mission to the two hospitals; and preference will be given to applicants who shall not for the longest period immediately preceding their application have been in receipt of parochial relief. The in-patients' orders are to be given so that, as far as possible, one-fourth of the total number of beds shall be filled by poor persons from each of the parishes of St. Paul, Covent-garden; St. James, Westminster; and St. Clement Danes; and one-eighth of the beds by poor persons from the other two parishes respectively. As far, too, as is practicable, the orders are to be given in the proportion of three-fifths to King's College and two-fifths to Charing-cross Hospital. It is also provided that, should the income of the charity increase so as to exceed £1000, a new or further scheme may be made, if this be deemed desirable, by the Attorney-General.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE BEAKED SOUND.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—MY friend Mr. Gay says that "in almost all works in which allusion is made to this instrument, its origination is accredited to those to whom, I believe, it does not justly belong."

Had Mr. Gay opened my work on the Prostate, 2nd edition, p. 167, or the 3rd edition, just published, he would have found the following passage, which describes the instrument in question, and is illustrated by a figure of it:—

"A sound with a very short curve at its extremity, or possessing a beak rather than a curve, which is much shorter and more angular than that of the ordinary catheter. Instruments somewhat resembling this description have long been employed, but their use for sounding the bladder, and more especially for examining the condition of the prostate, has during the last thirty years been more particularly advocated by those among the French surgeons who have bestowed special attention on maladies of the urinary organs, as Civiale, Heurteloup, Leroy d'Etiolles, and Aug. Mercier. The two latter have represented the forms which they employ (see Figs. 12 and 13); they differ little from the sound which is now generally used, and scarcely if at all from the form of the common lithotrite."

Mr. Gay claims to have introduced this form in 1845. Now the "thirty years" of the passage above quoted refers to the date of Leroy d'Etiolles' work, "De la Lithotripsie," published in Paris in 1836. M. Leroy is at some pains to show that a sound fashioned like a catheter is unfit to detect a calculus in the bladder, and he points out the advantages of the short beaked instrument, illustrating the form by means of a figure—pp. 33-4. He adds that Tolet had recommended a similar form for the purpose, but that, like many other useful things, it had been forgotten and re-invented.

Tolet's work on Lithotomy was first published about the end of the seventeenth century; the fifth edition, now before me, bears date 1707. Extended research might carry the origin farther back, but this is unimportant. I am only concerned to support my statement that for thirty years past the sound has been common enough in Paris.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Wimpole-street, May 5th, 1868.

HENRY THOMPSON.

THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION AT THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you permit me through the medium of your journal to announce my intention of coming forward in July next as a candidate for a seat in the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons.

If I have the honour to be elected, I will endeavour to urge on members of the Council the duty of publishing minutes of their proceedings, in accordance with the course adopted by

the Medical Council, and most other representative bodies. By such publicity a deeper sense of responsibility will be awakened in the governing body, and the Fellows at large will know—as is their undoubted right—what their representatives are doing, and how they perform their duty.

If report speaks truly, some of those who have been most strong in the profession of liberal principles before election, have subsequently opposed measures of progress of the highest importance—a course which they would scarcely have ventured upon, I think, had the proceedings been authoritatively made public.

I shall advocate a total remodeling of the Court of Examiners. This body ought, in my opinion, to be distinct from the Council, and chosen indifferently from the profession at large. At present, or at all events until lately, the Court of Examiners have ruled the Council instead of being ruled by it, the result of which has been and is evident in many lamentable ways.

Again, the Examiners, under the present system, appear to me to hold office too long. Their term, which used to be for life, has, thanks to Sir William Fergusson, been reduced to ten years. A further reduction to five, as at the London University, would, I think, still further promote the interests of the profession.

I think, too, that those Fellows who reside beyond a certain distance from the College should have the privilege of voting by proxy accorded to them, in conformity with the plan prevailing at our Universities in elections for members of Parliament.

Lastly, I will use my best endeavours to bring about periodical meetings of the Council and the members at large, in order that subjects relating to the general welfare of the profession may be discussed. By such conferences, I believe, a bond of union between the College and its members, which is now wanting, would be formed, and any occasion for disaffection towards the governing powers be prevented.

