privy Council will not allow a constitution of the governing body which is unknown to any other University throughout the kingdom, and which is totally out of accordance with any of the principles on which such governing bodies when created are now constituted. The Council will be prepared to support these arguments and this prayer by deputation, if the Privy Council think fit to receive such deputation, or by any other method indicated. They earnestly pray that the Lords of the Privy Council will not accede to an application containing so many elements of injustice and so contrary to public policy, public interest, and the general feeling of the whole body of the profession, without taking steps to carefully ascertain what is the opinion of the profession on the subject, and without giving effect to the general principles of public right.

It should be mentioned that the two said Councils, of which the constitution has been above referred to, have not in any way submitted this Charter to the large body of their members and licentiates, but have discussed the same in secret councils, and have forwarded it to the Privy Council without submitting it to the professional opinion which they have reason to know would wholly condemn the clauses to which reference is made above.

We have the honour to be, &c.,

C. G. WHEELHOUSE, President.

H. WALTER VERDON, } Hon. Secs.

W. GIBSON BOTT, }

Association of General Practitioners.

410, Erixton-road, S.W.

VITAL STATISTICS.

HEALTH OF ENGLISH TOWNS.

IN twenty-eight of the largest English towns 5737 births and 3978 deaths were registered during the week ending December 3rd. The annual rate of mortality in these towns, which had been 20.0, 21.1, and 23.5 per 1000 in the preceding three weeks, declined again last week to 22.5. During the first nine weeks of the current quarter the death-rate in these towns averaged 20.6 per 1000, and was 0.7 below the mean rate in the corresponding periods of the ten years 1877-86. The lowest rates in these towns last week were 15.5 in Brighton, 16.2 in Hull, 16.3 in Norwich, and 17.3 in Sunderland. The rates in the other towns ranged upwards to 29.6 in Oldham, 30.4 in Blackburn, 31.1 in Bolton, and 35.6 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The deaths referred to the principal zymotic diseases in the twenty-eight towns, which had been 404 and 480 in the preceding two weeks, declined again last week to 443; they included 108 from scarlet fever, 96 from whooping-cough, 69 from measles, 59 from "fever" (principally enteric), 48 from diphtheria, 37 from diarrhoea, and 26 from small-pox. No deaths from any of these zymotic diseases were registered last week in Cardiff, whereas they caused the highest death-rates in Derby, Salford, and Sheffield. The greatest mortality from scarlet fever occurred in Sheffield, Norwich, Bristol, Bradford, Birkenhead, and Salford; from measles in Birmingham, Oldham, Bradford, Nottingham, Blackburn, and Derby; from whooping-cough in Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and from "fever" in Preston. The 48 deaths from diphtheria in the twenty-eight towns included 28 in London, 4 in Birmingham, 3 in Sheffield, and 2 in Portsmouth, in Huddersfield, and in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Small-pox caused 25 deaths in Sheffield and 1 in Bristol, but not one in London or in any of the twenty-five other large provincial towns. The metropolitan hospitals receiving cases of small-pox contained 12 patients on Saturday last, against 16 and 13 on the preceding two Saturdays. The number of cases of scarlet fever in the Metropolitan Asylums Board hospitals and in the London Fever Hospital at the end of the week was 2726, against 2764 on the previous Saturday; the cases admitted showed a decline from the number in the previous week. The deaths referred to diseases of the respiratory organs in London, which had been 438, 461, and 560 in the preceding three weeks, declined again last week to 455, and was 27 below the corrected average. The causes of 89, or 2.2 per cent., of the 3978 deaths in the twenty-eight towns last week were not certified either by a registered medical practitioner or by a coroner. All the causes of death were duly certified in Portsmouth, Nottingham, Bolton, and in three other smaller towns. The largest proportions of uncertified deaths were recorded in Huddersfield, Halifax, Salford, and Sunderland.

HEALTH OF SCOTCH TOWNS.

The annual rate of mortality in the eight Scotch towns, which had been 19.9, 22.0, and 23.5 per 1000 in the preceding three weeks, further rose to 25.0 in the week ending Dec. 3rd; this rate exceeded by 2.5 the mean rate during the same week in the twenty-eight large English towns. The rates in the Scotch towns last week ranged from 17.1 in Greenock and 21.9 in Edinburgh, to 30.8 and 37.6 in Perth and Paisley. The 624 deaths in the eight towns last week showed a further increase of 44 upon the numbers returned in recent weeks, and included 28 which were referred to whooping-cough, 13 to scarlet fever, 12 to measles, 10 to diarrhoea, 9 to "fever" (typhus, enteric, or simple), 5 to diphtheria, and not one to small-pox; in all, 77 deaths resulted from these principal zymotic diseases, against 74 and 78 in the preceding two weeks. These 77 deaths were equal to an annual rate of 3.1 per 1000, which exceeded by 0.6 the mean rate last week from the same diseases in the twenty-eight English towns. The fatal cases of whooping-cough, which had been 26 and 30 in the preceding two weeks, were last week 28, of which 14 occurred in Glasgow and 3 in Dundee. The 12 deaths from measles were within one of the number in the previous week, and included 7 in Dundee and 3 in Edinburgh. The fatal cases of scarlet fever, which had been 16 and 11 in the previous two weeks, rose again last week to 13, of which 8 occurred in Glasgow and 3 in Dundee. The 10 deaths attributed to diarrhoea somewhat exceeded the low numbers in recent weeks. The 9 deaths