Medical Societies.

ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1852.—MR. HODGSON, PRESIDENT.

ON THE OCCASIONAL ORGANIC UNION OF CONTIGUOUS TEETH. By S. J. A. SALTER, M.B., &c.

(Communicated by THOMAS BELL, Sec. R.S.)

The object of this paper is to enumerate fresh examples of the so-called "bony" union of contiguous teeth; to explain the true nature of that union, as exhibited by microscopical scrutiny; and to suggest the probable mode of its formation.

1. The fresh instances here recorded are, a united dens sapientiæ and supernumerary tooth of the lower jaw; a cuspidatus and lateral incisor of the lower jaw united; and a specimen exhibiting the lateral and central incisors of the lower jaw in the same condition. These are particularly described.

2. In the next place, the nature of the uniting medium is shown to be dentine and not crusta petrosa, (as stated previously by written on this subject.) This is demonstrated by microscopical drawings of sections of the teeth.

3. The probable mode by which this abnormality is produced is explained thus: The pulps of the teeth form in their usual place and usual relation, with this one exception, that that portion of the capsule which should separate them is wanting. The result is, that they come in contact, and when the soft dentinal elements commence calcifying they unite, and the tubes of the two teeth are continuous. There is no enamel between the teeth where the crowns are in contact.

The author further remarks, that all the teeth, and in both jaws, have been subjects of this peculiar condition. The paper concludes with a few practical remarks—that, in the majority of cases, the union could not be discovered while the teeth were in the mouth, and that, even where it could be discovered, both teeth must necessarily be removed together should extraction of either be required, as there appears no means of separating them.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE PROPOSED LAWS OF THE NEW MEDICAL COLLEGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some months since, I attended a meeting held at the Hanover-square Rooms, for the formation of the Medical Benevolent College, with the intention of subscribing my mite towards the attainment of so desirable an object; but I soon saw and heard quite sufficient to determine me to keep my money in my pocket, as I found that a good part of the subscriptions would be expended in building a church, and in paying a large salary to a chaplain. In this opinion I am confirmed by a copy of the "Laws," which I have just received; in every page, and in nearly every rule, I perceive the cloven feet of the church of England.

In No. 1, "There shall be a chapel of the church of England."

No. 3, "Incumbents in whose churches sermons have been preached in aid of the funds." (Nothing said about dissenting chapels.)

No. 17, The Bishops of London and Winchester are to be visitors.

No. 34, The head master is to be a clergyman, and is to appoint the assistant-masters, (who of course will be ditto,) and is not to be removed without the consent of one of the visitors, who, by-the-by, is the gentleman who has rather an objection to remove Puseyites.

It thus appears that, no matter what religion the father may have been, his children are to be brought up to the church of England.

Hoping you will give insertion to the foregoing,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

May, 1852.

A BAPTIST.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The remarkable letter of your correspondent, "M. D., and 'an Admirer of Religious Freedom,'" contained in THE LANCET of May 22nd, cannot fail to have been read with pain.

Although unwilling to intrude myself again upon your valuable space with reference to the Medical College, which is

continuing to receive such able and substantial support on all sides, I cannot refrain from immediately expressing my disapprobation of the spirit of acerbity in which the "M. D." has written. What does he mean by the offensive terms, "priestly tyrants," "stupid and bigoted," &c. &c.?

Now-a-days, I believe it to be generally admitted that no institution, of a charitable description and the like nature, wherein religious observances are necessary, such as are especially required in the education and training of the young, can be worked, practically, with success, under the attempted combination of the principles of church and dissent. Witness the Infant Orphan Asylum, which, after the fruitless effort of a few years, became divided from this cause into two separate establishments. Hence, the Council of the College have, in my opinion, wisely decided that this benevolent undertaking should be based on the principles of the established church.

I am a perfect stranger to the proceedings of the Council, beyond having seen their by-laws, but I cannot apprehend that there would be the slightest objection to those non-conformists, whether old or young, who may become inmates of the College, and conscientiously object to the forms of worship therein observed, performing their religious duties after their accustomed manner. Neither do I see anything in the by-laws contrary to this view of the matter.

Let it not be supposed that I entertain other than feelings of Christian toleration and cordiality towards the large and influential body of dissenters, amongst whom, indeed, I can enumerate some of the members of my own family. I am myself a churchman, and I hope a sincere one, but the man whom I have every best reason most to love and respect in this world is a dissenter.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

G. BURY.

Whetstone, May, 1852.

ARTIFICIAL DILATATION OF THE OS UTERI.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am sure your sense of justice will accord me a little space, to answer the charge of misrepresentation made against me by Mr. Gilmour, in your last number.

He freely taxes me with professional ignorance. At all events I do not sin alone; for immediately following his letter is one from "Alpha," who is decidedly as disposed to call the practice in question "malpractice" as myself.

The misrepresentation is this. Mr. Gilmour says: "He talks of the whole structure of the uterus being in a state of rigidity similar to that rigidity of the os uteri mentioned by writers."

Now, I said no such thing. My words are: "The truth is, that in such cases the whole structure of the organ is physiologically in the same state." I did not say "of rigidity," for I am not a believer in the book doctrines respecting rigidity, especially as affecting the os uteri exclusively, and therefore could not have made an assertion so absurd.

Again, Mr. Gilmour states: "My entire paper never once alludes to the propriety of using artificial dilatation in rigidity of the os." If that were not his subject or object, the title of his communication, nay, every word of it, belies his attempt to cancel or stultify his meaning. Why then does he quote Celsus—a splendid authority certainly in progressive science, and especially in midwifery—in support of the practice, and a host of other men of later days, whose doubtful recommendations have passed into the habits of every village apothecary and aged midwife in the kingdom, until the thing has acquired the force of a demand.

My words in reference to irritability of the parts have been grossly misunderstood. I said, "for this in many cases of protracted labour is no overcharged description of the state of parts;" then not certainly in their natural condition.

When a man loses his temper, and makes general and random charges of ignorance, it is generally understood to signify that he has the worst of the argument. Mr. Gilmour thinks me scurrilous: now I will not say he is so; but venture to quote a letter that I have received from Mr. John Brierly, M.R.C.S., of Staley-bridge.

"I have just been reading your admirable paper in THE LANCET, &c. I hope it may direct men's minds to a better practice than the one too much in vogue, and secure the safety and welfare of many a poor creature whose sufferings are, I should fancy, quite enough naturally without being increased artificially by the meddlesomeness of the person called in to watch her safe delivery. How often has the expression been that such and such a person never had his hands off his patient for hours."

Sir,—I repeat it, that however it might be otherwise accounted