

Battalion, the Essex Regiment: Honorary Assistant Surgeon W. G. Gimson, M.D., resigns his commission; also is permitted to retain his rank, and to continue to wear the uniform of the Battalion on his retirement (dated June 13th, 1891).—17th (North) Middlesex: Horace Sanders, Gent., to be Acting Surgeon (dated June 13th, 1891).

VOLUNTEER MEDICAL STAFF CORPS. — The Glasgow Division: Captain George Thomas Beatson, M.D., from the 1st Lanarkshire Artillery Volunteers, to be Acting Surgeon (dated June 13th, 1891) — Infantry: South Wales Brigade: Brigade Surgeon John W. Mulligan, from the Severn Infantry Volunteer Brigade, to be Brigade Surgeon, ranking as Lieutenant-Colonel (dated June 13th, 1891).

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE ELECTION AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With your permission I should like to say a few words in regard to my candidature for a seat in the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. If I had followed my own feelings and judgment, I should have abstained from coming forward this year, when only one absolute vacancy has occurred, and should have been more than content to leave Mr. Lawson Tait, who polled more votes than I did last year, to be the representative of the Fellows who desire to see their constitutional status raised to a level with that of the Fellows of other professional colleges. As, however, it was the wish of those with whom I have been working for the attainment of this end that I should stand again, I consented to do so, and I cannot but think that the moderate proposals embodied in the temperate circular just issued will commend themselves to all Fellows who think and act independently in regard to what are called College politics, and who have the welfare of the College at heart.

It may be as well to explain that my active connexion with the Association of Fellows did not commence till June, 1889, when I accepted office as a member of the committee, because I felt that it was only by combined action that desired improvements could be effected. For the policy of the Association prior to that date I am not responsible, but with all that has been done by the committee during the last two years I have been closely identified, working steadily with my colleagues to secure for the Fellows those privileges the concession of which would, in our opinion, materially conduce to the good of the institution and of the profession at large. I took part in that deputation of the Committee of the Association to the Council last year, which commended itself to Sir Spencer Wells, and joined in urging upon the Committee of Council the expediency of occasional consultation of Fellows of the College separately from the Members, granting to the Fellows a common room, modification of restrictive regulations in regard to the use of voting papers at the election of councillors, and submission of the proposed scheme of conjoint examination for the medical degrees of the University of London to the Fellows before its final ratification by the Council. This action of the Association was not without success, for an authoritative legal opinion has been obtained favourable to separate meetings of Fellows; a common room will doubtless be set apart for the Fellows in due time, for some of the members of Council expressed themselves as favourable to the proposal; our suggestions in regard to voting papers were only lost in the Council by the bare majority of one; and everyone admits that if the Fellows are to be consulted at all, it is the best course to consult them before instead of after the final ratification of any new proposal. If the Fellows of the College agree with me in thinking that it would be for the good of the College that they should be a more homogeneous, united, and influential body than they are at present, and think that if elected to the Council I could help to advance this object, I should esteem it a honour to have the opportunity of serving them to the best of my power.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,

Finsbury-square, E.C.

WALTER RIVINGTON.

PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF DIRECT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE MEDICAL COUNCIL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—May I, through your columns, ask medical practitioners heartily to take up the petition, which I forward to you for publication, to the Privy Council, asking for an increase in the number of direct representatives of the medical practitioners in the United Kingdom from five to eight? We have in accordance with the Act of Parliament petitioned the General Medical Council last year to move in securing the above increase. But the Council has not moved. Our next step is to petition the Privy Council. If a sufficient number of petitions are sent in, there is little doubt but that our prayer will be granted. If we do not send sufficient in, then the cry will be raised that the profession is careless, and does not want any increase. It will be remembered that although the Medical Act (1858) provided for the formation of the Medical Council, yet no direct representation was granted until the Medical Act of 1886 was passed. Dr. Waters, Mr. Wheelhouse, Dr. Leech, and Dr. Wade were the chief workers in securing for us such representation. Further, it is evident that the draftsmen of the Act of 1886 clearly saw a time would come when the growth of the profession would be such as to require an increase of direct representatives. That time has come. It seems very strange that although the income of the Medical Council is chiefly obtained from the registration fees of medical practitioners, the said practitioners have up till 1886 been given no voice whatever on the Council. It seems even stranger that, although twenty universities and medical corporations are represented on the Council, not one penny is given to the Medical Council by these bodies. This is still more palpable when it is further stated that we practitioners actually pay each university and corporation representative about £170 a year. The case stands thus: The university representatives are paid by us, but their universities do not contribute to the income. The medical practitioners pay for all, and are only *allowed* five representatives. Further, it certainly seems strange that although the Privy Council is given the power to elect, and does elect, five representatives on the Council, not one farthing is contributed by the Privy Council to the income of the Medical Council. Here, again, medical practitioners are given the pleasure of paying for those who do not represent them. In political life it is a maxim that if the Government is represented on a body, and is given part control over the actions of that body, then the Government must contribute. This is seen in educational, poor-law, and sanitary legislation. Why not in ours? The Government has as great a right to make an annual grant for the part defraying of the expenses of the Medical Council as it has to make a grant to the Council of Education. The Medical Council is a body acting purely and simply in the interest of the public. It does not, certainly, act in the personal interests of the profession. Further than making a grant in aid, many of us hold that the Privy Council would do good service if it from time to time elected as one of its five representatives on the Medical Council two members who represented truly the great mass of the profession. All along the Privy Council has in reality nominated those who represent the universities and colleges. Those who read the reports of the proceedings of the Medical Council must notice the genuine work performed by our direct representatives, more especially that of the English. If we had three additional representatives, I believe our Medical Council would become a truly national institution, and cease to be a representative of diploma-granting bodies.

