Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE GRESHAM UNIVERSITY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Permit me to make a slight correction in your excellent leading article on "The New University for London" in THE LANCET of this day. You say that in my "oft-quoted" letter I express the opinion that in the case of the "London diplomates" a clinical examination only would suffice. The words I used were "practical and clinical"—I mean "practical" in its widest sense—in the laboratory rather than in the class-room; in the laboratories of physiology, pathology, forensic medicine, and hygiene; in the dissecting and post-mortem rooms. The "oft-quoted" letter to which you refer, though expressly stated to be unofficial—as much so as this,—has received, most undeservedly, an amount of attention that is rarely bestowed upon official documents, and has been used with more ingenuity than ingenuousness in support of the contention that I advocated a lowering of the degree of M.D. in the new University. It has been attacked by the authorities of the Victoria University, it has been published in the appendix to a petition that has been presented to Parliament, and it has been so unfortunate as to meet with the disapproval of philosophers and scientists who, with little or no experience of medical education and its requirements, are quite prepared to legislate for it by what you truly term "impracticable schemes." And lastly, it has been used by writers in the daily press to make "political capital" against the Charter.

Those self-constituted champions of a "high standard," the authorities of the Victoria University and my friends the philosophers, persist in accusing me of seeking to lower the standard of education in respect to the medical degree of the new University. I most emphatically deny ever having had or having expressed such an intention. The charge is absolutely untrue. The "oft-quoted" letter on which it is founded had no reference whatever to the curriculum of the student qualifying for a degree in the University. It referred solely to the question of the admissibility of the "London diplomates" to examination for the M.D. degree, that examination being a final one from which all "preliminary science" must necessarily be excluded. What I did say was that a good qualification might be taken in the case of these diplomates as equivalent to the M.B., and that such a qualification was the M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P.,—and I contend that this combined qualification is equivalent to the M.B. of any university in the kingdom, with the single exception of that of London, and possibly that of the Victoria University, of the relative value of which I regret to have to confess my ignorance; and that the London diplomates suffer under a real and substantial grievance in its not being so recognised.

It is absurd to speak of a "standard" in scientific or medical examinations qualifying for degrees. There is no such thing. Every university and medical college has its own "standard," determined by its own governing body, as will be the case in the Gresham University should its Charter—happily for medical education—be granted. Can it be pretended that the "standard" is the same in the University of London and that of St. Andrews, that of Cambridge and that of Glasgow?—in the Royal College of Surgeons of England and in that of Edinburgh, in the Royal College of Physicians of London and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow? There is not only no uniformity in this respect amongst the different degree-giving and licensing bodies in the kingdom, but the standard will vary in the same institution at different times, according to the views of its Senate or Council for the time being. This is a question of statute or by-law, and not of charter. Which, then, of these "standards" am

I accused of wishing to lower? That of London or that of St. Andrews?—that of Cambridge or that of Glasgow? But perhaps the true standard of excellence is to be found at Manchester, and there only.

I am, Sirs, yours very obediently,
Eastbourne, Feb. 27th, 1892. JOHN ERIC ERICHSEN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In your notice of my little volume in your leading article in last issue you speak of me as advocating the "absorption of the governing bodies of the two teaching colleges and the ten medical schools into the Senate of the University." If you will re-examine p. 116 of my book you will find that what I say is: "That after the first constitution of the faculties no further appointment to College posts shall, *ipso facto*, make the holder a member of the faculties of the new university in arts, science, or law, but that the university shall itself nominate to its own faculties." This expressly excludes the Faculty of Medicine, which I am quite aware needs peculiar dealing with. I think this clears off the objections you raise as to the absorption of the medical schools. I am quite certain that no high standard will be maintained on the science and arts side of the proposed university unless the appointments are made by the governing body of the University itself. The powers of extra-collegiate lecturing must be extended if the University is not to present the absurd spectacle of being called "Gresham," but excluding all teaching done at Gresham College from its graduation courses. The Charter, as it stands, needs amending in the direction of wider powers of extra-collegiate teaching just as much for the sake of the highest as for the lower forms of work. It is the former which Sir Thomas Gresham originally intended to assist by his foundation.

