means known could have ever produced it, was alone enough to demonstrate the absurdity of this view. Without pretending himself to determine the exact nature of these singular bodies, his confident opinion, from all he knew of the history of the case, was, that they were some peculiar morbid product of the kidney, hitherto unknown, which, if thoroughly understood, might ultimately lead to a more lucid view of kidney pathology, beneficial both to science and humanity. In this idea he was sustained by the opinion of Mr. Quekett, who had once seen somewhat similar bodies in the cysts of a kidney, and who, after a diligent microscopic and careful examination, considered them as decidedly of this nature. Having a high opinion of his friend, Dr. Hassall's, abilities in this department of pathology, he had submitted some of the present bodies for his examination, but had not yet received his report. He hoped, however, at some future day to be able to lay before the Society some further researches into the nature of those interesting substances, which at all events tended to show that, notwithstanding the wonderful progress of science in late years, yet there still remained something "more in nature than was dreamt of in our philosophy."

Correspondence.

"Audialteram partem."

KING'S COLLEGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The praiseworthy desire, which seems ever to have actuated the Editor of THE LANCET, of ameliorating the condition of the medical profession, has lately had the effect of permitting the appearance in your columns of several very lengthy letters, complaining of the misconduct of the authorities of two of our largest and most important medical schools. I do not intend to comment upon the letters respecting St. Bartholomew's, for the men there seem to have some real cause of complaint; I very much regret, however, that the *cacoëthes scribendi* should have spread westward and seized some of the young gentlemen at King's College.

In the first place, a "King's College Student" suddenly imagines himself an injured individual; he commits his grievances to paper, and forthwith appears a letter in THE LANCET, full of deans and secretaries, solution and tow, lectures and hot water, crowded together in the most extraordinary and indiscriminate confusion. These intended complaints were shown to be utterly groundless, when we have a letter from a gentleman who styles himself a "Superannuated Student," in which it appears that, even in his day, the morbid feelings of Kings' Students led them to imagine they were suffering under the same fanciful burdens. Another letter appears in THE LANCET for February 5, in which a most ungenerous and unfounded attack is made upon our demonstrators. I can assure the writer of that libel, that had he really wanted assistance in his dissection, a demonstrator was at hand, and would readily have afforded him any aid in his power. The letter, however, is so obviously an excuse for his own idle conduct, that it is not worth more time and attention.

I believe, Mr. Editor, that these letters, in themselves, will be considered by most men as trivial and insignificant, but as affording very fair evidence of the unpleasant feeling existing, unhappily amongst Kings' men; I think they are worth a little serious consideration. With your permission, I will explain why, and by whom they were written.

I am a great admirer of King's College on the whole, but am by no means blind to the very obtrusive system of control which has of late years been carried out in that institution. I freely acknowledge that the students are harassed and hampered in every way, but they have themselves only to thank for these inconveniences, and have the remedies in their own hands, were they capable of using them in a proper manner. It is a well-known fact that the class of medical students at King's College is the most juvenile of any in London. Many of them come to town direct from school—boys in ideas, in manner, in behaviour. What is the consequence? Attend a lecture, and you are pelted with small pieces of paper; others are engaged in the equally intellectual proceeding of cutting their names on the benches, &c. Often have I heard the lecturer remonstrate with the class upon this highly indecorous behaviour. Again: enter the library, and the contrast with the same room in any other medical school is indeed remarkable: in the latter, men are reading, or at least they are perfectly quiet; in the former, the young gentlemen visit that room for the purpose of talking and laughing, thereby annoying all industrious men. This and similar conduct induced the authorities to enforce that schoolboy discipline so bitterly men-

tioned by an "Old King's Man" in the very last words of his letter, and which naturally enough raises the indignation of the juveniles, and is a source of great annoyance to the *men* who have been unluckily tempted to enrol themselves at King's College. It is in consequence of the extremely childish conduct of the class that the secretary occasionally appears cross; that the dean is often compelled to turn a deaf ear to complaints which one only hears at a boarding-school and King's College. Let the pupils at this institution learn to conduct themselves with that dignity, that firmness which becomes the man; let them put away all petty ideas and childish behaviour; let them persuade themselves that the authorities are *not* in league to deprive them of instruction; let them not come before the public with complaints which, at best, are fit only for the dissecting-room; let them behave and write as men, and they will be treated as men: as it is, let me assure them that they and their effusions will escape ridicule and contempt only when they escape notice altogether. I firmly believe that it is this schoolboy discipline, carried into effect in every possible way, that is the real source of all the bickerings between the authorities and students; but so long as the latter show themselves unfit for liberty, so long will they be under strict control.

