Correspondence.

"Addi alteram partem."

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

Sir,—With reference to the article in your issue of the 23rd inst. regarding the constitution of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons, I beg to remark that the College was founded in order to promote the art and science of surgery; this fact is reiterated in all the charters granted to the College. It was "in order more effectually to promote and encourage the study and practice of surgery" that the class of Fellows by examination was instituted. I believe that in the interests of surgery it is desirable that the College should continue to have the power to confer honours in surgery, and that the honours should carry with them any privileges which it is in the power of the College to bestow; and, consequently, that those only who gain the Fellowship should be entitled to a seat on the Council. It is open to any Member of the College to pass the examination for the Fellowship, and I should very much like to see the second examination or that in the practice of surgery alone insisted on for Members of twelve years' standing and upwards.

It is urged that one of the reasons why Members of the College have seats in the Council is because it is desirable that the views of general practitioners should be heard at the Council. But a very large proportion of the Fellows are in general practice. If, therefore, general practitioners have interests which it is the province of the College to advance, as distinct from those of consulting surgeons, there can be no reason why their views should not be advocated at the Council by Fellows who are engaged in that profession. The idea above referred to consequently appears to me to be groundless, so far as it applies to Members being elected to the Council.

On the other hand, by only permitting Fellows to be elected to the Council it is possible we enhance the privileges of the Fellowship, and may lead men to seek this honour, and thus forward the objects for which the College was founded. Beyond this it seems to me most objectionable to have anything like class distinctions or interests in the profession; the idea above referred to consequently appears to me to be groundless, so far as it applies to Members being elected to the Council.

The next case was that alluded to by Mr. Stephen Paget, and Dr. F. L. Taylor on the 16th inst. from Mr. Stephen Paget and Dr. F. L. Taylor on the subject induce me to record the following cases, which will be seen to bear on the subject from both sides of the question—viz., the occurrence of parotitis from irritation of the genito-urinary system, and, conversely, the occurrence of cystitis in connection with—

The first case was that of an old gentleman aged eighty-five, who was much troubled with irritable bladder. I had passed a flexible catheter on several occasions without any subsequent irritation, and as there was but little enlargement of the prostate to account for his increasing trouble, I introduced a pessary, easily inserted, which made sure that he had no calculus. This proceeding set up great irritation, and on the second day he had violent rigors, and complained of stiffness and pain about the right parotid, which became much enlarged and suppurated, and caused death from exhaustion in about a fortnight. During the whole time the catheter was required to relieve the bladder, owing to the inflamed and swollen condition of the prostate.

The other two cases were similar to one another that one account will serve for both. They occurred in single ladies about twenty to twenty-two years of age, both in fairly good health, when they contracted mumps from infection, and for a week seemed to progress as usual. They were then attacked with rigors and pain in both ovarian regions, the pain being intensified by moving in bed. The ovaries could be felt swollen and very tender. The acute attacks subsided in about a week; but the ovaries still tender and enlarged for some time. In both cases the general health of the patients was considerably impaired for some months.

The two cases seem to expand the idea of the connexion of the parotid with the testes and ovaries into some unexplained association of the parotid on the one hand with the whole genito-urinary system on the other; the first two cases indicating sympathy between the parotid and the other, determined a local degeneration in the motor tract of the same side of the cord, the area of degeneration never extending more than about two millimetres on each side of the point of section. Further, I also showed that the result described by Schiff—viz., absence of movement on the fore limb of the same side as the cord lesion, when, nevertheless, the corresponding motor centre in the opposite cortex was excited—appeared in exact proportion to the degree of degeneration observable in the motor tract, and that in the cases where the degeneration was very slightly marked, Schiff's result did not appear, although the posterior column had been perfectly divided. I am about to publish in Brain the full details of the experiments on which my criticism of Professor Schiff is based, and I trust that we shall soon have the unusual opportunity of seeing Professor Schiff's methods, details of experiment, drawings of the lesions produced, and, last but not least, a full account of the state of the motor tract (opposite the seat of operation) published in extenso for comparison.

Dr. Huggard's praiseworthy energy in reporting Professor Schiff's experiment last summer leads me to hope that he will furnish us with the foregoing details, since until we know, for instance, that Professor Schiff's result is based on accurate work, the motor tract as I have described, &c., it is somewhat premature to depart from the language of ordinary criticism, and to explain my opposing results as due to "lack of success." I am, Sir, yours faithfully.

VICTOR HORSLEY.

Park-street, Grosvener-square, W., Jan. 30th, 1886.