Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

SIR C. ADDERLEY'S PUBLIC HEALTH BILL.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The great uncertainty of successful Parliamentary action attending all efforts made by independent members during the present session of Parliament has alone prevented my writing and drawing your attention before this to the Public Health Bill by Sir C. Adderley, F. Powell, &c.; but as during the last week the Bill passed the second reading, and Mr. Hibbert, on the part of the Government, has announced that the Bill was approved of and would obtain its support, it has become necessary that I should invite your readers' consideration of certain provisions contained therein, which affect the interests of the profession, and notably all those engaged in the administration of medical relief to the poor.

Some three weeks ago, being at the Carlton Club, I went through the clauses of the Bill with Mr. Powell, who, after explaining its provisions, expressed the hope that I would support the measure. Whilst agreeing generally that there was much contained in the Bill which had my hearty approval, I took occasion to state that the Association I was connected with would enter a decided opposition to the 13th Clause, which ordains "that the Local Government Board may from time to time require from all medical officers of health, and from all medical officers appointed under the laws for the relief of the poor, such reports of particulars respecting sickness within their respective districts as the Local Government Board may think fit," unless some provision were made for payment for any additional labour on the part of the officer who furnished it. Mr. Powell frankly admitted the justice of my objection, and said it was open to our friends in the House to propose an amendment giving effect to my views. I have therefore written to Dr. Lush, urging him to put an amendment on the paper; I have also drawn up and have forwarded a petition (a copy of which I subjoin), praying that proper remuneration shall be granted.

Were our profession as alive to its own interests as it ought to be, such an attempt to obtain gratuitous information for the public benefit would never have been dreamt of; but though miserably disunited and therefore politically ineffective, surely we possess sufficient influence, if we care to exert it, to induce the House of Commons to do us the simple justice to which we are entitled. To secure this, I advise that the petition be copied, and after being signed, that it should without delay be forwarded to Dr. Lush or such other M.P. as the petitioner may know, coupled with the request that he will not only *present* it, but will *support* its prayer in his place in the House.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Dean-street, May 13th, 1873.

JOSEPH ROGERS.

To the Honourable the House of Commons, in Parliament assembled.

The humble petition of
Medical Officer, sheweth,—, Poor-law

That whereas there is a Bill at this present time before your honourable House, entitled, "The Public Health Bill, 1873," which under the 13th clause provides that the Local Government Board "may from time to time require from all medical officers of health, and from all medical officers appointed under the laws for the relief of the poor, such reports of particulars respecting sickness within their respective districts as the Local Government Board may think fit," but which clause fails to make provision for the remuneration of the additional labour thereby entailed;

Your petitioner urges on the consideration of your honourable House the fact that the Poor-law medical officers are at present very insufficiently paid for the duties which they perform, and that in your petitioner's opinion it will be both unfair and impolitic to impose additional duties without such extra remuneration as the justice of the case demands.

Your petitioner prays that no Bill be permitted to pass

your House which does not contain provision for the payment of any extra service required under any such Act.

And your petitioner will ever pray.

* * We commend Dr. Rogers's suggested petition to the profession, and trust that it will meet with the support that it deserves. But we regret that action should have been taken so sluggishly in this important matter, to which THE LANCET directed prominent attention in its impression of the 19th April.—ED. L.

UNIVERSITY PHYSIOLOGICAL LABORATORIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Some expressions which escaped your reviewer in a notice of the new "Handbook for the Physiological Laboratory," edited by Dr. Burdon Sanderson, seem to me to be surely rather ill-considered, or else to result from a want of information on the actual state of practical physiology in the universities. At Oxford practical physiology is not taught at all—Dr. Rolleston I believe has excellent reasons for preferring to concentrate the whole strength of his teaching staff and museum upon comparative anatomy. Anybody who has inspected Dr. Rolleston's system, or, better still, studied under him as I have for a considerable period, cannot but feel that the application of the term "creeping" is very disparaging, and but a poor compliment to the earnestness and energy with which he has applied himself to his duties for the last twelve years.

