A CORRESPONDENT, writing from the Cape on the 19th ult., says:—"Medical men are still very much wanted in Cape Colony and the other states of South Africa. The Colonial Government offer two guineas a day for surgeons to do duty at the front, and some allowance for forage is also provided. The scale is not specially liberal where everything in the shape of provisions is very scarce and dear, but those who serve in the Kafir war are likely to have a prior claim to any good district surgeoncies that may hereafter become vacant. Some of these latter appointments are worth from £200 to £300 a year. Very little rain has, as yet, fallen either near Cape Town or in Krel's country. King William's Town is very unhealthy in consequence of the drought and the absence of all systematic sanitary arrangements, and so typhoid has become epidemic. Dr. Hartly is about to be appointed principal medical officer to all the colonial forces. This will be a very difficult post to fill, as each 'Burgher' corps practically claims to arrange its own medical affairs as well as commissariat, and every commanding officer does pretty well that which is right in his own eyes."

THE revised rules of the Manchester Infirmary are at present under consideration, and the clause referring to the qualifications for the office of physician threatens to give trouble. By the new rule it is decreed that every candidate for the office shall be a fellow or member of the College of Physicians, and shall have spent one year at the university where he graduated. It is felt that this residential clause is harsh and unwisely restrictive, as it would exclude many of the ablest physicians in the country. It is all the more to be regretted that the board adhere to this clause, as a majority of the Medical Committee decided against it. The retention of the objectionable feature strongly suggests some unfair and occult influence brought to bear upon the board by the minority, but there is reason to believe that it will not be allowed to pass without an appeal being made to the general body of trustees at the meeting called for the 26th inst., to confirm, reject, or modify these new rules.

At a special meeting of the Dublin Sanitary Association, held on the 11th inst., it was resolved that the Executive Committee should communicate with the Chief Secretary for Ireland, asking him to receive a deputation from the Association, in order that a public inquiry might be instituted into the present insanitary condition of the city. If an inquiry under the Local Government Board is held, the evidence given must show, what is already well known, that the present unhealthy condition of Dublin is due to bad drainage, insufficient ventilation, unhealthy dwellings, uncleanness, and general neglect of proper sanitary regulations.

THERE was a still further rise in the mortality-rate of London last week, having been 27.6, against 27.4 in the week preceding. The deaths numbered 1895, and included 58 from small-pox, 40 from measles, 36 from scarlet fever, 9 from diphtheria, 157 from whooping-cough, 32 from different forms of fever, and 14 from diarrhoea; the seven principal diseases of the zymotic class thus accounting for 346 deaths, 108 above the corrected weekly average. To diseases of the respiratory organs 497 deaths were attributed.

SMALL-POX appears to be increasing in the metropolitan district. It has been found necessary to reopen the hospital situated at Deptford for the reception of cases, and the number of small-pox patients in the Metropolitan Asylum Hospitals is steadily augmenting. It is reported that the disease has broken out in the barracks at Chatham. The place is full of military and workpeople, and it is to be feared that a serious epidemic will ensue if some very stringent regulations be not adopted.

AT the meeting of the Hunterian Society, which will be held in the London Institution, Finsbury-circus, on Wednesday, April 24th, Dr. B. W. Richardson, F.R.S., will read a paper on "The Practice of Total Abstinence from Alcohol in Health and Disease." The President and Council desire that any member of the profession interested in the subject may be present to hear the paper and join in the discussion.

MR. THOMAS JESSOP, the President of the Sheffield Hospital for Women, is about to hand over a new building completely furnished for use, the cost of which, we understand, will be about £30,000. Miss Johnson, of Spalding, bequeathed £30,000 for the building of a hospital in that town, and £3000 to the Lincoln County Hospital.

WE observe with satisfaction that on the resignation by Mr. Wilkes of his office as a paid Commissioner in Lunacy, Dr. Rhys Williams, the resident physician at Bethlem Hospital, has been appointed to the vacant post. Mr. Wilkes becomes an honorary commissioner.

DRS. EDGE and REED have been elected physicians to the Salford Hospital, and Dr. Boddy and Mr. S. Buckley assistant-physician and assistant-surgeon to the Clinical Hospital, Manchester.

