Your second argument is that the scheme will not satisfy any of the bodies interested. I should have thought it was obvious that when so many bodies are interested, and each would like as much as it can get, it would be impossible to satisfy them all; but surely it speaks well for the scheme that it has already been adopted by the Senate, the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Surgeons, Guy's, St. Bartholomew's, St. Thomas's, London, Charing-cross, St. Mary's, Middlesex, St. George's, and Westminster Hospitals, the London School of Medicine for Women, the Incorporated Law Society, and (with certain reservations with regard to the provincial colleges) by University and King's Colleges. Probably everyone thinks he could improve the scheme, but it seems to me that it ought to be strongly supported by Convocation, for it is the only one which has yet been proposed which commands support from almost all the bodies concerned. Further, those who oppose it should consider what will happen if it is rejected, for then one of two things will come to pass: either the medical faculty of the London schools will be left in its present unsatisfactory state for many years to come, or a second university will be founded in London. This will lead to dangerous rivalry, and probably to the degradation of the degrees in one or both of the universities. Also, there will be great confusion between the two London degrees.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, W.

W. HALE WHITE, M.D. Lond.

* * If Dr. Hale White compares the proposed constitution of the Senate in the new scheme with that proposed by the Royal Commission he will see that provincial representatives are included in the former and not in the latter. He should also be aware that the "latest" scheme differs from the one before the "latest" in making arrangements for including provincial colleges, and was introduced as the outcome of a distinct objection on the part of those colleges to be excluded from a share in the reconstituted University, as well as in its management. This is in direct opposition to the recommendation of the Royal Commissioners, who merely suggested "access to the examinations and degrees" for provincial students, as is now the case. Unless the scheme lowers the M.D. degree by changing the earlier matriculation and preliminary scientific examinations, it cannot render that degree more accessible. It simply *compels* every London pass M.B. student to come under the examination system of the Royal Colleges, and that at an increased expense to the intending graduate. Does Dr. Hale White intend to convey that the members of the medical staffs of the various London hospitals have officially met to consider the scheme, and that it has been regularly voted on and agreed to by them? Dr. Hale White should not have accepted so readily arguments employed in an *ex parte* memorandum, which would seem to be drawn up by the Senate of the University to influence the voting of Convocation on May 12th next.—ED. L.

THE ELECTRIC BATH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The experiment quoted by Beard and Rockwell, to which Dr. Steavenson alludes as proving that the body conducts the electric current better than water, has little to do with their relative conductivities, but depends entirely upon the difference of potential between the two positions in the bath in which the two hands are immersed. If there were a difference of 50 volts between the head and foot electrodes, and the hands were immersed three feet apart, there would be a difference of potential of about 20 volts between the right and left hands, and the current through the body would equal in fractions of an ampère that voltage divided by the resistance in ohms, and as the distance between them is diminished so also will be the voltage and current. If, however, the hands were placed the same distance apart across the bath there would be no difference of potential and consequently no current. Another experiment was quoted to me a short time ago which was supposed to prove the same thing, and is as follows. If a galvanometer be included in the circuit of a galvanic bath and the current noted, through the water alone and also when the patient

is immersed, it will be found that the current is considerably increased under the latter condition. This result is, however, in no way due to the superior conductivity of the body, but to the fact that its conductivity is added to that of the water, since they are practically in parallel circuit, or the sectional area of that portion of the circuit may be regarded as thereby increased, and consequently its resistance diminished. Again, it is quite true that if salt or acid be added to the water, it will become a better conductor, but not that the whole of the current will then pass through it. In fact, but little current will be thereby diverted from the patient, since as the resistance of the circuit is diminished the total current is increased, and will be divided between conductors in parallel inversely as their resistances; so that whilst the current through the bath would be increased, that through the patient would be but little diminished, and that diminution would not be due to the current selecting the path of least resistance, but because, by increasing the conductivity of that portion of the circuit, the gradient of potential is rendered less steep. I must not be understood as calling in question the fact that the body may under some circumstances be a better conductor than the water, but only as stating that the above experiments have no direct bearing upon the question.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Southport, March 30th, 1891.

FREDERICK GEORGE, M.D.

THE ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—An able and lucid article in THE LANCET of March 28th, 1891, concludes as follows: "We would protest against the assumption that the profession of medicine is in need of any reflected dignity. It has every bit as much title to respect as the profession of arms." It has more right to respect than the profession of arms, which is not a learned profession, but unfortunately in the army, at any rate, it does not obtain the respect, to which it is entitled, and never will until its officers have distinct and intelligible military rank and titles. This is lamentable, but it is true, as army medical officers well know; and it is to this aspect of the case I crave the powerful support of THE LANCET. I wish you could see the state of things at the station from which I write. It is a very large one, where society is exclusively naval and military, and the medical department is at the bottom of the social scale, not from any peculiarity of its members, many of whom have brothers, cousins, or schoolfellows among the combatant officers of the garrison, but solely because they have no military rank or status. It may be difficult for a civilian to understand this, but to those accustomed to military habits the question is simple enough, and they will see that among military society a man without rank and title is nowhere. I can assure you that if Sir Andrew Clark or Sir James Paget formed part of this garrison they would have their corns trodden upon many times every week. They would find that they were not considered fit to preside over even a sanitary committee, of which the most junior subalterns of the station, who might even be their own sons, formed a part. That they could not form part of a court martial by which one of their own men was tried, and that they and their belongings were avoided by society for fear that those who associated with them might be branded with social inferiority; and all this because they have no military rank and status. How can any officers, except they are superhuman, perform their duties, with zeal and interest under such circumstances?

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

April 14th, 1891.

MEDICAL STAFF.

PRE-HISTORIC TREPHINING.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It may interest some of your readers who are interested in the question of pre-historic trephining to know that a very full and most interesting account of the operation is to be found in Miss A. W. Buckland's paper, "Surgery and Superstition in Neolithic Times," read at the meeting of the Anthropological Institute on Feb. 8th, 1881, and published in the journal of the Society, vol. xi., pp. 7-21. On