

enough to carry out many other reforms for the benefit both of the sick poor and of the medical service."

After the usual loyal toasts, the Chairman proposed the House of Commons, associating with it the names of Mr. Gordon and Sir John Gray. In responding to the toast,

Mr. GORDON, M.P., said that he was glad to hear, in the recent debate on the Superannuation Bill, expressions of opinion in favour of what he could scarcely help calling an oppressed profession. As a member of the Board of Supervision, in Scotland, which corresponded with the Poor-law Board in England, he had been horrified at the wretched condition of medical officers, and had felt his inability to better it.

Sir JOHN GRAY claimed to have a special interest in the medical profession from the fact of his having chosen it in opposition to the wishes of his friends. His attention had been specially directed to the question of medical education from the fact that he was complimented at his examination on his accurate knowledge of the stethoscope, although at the time he had gained his knowledge from the grinder, and had never once placed the instrument on a human chest. He said that he felt ashamed of his position, and from that moment he had lost no opportunity of enforcing the necessity of practical education, and practical examinations conducted at the bedside. When the examinations were such as to give the public assurance that a medical man is capable of dealing with human suffering, the profession would be treated as they deserve, and the scandals of Poor-law officers receiving paltry salaries would cease.

Dr. ROGERS, in proposing the toast of "Prosperity to the Poor-law Medical Officers' Association," recapitulated the results which had been obtained. He observed that the true character of pauperism was coming out more prominently day by day; but that the means of dealing with it were most inadequate. He said that the condition of the Poor-law medical officers was most unsatisfactory. In respect of the extent of the districts, and of their population, he found that in no less than 583 districts there are more than 15,000 acres, and that there were 73 districts in Wales which extend seven miles from the residence of the medical officer. There are also 120 districts which exceed 15,000 of population. In fact, there are 1378 appointments which are contrary to the rules and regulations issued by the Poor-law Board. In 16 unions the stipends range from 8*d.* to 1*s.* per patient; in 239 unions from 8*d.* to 3*s.*; in 348 unions from 3*s.* to 7*s.*; in 51 unions from 7*s.* to 16*s.* Contrasting the state of things in England and Ireland, he found salaries in England, with all the drugs to find, to average only £49; whilst in Ireland, with nothing to find, they averaged £90. In England, last year, the Poor-rate relief amounted to £7,673,100, and the salaries to £282,130; whilst in Ireland the Poor-rate expenditure was only £799,602, and the medical salaries were £133,000. Expenditure in England increased £200,000 last year, and decreased in Ireland £30,000. He associated with the toast the name of Mr. Brady, M.P., for whose great exertions the Association owed him a deep debt of gratitude.

Mr. BRADY, who was received with immense cheers, said that he never felt less able to give expression to his sense of gratification at the reception given to him. He acknowledged the vast assistance which had been afforded him by Dr. Rogers and the Council of the Association, but for which he never could have passed the Bill through a second reading. He augured favourably for the profession from the feeling displayed in the House of Commons' debate. He made some observations on the shortcomings of the Medical Act, and of the necessity of restoring the 18th clause. He asked why it was that the colleges in England had so completely neglected the interests of their *alumni*, and commented upon the absence of the Presidents of the London colleges. He thought that, having received the fees, they were bound to support their members in all matters relating to their interests, and he observed that the Irish corporations had been more mindful of their duties in this respect.

Dr. DIXON proposed "The Press," which was responded to by Dr. STALLARD and Mr. LESLIE STEPHEN.

Dr. MACNAMARA, the late President of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, in responding to the toast of his health, proposed the Chairman's health. He said that it was the bounden duty of the Colleges to protect the in-

terests of their members and the profession generally, and when they ceased to do so he hoped that their existence would cease.

This most successful and satisfactory meeting was brought to a close at a late hour.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

LADY NURSES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET of a few weeks since is a short leading article headed "the nursing at the South Devon Hospital," in which, referring to the sisters engaged in nursing at University Hospital, you remark, "it is a great mistake to suppose that ladies make good nurses." Now I assure you that, so far as concerns the ladies who constitute the sisterhood of All Saints, this statement is incorrect. At least, I can say those employed in my wards have been excellent nurses. Before these ladies undertook the nursing, nothing could be worse than was nursing in my wards at University College Hospital. Now it is admirable. Not only have the aspect and tone of the wards changed, but the sisters of All Saints (ladies) engaged in my wards have proved themselves to be efficient as nurses.

In justice to these ladies, I do hope you will give this letter a place in an early number of THE LANCET.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM JENNER, M.D.

Brook-street, Grosvenor-square, July, 1870.

* * We are happy to give insertion to Sir Wm. Jenner's letter, though we believe his experience that ladies make good nurses in the wards of general hospitals is not confirmed by that of other eminent physicians and surgeons; and in military hospitals especially, attempts made by well-intentioned ladies to do the actual nursing, instead of superintending the inferior nurses, have proved embarrassing to the surgeons, and distasteful to the patients. Our article expressly alluded to the improvement in the wards of University and King's College Hospitals since the introduction of ladies; and we think Sir Wm. Jenner should in fairness have quoted the remainder of the article, which is as follows:—"It is a great mistake to suppose that ladies make good nurses. The actual nursing is better done by well-trained respectable women of the middle classes; but the value of ladies is in superintending the actual nursing, and in giving, by their presence in the wards, a tone which is felt both among patients and doctors, and which renders many of the scandals of the old nursing system impossibilities."—ED. L.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY ON MEDICAL EDUCATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The charge which Dr. Pavy originally brought against my fellow examiners at the University of London and myself was that we had, by our method of examination, created the evils of which I ventured to complain.

In my reply I produced proof that our standard has not been pitched too high, and I challenged Dr. Pavy to produce a single question of ours which should justify his assertions.

In the letter which appeared in last week's LANCET Dr. Pavy does not attempt to dispute the obvious conclusion from the statistics of the examinations, nor does he reply to my challenge. I am, therefore, justified in assuming that his first line of attack is abandoned, and that he tacitly confesses that he has made a grave accusation against persons discharging a public duty without being able in any way to justify it.

A candid adversary would, I think, have confessed this