Medical Council, and that he does so worthily. But our correspondent will not deny that he was lately President of the Faculty, and that the Faculty knows that it has in him a friend. Neither will he deny that Dr. M'Vail is an able and sufficient representative of the Faculty. Our contention is irresistible, that to put in its new President will be to throw away the seat and to stifle the free representation of Scotland. If such an attempt succeeds, we shall, however, blame not Dr. Morton, but the general practitioners of Scotland, who have two excellent alternatives, and who, for the first time, have a chance of showing what stuff they are made of when out of the shadow of schools and corporations.—ED. L.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—While in England practitioners generally seem to be alive to their interests in the election of their three members of the General Medical Council, we in Scotland (long-headed and sagacious though we get the credit of being) are in considerable danger of being thwarted and denied even the single representative we believed we had secured. Most certainly, if the successful candidate be intimately connected with any of the corporations or teaching bodies, the object of our struggles for direct representation during these past years will not have been attained—our end will for the time have been frustrated. Holding the opinion that the Scottish seat in the Council should be occupied by a general practitioner, Sir Douglas MacLagan has declined to be nominated as a candidate. There is no honour he himself would value which the profession in Scotland would not willingly pay Sir Douglas, but this compliment would have been so inapt and incongruous that I more than ever admire and respect him for the consideration and decision which have prompted him to act as he has done.

But surely, Sir, it would be a much more unsuitable appointment still if the President of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow were chosen for this seat. Dr. Morton holds this office, and therefore by his election that corporation would be doubly represented in the Council, and besides, Glasgow would absolutely gain two seats, the University at this time sending one of its own members. Personally, I have no doubt whatever that Dr. Morton would make an excellent representative, but it is absurd to speak of him as a *bona-fide* representative of the general practitioner. Questions are coming up which will affect the relative positions of the corporations, the profession, and the public, and it would be puerile to take for granted that on any test question the interests of the corporation would not be preferred by the president to the general interests. When we have it in our power, let us have a man of unprejudiced mind, whose concerns are ours, who from experience knows our difficulties and has the ability to give expression to our wants and wishes. We have such men in Dr. Bruce and Dr. Sinclair, both of whom are ready to undertake the representation on our behalf. For myself, I intend to vote for Dr. Bruce, on the ground that he is the senior, has had greater variety of practice, has longer taken a deep interest in medical politics and education, and is, in all respects, a typical representative of the general medical practitioner. But, in any case, let us not stultify ourselves by the choice of one not of ourselves.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Oct. 1886.

M.D. EDIN. IN GENERAL PRACTICE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There are a few very material circumstances connected with the formation and action of the Birmingham committee not mentioned in the joint letter of Dr. Carter and Mr. Ker, but which seem to me essential in order to enable your readers to judge how far its voice can have any claim to be considered the voice of the profession. In the first place it should be remembered that it was the refusal of the British Medical Association in public meeting assembled to adopt a resolution brought forward by Dr. Carter and Mr. Ker (and of which notice had been previously given), authorising the Council of the Association to select three names of gentlemen suitable for election, that "led to the summoning of the first small conference at Brighton."

Next we have it on the authority of Dr. Strange, who presided at the Birmingham meeting, that out of 1100 circulars which had been sent out only about 300 had been responded to at the date of the meeting—a victory if you will, but one so uncommonly like a defeat that had the whole 300 met together he would have been a bold man who would have claimed for them the right to speak in the name of the medical profession of England and Wales. Instead of 300, however, thirty-five gentlemen met at Birmingham, and unanimously resolved—"That this meeting, fully impressed with the extreme importance of the present crisis, &c., deems it expedient to proceed at once to deliberate on the merits of the various candidates, and to solicit by requisition three fit and proper persons to undertake the office." No doubt the thirty-five felt themselves as competent as the 300 would have been to speak in the name of the profession, but somehow when the numbers present had dwindled down to fourteen, it was felt, I suppose, that a line must be drawn somewhere, and by a majority of 11 to 3 it was determined not to do what the 35 had resolved to do, but to take the opinion of the 300 by post-card, and that the three who received the highest number of votes should be the adopted candidates of the committee. Power was given to the chairman and secretaries to count the votes and declare the result, but no further power, according to the published reports. These three gentlemen, for each and all of whom personally I have the highest respect and regard, constitute, I presume, the sub-committee, in whose name the chairman, Dr. Strange, writes that they have resolved to substitute Dr. Glover, whose name stood fourth on the list, for Mr. Ernest Hart, who was third, though the number of those voting for each is not given. We are thus reduced in successive steps from 1100 to 300, from 300 to 35, from 35 to 14, from 14 to 3, and we are asked to accept the final decision of the three as the voice of the profession.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

October, 1886.

H. NELSON HARDY.

THE IRISH BRANCH COUNCIL AND THE APPROACHING MEDICAL ELECTION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some time since I wrote to you pointing out the dangerous powers allowed those councils in connexion with the approaching election, and suggesting as the only possible safeguard the presence of legal agents of each candidate at the scrutinies. My fears as to the competence (putting their *bona fides* for the moment out of the question) of the officers of these councils have been somewhat prematurely verified. A nomination paper was sent to me a few days since from the Irish Branch Council, which would have disqualified me had not a flaw in it been discovered just in time. This flaw escaped myself, but was detected by Dr. Doyle, of Mount-street, Dublin, to whose astuteness I desire to render public acknowledgment. I may as well tell English candidates that if the votes are counted in the dark no man will be safe.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Oct. 12th, 1886.

THOMAS LAFFAN.

TREATMENT BY MASSAGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read with interest and some amusement the correspondence which has been going on in your columns on the above subject. When some years ago I first attempted the systematic treatment of certain forms of functional neurosis on the lines laid down by Dr. Weir Mitchell, there was, so far as I knew, no such thing as a "masseuse" in this country. I then had to instruct a nurse, with much trouble, from the few and imperfect descriptions of the process I could lay my hands on, but with results that were thoroughly satisfactory. She taught another, in a few lessons only, and from this origin I have obtained a staff of competent masseuses sufficient for my own purposes. When I published in 1881 my original paper on the systematic treatment of a class of disease hitherto practically abandoned as hopeless, I had to undergo an amount of obloquy which was quite surprising. Some of my professional friends did not hesitate to tell me that I had descended to the level of a charlatan, and other criticisms were made on me which would have been amusing had they not been painful. Fortunately, I held the theory that the first duty of a