As applied to the laboratory under the care of Dr. Foster, at Cambridge, the word quoted above is the more easily passed over as it is the more inapplicable. Considering the wretched accommodation at the disposal of Dr. Foster—two rooms of very moderate dimensions—I think the amount of work done is most exemplary; the smaller room is reserved for original researches carried on by some of the senior students, while in the larger room the practical biology class is at present held; this is attended by twenty-nine students, who are put through a course intended as an introduction to biological science by Dr. Foster, with the help of four well qualified assistants. Surely this is not "creeping"; if it be, it is a mode of progression in this case eminently satisfactory.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

CHARLES YULE, B.A.

St. John's College, Cambridge, May, 1873.

* * We think our correspondent has misunderstood the tenor of our remarks. In making use of the term "creeping" we referred, not to the quality of the teaching, which we hold in the highest estimation, but to the numbers who avail themselves of it. Does Dr. Yule think that in so vast and important a subject as biology, twenty-nine students represent a fair proportion of the whole number in attendance at the university? We entertain no doubt that both the Linacre Professor of Physiology and the Trinity Prælector would be charmed to see their classes trebled or quadrupled as we have no doubt that they will be in a few years' time. We are sorry to learn that practical physiology is not even "creeping" at Oxford. It is not antagonistic to comparative anatomy, and we can only hope that every student will pursue the plan adopted by Dr. Yule of studying at both universities.—ED. L.

A PROPOSITION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Seeing in your impression of May 3rd a letter from "A Provincial Practitioner" in reference to the Society for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Medical Men, may I say that I agree with my brother, but should like to have a society differently formed; so that should you consider a few remarks from me worthy of being put in your valuable paper, to which I am a constant subscriber, in order that I may put before my brethren a project in its embryo

state, I shall consider it a kindness. Noticing how often we are called on to subscribe to the relief of some individual member of our noble profession—for one instance alone, take the late I. Baker Brown, Esq.,—and knowing what a tax, if I may be allowed to use the term, it is on our individual means, I am wishful to put forward a proposition and idea—the working department and details I must leave to my seniors, who have much more experience than I at present can pretend to have.

We have a Medical Club, which in its way is useful, but mainly, and, in fact, comparatively speaking, solely available and useful to those in London, or, shall I say, a radius of some thirty miles, and the rest of the brothers outside this line reap the benefit in a very sparse degree. I may be, I know, corrected as to drawing any line at all. But my own case is this: I am about eighty miles from town; I ask, of what use to me is the Medical Club? Now, were a club of some such description as this instituted, viz., a club for help during sickness through accident or otherwise, amongst ourselves alone, numbering, as we do, some thousands, I, for one, should willingly become a member. Of course I open out only a suggestion. If worthy of being taken up, I shall be glad to find I have been the means of helping some of our poorer brethren. Having lately commenced practice, being a young man, I am prepared to look forward, not only to a career of health and work, but to times of sickness and an assistant (?) Sickness, a small practice, and a qualified assistant, where are the means? Now I wish to lay before my fellow-workmen a noble cause, which is this:—Can we not, by paying an annual amount, to be discussed and settled by more experienced persons, as I said before, than myself, contrive to arrange to raise and support a club, so that during sickness we can receive, say two or three guineas weekly, according to the amount subscribed annually, on a certificate signed by a brother who would have as much interest in the club as the recipient.

Leaving the subject now in its embryo state, to be either taken up or left to die a natural death, and knowing like a grain of sand in the desert I am but an atom of our great profession,

I subscribe myself, yours hopefully,

May, 1873.

STONHAM ASPALL.

PARIS.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE General Association of the Medical Men of France held its two annual sittings a few days ago. The opening meeting was inaugurated by the President, Professor Tardieu, who complained in bitter terms of the indifference manifested by the members of the National Assembly who had recently refused to consider various questions of professional interest which had been brought before them. The same subject was taken up by the General Secretary, who furthermore gave a report of the movement of the Provincial Branch Associations. On the following day, Dr. H. Roger, and M. Brun, the treasurer, presented to the Assembly an account of its present financial situation, which, it was stated, is very prosperous. During the last year 30,000*fr.* had been given away as aid to the widows or children of medical men. At the same sitting Dr. Brouardel summed up the various debates which had taken place in the provincial Societies during the previous year.

