Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE REGISTRATION OF THE MEDICAL STUDENT AND THE REGULATIONS OF THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I hope you will allow me to answer as briefly as possible the letter of Mr. Bevan printed in your issue on Oct. 1st. If I make any incorrect statement the Registrar of the General Medical Council will doubtless set me right.

The London University recognises as the first year of the five years' medical course a year spent (after matriculation) at St. Paul's School or similar schools in the study of chemistry, physics, and biology. A student who has thus spent a year can proceed to the M.B., B.S. degrees after four years at a medical school. The General Medical Council does not "register as a medical student" such a person until he actually enters the medical school. But this makes no difference whatever to him. The General Medical Council has no power to enforce the interval between "registration as a student" and "registration as a practitioner," and it has no power to refuse to register as a practitioner forthwith an applicant who has the degrees referred to or the qualifications of the Royal Colleges.

Mr. Bevan is quite right in thinking that many parents are misled by the form of the statement issued by the General Medical Council. The intention of the Council was doubtless right. It meant to prevent the premature specialisation in medical work. But the effect has been precisely the opposite of that intended. Instead of inducing the student to prolong his "general education," it tempts him (by the ungrounded fear of losing a year) to go to a medical school at the earliest possible moment.

I have no desire to enter into the question whether it is or is not desirable in the case of students who matriculate (or otherwise qualify) early that they should spend the first year of their medical curriculum at school. I do not even ask that the regulations issued by the General Medical Council should point out the possibility of this, since the possibility depends not on the Council but on the licensing bodies. All I suggest is that the regulations issued by a public body should not be actually misleading. A parent would require to have a legal knowledge of the respective powers of the Council and of the licensing bodies if he is not to be misled by this statement in the Council's regulations:—"The commencement of the course of professional study recognised by any of the Licensing Bodies shall not be reckoned as dating earlier than fifteen days before the date of registration."

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

A. E. HILLARD, D.D.,

High Master of St. Paul's School.

West Kensington, W., Oct. 3rd, 1910.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Perhaps my personal experiences regarding the regulations laid down by the General Medical Council as to registration of a student may be of use to your correspondent, Mr. R. Bevan. I was educated at Epsom College, a school which, I believe, was founded in the first place for those going in for the medical profession. From there I passed first the London Matric. and then the Pre. Sci. (M.B.), first part (chemistry, physics, and zoology). After this I was registered as a student and entered a London hospital.

At the end of four years I wanted to have a shot at the final Conjoint. I was refused admission on the ground that I could not be signed up for a five years' course at a recognised medical school. But I was told my year's work at Epsom would count as half a year towards the five! I tried to go in for the L.S.A. final and was refused on the same grounds. As a last resource I applied to the London University, who admitted me without demur. After the examination I inquired of the registrar of the Medical Council whether I could be now registered as a practitioner, although I had been registered as a student for four years only. The answer was that I certainly might, since the Council could not refuse to register a man who had duly passed his final. I think that these experiences will show that somehow the

regulations are, to say the least of it, inconsistent, and I hope that they may help some other man in the same boat.

Finally, may I put in a plea that the General Medical Council at least extend the privileges of a recognised medical school to Epsom College? I am confident that the first year's training there is as good as, if not better than, that at any recognised medical school. Should my experiences be of any practical use to Mr. Bevan I shall be glad to communicate with him direct.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

HUGH L. BURTON, M.B.

13, Truro-road, St. Austell, Oct. 2nd, 1910.

THE COST OF SANITATION IN THE TROPICS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the report on the measures taken against malaria in the Lahore Cantonment, which I have just received from the authors, Messrs. Nathan, Thornhill, and Rogers, the conclusion is reached that anti-malarial operations, such as have been carried out so successfully in other countries, cannot be readily adopted in India, chiefly on account of the great cost. Panama is cited in illustration. The statement is made on the authority of Colonel Macpherson: "That the total cost of sanitary and medical measures amounted to two millions of dollars per annum, or about a tenth of the total annual expenditure on the Canal works." Colonel Gorgas has recently denied this statement. His paper is published in the *Gulf States Journal of Medicine and Surgery* (July, 1910), and as it is, perhaps, not very accessible, the following quotations will be of interest. "The ordinary man in speaking of the Sanitary Department has in mind a department such as the Health Department of New York. Besides performing such functions as the Health Department of New York performs, the Sanitary Department on the Isthmus cares for all the sick, both in the hospitals and at dispensaries, administers the national quarantine, does the street cleaning and garbage collecting, fills in drains and reclaims waste lands, pays the salaries of some fifteen ministers of the Gospel, cares for all the cemeteries, does a general undertaking and embalming business for some 80,000 people, and besides all this, pays directly to the Engineering Department about \$200,000 per year. Up to July 1st, 1909, Congress has appropriated \$7,927,840 for the Department of Sanitation on the Isthmus. Of this \$7,927,840 appropriated for the Sanitary Department, Congress has taken away and given to the construction department \$938,827. This leaves the total appropriation for the Sanitary Department \$6,989,013. Considering the 62 months covered by the period from May 4th, 1904, to July 1st, 1909, this gives us an appropriation at the rate of \$112,726 per month. This would give us a yearly appropriation for the first years since the Sanitary Department has been organised of \$1,352,712."

"Taking the fiscal year 1908 and 1909, we find that one-fourth of our expenditures were for sanitation. Apply the same rates to the average yearly appropriation, \$1,352,712 divided by four gives us \$338,178 as the annual appropriation for sanitation. Considering our average population for the past five years as one hundred thousand, we have the *per capita* appropriation for sanitation during the same period as three dollars and thirty-eight cents *per capita* per year, or 28c. per month."

"When we consider the great changes for the better that have been accomplished by the expenditure, I think that we will all agree that it has been very economically accomplished. Such expenditure is certainly well within the means of any tropical community."

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

University of Oxford, Oct. 3rd, 1910.

WM. OSLER.

THE MEDICAL REGISTER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you once more kindly draw the attention of members of the profession to the importance of keeping their addresses correct in the Medical Register? Circulars are not issued every year, and practitioners should themselves notify changes; failure to do this may result in the removal of the name because it is impossible to communicate with the practitioner, though every possible effort is made to avoid such a course. No person whose name is not on the Register