I would urge that the different Medical and Medico-Ethical Societies pass a resolution in favour of granting an increase in the number of direct representatives, and forward such resolutions to the Privy Council. If, further, a deputation to the Lord President took place, it would greatly tend to ensure success. It has been said that the twenty representatives of the universities and corporations represent the graduates of these bodies; but I find from replies that the *councils* of the universities and corporations, and not the *mass* of the graduates, elect the above twenty.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Liverpool, June, 1891.

ROBERT REID RENTOUL.

To the Right Honourable Viscount Cranbrook, Lord President, and the Right Honourable the Members of Her Majesty's Privy Council.

The petition of the undersigned registered medical practitioners of and its vicinity, humbly sheweth—

1. That the Medical Act, 1886, Section 8, provides for the election of

five direct representatives by the registered medical practitioners in the United Kingdom, while Section 10, Subsection 1, paragraph C., of the same Act provides the power for returning by the registered medical practitioners additional direct representatives to the General Council.

2. That petitions have been presented to and received by the General Council on November , 1890, urging the General Council to represent to the Privy Council that such increase in the number of direct representatives be provided for, and that the President of the General Council stated the proposal was one which would have to be "actually judged and decided upon by an authority outside and superior to the Council itself, to which authority, indeed, it would be more profitably addressed."

3. Your petitioners further beg to state that the registered medical practitioners since 1859 have paid no less than £155,985 as registration fees, and that the Universities and medical corporations represented on the General Council by twenty representatives do not contribute to the income of the said Council, although their representatives are paid for their services out of the above income.

4. That in 1875 the number of registered medical practitioners on the Medical Register was 22,715, while in 1890 the number had increased to 29,163, thus showing the necessity for an increase in the number of direct representatives.

5. Your petitioners would call your lordships' attention to the valuable help already given to medical education by the direct representatives on the General Council.

Therefore your petitioners humbly pray that your lordships will exercise the power vested in the Privy Council by Section 19 of the Medical Act of 1886, and direct that the registered medical practitioners in each of the three parts of the United Kingdom be given by your lordships the power of returning an additional direct representative for each of the three divisions of the United Kingdom. And that effect will be given to the prayer of your petitioners before November, 1891, when the next quinquennial election of direct representatives will take place.

And your petitioners will ever pray.
 Name. Qualification. Full Address.

TERRIBLE VISITATION OF LOCUSTS IN THE PUNJAB.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The enclosed extract from a letter just received from Rawul Pindi is so interesting and so graphically and tersely describes a probable cause of disease, at all events a great pest in another sense, that I send it to you for your next number if you think it worth publishing.

Rawul Pindi, May 25th, 1891.

The Punjab has this year had a terrible visitation of locusts, the worst there has been for many years. An army of about ten miles wide of unfledged locusts was passing through the station for five days. They have, of course, done much damage; but fortunately the crops were so nearly ripe that they were able to be cut in advance of the invasion, but unless some properly organised attack is made upon the eggs before next year a disastrous visitation is anticipated. Millions I should say have been destroyed in the station of the unfledged insects, so that in many places the smell from the dead bodies is very bad, and in the district a great many wells have been polluted by the numbers of locusts fallen into them. The trains have several times been delayed for some hours by the inability to make way over the greasy masses of locusts crushed on the rails. I believe the authorities are thoroughly alarmed, and steps are being taken, it is said, to organise throughout the Province a methodically planned raid on the eggs.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
 Wimpole-street, June 15th, 1891. J. FAYRER.