May I say a word, Mr. Editor, on the mode of teaching at King's College? Surely the exact routine system of education so rigidly followed up does not act beneficially. Why are our men rejected at the College?—at the Hall? They used to be satisfied with nothing less than honours at the University, they now think themselves lucky to see their names in the second division. Our teachers are a body of men who deservedly stand the very highest in the opinion of the profession, and yet where, of late years, has King's College appeared in the pass-lists? Nowhere. I can attribute this falling off to nothing but the execrable routine mismanagement pursued. All our men are not fools, but the attempt to make differently-constituted minds follow in the same track of education, will most assuredly be attended with failure.

I apologize very much for occupying so much of your valuable time, but as the letters which have appeared might, unless explained, give rise to erroneous impressions, I have thought it my duty to trouble you with this.

I have the honour to be your obedient servant,

Feb. 1853.

A LATE KING'S STUDENT.

P.S. I send you my name and address as a guarantee of my assertions.

MR. MARTINEAU'S MODE OF OPERATION IN LITHOTOMY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is equally due to the memory of a celebrated and successful operative surgeon, and to those who shall be anxious to emulate his reputation by imitating his method of operating, that no misapprehensions should be permitted to remain in their minds as to the principles on which he conducted one of the most difficult and important operations in surgery, in which his practical skill and dexterity were so eminently successful.

It is to correct such misapprehensions in reference to Mr. Martineau's operation of lithotomy that I trouble you with this communication. The reporter of a case of stone in the bladder, lately operated upon by Mr. Bransby Cooper, at Guy's Hospital, in several passages of the report, assumes that Mr. Martineau operated without *dividing with the knife* any portion of the prostate gland, but used forcible dilatation only with a blunt gorget. The following paragraph fully explains the ideas of the reporter as to Mr. Martineau's method of proceeding:—

"This method of proceeding is similar in principle to that which, some years ago, used to be performed by Mr. Martineau, of Norwich, whose success exceeded that of any of his contemporaries. The system of Dr. de Borsa agrees with that of Mr. Martineau, inasmuch as both avoided *making any incision into the prostate*, the object being merely to cut into the membranous part of the urethra, and then dilating the prostatic portion of the canal. This object was effected by Mr. Martineau with a beak-pointed blunt gorget, narrow at the extremity, and gradually widening towards the handle; and he gently inserted this instrument through the prostate gland into the bladder. Dr. de Borsa uses his finger instead of the gorget, and this constitutes the only difference between the two operations."

Mr. Cooper's operation performed in this manner was successful; but my object is, not to criticise this method of proceeding, but to prove that it was not that of Mr. Martineau; and for this purpose I shall adduce two authorities, which I

think must be allowed to be equally conclusive and irrefutable:—

1. The description of his method of operating, as described by Mr. Martineau himself, in his paper published in 1821 in the *Transactions of the Medical and Chirurgical Society of London*:—"After the first incision, I look if the staff is not altered in its situation, and then, feeling for the groove, I introduce the point of the knife into it, as low down as I can, and cut the membranous part of the urethra, *continuing my knife through the prostate into the bladder*; when, instead of enlarging the wound downwards, and thus endangering the rectum, *I turn the edge of the knife towards the ischium*, and make a lateral enlargement of the wound in withdrawing the knife. I thus avoid cutting over and over again, which often does mischief, but can give no advantage over the two incisions, which I generally depend on, unless in very large subjects, where a little further dissecting may be required." It is true that Mr. Martineau introduced a blunt gorget, but, as he says in a former paragraph of this paper, "*as a conductor for the forceps*." "In the first years of my practice I was not very successful; and, after witnessing many untoward circumstances in myself and others, which appeared to arise from the use of the cutting gorget, I determined to lay that instrument aside, and employ the knife only, and the *blunt* gorget as a conductor for the forceps;"—surely not as a substitute for the cutting gorget? If, then, Mr. Martineau understood his own operation, it must appear quite clear that, in passing his knife "*through the prostate into the bladder*," he must have partially divided that gland, and probably still more in withdrawing his knife when he made a lateral enlargement of the wound. But,

2. The dissection of an unsuccessful case operated on by Mr. Martineau, Sept. 15, 1825, which was conducted by Mr. Crosse, and recorded in his "Treatise on Urinary Calculus," places the question beyond dispute. "The prostate gland had been extensively divided with the scalpel, (perhaps to above two-thirds of its depth from the anterior vein,) in a direction backwards and a little outwards; and had the incision been carried on entirely through the prostate gland and neck of the bladder in this direction, it would have interfered with the left vesical seminalis, and divided the left vas deferens."

