

English towns. The fatal cases of whooping-cough, which had been 47, 36, and 37 in the preceding three weeks, rose last week to 53, of which 43 occurred in Glasgow, 4 in Edinburgh, and 3 in Dundee. The 34 deaths from measles also showed a further increase upon recent weekly numbers, and included 21 in Glasgow, 7 in Aberdeen, 2 in Dundee, and 2 in Greenock. The deaths attributed to diarrhœa, which had been 3 and 15 in the preceding two weeks, were last week 10, of which 4 occurred in Dundee and 3 in Glasgow. Of the 8 deaths from diphtheria, corresponding with the number in the previous week, 5 occurred in Glasgow and 3 in Leith. The 8 fatal cases of scarlet fever showed a further increase upon the numbers in recent weeks, and included 6 in Glasgow. The deaths referred to the principal diseases of the respiratory organs, which had been 86 and 94 in the preceding two weeks, further rose last week to 107, and exceeded the number in the corresponding week of last year by 3. The causes of 61, or nearly 11 per cent., of the deaths registered in the eight towns during the week were not certified.

HEALTH OF DUBLIN.

The death-rate in Dublin, which had been 27.3 and 25.1 per 1000 in the preceding two weeks, further declined to 21.0 in the week ending May 25th. During the first eight weeks of the current quarter the death-rate in the city averaged 25.3 per 1000, the mean rate during the same period being 16.7 in London and 16.8 in Edinburgh. The 142 deaths in Dublin showed a further decline of 28 from the numbers in the previous two weeks, and included 3 which were referred to "fever," 2 to whooping-cough, 1 to measles, and not one either to small-pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, or diarrhœa. Thus the deaths from these principal zymotic diseases, which had been 9 and 13 in the preceding two weeks, declined last week to 6; they were equal to an annual rate of 0.9 per 1000, the rates from the same diseases being 1.8 in London and 1.4 in Edinburgh. The fatal cases of "fever," of whooping-cough, and of measles showed a decline from the numbers in the previous week. The deaths both of infants and of elderly persons also showed a further decline from the numbers in recent weeks. Eight inquest cases and six deaths from violence were registered; and 53, or more than a third, of the deaths occurred in public institutions. The causes of 9, or more than 6 per cent., of the deaths in the city were not certified.

THE SERVICES.

ADMIRALTY.—The following appointments have been made:—Fleet Surgeon Edward J. Sharood, to the *President* (dated June 8th, 1889); Staff Surgeon Thos. E. H. Williams to the *Medea* (dated May 28th, 1889); Surgeon Alexander G. Wildey to the *Indus* (dated May 25th, 1889); and Surgeon John Ottley to the *Cambridge* (dated May 28th, 1889).

YEOMANRY CAVALRY.—Royal North Devon (Hussars): Henry Wilson McConnel, M.B., to be Surgeon (dated May 29th, 1889).

VOLUNTEER CORPS.—*Artillery*: 2nd Middlesex: Isaac Scarth, M.B., to be Acting Surgeon (dated May 25th, 1889). 2nd East Riding of Yorkshire: Acting Surgeon W. Barter, M.D., to be Surgeon (dated May 29th, 1889).—1st Volunteer (Norfolk) Brigade, Eastern Division, Royal Artillery: Acting Surgeon A. W. Knox, M.B., resigns his appointment (dated May 29th, 1889).—2nd Volunteer (Dorsetshire) Brigade, Southern Division, Royal Artillery: The appointment of Acting Surgeon C. S. Heap, announced in the *London Gazette* of June 10th, 1887, is cancelled.—*Engineers* (Submarine Miners): The Tyne Division: William Henry Brown, Gent., to be Acting Surgeon (dated May 25th, 1889).—*Rifle*: 1st Volunteer Battalion, the Lincolnshire Regiment: Acting Surgeon A. E. Odling to be Surgeon (dated May 25th, 1889).—2nd Volunteer Battalion, the Manchester Regiment: Acting Surgeon J. J. Marsh resigns his appointment (dated May 25th, 1889).—2nd Volunteer Battalion, the Durham Light Infantry: Surgeon J. Mitchell to be Surgeon-Major, ranking as Major (dated May 25th, 1889).—18th Middlesex: Acting Surgeon D. J. Slater, M.B., resigns his appointment (dated May 25th, 1889); Harry Baldwin, Gent., to be Acting Surgeon (dated May 25th, 1889).—3rd Volunteer Battalion, the Hampshire Regiment: Surgeon A. K. Richards to be Surgeon-Major,

ranking as Major (dated May 29th, 1889).—2nd Volunteer Battalion, the South Staffordshire Regiment: John Kerr Butter, M.D., to be Acting Surgeon (dated May 29th, 1889).—1st (Pembrokeshire) Volunteer Battalion, the Welsh Regiment: William Howel Lloyd, Gent., to be Acting Surgeon (dated May 29th, 1889).

