spection; he should be paid for attendance and *prescribing*, not for drugs and appliances; he should have these liberally supplied him from sources which would secure their being the best of their sort, or at least as good as his purposes required. The present system gives us no security, either for proper attendance or the administration of proper remedies; it makes boards of guardians authorities in matters they do not understand; it leaves the pauper to a process of obtaining first an order, then the doctor, then his medicine, which in each stage is one in which success is too much a matter of chance; it satisfies no party, and continues to excite from time to time public obloquy by the exposures of neglect and cruelty to which it is ever liable. Few men have enjoyed greater opportunities of studying the working of the medical part of the poor-law system than myself; I know well what union doctors have to go through; I know the sacrifices they have to make; I know the manner in which they are forced to pull through much of their duty. I could fill your columns with facts which would illustrate the evil resulting to the poor from the present system; I could find plenty of food for those who would dilate on the union doctors' alleged neglect of the poor; but I could also give many a proof of noble, self-denying charity, shown by the members of this profession. Their virtues are, at least, all their own; their shortcomings are, to a very great degree, to be simply ascribed to that legal ingenuity and cunning which ties them to the performance of onerous duties on terms which are ever galling to their temper, exacting unfairly from their means.

S. G. O.

REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS ON THE PROPOSED CHARTER TO THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, LONDON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—This charter of the Royal College of Physicians, London, in my opinion, inflicts, or rather attempts to inflict, a most unwarrantable hardship upon the extra-licentiates; for, as the London College, Oxford, and Cambridge, are the only places where in England men can procure a legal right to practise as physicians, doubtless many have submitted to the examination and paid for the extra licence, with no other object than that of getting this legal right to practise as physicians in England, which they are now legally entitled to do, and are men who do not require, or care much about, the acquisition of the legal right to practise in London, or within the limits of the intra-urban licence of the Royal College of Physicians.

Is it just, is it any thing like the keeping good faith with the extra-licentiates, to try to compel these extra-licentiates either to undergo another examination, or to pay another fee for this additional examination, and, if refused by the censor's board, to be even ejected from their own ranks? Is it consistent with the English constitution, to make a retrospective law which may disqualify some from the continuance of their long legally exercised medical privileges?

I hope, Mr. Editor, the London College of Physicians will pause, will think, and will hesitate much, before they force any further tax upon the 253 (out of the 685) of their own members—most of whom, I believe, are satisfied to retain their present rights, which have more than 300 years ago received the sanction of parliament, and are hallowed by the stamp of the experience of three centuries. Time may require some changes, but make them prospective, and not retrospective. If the class of extra-licentiates ought to be abolished, let it be done when the present 253 have passed away, unless the terms proposed are voluntarily acceded to; and for the future, commencing at the date of the charter, admit none but those who submit themselves to the conditions required by the charter and the by-laws of the College.

Pray attempt to induce the governing body of the college to exercise justice; and stir up the extra-licentiates to maintain their professional privileges unimpaired, and you will oblige,

Yours most respectfully,

EXTRA L. M. LOND. &c. &c.

THE NECESSITY FOR REFORM IN MEDICAL ORGANIZATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Charters are now attractive and repelling points. The one granted by bluff King Hal to his medical subjects is found to be ill adapted to the wants of these faithful lieges of our gentle Victoria. The queen does not govern on the prin-

ciples that guided the king, neither are her medical subjects content with the privileges granted by her predecessor.

Principles of government are now inquired into by all thinking men; and if they are found to be incompatible with present requirements and future improvement they are condemned. Charters may be granted to different individuals in our profession, and corporate bodies may be recognised by the law, but unless the principles are sound upon which these are based, they can no longer command approval or respect.

You, Sir, have discovered and pointed out, that the unanimity which appeared to exist between the presidents of the various medical institutions in London was based on misconception, and you deserve the thanks of the profession for making this discovery before we experienced the effects of such unanimity.

"Fraternal reconciliation" is most sincerely to be desired and striven after; and your excellent suggestion of a medical convention might do much to hasten that most desirable consummation; but I am persuaded that other misconceptions remain to be dissipated, before we can reasonably expect a millenium in our profession.

Is there no misconception existing, and encouraged, respecting the true value of a diploma? Does no one conceive that the two distinct ideas conveyed by the words diploma and qualification may be blended? Is it not, indeed, the fashion to use these words synonymously?

I remember, nearly twenty years ago, you taught the true worth of diplomas, and I have to thank you for that teaching, for it determined me to possess one less than I otherwise should have done, and I have thus been spared the infliction of an indignity which no man of honour could patiently endure. But is there no one in the profession who thinks me inferior to him solely because I have not placed myself in the position to experience that indignity? I have had painful experience on that subject. Not that this has influenced my conduct, or made me a complainant at the present time, for in all probability I should not have presumed to address the profession, through your favour, on the subject now agitating it, had I not been induced to do so by one, who, like myself, will feel the influence of continuing unfair class legislation, and who believes, as I do, that the present is a fitting time to resist such injustice.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Upper Southwick-st. Hyde-park, 1848.

WILLIAM ROBINS, L.S.A.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.—LECTURES ON COMPARATIVE ANATOMY.

ON Saturday, April 15th, Professor Owen resumed the consideration of the structure of the cetacea. He instanced that the mammary glands in those animals were placed on the margins of the vulva—a situation apparently very unfavourable for lactation, during which process, however, the female rises, and is often seen rolling over on the surface of the ocean, so as to allow the young, while attached to the nipple, to obtain suck, unimpeded by the watery element; and the process is further facilitated by the presence of a dense and highly elastic corium, surrounding and pressing on the mammary gland. The heart in the cetacea is highly developed, and the arterial system presents great peculiarity: the intercostal arteries speedily subdivide into branches which ramify, in a most tortuous manner, throughout the intercostal spaces, forming what is called the *retia mirabilia*, and owing to this peculiar arrangement, the whale and allied species are enabled to remain under water sometimes for nearly an hour.

Comparatively slight wounds destroy cetaceous animals, for their veins are destitute of valves, and the increasing pressure of the water on their bodies, as they dive after being struck by the whaler, forces so large a quantity of their circulating fluid through the wound, that the vital powers are soon exhausted. Remains of the cetacea are found in the lowest tertiary strata, indicating their high antiquity amongst the animal forms which have inhabited the globe; and the dense and apparently indestructible annular bony masses commonly found on the East shores of England, are proved to have been the tympanic bones of animals of this class, the remaining osseous structures of which had become destroyed by the wear and tear of ages. The remains of cetacea discovered in Alabama had been erroneously conjectured—and by some high authorities—to have belonged to a vast extinct reptile; but Professor Owen laid bare the error, and pointed out the material differences between the bones of reptiles and of mammalia—one of the most conclusive of which is, that the spinal canal is much larger, in proportion to the rest of the vertebra, in mammalia than in reptiles, coincidentally with the