There is some agitation going on among the Professors of the three faculties of medicine (Paris, Montpellier, and Nancy), and at the Paris Academy of Medicine, touching the forthcoming election of the two members to represent the Faculties and Academy in the Superior Council of Education. The duties and prerogatives of this Council, such as they were recently voted by the National Assembly, are so very great that it is considered that the Council will be even more powerful than the Minister of Public Education himself in deciding on all questions connected with education and educational bodies, so that of course considerable importance is attached by the faculties and the Academy to the choice which they are about to make of their representatives. The three faculties are to be represented by only one member, and it is very likely that the

Professors of Nancy, Paris, and Montpellier will select M. Wurtz, the present Dean of the Paris School of Medicine. As to the Academy of Medicine, five candidates are stated to have equal chances for election. Professor Bouillaud, Dr. Barth, (former President of the Academy and physician to M. Thiers), Baron Larrey, and Professor Bouisson of Montpellier, member of the National Assembly.

The Minister of Agriculture and Commerce has, on the proposal of the General Consulting Committee of Public Hygiene attached to his department, bestowed a number of gold, silver, and bronze medals on several medical men who had distinguished themselves in the provinces and rendered good service by their labours as members of the various local councils of health which are officially instituted throughout France.

It is reported that the commission appointed by the Government to decide on a thorough reorganisation of the sanitary department of the army cannot agree in drawing up a report, and the matter is left over. The present system will therefore be maintained.

It is mentioned that Dr. Gautier, of Bazouge-la-Pérouze, has discovered the existence of natural cow-pox in his locality. Five tubes were sent to Dr. Joulin, the well-known obstetrician of this town, and the results of his vaccinations have been most satisfactory. Dr. Joulin is carrying on a series of vaccinations in co-operation with several other *confrères*.

A case of death through chloroform has just occurred at Lille, and the man who administered it—a dentist without any sort of degree—has been condemned for “involuntary homicide” to one month’s imprisonment and a fine of twelve shillings, and about twenty pounds damages.

The last sitting of the Society of Surgery was taken up by two interesting discussions on subjects of uterine surgery. Dr. Courty, of Montpellier, first read a paper on the Surgical Treatment of Stricture of the Cervix Uteri. He stated that forcible or slow dilatation was not sufficient to dilate in a permanent manner the vaginal orifice of the cervix uteri, and that surgical means were necessary for stopping dysmenorrhœa, and, in some cases, removing sterility. Dr. Courty has employed three methods:—1. Instantaneous bilateral loosening, by means of the simple or double hysterotome. Dr. Courty prefers, however, a tenotome with a blunt point, a narrow blade, and long handle. Cicatricial tissue soon narrows again the cervical canal, so that Dr. Courty employs this proceeding only in cases where a folded mucous membrane shows that there is tissue enough for providing for the process of retraction. 2. In order to prevent cicatricial retraction of the angles, M. Courty makes use of a special instrument, which consists of two metallic rings passed through the substance of the cervix, one on the right and the other on the left, like the rings of the lobules of the ear. Both of the rings cut, and the result of the section is added to the normal orifice. 3. When the preceding methods are insufficient, the author has recourse to autoplasty, for performing which he has adopted three different procedures. The first consists in making an incision on each side of the cervix, and a suture of the external mucous membrane with the internal one, when they are loose enough to be brought together. By the second procedure M. Courty cuts a quadrilateral mucous flap in front and another behind; he dissects the two flaps and excises the prominent part of the cervix uteri; he then concludes with a suture. Thirdly, instead of cutting out anterior and posterior flaps, M. Courty cuts two lateral flaps of a triangular or quadrangular shape. Into each bleeding commissure of the uterine tissue he introduces a flap of mucous membrane, which he maintains by means of a suture. This last proceeding has been employed twelve times during the last four years with excellent results.

In the debate which followed, Dr. Desprès made some remarks on the rareness of strictures of the cervix; out of 4000 patients he had observed at Lourcine, he had only seen two cases of stricture.

M. Blot made the same remark. In twenty-seven years’ practice he had only met six or seven cases. When Huguier’s hysterometer could pass no treatment was necessary. M. Courty had spoken only of stricture of the internal orifice; how did he cure dysmenorrhœa and sterility when there was stricture of the internal opening? He had seen cases of imperforation of the cervix, but had