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

REFORM OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As my correspondence with Mr. Stonham was addressed to him in his character as secretary to a small band of Fellows who had issued a belated circular relating to the first draft of a Bill to amend the constitution of the College of Surgeons, I assume that he is still their mouth-piece; otherwise, there is no material point in the letter which he has addressed to you that has not been sufficiently discussed already.

In THE LANCET of March 23rd last, I gave an account of some phases of the constitutional history of the College, and proposed the following theses: (1) That, by the Charter of Edward IV. (1461), which first incorporated the Company of Barbers of London, from which the College has sprung, the Commonalty were empowered to elect yearly two Masters or Governors, and shared with the Masters the power of making assemblies of themselves, and of ordaining laws and ordinances; (2) that these powers and privileges, though confirmed by an Act of Parliament passed in the year 1540 (32 Hen. VIII., c. 42), were gradually usurped by a Court of Assistants—the prototype of the present Council; and that this usurpation was from some cause allowed to receive the sanction of the Legislature in the year 1745; (3) that the present College is, presumably, the direct legal successor of the old Corporation of Surgeons, inasmuch as the Council of the College administers the Arris and the Gale trusts, which were in the year 1745 vested in the Corporation of Surgeons by Act of Parliament (18 Geo. II., cap. 15); (4) that the Members of the present College were until the year 1843, when the order of Fellows was instituted, eligible to sit in the Council, to hold examinations, and to occupy the office of Master or President; and (5) that this eligibility was taken away by the Charter of 7th Victoria, without the knowledge and consent of the commonalty.

My critics do not controvert one of these propositions, but give instead what purports to be a summary of the constitutional history of the College, but what is, in truth, a crude and inaccurate statement, obviously compiled from a secondhand source, and having scarcely any relevancy to the particular matters in dispute.

Though I will not follow all their vagaries, some notice must be taken of the strange doctrine which promises to become the principal article of faith with the heterogeneous body of gentlemen who have constituted themselves the Fourth party in College politics. Taking advantage of past encroachments upon the corporate rights of Members, they make the preposterous suggestion that the present Members of the College are not the direct successors of the ancient Freemen, but correspond rather to Licentiates or Foreigners. Now the term "Foreigner" technically denotes "one not belonging to a gild," and if we interpolate this definition into the description of College given in the preamble of the Charter of 7th Victoria, it would appear that—"The Body Politic and Corporate of the said College at present consists of persons created Members of the said College (i.e., *Licentiates, or Foreigners, or non-Members*) by the first-mentioned Charter [1800], or constituted such Members (i.e., *Licentiates, or Foreigners, or non-Members*) by Letters Testimonial under the Common Seal of the College." So far as such a description is understandable by ordinary man, it is sheer nonsense.

It is a significant indication of the straits to which the opponents of collegiate reform are reduced when, in order to arouse alarm at the prospect of an extension of the representative principle to a portion of the Members, they are fain to cite a quotation of Macaulay's to the effect that large collections of human beings strongly tend to become a mob. Do they really imagine that any educated man will be taken in by this clumsy device? If Macaulay is to be

arbitrator, here is his judgment: "I believe that there are societies in which every man may safely be admitted to vote," and "Woe to the Government which cannot distinguish between a nation and a mob! Woe to the Government which thinks that a great, a steady, a long-continued movement of the public mind is to be stopped like a street riot!"

I wish, in conclusion, to do justice to the commendable candour with which Mr. Stonham's friends have announced the result of their appeal to the Fellows. They issued 925 circulars animadverting on a hypothetical Draft Bill, and requested the answer "Disapprove" or "Approve" to four statements which predicted certain evils which would ensue upon the passing of the Bill. Of the circulars, 898 reached their destination. The suggestion which appealed most directly to the jealousies and prejudices of the Fellows was that which alleged that by the supposed Bill the Fellows would lose all their privileges. While 436 Fellows disapproved of this prospective loss, 18 seem to have contemplated it with unqualified satisfaction—

"The few, by nature formed, by learning fraught,
Born to instruct, as others to be taught."

Besides these, however, 5 gave qualified answers, and 439 were silent, thus making a total of 462 who lent support to the belief that the *real* privileges of the Fellows were not in danger, and that no privileges, whether real or imaginary, are worth perpetuating that divide the College against itself.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Harley-street, May 27th, 1889.