Of the merits of the plan of procedure recommended by the Italian surgeon, Dr. de Borsa, and lately adopted by Mr. Bransby Cooper, which had a successful issue at least to recommend it, I do not now offer any opinion, it being my only purpose to prove that such was not Mr. Martineau's method of conducting the long course of successful operations recorded in the paper already quoted. I may add that I am confirmed in this opinion both by operations performed by the skilful hand of Mr. Martineau which I had the pleasure of witnessing, and long conversations with him on the subject.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Feb. 1853.

T. M. GREENHOW.

SPURIOUS DIPLOMAS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In accordance with your opinion, expressed in a note appended to my letter of last week, I beg to state that the individual who appeared prominently in the transactions therein alluded to, and with whom alone I corresponded, gave me, in 1851, his name and address as Dr. William Lang, Great Pulteney-street, Golden-square, London.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Gloucester-cottage, Prior-park-road,
near Bath, Feb. 1853.

JOHN TRULL.

PERMANGANATE OF POTASH IN DIABETES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you be so obliging as to allow me to offer one or two observations as supplementary to a communication which I addressed to you, on the 8th of last month, respecting the use of permanganate of potash in diabetes.

In that communication I specified two or three grains of that salt as the dose which appeared to agree best with the stomach; but I have since ascertained that a larger quantity may generally be administered without inconvenience. For instance, a patient, for some months past afflicted with diabetes, commenced the use of the permanganate, six weeks since, in doses of two grains; but he is now taking eleven grains three times a day, and is rapidly advancing towards recovery.

There is, however, considerable diversity in the tolerance of the medicine evinced by different individuals. In two patients, for example, suffering from dyspepsia, it became necessary to restrict the dose, nausea being produced, in one instance, by nine grains, and in the other by six grains of the salt.

My experience leads me to the conclusion that the best plan is to begin with two or three grains three times a day, and to add one grain to each dose every third day, unless it be found to disagree.

The effect of the permanganate is remarkable in speedily removing the thirst from which diabetic patients usually suffer so much; and although during the use of the remedy a brown fur is sometimes formed on the tongue, this appearance is not accompanied with dryness of the surface, and is not therefore to be regarded as an objection to the continuance of the medicine.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Eaton-place, Feb. 9, 1852.

GEORGE SAMPSON.

THE INCOME-TAX AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It appears from a letter which was published some few days since in the *Times*, signed "William Farr," that it is proposed to substitute a "property" for an "income-tax;" but, in order to still mulct income, and to compel industry to bear its share of taxation, "*all incomes are to be capitalized—i. e., to have a value assigned them, and to be made to pay tax upon that value.*"

This value is easily found with regard to land or funds. The fundholder who derives £1000 a year from Government securities can sell his capital at the present prices for more than £30,000, and will be fairly taxed on that property; but I must, as a professional man, and one who has had many opportunities of knowing the value of "practices," protest against a medical man's income being considered as valuable as an annuity.

I see a fresh attempt at laying an unfair burden on our shoulders when I see a professional income of £1000 a year considered as representing a capital of £13,000 and upwards, when I know that £2000 is the utmost I could sell it for. The marketable value of an income is, I conceive, the true test of its worth, and this, I hold, ought to be considered in any attempt at capitalization of income.

I trust, Sir, that you will use your powerful pen in asserting our right to fair consideration in any modification of the income-tax, or a pretended boon may in reality prove a more oppressive burden.

In contemplation of change, would it not be advisable to collect evidence as to the *real practical* value of the incomes of medical men, and to embody this evidence in a petition for real, not theoretical, justice, to be signed by medical men?

I am, Sir, obediently yours,

Brighton, Feb. 1853.

WILLIAM BAYES, M.D.

INADEQUATE REMUNERATION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS BY PUBLIC BODIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—While the attention of the profession is directed to the inefficient remuneration of medical assistants, perhaps you will allow me a little space to show how shamefully they are remunerated by public bodies.

A short time since, I inserted an advertisement in your columns for a situation as medical assistant; and among the various replies I received one from the guardians of the Cleobury-Mortimer Union, offering a salary of £40 per annum for an assistant to dispense and vaccinate, &c. Of course, for such a sum, I supposed my board, residence, &c., was found, but wrote, however, to satisfy myself fully on the subject, and received an answer that that, and that only, was the remuneration offered.

Supposing, Sir, I was able (which I very much doubt) to obtain board, residence, and every accommodation at £30 per annum, I should have just £10 for my services, besides incurring the expense of going to a place so far distant as Cleobury-Mortimer, which would be little short of £2.

And this, Sir, is the remuneration the Board of Guardians think sufficient for gentlemen of a liberal education. I immediately declined the situation, and expressed my astonishment that the Board of Guardians could ever think of offering such a very niggardly sum. I do not know whether they have been able to get any one to accept it, but this I know—that if medical assistants were but true to themselves, we should soon hear no more of such shameful offers. The Board of Guardians would