a new charter to the College of Surgeons, you will defer to the wishes and feelings of the great body of its members rather than to the representatives of the interested, and for the most part self-elected, few who constitute its present council.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,
Manchester, March, 1850. W. WATSON BEEVER, Chairman.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS AND THEIR POWERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The other day I gave a written order for meat to a pauper patient under my care, which was refused by the assistant relieving officer, without assigning any reason to myself. The mother of the patient informed me of the fact the following morning, when I wrote another order, telling the mother that if it were refused, I should report the case to the board of guardians; the order was immediately granted. I called upon the assistant relieving officer for an explanation of his conduct, as the patient was very ill and very poor, without a sixpence to procure anything in the shape of nourishment. That functionary informed me that the relieving officer, who visits the town once a week, had told him that the medical officer had no power to order nourishment &c. for pauper patients, but simply to *recommend* that meat &c. should be given. The relieving officer told me the same thing, but at the same time added, "it is the duty of the relieving officer, as soon as he receives a medical order for relief, to visit the patient, and to withhold nourishment if he should see just reason for so doing, of course explaining the cause to the medical officer; he does it, however, on his own responsibility, and can be made answerable if any harm should result from withholding the same." I have always considered that I possessed the power of *ordering* meat, wine, &c., for pauper patients having a medical relief order, whose case absolutely required it, and that even the possession of a shilling did not render such a patient ineligible for relief; in the case, however, mentioned above, the party had not a penny. I have not long enjoyed the honour of belonging to that hard-worked and ill-paid class of men, the poor-law medical staff, and I should feel obliged if you, Sir, or some other gentleman, would kindly inform me of my exact position, and whether in reality I do possess the power of *ordering* for pauper patients such necessities as their cases require, and also, if a refusal on similar grounds should take place, what course I had better adopt. Is it not the duty of a relieving officer visiting a town once a week, not merely to rest satisfied with information obtained from the assistant relieving officer respecting pauper patients, but personally to inspect every case, new as well as old? By inserting the above in your valuable journal, you will greatly oblige,

Your obedient servant,

March, 1850.

ALPHA.

A NEW NIPPLE-SHIELD.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you kindly enable me to present to your very numerous readers the accompanying engraving of a shield and teat, which I have found admirably adapted for sore or imperfectly-formed nipples.

The figure marked A represents a glass shield, having a socket for the reception and protection of the sore nipple. B is an india-rubber teat, which clings on to the nose of the shield, air-tight, by the sucking of which the milk is obtained, without any pain or suffering to the person. The neck of the

shield is bent, diagonally, to direct the teat conveniently to the child's mouth.

I have so fully proved, in my own practice, the unfailing advantages of this little instrument, that I have no hesitation in quoting the expression of a surgeon who had used one of them, "that henceforward, with the use of these shields, sore nipples would be matters of little importance."

I am, Sir, your obliged servant,

FRANCIS TAYLOR, M.R.C.S. & L.A.C.

Romsey, Hampshire, March, 1850.

THE UNITY OF MEDICINE.—THE ONE-FACULTY SYSTEM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I perceive by the remarks in your leader of this day's date, that you have determined not to allow the subject of Corporate Reform to die: but I am sure, from your accustomed liberality, and acting on your published motto, you will not exclude from your valuable journal any observations tending to the more general reformation of our profession. Communism is a word never more to be mentioned within the reach of ears polite; and most certainly its doctrines have been so thoroughly damned by the doings of its disciples, that they must undergo very considerable alterations before they can be listened to again. The divine ideas of equality and fraternity, too, are in no great favour at the present moment, chiefly in consequence of the prostitution of these words by mountebanks whose vagaries have astonished and affrighted the world.

All principles, indeed, that are considered to have a levelling tendency are now so much dreaded, that the opponents of a system have only to nickname it by some opprobrious epithet which will convey the notion of such a tendency, to secure for it the contempt of the thoughtless and the dread of the timid. The opponents of the "One-Faculty System of Medicine," however, will not gain much by the adoption of such an antiquated mode of warfare; for the consideration of this question has long since been taken out of the hands of that numerous party who might have been influenced by this system of tactics. A question which has for years been in agitation, and which has been several times brought under the notice of our lawgivers, is not likely to be much influenced by the thoughtless or the timid. It stands entirely on its own merits; and its adoption or rejection must be the result of convincing argument, and not of passionate declamation. And but for recent circumstances one would hardly think it necessary to disclaim, on the part of those who advocate the unity of medicine, any kindred feeling with that class of theorists who would establish laws to proclaim that in all respects all men are equal; for no one can be more thoroughly convinced than we are, that, if such laws could be instituted, the daily and hourly experience of this world would denounce them as the production of visionaries, and better fitted for the regulation of a world of spirits of their own creation than for the guidance of the compound called man.

A man of sense could never imagine that the present position of medical practitioners would really be altered if, in an instant, by a breath, they were all created Fellows of the Royal Colleges. Neither would he ever imagine that all future practitioners of medicine must of necessity be equal because they were all obliged to be educated up to the highest point each succeeding generation could command, receiving the same honourable title, and the same licence to practise. Nature has ordained that men shall not be alike. There would be then, as now, a difference in capacity; and the young physician would then, as now, be in most points inferior to his teachers, and to all those who had acquired great practical skill in addition to what they had been taught. Teachers would not be "put down" by the One-Faculty system; and consulting practitioners will continue in existence as long as medicine lasts. But these necessary teachers would be much more honoured under the One-Faculty system than they are at present. They would then be, *indeed*, the "heads of the profession," and would be chosen to fill every honourable post by those who could best appreciate their ability and fitness.

It is in the nature of things, then, that there should be men of superior minds—men by whom others will always be proud to be instructed. It is natural that consulting practitioners of medicine should exist, and that some should pay particular attention to one department, and some to another; but it is not natural, neither is it right, that what can be obtained only by great skill and exertion, should be so easily imitated as readily to deceive. The law ought not to encourage, as in its present state it does, such a state of things as this. It ought not to encourage an ambitious