

Council speaks of the danger of placing the election of the President in the hands of "a comparatively small number," is an instance of the Council being judged out of its own mouth, not only on this but on the larger question of the Members' claims. We are informed, however, on the highest authority, that the Privy Council does not look so slightly as does the College President upon the petition presented by 4665 Members of the Royal College of Surgeons, and that that body looks upon it as a most important and weighty document, over the discussion of which much time must yet be spent. We have no misgivings as to the result, and remain your obedient servants,

Feb. 8th, 1888. WARWICK C. STEELE, } Hon. Secs. Assoc.  
WM. ASHTON ELLIS, } M.R.C.S.

## IMMEDIATE CLOSURE OF TRACHEAL WOUNDS.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—As confirming Sir W. Mac Cormac's letter, and supporting your editorial remark on the advantage of immediate closure by suture of tracheal wounds, the following case may be of interest.

A. B.—, aged fifty-seven, a man suffering from extensive cancer of the tongue implicating the floor of the mouth, and being beyond any surgical interference, was on Jan. 1st, 1888, seized with violent hæmorrhage from the left lingual artery. Owing to the condition of the parts it was found to be impossible to secure the bleeding points, and all styptic application failed to arrest the hæmorrhage. It was decided, owing to extensive glandular mischief making the ligature of the external carotid artery a very difficult operation, to tie the common carotid. All went well until I had placed the ligature round the artery, when the patient ceased breathing, and although every effort was made to drag the diseased tongue forward, it was found impossible to restore respiration. So without loss of time I opened the trachea and introduced a tracheotomy tube. The patient rapidly commenced to breathe again, and I finished the operation. The patient having now recovered somewhat from the anæsthetic, I removed the tube and found he breathed quite easily by the natural way. I therefore stitched up the wound in his trachea, placed a few strands of horsehair in the external wound for drainage, and returned the patient to bed. He made a perfect recovery from the operation, the wound healing by first intention, and he had no further difficulty in breathing.

This case was instructive in many ways, and I venture to think that in extensive operations about the mouth a preliminary tracheotomy or laryngotomy might be well performed, enabling the pharynx to be packed with sponges, so as to prevent the possibility of the blood being swallowed or trickling into the trachea. After the operation the tracheal wound might be at once closed, and in this manner cold air is shut off from the lungs, and the extra risk to the patient by the performance of the tracheotomy reduced to *nil*.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,  
Upper Wimpole-street, Feb. 7th, 1888. F. BOWREMAN JESSETT.

## MANCHESTER AND SALFORD PROVIDENT DISPENSARIES.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—As the Provident Dispensary system is engaging the attention of some well-meaning members of the profession, I beg to enclose the annual report of the Pendleton Provident Dispensary, which is the most flourishing branch of the above Association. Members over fourteen years of age pay a subscription of one penny a week. "Children under fourteen years of age, in one family, are charged one penny a week for the first two; all the remainder are admitted free." One penny is charged for each prescription, and the profit made last year upon 40,386 prescriptions is stated to be £68. The sum of £499 was divided among the medical staff, and as they paid 11,322 visits and had 9492 consultations at the dispensary, making a total of 20,814 visits and consultations, their remuneration did not amount to sixpence for each visit and consultation. The medical men receive one-half of the weekly subscription and two-thirds of the profits over, after paying all other expenses. When this dispensary was started, a rule was made that all persons with an income of over thirty shillings a week

were ineligible as members, but it was found that the poorer classes did not care to join the dispensary in sufficient numbers, so the rule was abolished, and now there is no limitation as to the income of those wishing to become members; consequently members of well-to-do families with an income of several pounds a week, small shopkeepers, and lower middle-class persons have taken advantage of this method of obtaining medical attendance. The acting committee, which is composed of paying members, encourage every person they can to join the dispensary, where medicine can be had for one penny a bottle. The Pendleton Provident Dispensary is almost entirely in the hands of one medical man, who keeps two qualified assistants to do the work. Another of the medical staff made 160 visits during the past six months, besides attending twice a week at the dispensary, and he received £3 17s. 6d. as his share of the receipts. The collector, who also acts as dispenser, canvasses for members, and receives a commission for those he persuades to join the dispensary. This comparatively new departure in the practice of medicine does not tend to raise the profession in the estimation of the public, and unfortunately the clergy and those persons who delight to pose as philanthropists (though not at their own expense) are ardent supporters of this Provident Dispensary scheme.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

Feb. 4th, 1888.

M.D.

## "ANTISEPSIS IN PHTHISIS."

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I am glad to see this question raised in THE LANCET both by your able leader and the letter of Dr. R. J. Lee. I quite agree with him that the inhalation to be of any benefit must be kept boiling. But are we not, in using these vapours, going against the climatic theory of treatment of phthisis? We are told that a moist atmosphere is the hotbed for causing and rearing the bacillus. What is the vapour? Steam qualified by some antiseptic? Yes, but does or will the said qualification do the good we want and wish for? I have tried, unfortunately on myself, almost every known antiseptic; had them boiling in water over a portable gas tripod until the room reeked with the odour; but I very much doubt if the antiseptic good was greater than the discomfort of the heat and moisture. Lately I am using as a dry inhalation what my friend Dr. Wm. Henry White of Weymouth-street gave me, the carbolised iodine thymol ether and spirit, and find it very soothing, but how much gets as far as the apices I cannot say. Since then I got a box of the iodine disinfecting candles, and I think this opens a ready and easy way of introducing into a patient's lungs any antiseptic in a dry atmosphere, and is worthy of a trial on a larger scale. Trusting you will give us some further information of this very important point,

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Ashburton, Devon, Jan. 29th, 1888. WILLIAM FRASER, M.B.

## THE DRAINAGE OF CANNES.

*(From our Special Correspondent.)*

Cannes, Dec. 1887.

DURING the last eight years it has been acknowledged on all sides that Cannes requires a general system of drainage. No one now denies that such sewers as actually exist give off bad odours, that the cesspools are a nuisance and a danger, and that Cannes is so growing in wealth and population as to call for the prompt abolition of all primitive and barbaric methods of dealing with sewage. The difficulty, as is the case in so many other towns, does not arise from the indifference of the population to the need of reform. Nor, again, is the necessary outlay considered a formidable obstacle. On the contrary, the funds are ready at hand. Householders are actually compelled to pay four francs per cubic metre for emptying their cesspools, and various police ordinances, together with the increased use of water, necessitate the repetition of this unpleasant and expensive operation at frequent intervals. The cost for a private house or villa varies from £3 to £10 a year; while large hotels sometimes spend as much as £40 and even £60 a year merely for the emptying of their cesspools. The population would, therefore, be no poorer if each proprietor were