A CRUISE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have recently returned from a cruise in the Mediterranean in one of the steamers that are advertised to make yachting cruises, and I have derived so much benefit from various trips, in the same vessel, that I am anxious that others should benefit by the same course. I was very much broken down in health when I made my first trip in the early part of last year. Since then I have been again to the Mediterranean, to Norway, the North Cape, and up the Baltic. The sea air, the variety of changes, the pleasant company one meets in the course of these cruises, all tend to the restoration to health of those who have suffered from various causes—from depression of spirits, nervous affections, attended by loss of appetite and want of sufficient sleep. Men coming on board with every appearance of a general break down of their constitutions in a few days begin to pick up, recover their spirits, join in such amusements as can be obtained on boardship, recover their appetites, and again begin to enjoy life, the change in them becoming very marked; and I know no more rapid means of recovery from sickness of any sort as the patient obtains fresh air, enjoys the advantages of change of scene, without undergoing any fatigue, and, when visiting the various ports, has all the advantages of a home, as he returns to the ship to all his comforts, instead of being in an hotel or having to

undergo the fatigue of long railway journeys. I think if medical men knew of the great benefits to be derived from these sea trips, they would often advise their patients to seek this form of recovery to health and spirits, instead of sending them long railway journeys to Scotland, or again to the Continent. The amount of bad weather and rough sea is very small while on the trips to Norway. The sailing is entirely in smooth water in the fiords, and the air is most bracing and invigorating. I have derived such great benefit myself from these trips to sea that I am anxious that others should benefit in a like degree, and therefore address myself to you as being the best way of spreading the knowledge of this experience both to medical men and through them to their patients.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

June 15th, 1891. GEORGE H. RAY, M.D.,
 Surgeon-General (retired).

WHOOPIING-COUGH AND MEASLES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—A few years ago I submitted the question in the medical journals whether whooping-cough ought not to be included in the term "contagious disease," as used in the Public Health Act, and whether persons suffering from the malady were not liable to prosecution under the Act if exposing themselves in public. It was quite clear to me that the time had come for the profession and the public to realise the importance of this question. As it has now been again raised in THE LANCET, it may be allowed me to strengthen your remarks by drawing attention to the mortality caused by whooping-cough, measles, and scarlet fever during the five years 1885–89. It will be seen from the Tables of the Registrar-General's Reports that the mortality from whooping-cough exceeded that of measles and scarlet fever respectively.

Mortality in England caused by Whooping-cough.

	Whooping-cough.	Measles.	Scarlet fever.
1885.....	13,106	14,495	6355
1886.....	12,936	12,013	5986
1887.....	11,251	16,765	7859
1888.....	12,287	9784	6378
1889.....	12,225	14,732	6698

I am disposed to think that a large number of infants die from whooping-cough, whose deaths are attributed to other causes, from the reason I pointed out some years ago, that infants do not whoop.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,
 Savile-row, W., June 10th, 1891. ROBERT LEE.

THE HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES IN RURAL DISTRICTS.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

THE first inquiry in a rural district under the Housing of the Working Classes Act was held at Ixworth, Suffolk, on Monday last (June 15th), by Lord Francis Hervey, M.P., on behalf of the West Suffolk County Council. The formal notice convening the meeting set forth that, the Thingoe Rural Sanitary Authority having applied to the County Council for a certificate for the adoption of Part III. of the Act, Lord Hervey had been directed to hold a local inquiry, and that all persons interested in the scheme might attend and give evidence. Ixworth is an agricultural village with a population of 951, and contains 224 inhabited houses (Census, 1891). In an article which recently appeared in a London paper it was stated that "for insanitation and general decay it would be hard to find so many cottages as bad in any rural area in England." This, however, is an exaggeration, for unfortunately there are many villages in which the average dwelling of the agricultural labourer is far inferior to those at Ixworth. It must be admitted that there are many cottages in Ixworth which are really unfit for human habitation—old cottages built of lath and plaster, and covered with straw thatch, both walls and thatch being defective; some with only one bedroom, and that in the roof; floors of brick, damp and uneven; windows and doors rickety; privies with large cesspools near the houses and the wells; many without gardens and others without back doors. Notwith-