against £11,511 in the former period. The difference in the receipts is, however, more apparent than real, since last year's accounts included a sale of stock to the amount of £868. The fees received for the preliminary examinations have increased by two hundred and fifty pounds, but those for the diploma of membership have fallen off a hundred pounds, which is just balanced by an increase of the Fellowship fees. The Fellowship by election yielded £136, whilst the fees for both the Midwifery and Dental diplomas have decreased.

The payments to the Council amount to £269—a slight increase on last year—and to the Court of Examiners £3159, against £3306 last year. The "College Department" is the only department with an increased expenditure, viz., £2598 against £2403 last year, the gross sum being divisible into expenses of the College £1283, and salaries and wages £1314. Both items, and particularly the former, are capable of reduction, and as a first step in that direction we would suggest a more detailed account of expenditure under the separate heads of coals, postage, &c. It is only fair to mention that the household accounts on this occasion include a bust of Sir William Lawrence, for which no price is given! The Museum department is debited with £436 for expenses, and £1381 for salaries, and the Library with £317 for books, and £300 for salary.

The Calendar itself as a book requires a few words, since its form is slightly altered, and its price reduced from half-a-crown to one shilling. As last year the Calendar cost eighty-five pounds, and yielded only six, it was time some experiment should be tried by which it might be rendered more remunerative. It is for the future to be obtainable within the sacred precincts of the College.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

PARACENTESIS CRURIS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In 1861 you inserted in your periodical a description of a method of relieving anasarca by deep puncture, which I ventured to submit to your notice as both novel and successful. A case of the kind has recently been attended with a result so unexpected and remarkable that it appears to me very desirable that it should be made known to the profession.

For reasons which need not be given, the report must be brief and confined to the fact about to be described, the more so as in other respects there was nothing unusual to be mentioned.

The patient, a lady aged about forty-five, was suffering from general anasarca, caused by disease of the heart. The legs were enormously swollen, and to such an extent that a large red patch appeared on each, plainly preparatory to their bursting. Any other than a raised position in bed had long been impossible, and nothing need be said as to shortness of breathing, &c.; the enlargement extended up to the loins and over the abdomen, and, in short, all the attendant circumstances were such as are usually present in these cases.

The operation was at once determined upon; but as the patient (simple as it is) felt the greatest alarm on its being proposed, my worthy coadjutor suggested that it should be done at first in one leg only; and as it seemed clear enough that when the water was let off from the right leg, and from all parts as far as the groin of the left, the unwieldy and irksome state of this latter limb would manifestly remove any reluctance to its being repeated, the puncture was accordingly made in the right foot.

On our visit the following day, besides the reduced size of the right leg, and the improvement in the breathing, we were pleasantly told that "the other thigh was a good deal softer." This we then attributed to fancy; but, to our surprise, at our next visit the enlargement in both legs had actually diminished in nearly the same degree. The relief, in truth, was in a few days almost as complete as if both legs had been operated upon, and at the same time. The patient was able to lie down, and to move from room to room with ease, and even to go up and down stairs.

The only surprising point in this case is the fact of the water having ascended one leg, and made its way out at the other

foot. By the ordinary law of gravitation this could not take place. Could it have been effected on the principle of the syphon? At all events, it seems that this accidental teaching suggests an improvement, and no unimportant one, of operating on one leg only.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Spring-gardens, Aug. 1863.

CHARLES WITT.

THE NEW VACCINATION ACT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—For the information of those of your readers who are medical officers to union workhouses, and whose contracts (which include vaccination) bear date previous to January 1st, 1868, I forward the answer I have received to my application to the Poor-law Board, inquiring if, under the new Act, I am entitled to the payment of 1s. 6d. per case for successful vaccination in the union workhouse.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Hitchin, Sept. 21st, 1863.

OSWALD FOSTER.

ANSWER.

Poor-law Board, Whitehall, Sept. 11th, 1863.

SIR,—I am directed by the Poor-law Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ult., and, as regards your inquiry, to state that unless the guardians of the Hitchin union enter into a new contract for your services of medical officer of the workhouse, which shall contain special provision for payment in respect of the performance of vaccination in workhouses at the rate of remuneration prescribed by Section 6 of the Vaccination Act of 1867, you will not be entitled to any fee in respect of cases of successful vaccination performed by you in the workhouse.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

FRANCIS FLETCHER, Assist. Sec.

To Oswald Foster, Medical Officer of the Workhouse
of the Hitchin Union.

THE CURABILITY OF CONSUMPTION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In the admirable Address in Medicine recently delivered at Oxford by Dr. Gull, the following passage occurs:—"The word phthisis, which has now too often a specific value, will dilate so as to include a whole genus of chronic affections, which, when duly recognised and classified, will afford more secure grounds of prognosis, and spare us the perusal of worthless records of so-called consumption cured." This statement suggests the question, Is consumption curable? And I take it (from the above) that Dr. Gull's reply would be in the negative.

Now there is no doubt that many chronic pulmonary affections have been mistaken for and described as consumption. Chronic bronchitis has often been thus mistaken, and recovery having resulted, those who disbelieve that consumption is recovered from, show up the mistake in support of their opinion. An enlarged bronchus may be mistaken for a cavity; but if lung-tissue is recognised in the sputa by the microscope, and as the case proceeds the signs of a cavity be lost (although previously present), and, by treatment, health restored to a patient several of whose relatives died of phthisis, there is an inclination to give the matter more careful consideration. But further, the patient whose case is thus briefly given dies many years after of some independent affection, as typhus, for instance, and post-mortem examination shows cicatrices in his lung at the parts where, during life, cavities had been determined to exist. There are no dilated bronchi. What, then, is liable to give rise to cavities in the lung, in a patient presenting a scrofulous tendency?

Dr. Hughes Bennett, in his excellent monograph on Consumption, gives many cases such as I have mentioned, in which he had the opportunity of examining the lungs after death, and several in which, not a single cavity, but several tuberculous cavities, had formed. Of course there are later stages of all diseases from which recovery is impossible, and this is true of phthisis perhaps pre-eminently. Yet in the face of evidence such as this, the perusal of records of consumption cured does not appear to me to be "worthless."

I trust some of your numerous correspondents will define phthisis for me. I have always regarded the word to signify the pulmonary complication of the constitutional tendency or