MR. EDWARD NETTLESHIP has been elected Ophthalmic Surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital, in place of M. Liebreich, who has resigned.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE COUNCIL ELECTION AT THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Will you be kind enough to read the enclosed correspondence relative to the coming election for the Council of the College of Surgeons, and give it space in your next number, with any remarks you may think proper to make on the same.—Yours faithfully,

Grosvenor-street, April 11th, 1878. GEORGE POLLOCK.

Letter to Mr. Pollock.

Edinburgh Chambers, 12, King-street, Manchester.

DEAR SIR,—There is a strong desire on the part of many distinguished Fellows of the College of Surgeons to see Mr. Lund elected to the forthcoming vacancy in the Council of the College as a representative of provincial Fellows.

He has for many years occupied a prominent, and of late a foremost, place among surgeons in Manchester, and for more than a quarter of a century has been actively engaged in lecturing and hospital work.

His position in the scientific world, and his many and valuable contributions to surgical literature, are too well known to need mention by me. Sincerely hoping you may be induced to sign the enclosed memorial,

I am, my dear Sir, yours truly,

April 5th, 1878. S. MESSENGER BRADLEY.

Requisition to Mr. Lund.

12, King-street, Manchester.

DEAR SIR,—We, the undersigned Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, respectfully hope that you will offer yourself as a candidate for the forthcoming vacancy in the Council of the College, feeling a just confidence that your acknowledged eminence as a surgeon, and wide popularity both in London and the provinces, will ensure a successful issue to the contest.

We are, dear Sir, yours faithfully.

Copy of letter from Mr. Pollock to Mr. Bradley.

36, Grosvenor-street, W., 11th April, 1878.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your circular relative to the election of Mr. Lund to the Council of the College of Surgeons. In reply, will you allow me to

state that I have always steadily refused to be nominated for the Council; as I consider the "certificate of character" required by the charter, and the usual canvassing that takes place prior to the elections to the Council, derogatory to the profession.

The College of Physicians does not require or permit anything in the shape of the former, and would condemn, if not punish, anything approaching the latter.

The canvassing that has been permitted and undertaken for some of the candidates for seats in the Council is really a disgrace to the Fellowship.

Entertaining the feelings I do, you will understand my objection to signing any paper in reference to the coming election on behalf of any candidate. No one will be more pleased to see Mr. Lund a member of the Council than myself. I have the highest appreciation of his work and worth as a surgeon. But in my opinion, whatever that may be worth, his election should not be dimmed by private or public solicitation of votes.

I think this subject one of so much importance that I have enclosed copies of the correspondence to the medical journals.

Believe me, yours faithfully,

S. Messenger Bradley, Esq.

GEORGE POLLOCK.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I request the favour of an insertion in your journal of a copy of a letter which I have addressed to Mr. Bradley on the subject of Mr. Lund's candidature for election into the Council of the College of Surgeons.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Grosvenor-street, April 13th, 1878.

T. B. CURLING.

39, Grosvenor-street, Grosvenor-square,
April 13th, 1878.

DEAR SIR,—I regret that I am unable to sign the paper you have sent me inviting Mr. Lund to become a candidate at the next election to the Council of the College of Surgeons.

Mr. Lund's position as a surgeon, and his contributions to surgical literature, I cordially agree with you, entitle him to the confidence of the profession, but they do not give him a claim to election on the College Council in preference to many of his seniors in the Fellowship, amongst whom I may name Mr. Lister, Sir Henry Thompson, Mr. Callender, Mr. Hulke, Mr. Heath, Mr. Durham, and Mr. Hutchinson.

There are already three provincial Fellows on the Council, and if the number be increased there may be difficulty in getting the business of the College transacted. Members of the Council residing at a distance from London are not usually elected on important committees, from a desire not to put them to the serious inconvenience of attendance; and they are practically ineligible for the higher offices of president and vice-president, who are expected to attend all committees.

Even if there were not several Fellows from the provinces on the Council, I should demur altogether to the reason you give for Mr. Lund's election as a representative of the provincial Fellows. The Council know nothing of class interests. The interests of the provincial Fellows are equally the interests of the metropolitan.