By such measures, I believe, our College would be advanced in efficiency and public favour, and speedily take rank as second to none of its rival institutions.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN GAY, F.R.C.S. (Hon.)

Finsbury-place South, May 4th, 1868.

THE MINUTE ANATOMY OF CANCEROUS GROWTHS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Your readers are much indebted to you for the able summaries of the new facts in minute pathological science which you have of late from time to time placed before them.

Of these not the least interesting and important are the researches into the minute anatomy of cancerous growths, which you have indicated in your leading article of Saturday last; and I would especially call attention to one particular point in connexion with these investigations. It is this:—If, as is thereby apparently shown, *the cancer-cells, which are confessedly capable of reproduction, are not really new structures, but only abnormal and modified developments of normal connective tissue and gland-cells*, it follows almost as a matter of course that the cellular corpuscles, and the epithelial or glandular cells from which they are formed, must be also *endued with this property of independent growth and reproductive increase*. And although this power in their perfectly normal state may be, and plainly is, kept in abeyance by *their healthy innervation*, yet it is doubtless ready to spring into action under plenty of other abnormal conditions besides that which we call cancer. It therefore appears to me that the recognition of this as a fundamental fact has the greatest possible significance, as it assimilates these elementary animal structures most closely to minute vegetable germs (in which an independent vitality and an inherent power of reproduction are confessedly present), and so, I think, throws a great additional light upon the nature and mode of propagation of all infectious and contagious—*i.e.*, reproductive—diseases; and, moreover, helps us not a little to understand the nature of suppuration, and analogous processes, with their rapid development of similar cells.

Both of these questions are just now matters of great scientific concern, and of careful inquiry; and that they are not recent subjects of thought with me is shown by what I have said on the germ theory, and local origin of cancer, in a short paper

published in the columns of THE LANCET for 1863. My only wish now is to direct attention to the one great fact alluded to above, which, if true, marks, I think, a distinct and most important advance in our knowledge of the nature of all communicable disease.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Norwich, May 4th, 1863. PATER EADE, M.D. Lond.

LIVERPOOL.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE Children's Infirmary in this town, which has now been in existence upwards of sixteen years, has, like many a similar institution, a very humble origin. In 1851 a small house in a frequented thoroughfare was rented as a dispensary for children by Dr. Stephens, who may be said to have been the promoter of the undertaking. In a very few years the house proved too small, such numbers availing themselves of the advantages and benefits derived from it. A larger house was taken in a better neighbourhood, and twenty beds fitted up. In this for the last ten years an amount of good has been done which it would be almost impossible to overestimate. An average daily attendance of 70 out-patients; 70 little sufferers daily prescribed for; 3438 during the year 1867, 135 of whom were in-patients. These figures but vaguely tell the widespread influence which this institution exerts for good on the health of the poor children of the southern and eastern districts of Liverpool.

The committee have interested the public, and especially ladies, in their infirmary so largely that they have now obtained nearly all the requisite funds for the new hospital which they are building. This is to contain sixty beds; it is nearly completed; the foundation stone was laid a year ago by the Duke of Edinburgh. H.R.H. the Princess of Wales is the lady-patron, and she has more than once in a substantial manner evinced her kindly interest in its welfare.

An increased staff has become necessary; hitherto it has consisted of two medical officers; and two assistant medical officers. Some very necessary alterations in the laws relative to the working of the infirmary were made last year, and it was then decided, with a new and larger hospital in view, to appoint a third medical officer. The election to this office took place last week. There were several candidates, and among them appeared Dr. Drysdale, the leading homœopathic practitioner here. This being the first attempt made by anyone practising homœopathy to obtain an hospital appointment, it was vigorously and, I am happy to add, successfully resisted. Dr. Oxley, who has for some years acted as assistant medical officer, was the candidate best entitled from his past services to hold the appointment. He received the greatest amount of support, though every effort was made by the friends of Dr. Drysdale to secure his return. The result of the voting was 159 for Oxley, and 95 for Drysdale.

In my next I propose to refer to the mode of electing an honorary officer adopted on this occasion, and also a few months ago, when a vacancy occurred at the Southern Hospital.