J. TWEEDY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The question of reform of the Royal College of Surgeons is arriving at an acute stage, the inflammatory processes are augmenting, and functional disturbances, if not checked, must culminate in some form of degeneration which may prove disastrous to its constitution and enfeeble its powers of vitality and usefulness. As one of the Association of Members, I must state that I should be very sorry to witness any result of this nature, and I might add that the revolutionary requisitions of the first Draft Bill, which was to have been presented to Parliament, never met with my unqualified approval. A little serious reflection must have made it evident that such a fanatical scheme was intolerant in character and unsound in principle. I joined the Association of Members with one object, which I thought, and still believe, would add to the usefulness and general well-being of this institution—namely, in some way to promote the extension of the franchise to the Members, to which I believe they are entitled, and I should rest quite satisfied and content if this could in any way be effected. It was very far from my wish or desire to underrate or to lower the somewhat Quixotic value which Fellows associate with the Fellowship, and I feel that those who possess this distinction should be in possession of an accumulative power, the natural outcome of expenditure of capital and energy beyond that which is called forth to obtain the ordinary Membership, but I never will admit that they should have the College and its management all to themselves. I care naught for ancient rights or barber surgeons, and I am weary and sick of all such nonsense. We have to deal with the attributes of the age in which we live, when the self-government of communities or institutions by cliques can have no sure foundation or enduring existence. In reference to the control over the College of Surgeons, I am perfectly sure that the Members have no wish to swamp the Fellows, and if voting power were given to them I doubt if they would care to exercise it, so long as the members of Council safeguarded their welfare and professional interests. I hope some means will be discovered by which disagreement may be rectified. Civil war is the most disastrous form of warfare, and if material evidence of conciliation were forthcoming it would heal the breach, which must widen unless something be done to avert it. The profession to which we belong is called a noble profession, inasmuch as we are constantly exercising in our daily life a spirit of charity and mercy towards our fellow-men. Do not let us forget to promote it amongst ourselves; it is to the interest of all concerned that we should endeavour to cultivate within our ranks (without pride or ostentation) a kindly and generous feeling, which is so essential to the happiness and undivided interests of mankind, both of high and low estate.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

May 27th, 1889.

T. STRETCH DOWSE.

"CONTINENCE v. SYPHILIS."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—To judge from letters that I have received, many members of the profession besides myself will be thankful for the powerful aid you have given to an endeavour which has an importance that can scarcely be overvalued. It may interest some of your readers to know that I have endeavoured, in another manner, to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the concluding passage of my lecture. I have removed the allusions to the medical profession, and have substituted a brief statement of the circumstances of the delivery of the passage; I have also appended the concluding sentence of your leading article on the lectures (*THE LANCET*, May 25th). This double-page leaflet is thus suitable for distribution to young men, and it can be obtained of Adlard and Son, Printers, Bartholomew-close, E.C., at 3s. per hundred, or at a lower price for a larger quantity.

Permit me to add to the valuable extract from Sir James Paget's lecture, which you quote, the fact that the whole subject is discussed in an admirable manner, as practical as effective, in the Howard Prize Essay (of the Statistical Society), by Dr. Clement Dukes of Rugby. The half-private issue of this book has lessened the knowledge of it and the influence it has exercised; the latter might be incalculable were a cheap edition to be brought out by a publisher who desired to use his business as a means of doing good. Indeed, this book and Dr. Dukes' "Health at School" ought to ensure for their author the gratitude of the entire profession, and should be within the reach both of the purse and the hand of every medical practitioner in the kingdom.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant.

Queen Anne-street, W., May 28th, 1889.

W. R. GOWERS.

FATAL AFFRAY AT LIVERPOOL.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I know that the above case has been the subject of considerable discussion, and as my position in it is not fully understood, except by a few, perhaps you will be good enough to permit me to define it.

My patient, Mr. G. Godfrey, was taken to the Northern Hospital after the assault, and I was summoned to see him the next day (Tuesday). I was told by the surgeon whom I saw in charge of him that he had a scalp wound and a fracture of the skull, but he was perfectly conscious, and begged to be taken home. This I refused. Again, on Wednesday, I saw him, and was again asked by him, as well as by his wife and brother, to sanction his removal. This I again declined to take the responsibility of advising. That night, or early on the Thursday morning, he became unconscious, partly or wholly, and at noon his brother rang me up by telephone to request my attendance at the hospital, as an operation was about to be performed. I witnessed the operation, fully believing that it had been sanctioned by the usual consultation of the staff, and during the operation occurred the catastrophe which I look upon as the immediate cause of death. After this unhappy incident he was taken back to bed as an utterly hopeless case, and the only result of the operation was to prove that the diagnosis had been wrong, inasmuch as there was no fracture and no collection of pus. So ended the first stage.

That day I had a conversation with one of the house surgeons, in which I spoke of the serious moral responsibility arising out of the accident in case the prisoner should now be charged with wilful murder, and it was arranged that I should be present at the post-mortem examination. This promise was not kept. On the contrary, I was refused admission to the examination when I accidentally learnt of its progress, and it was only when I insisted upon my right to be present that the matter was referred to Mr. D. Harrison, and his permission—though I still protest against his right to refuse or permit—was given; but it was then too late to be of any practical use to me, inasmuch as everything had been removed, and I saw nothing *in situ* so far as the brain was concerned.

I was not summoned to the inquest, nor did I volunteer to attend, for I was fully sure that in common honesty "the truth and the whole truth" would be told, and that a verdict of "manslaughter" would be returned. Finding it was not so, I took the opinion of some whom I consider to be the