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

S. M. Bradley, Esq.

T. B. CURLING.

The requisition printed on previous page (signed by 321 Fellows) was presented to Mr. Lund on Tuesday, April 16th. Mr. Lund replied as follows:—

GENTLEMEN,—The fact that more than 300 Fellows have signed the requisition presented to me to-day asking me to consent to be nominated as a candidate at the next election of members of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England leaves me no alternative but to accept, with many thanks, the compliment thus paid to me, and to accede to the request contained.

This request has been tendered so much earlier than I had expected that I fear in your anxiety to carry out speedily the wishes of my friends you may seem to have overlooked the names of other Fellows of our College whose claims to such a post of honourable trust are quite equal to my own; but I hope the good sense of the constituency to whom I have to appeal will not permit my cause to suffer through any excess of zeal in its supporters.

Very truly yours,

EDWARD LUND.

"INSANITY IN ITS LEGAL RELATIONS."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have read with great interest the essay in your last issue, of Dr. Bucknill, on the subject of "Insanity in its Legal Relations." I should wish to correct one error in regard to my own connexion with the subject as a witness before the Capital Punishment Commission. I was never a prison chaplain; I had, however, been a visiting magistrate of a county prison, in which were confined two or three prisoners who had been acquitted on the ground of insanity of capital offences, who, however, were anything but insane. I had also acted for some years as one of three inspectors appointed to visit an asylum for the insane of the higher orders, belonging to private proprietors. I had—as I testified—taken for many years a great interest in the treatment of the insane. It was on this account I was summoned as a witness. I have also reason to believe that it was known that I had undertaken at my own cost the defence of Preedy, the young man who was hung for the murder of a warder at Portland Prison, whose sad history had become known to me.

I had the satisfaction, if my memory does not fail me, of reading in your columns a very flattering comment on the evidence I gave on the subject of insanity in its relation to the law.

Since the date of my evidence, I have followed closely the curious and, to me, most unsatisfactory method by which it is still sought to establish the sane or insane condition of criminals on trial. I remain satisfied that many are found wrongly insane, some are held sane who are not so. I believe it to be utterly impossible to—as the law now stands—define with any real approach to perfect accuracy questionable cases of brain disturbance. Dreams are scarcely sane—who does not dream? Do not some men have in dreams the most violent disposition; are they not (in dream-land, sometimes) had such land law, guilty to any extent? It is well seen that "experts" can be retained, as barristers are, to do their best to prove the allegations of "the brief."

There may be objections to the plan I pray for, but I wish I could live to see it tried—viz., certain experts of high character to be appointed at fixed salaries by the Crown. When it is signified to the high sheriff that a prisoner committed for capital offence is to have insanity pleaded, the sheriff should give notice to the Home Office, who would then send one of these "experts," to act as an assessor with the judge, to advise him how far the evidence given one way or the other is, in his judgment, worthy of acceptance. We should thus at least get some wholesome check on the present very loose system.

Your obedient servant,

Sidmouth, April 15th.

S. G. OSBORNE.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, April 15th.

MEDICAL ACT (1858) AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion for the second reading of this Bill,

The Marquis of RIPON said it was scarcely necessary to point out the inevitable effect of allowing distinct bodies to confer a title to practise. It was that some of those bodies attempted to underbid the others as to the terms on which they granted their licence. Consequently the public had not the necessary security that the holder of a licence had the minimum qualification which ought to entitle a man to practise as a surgeon or a physician. It was felt very generally that there ought to be but one examining board, or that at most there ought to be only one for each of the three parts of the United Kingdom, through which admission to the practice of medicine could be legally obtained. Since 1858, when the Medical Council Bill was passed, there had been almost continuous but unsuccessful attempts to establish what was known as the conjoint scheme. As the Bill of his noble friend was merely permissive in that respect, it would leave the matter of a conjoint scheme where it had been for the last twenty years. His noble friend had expressed a hope that before the Bill was through both Houses such a scheme would have been established for England, but he had held out no hope that such a scheme would by that time have been established for either Ireland