My modifications (3) and (4) are especially intended to cut the ground from under the feet of far more serious opponents of the Charter than myself. You possibly, Sirs, have no idea of the parliamentary strength of the "Extension" and "External Medical Schools" oppositions. But unless these opponents are met by modifications in the House, and those I have suggested are the least feasible, I do not think the Charter has any chance of surviving. I believe that the only way for those who wish to see a Teaching University in London is to work for the modification of the Charter in such a manner as will really strengthen it, while disabling opposition. I have good ground for thinking that in pressing the Charter as it stands, you are destroying all hope of carrying it. So far as medicine is concerned, my modification (3) is the only one that touches it, and on your own showing this is practically accepted by the London members of the profession. If you do not want Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Bristol, and Birmingham to vote solidly against the Charter, you must be prepared to accept some modification of the kind I have suggested.

It is, Sirs, perfectly open to Parliament to petition that the Charter be *suspended* until modified, and I believe the only alternative to absolute rejection is suspension. If this be so, surely an influential journal like THE LANCET should work for the latter alternative.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,
University College, March 3rd, 1892. KARL PEARSON.

* * We did not say that Professor Pearson advocated "the absorption of the governing bodies of the two teaching Colleges and the ten medical schools into the Senate of the University," but that his second provision could only mean this. No one conversant with the composition of the governing bodies of the medical schools could have suggested such an obviously impracticable proposal. His method, which again is an impossible one, of dealing with the medical problem is stated in his appendix (p. 133). Professor Pearson has hitherto urged, without sufficient foundation, that the medical faculty intended to lower medical degrees. There are not, so far as we can see, any stronger grounds for his assertion that the professors in the two Colleges will not "maintain a high standard in arts and science." This seems to us most unjust to his colleagues in those faculties. We still believe that the Charter must be accepted or rejected as it stands.—ED. L.

POST-MORTEM APPEARANCES OF THE BRAIN OF INFLUENZA PATIENTS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Goodall's account of the post-mortem appearances which he has found in fatal cases of influenza at the West Riding Asylum forms indeed a singular contrast to the results which I had mentioned in a previous letter as obtained by Helweg of Aarhus. I think it will be interesting to your readers, in connexion with this, to be informed of the results of twelve necropsies of gripped patients made by Maillart¹ in the Cantonal Hospital of Geneva. In the first case there was great hyperæmia in the right hemisphere of the cerebellum, with hæmorrhagic spots, and complete softening of the medullary matter. In the second case there was found copious hæmorrhage at the base of the brain, proceeding from an aneurysm of the basilar artery, there being liquid blood in the right lateral ventricle, and granular ependymitis. In the third case the dura mater was completely adherent to the skull, and the pia mater thickened and strongly congested. In the fourth case there was acute non-suppurating leptomeningitis; the pia mater showed strong œdematous infiltration at the convexity as well as at the base, the vessels being very turgid. In the next three cases, where the patients, being previously consumptive, had died of rapid progress of the tuberculosis subsequent to the attack of grip, the condition of the brain is not mentioned. In the eighth case there was hæmorrhagic pachymeningitis, chiefly in the middle fossæ. In the ninth case there was general sub-arachnoid œdema. In the tenth case, which was that of a tubercular and alcoholised person, there was strong sub-arachnoid œdema. The left Sylvian artery was surrounded by a loose non-transparent tissue, and showed numerous miliary tubercles in its tract. On the right side the same lesions were found, although not so pronounced. There were a few miliary tubercles on the bloodvessels of the anterior surface of the pons and internal hydrocephalus. In the eleventh case slight subarachnoid œdema and lepto-meningitis with hyperæmia were discovered. Finally, in the twelfth case, the pia mater was found covered with a thick layer of greenish, thick, and ropy pus on its whole surface, at the base as well as at the convexity, and the membrane was strongly œdematous. The lateral ventricles were likewise found to be filled with the same kind of pus. Everyone must admit that such a series of records is very significant, and cannot be simply due to coincidence, more especially when it is remembered that the cases were not of inmates of an asylum, but of persons indiscriminately admitted for severe forms of grip into a general hospital.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Harley-street, Feb. 29th, 1892.

JULIUS ALTHAUS, M.D.

