

## Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

## "WOOD PAVEMENT."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Professor O. W. Wight, Health Officer of Detroit, U.S.A. (THE LANCET, Sept. 23rd, p. 513), describes wood pavement as laid in America, and utterly condemns it, and most deservedly; but then the mode of construction described is wrong in every way it is possible to be. Wood pavement should be constructed as under—namely, the foundation should be absolutely sound, watertight, and have a smooth and even surface. In England such foundation is best made of Portland-cement-concrete, the surface finished with neat cement; over this surface should be laid a layer of tar-felt, or a layer of asphalt, not less than half an inch in thickness. The wood blocks should be sound and free from sap, if creosoted all the better. The blocks should be laid solidly on the prepared base, and, with a layer of tar-felt betwixt, be close jointed. The surface of any wood pavement so laid will be smooth and absolutely watertight, and in wear will not be subject to any of the ills attributed to the wood pavements as laid in America and as described by Professor Wight. The wood pavement as herein described will, in England, cost from 12s. to 14s. per square yard, according as the foundation may have been more or less costly. The felt used will cost 2s. per square yard. Wood paving has been most imperfectly laid in London, and has greatly discredited the system. There are, however, now good samples—as in Parliament-street and St. James's-street, for instance.

The bad examples of America must have been followed in England, and especially in London at first: such as loose and ill-formed foundations with blocks set wide apart, the spaces filled in with gravel or with concrete. In these cases the foundations gave way, the blocks frayed at the edges and sunk, the whole surface becoming uneven and jolting with less than twelve months' wear. When wood blocks are laid on a solid and smooth foundation, and are close jointed, they cannot sink or fray at the edges, but must wear evenly, because the traffic passes over smoothly. Such surfaces may be washed by hose and jet so as each morning to be clean and sweet as when new. London under uniform municipal government may accomplish this.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

September 25th, 1882. ROBERT RAWLINSON, C.B., &amp;c.

## THE COMPULSORY NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The newspaper reports of the proceedings of the Public Health Section of the Social Science Congress contain a statement that a resolution was adopted by the section in approval of the principle of Mr. Hastings' Bill, which proposes that the medical attendant shall be compelled by fine or imprisonment to report to the sanitary authority every case of infectious disease coming within his knowledge. Lest it may be assumed that the section gave its deliberate sanction to this proposal, I think it well to inform you of the exact circumstances. After a debate, which lasted four hours and a half, and in which the speakers against the proposal were almost as numerous as its advocates, a motion was unexpectedly proposed, no notice whatever of it having been given. The motion declared that the section endorsed Mr. Hastings' Bill, which was not before the section at all, had not been even mentioned in the debate except by the mover, and was entirely unknown to the great majority of those present. As it was manifestly improper that the section should be pledged to approval of a measure of which it was ignorant, I desired to moved the previous question as an amendment, and if I had been permitted I am satisfied that my motion would have been carried by a large majority. To my astonishment, it was ruled by the chairman that no amendment of any sort could be entertained, and that a Yes or No vote should be taken on the merits of Mr. Hastings' proposal. Such a

question being put from the chair, the great majority of those present declined to vote, and a small minority of the section decided the question affirmatively. No doubt use will be made of this vote to support Mr. Hastings' Bill in the next session of Parliament, but I think it will be agreed than an expression of opinion, forced without notice, and without permitting any alternative proposition to be considered, is entirely valueless. And I am further of opinion that the ruling of the chairman was altogether unconstitutional, and at variance with the usage of the Congress or any other public assembly.—I am, Sir, yours &c.

ARCHIBALD H. JACOB, M.D., F.R.C.S.  
Ely Place, Dublin, September, 1882.

## THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY DEGREES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your issue of the 23rd inst. I notice a statement made before the Royal Commission on Medical Acts, by Dr. Jacob, of Dublin, where, among other things, he says, referring to the affiliated Colleges of the late Queen's University, "A student attending in a Queen's College may obtain all the lectures necessary for a Queen's University degree (or a Scotch double diploma) in two years." Now, as to the requirements for a Scotch double diploma I know nothing; but regarding the Queen's University, I know that Dr. Jacob's statement is not a fact. It may be a great annoyance for any medical man to be called on to give evidence before a Commission, but if he consents he ought to feel bound at least to be accurate in his statements irrespective of results. The Calendar of the University will prove the truth of my statement; but, in a word, I may just show the impossibility of what Dr. Jacob states. The University requires twenty-four full months' attendance at hospital, and as it is only possible to attend nine months in each year, it will be evident that two years will not suffice, but that it will require three winter terms of six months each and two summer terms of three months each, or, in other words, three years. Besides this, no student can attend hospital during his first year, as he is obliged to be present at College lectures during the roll-call at hospital, and cannot secure "a present" at both places. This brings out a further fact, that each student must therefore begin his hospital attendance after his first year at College, and can thus only secure the necessary certificates in three years and a half.

Dr. Jacob suggests that the reason so many Queen's University students go to Scotland for qualifications—and everyone must admit the proportion is large—is because the term of study at Queen's Colleges is very short. This I have shown not to be a fact. The true reason is this, Queen's University degree is admittedly difficult to obtain, and this Dr. Jacob must know, there being only one-fourth of the students who enter the University who ever obtain its degree. And, as a matter of fact, Dr. Jacob perhaps also knows that students failing at Queen's University go to either the Scotch licensing bodies or to the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin, and obtain their qualifications.

I am, Sir, yours &amp;c.,

London, Sept. 26th, 1882.

J. W. M.

## SUDDEN DEATH AFTER DIPHTHERIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The case related by Mr. Alfred Charlton in last Saturday's LANCET reminds me of one which came under my observation in 1874, when I was acting as locum tenens for Dr. R. Lowther, of Cartmel, in Lancashire. Diphtheria of a severe type had carried off several members of one of the leading families in the place. Amongst the survivors was a young lady, whose age I do not recollect, but probably about thirteen or fourteen, convalescent as far as general symptoms were concerned, but suffering from precocious pharyngeal paralysis, which rendered deglutition of a sufficient quantity of food impossible. For a week or ten days she had been living upon nutrient enemata, but she was beginning to swallow with greater facility, and appeared in a fair way of recovery, when death occurred in the following manner:—A bedpan, which she required to use for the purpose of defecation, had been slipped, without causing her any exertion, beneath the clothes; but some difficulty taking