In connexion with proposals for the improvement of the food of the soldier, more particularly in the field, it has been decided to form a class for officers at the Army School of Cookery, Aldershot.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF THE LONDON MEDICAL SOCIETIES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. G. Steele-Perkins has found a great mare's nest concerning the proposed amalgamation of the London medical societies, about which he wrote to you in your issue of Dec. 23rd last. He would not have done so had he asked any member of the general committee of representatives or any official of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society about the scheme. The report to which Dr. Steele-Perkins refers was a preliminary scheme which was referred to the various societies for their views. It was drawn up by representatives of all societies and certainly was not intended to favour any one society. It is the belief that the majority of members will become Fellows that augurs so well for the success of the scheme. On p. 4 it is expressly stated that "every member of the societies which amalgamate shall have the option of joining the new society," and on pp. 2 and 3 a reference is made to the expectation that many who are now only members of the joining societies will become Fellows of the new society.

It is proposed that the property of the new society shall be vested in the Fellows, who will consist at first of all members who are willing to pay 3 guineas annually, and Dr. Steele-Perkins is entirely in error in stating that the only Fellows will be those Fellows of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society who have already compounded their subscriptions.

Some of the inconsistencies of the tentative scheme to which Dr. Steele-Perkins draws attention will require consideration and adjustment later when the details will have to be worked out, such, e.g., as to what should be the subscription of a Fellow who has already compounded for an annual subscription of 1 guinea in a society; but these are of minor importance and can be kept till the new society is formed. Further consideration will, I feel sure, convince Dr. Steele-Perkins that his fears are unfounded and they certainly never occurred either to the general committee which drew up the scheme nor to the council of the society referred to that only suggested certain alterations in detail.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Portland-place, W., Jan. 2nd, 1906.

G. NEWTON PITT.

SIR JOHN BATTY TUKE AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The action of Sir John Batty Tuke in leaving the meeting of the General Medical Council on the occasion of the discussion on the Rusholme Dispensary has given rise to a misapprehension which might operate unfairly against his candidature for the Universities of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, and the Medico-Political Committee of the British Medical Association has instructed us to state the facts of the case. These are:—

1. That Sir John Batty Tuke left the meeting by special permission of the Chairman and at the request of the British Medical Association for the purpose of introducing to the President of the Local Government Board the deputation in support of the Public Health Bill prepared by the Association to give security of tenure to medical officers of health.

2. That this had been arranged before it was known that the discussion on the Rusholme Dispensary would be taken at that time.

The Central Council has given instructions that in the case of every Member of Parliament who has conspicuously supported or opposed the policy of the profession in Parliament, and is a candidate, particulars of his action should be furnished to each medical constituent. As this could not be

done by circular in the case of university constituencies, we take the present opportunity of making it known to the profession that Sir John Batty Tuke has supported the British Medical Association on every occasion on which such support has been sought.

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

R. C. BUIST,

Chairman of the Medico-Political Committee of the British Medical Association.

C. H. W. PARKINSON,

Chairman of the Public Health Committee of the British Medical Association.

ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL MEN RECEIVING RESIDENT PATIENTS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—There is reason to believe that there are many medical practitioners in all parts of the country, particularly in health resorts, who have facilities for the reception of invalids into their houses for treatment. Such practitioners may not be aware that there has been in existence for some time a coöperative "Association of Medical Men Receiving Resident Patients" which it might be advantageous for them to join. Full particulars may be obtained from the honorary secretaries of the association, 18A, Hanover-street, Hanover-square, London, W., or Bodorgan Manor, Bournemouth.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Bournemouth, Dec. 29th, 1905.

G. E. J. CRALLAN.

A CASE OF CLAY-COLOURED STOOLS WITHOUT JAUNDICE BUT ATTENDED WITH COPIOUS BILIOUS VOMIT.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—After Mr. A. W. Mayo Robson's appeal to exact analyses the letters of Dr. P. J. Cammidge and Mr. F. A. Watkins come as a surprise. One naturally looked for figures, but none are forthcoming. Dr. Cammidge divides his results of analyses into six statements. Before dealing with them it is necessary to recall the precise question at issue. It is this. I have strongly disagreed with the opinion that "the characteristic white stools often seen in pancreatic disease in the absence of jaundice *owe their pale colour entirely to the solidification of the fat when the motion cools*, although there may be a normal amount of bile entering the intestines." (The italics are mine.) With this kept in mind, three of Dr. Cammidge's six statements may be quickly dealt with. No. 1 proves nothing, for the excess of fat and defect of colour may both be due to a common cause, not one to the other. No. 2 proves nothing, for no one has suggested that the pale colour may not be *partly* due to the quantity of fat present or to its quality. No. 6 also proves nothing, for in such cases also pigment may be diminished.

The other three statements require more detailed scrutiny. No. 5 is indeed a quantitative statement but the essential comparison with the normal is omitted. The first part of this statement also is not in accordance with other observations to which I shall presently allude and the second part is opposed to the statement of Mr. Watkins, immediately below on the same page. No. 3 records a definite and interesting result but is immediately discounted by No. 4. No. 4 is the only instance in which Dr. Cammidge has made the essential comparison with the normal and it is noteworthy that, so far as it goes—for it, too, is incomplete—this statement tends to support my view, not Mr. Mayo Robson's. As the argument used is also the only argument brought forward by Mr. Watkins, which strictly applies to the point at issue, I may consider the two together. In Dr. Cammidge's words, "removal of the fat with ether leaves a residue similar to that obtained from normal fæces." If this means anything relevant to the present discussion it means that this residue contains a percentage of pigment similar to that contained in the residue from normal fæces. If this be so, then in the case cited by Dr. Cammidge, a little further on in his letter, where 90 per cent. of the dry weight of the fæces consisted of fat, leaving only 10 per cent. residue, there must have been a very notable diminution in the output of pigment, unless the fæces were remarkably excessive in bulk, of which no suggestion is made. For normal fæces contain about 15 per cent. of fat and therefore should leave 85 per-