RETRO-PHARYNGEAL ABSCESS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have read Mr. Pollard's paper in THE LANCET of Feb. 6th on Retro-pharyngeal Abscess with great interest. About ten weeks ago an infant aged four months was brought to me suffering from one. The history given was the following: The child had always been ailing, and from birth had difficulty in breathing, especially when asleep. On examination the fauces were congested, the tongue was furred, and the child presented all the symptoms of croup, for which I at first treated it. As the dyspnoea continued to increase I examined the pharynx, and found an elastic swelling behind the right tonsil, and extending laterally beyond the middle line and below, reaching to the upper part of the larynx. I opened the swelling through the posterior wall of the pharynx, inverted the child, and washed out the month. There was instantaneous relief. Three days after this I was hurriedly summoned to the child, as it was said to be dying. I found that the abscess cavity had re-filled, and the dyspnoea was intense. A free opening was made into the swelling, and about a tablespoonful of fetid pus was expelled. The month was washed out twice daily, the child being inverted. There has been no return of the abscess, and the child is now in good health. I am of

opinion that retro-pharyngeal abscess in infants is sometimes of syphilitic origin, and is not such a rare affection as Mr. Pollard imagines. Probably cases occur which are mistaken for croup, and treated as such, the error never being rectified.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Stanford-hill, N., Feb. 21st, 1892.

DANIEL MOWAT.

NORTHERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Hospital for Diseases of the Chest.

THE annual meeting of the Northern Counties Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest at Newcastle has been held. The Mayor presided. The total number of patients treated has been 1084. The financial statement was satisfactory, showing a balance in the hands of the treasurer. Reference is made in the report to Koch's treatment for consumption, which was carried out last year at the hospital. It says that a special nurse was engaged, and careful notes were made of the course of the disease in those patients who were subjected to this treatment, who had been selected with a view of giving it the best possible chance of success. In this the medical staff had the coöperation of Dr. George Murray, through whom the supply of tuberculin had been received, and who brought it directly from Koch at Berlin, so that there could be no doubt as to its genuineness. The result of these and other experiments is that the opinion formed by the medical staff is unfavourable to its use in its present form, and that, while not denying that it may be of some service in a few cases, they consider that it was not of much practical value in the cases which came under treatment at the hospital.

Gateshead Dispensary and Children's Hospital.

The report of the Gateshead Dispensary, presented at the meeting held last week under the presidency of the Mayor, is a record of an enormous amount of work, as will be seen from the following figures: Patients treated by letter, 3537; casuals, including 249 accidents and 425 dental cases, 11,281. Thanks were accorded to the Hospital Sunday Fund and the Gateshead Dispensary ball committee, and the honorary medical staff and other officers were congratulated on the successful working of the charity. The Children's Hospital at Gateshead has also held its annual meeting. There had been a slight increase of patients, 82 in-patients as against 74 in the previous year; whilst 765 out-patients had been attended to. The financial statement was very satisfactory, the year closing with £153 in the hands of the treasurer on current account. Mr. William Rowland had given £300, and the late Dr. Benjamin Barkus, formerly of Gateshead, late of Newcastle, had bequeathed £300 to the hospital.

Ambulance Work in the North.

At Seaham Harbour Surgeon-Major Gibbon has commenced a course of ambulance lectures, with lantern illustrations by his son, Surgeon Fred. W. Gibbon, of the Tyne Dock Volunteer Engineers. There was a large attendance at this lecture, including most of the police force of the district. At Wooley also a public meeting, in connexion with the ambulance class has been held, and Surgeon-Major Hutton delivered a lecture. At this meeting a presentation was made to Dr. Dey (who had successfully instructed the class during the winter) of a handsome marble timepiece, with appropriate inscription, from the class. Mr. G. P. Hughes, High Sheriff of Northumberland, made the presentation.

Epidemic of Diphtheria in the Houghton-le-Spring District.

There has been a serious epidemic of diphtheria at Newbottle, in the Houghton-le-Spring rural sanitary district, and it has been under consideration to destroy all the books at the schools, which have been closed. Such destruction of books would mean a loss of about £100. Another suggestion is to disinfect them, and a new machine has come down from London which, although it weighs about one ton and a half, can be moved about from school to school to disinfect the books.

North-Eastern Convalescent Home.

The second meeting of the North-Eastern Convalescent Home has been held. This institution is for the benefit of the working classes of the friendly societies of the north-

¹ Étude Clinique sur la Grippe pandémique d'après les Observations recueillies à l'Hôpital Cantonal de Genève pendant l'Epidémie de 1889-90. Genève, 1891.