ROYAL MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—By the request of the Exhibitioners Committee, (which now numbers thirty-five members, all good friends of the above College,) at the annual general meeting on Tuesday the 12th inst., I put the following question—viz., “Whether, when the new buildings enlarging the school department shall be completed, the charge for the education of exhibitioners would be reduced to the original sum of £30, in accordance with a sort of promise which had been held out to the Exhibitioners Committee, by Mr. Propert.” I also stated that upon such grounds agitation had been suspended for two years, in compliance with Mr. Propert’s request. To this Mr. Propert replied, “that each of the exhibitioners now cost the College upwards of £43, and he was sorry that he could not hold out any hope that the sum would ever be reduced below the present charge of £40.”

By this answer your readers will observe, that the much-disputed legal point as to whether the College can, under the present charter, appropriate any portion of its funds towards the education &c. of exhibitioners, has been most practically decided in favour of the opinion given by the present Solicitor-General!!

On March 31, 1857, Mr. Roundell Palmer wrote as follows—“My own opinion (and I am bound to say that it is a decided one), is, that the clause referred to does not in any manner prohibit the application of part of the funds of the College in aid of the expenses of the education, board, lodging, and washing of the exhibitioners; and that the Act of Parliament did not render necessary any alteration whatever of Rule 30, as to the charge of not more than £30 a year for exhibitioners; although it may be capable of proof that the cost of the education, board, lodging, and washing of such exhibitioners may exceed £30 a year.” If the College can legally spend upwards of £3 upon every exhibitioner now in the College, it can, with equal justice, further reduce the charge from £40 to £30 to a limited number.

It is now plain, that by spending £3 of the College funds upon each exhibitioner, the Council has either misappropriated the funds to the amount of nearly £400 a year, or the Solicitor-General is right, and the Council can legally make the original charge of £30 to the poorer members of the profession, and supply a want which would make the school a blessing to those who can neither afford to pay £40, or to expose their poverty to the world by canvassing for a free scholarship. The legal barrier being removed, the urgent want of a cheap education can be supplied, and the grand defect of the school can be remedied.

It now remains for the Exhibitioners Committee and the whole profession to co-operate with the Council, and to devise a plan which will give the boon of a high education at such a moderate charge as to bring it within the means of the struggling practitioner.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

WM. A. N. CATTLIN.

Highbury-place, Islington, May 13, 1862.

THE CHOLERA IN INDIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Dr. MacLoughlin, in your journal of Feb. 15th, 1862, obliges the profession with certain crude remarks on the early treatment of cholera. He commences a most illiberal letter with a statement to the effect that the disease has never been scientifically investigated in India. This is most inexact, as in no country is the progress of the disease watched with greater care. Moreover, in every fatal case an exact statement of the post-mortem examination is required. Those who are most conversant with this disease are most unable to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the meaning of its symptoms, and on that account the treatment has to a certain extent remained empirical. But if there is one fact in the pathology of the disease more established than another, it is that there is a remarkable absence of bile in the discharges, and this fact has led to the employment of mercury, not as an empirical but as a rational remedy. Neither can the administration of opium in the first stage of the disease, and stimulants as occasion may require, be held to come under the former category of treatment.

The “Member of the Legion of Honour” would seem to attach much value to the assertion that diarrhoea *always* ushers in the attack of cholera. This, however, is not invariably the case; and even were it so, the difficulty of persuading men to go into hospital for what they consider a trifling looseness

would much militate against the value of the discovery as regards early treatment.

The statement that in districts where cholera prevails the functions of the bowels of every individual in the locality are disturbed is decidedly untrue; and the deduction, supposing it to be founded on fact, makes a charge of a degree of ignorance against Indian medical officers which it is difficult to conceive can have emanated from a professional brother.

I avoid the remainder of the letter, with the exception of the conclusion so uncharitably and illogically arrived at; and I would suggest that, instead of making wild assertions, the writer should confine his remarks to subjects of which he has personal cognisance, failing which it seems probable that he will be unable much longer to sign himself a “Member of the Legion of Honour.”

I am, Sir, yours truly,

India, March 30th, 1862.

AN INDIAN MEDICAL OFFICER.

THE TREATMENT OF UTERINE CANCER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—During my recent attendance upon a case of uterine cancer, in the course of which the frequent employment of the catheter was called for, owing to the complete infiltration of the uterine wall with the disease, the presence of the instrument was on each occasion productive of such intense suffering, continuing for several hours, as to lead my patient to say she would prefer death to a repetition of the operation. After a trial of every means of relief I could devise, the following plan on one occasion suggested itself to me—viz., to smear the whole length of the catheter with an ointment composed of equal parts of extract of belladonna and lard. The experiment succeeded far beyond my expectations. Within a few minutes of the first application, the pain almost entirely vanished, and for many weeks afterwards, by this means, I was enabled to relieve the bladder twice a day, with an amount of pain comparatively trifling.

The above plan, though new to myself, may probably have been resorted to by others. Still, as I find on consulting the works of Drs. Simpson, West, and Rigby, that such treatment of the complication alluded to is not suggested by them, I venture to hope that this short communication may not be thought altogether unworthy of a corner in your valuable journal.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Wells, Somerset, May, 1862.

JOHN G. FRENCH, M.R.C.S.

CONSULTATIONS WITH HOMŒOPATHS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is reported in Hanley, that Dr. Clay, of Manchester, has lately been meeting a professed homœopathist in consultation in this town. Will you allow me to ask Dr. Clay, through the medium of your journal, if he can give any satisfactory answer to this report?

I am led to believe, on what I consider the most undeniable authority, that Dr. Clay has done so, knowing the person to be a homœopathist. If this report is incorrect, it cannot be refuted too soon; if it is correct, I think Dr. Clay’s colleagues cannot too soon be made acquainted with it, as I believe there is a Medico-Ethical Society in Manchester to which they would, no doubt, like to refer the case.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Hanley, Staffordshire, May, 1862.

INQUIRER.

P.S.—I enclose my card.

PARISIAN MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

A GENTLEMAN whose sound judgment and long experience testify to the justice of the cause he has undertaken to defend, Dr. Shrimpton of Paris, addressed a few days ago a letter to the Academy of Medicine on the subject of hospital ventilation. This letter embodies in a succinct form, together with the views of its author, the opinions of Miss Nightingale, as transmitted directly to Dr. Shrimpton, with reference to the causes of the increased rate of mortality at Lariboisière. “This unforeseen mortality,” observes Miss Nightingale, “is due neither to situation, nor construction, nor overcrowding, but