April 22nd, 1868.

GLASGOW.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

WE have lately had two great gatherings of the profession, for very different objects,—the one purely scientific, the other purely commercial. The first consisted in a very numerous meeting of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, to hear Professor Lister on the antiseptic treatment of wounds and abscesses. His paper was methodical and clear, his reasoning close, and his deductions fair and allowable. Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the truth of the theory on which he founds his practice, all who heard his disquisition must admit that the results he has obtained are wonderful. It would be against rule, of course, for me to give any outline of Mr. Lister's paper, as no doubt he will soon lay before the

profession his more matured reflections and experiences on the uses and mode of applying carbolic acid in surgery. I may be allowed to say, however, that if his astonishing success in the treatment of compound fractures, dangerous wounds, and aneurism, on antiseptic principles, is confirmed by further experience, those horrors of the surgeon, pyæmia, erysipelas, hospital gangrene, and secondary hæmorrhage, are likely soon to be among the things that have been.

For some months we have had a smouldering agitation at the appointments of certifying surgeons under the Factory Acts being limited to three, which last week culminated in a public meeting of the profession, convened by the President of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons. He however did not think fit to attend, but the following day published a letter giving his reasons, which are generally admitted to be satisfactory. The discussion at the meeting was painfully personal, and perfectly futile. The resolutions submitted proposed to give the power of certifying under the Acts to any practitioner, without restriction, whom the employer of labour chose to call in; the effect of which would tend to render some of the most important provisions of the Acts null and void. What is required is to increase the number of certifying surgeons, which the Inspector of Factories has the power to do. The large sum to be divided, estimated variously from five to ten thousand pounds a year, would afford very snug berths for ten or fifteen, instead of three, members of our profession. I have little doubt the question will be settled by such a division of labour and of money as will be alike beneficial to the profession and the public.

The 1st of May is commemoration day at our University. The ceremonies this year excited more than usual interest, and were conducted with more formality and decorum than I ever saw before. The graduates in arts and in science were capped in public. What became of the medical graduates?

Glasgow, May 4th, 1868.

ABERDEEN.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE ceremony of capping the medical graduates took place in the University Hall, on Thursday, the 23rd ult., when ten candidates received the degree of M.D., twenty the degree of M.B., and nineteen the degree of C.M.

The scheme for a Fever Hospital, mentioned in my last letter, is in progress, and may perhaps be looked upon as in a fair way of being carried out, considering the slow and cautious manner in which things are gone about in this part of the country. It is proposed to construct and arrange it on a somewhat similar plan to that of the Glasgow Fever Hospital, commencing on a small scale, but so as to admit of additions being made as necessity may require. The only obstacle that seems to stand in the way is the penny-wise economy of some of the committeemen of Old Machar's parish, who, after all demonstrations in its favour, still grudge to contribute their share. I would recommend to these gentlemen the perusal of the admirable paper "On the Statistics of Typhus in Aberdeen," read by Dr. Beveridge before the Social Science Association, and published in the last volume of its Transactions, showing the probable cause and cost of the last epidemic. It is annoying that such men should always be found at every petty board, to act as a drag on the wheel of progress, and to obstruct even the most necessary improvements.

The half-yearly meeting of the Garioch Medical Society took place at Inverary on the 2nd inst., under the presidency of Dr. Mitchell, of Rayne. Dr. Wolfe read a paper "On Protoxide of Nitrogen and other Anæsthetics," expressing his satisfaction at the discouragement of its use by THE LANCET. He pointed out that laughing gas had been extensively tried in America, and well-nigh abandoned on account of its many casualties; and stated that he had been informed by Dr. Lewett, of Fitchburgh, Massachusetts, that he had been called to attend one case of complete paralysis, which lasted five months, and another case of cerebral congestion of some weeks' duration occurring in healthy persons, after its administration by a dentist. Dr. Wolfe added that, among the few cases in which he had seen it used in London by Dr. Evans, the appearance of lividity in one case was such as to cause serious doubts of its safety, the appearances being more those of suffocation than of genuine anæsthesia.

The annual meeting of the North of Scotland Medical Asso-