

land, if some applicants have the full space granted to them which they have sought.

There seems to be an idea generally prevalent that all who request an allotment of space have a sort of claim on her Majesty's Commissioners for it, and that if they cannot have all they ask for, they must and ought to have it distributed to them in proportion to their demands. This is manifestly absurd, for the exhibitors will employ for scientific and commercial purposes the space given them as a *favour* from the Commissioners; and it is clear that if the exhibiting space were distributed in proportion to the demands, the man who began by asking for twice as much as he would want would probably get what he really wished; while he who forbore, and only sought exactly what he required, would find himself with only its half, supposing this were the proportion in which the division were to be made. For example, a report is in circulation that a certain manufacturer of agricultural implements (whose name is familiar to all who glance over the advertisements in the *Times* and other papers in connexion with an inquiry which must have startled or amused all who have met with it—namely, "Do you bruise your oats?") modestly demanded more space than the whole building itself will contain!

It is expected that each successful claimant will soon receive an intimation as to the area allotted to him individually, and we sincerely trust, for the sake of our national *prestige*, and as a proof of the advanced state of the manufacture of surgical instruments in this country, that every member of the trade who intends to aid in forming the Exhibition of 1862 will set to work earnestly and ably, and acquit himself of his task right well. We trust that none of them will forget that the commercial view of the Exhibition is not the only one, important as it is. The scientific side of the question ought not, and must not, be overlooked, otherwise Class 17 will be found to contain mere instruments of cutlery and iron manufacture, instead of a collection of proofs of what the mind of man has been capable of devising for the relief of the evils to which his race is liable.

Since our last notice of the Exhibition in these columns, Dr. Arthur Farre and Mr. Thomas Bell have been added to the National Committee, and the profession will at once feel that the departments of Obstetric and Dental Surgery could not be entrusted to better hands. J. Reeves Traer, Esq., F.R.C.S., has been appointed Superintendent of the Class, and on him devolve the arrangement and charge of this portion of the Exhibition.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE CONSERVATORSHIP OF THE HUNTERIAN MUSEUM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your journal of October 5th, you paid me the compliment to mention my name favourably in connexion with the Conservatorship of the Hunterian Museum, for which office I was at that time a candidate, believing that the appointment included the Professorship of Histology, and that the person obtaining the appointment would, like the late Professor Quekett, lecture annually to the students and members of the College. If this matter concerned myself only, I should not presume to intrude my opinions upon your readers; but as the Conservatorship of the Hunterian Museum is a national, and indeed to some extent a Government affair, I trust that the subjoined remarks will not be considered inappropriate.

I may premise that in the pamphlet which I sent to each member of Council, I suggested that the appointment should be made by public *concours*,—a system I had long advocated in my political writings,—to all of which I referred the members of the Council. I scarcely need state that my chance of success was but slight; but I thought that some members of the Council might possibly support me, on the ground that my occupations for many years especially fitted me for the appointment, as shown by my published works, and especially by the preparations and drawings I sent for their inspection. It was rumoured "that the matter was to have been decided several weeks since, the Council deputing the Museum Committee to name such person or persons to the Council as they thought best qualified." Rumour also reports "that a certain clique in the Council, who were desirous of

putting in their friend, an hospital surgeon, met with more opposition than they expected, and that after a warm discussion it was decided at the eleventh hour to advertise the appointment, and to concoct, with Mr. Belfour's assistance, the following 'standing rules,' as they are called, which were to be sent to each of the candidates, the very *pertinent* and ominous question being asked, whether, after reading these rules, he was still a candidate?" I enclose these rules, which you may think too long to publish; but perhaps you will permit me to notice briefly some of them. That the Conservator shall reside in the house next to the College. That his hours of attendance shall be from ten to five; but should the business of the Museum require it, his services shall not be limited to such hours of attendance. That the books in his use shall be according to the directions of the Museum Committee. That he shall insure his life in the sum of £1000, unless he shall have done so prior to his election; that he shall deposit the policy with the College, and produce the receipts for the premium when required by the President. That he shall *direct* and superintend the dissections required for the examinations by the Court of Examiners, according to the instructions of the President. That the whole of his time (twice repeated) shall be at the disposal of the College. And all this to be verified on oath. The office is shorn of the Professorship, and it is evident, Sir, that the Council do not require a lecturer, or a man who would turn the yet hidden treasures of the Museum to national account. He is expected, to use a zoological simile, to be a sort of College grub: to remain in the larva state until killed by the bad air of the house next door and that of the Museum vaults and examination subjects; when the strong box will be unlocked, the policy given to the widow, and the Councillors will chuckle over their far-sightedness in having "nothing to pay." Surely, Sir, it would have been better, instead of impeaching a man's honesty in this way, to have told the candidate that at his death his widow or family must expect no pension or bonus from the College—a provision that no honest or provident man would complain of. But, Sir, there is more connexion between the residence next door and the life insurance than meets the eye. A man who is pent up in the stone walls and vaults of this College, exposed to its noxious effluvia, requires daily change of air, and should live in the suburbs of London. I may mention that I told Professor Quekett, three years before his death, "that if he did not obtain permission of the Council to live out of London, the College air would kill him"—a circumstance which should operate in favour of his widow when the Council are considering her pension.

I now come to another matter, about which there can, I think, be no difference of opinion—viz., "the direction and supervision of the examinations, under the direction of the President, and it may be to act as a spy upon the students, to prevent "cribbing," &c. As mentioned by Professor Owen, in his letter in your journal of October 12th, the Museum of the College was purchased by Parliament, and confided to the College under the supervision of a Board of Trustees, for the public benefit! How then, Sir, can the Council properly ask the Conservator to perform duties which have nothing whatever to do with the Conservatorship of the Hunterian Museum, but rather with the putting of money into the pockets of the Examiners? Professor Owen (with the exception of John Hunter) has conferred far more honour upon the College by his vast labours and researches than any other name in its muster roll; but, Sir, if a second Owen could be found, do you think that *he* would be the man that the Council would select? To borrow from *Punch*, he would be "too strong for the place." Everything must have a beginning, and all changes in this country are rather slow. But there is one little matter of progress connected with this election that I am pleased to allude to: the *concours* has been suggested, and the advertisement of the office, although at a late hour. When the General Council of Medical Education selected the brother of the now President of the College for the office of Registrar, they did so without advertising the office, and elected Dr. Hawkins, in spite of his having objected in his parliamentary evidence to a *general* registration of medical practitioners!—Yours obediently,

Parliament-street, Dec. 1861.

EDWARDS CRISP, M.D.

FURRED TONGUE IN DISEASE OF THE BLADDER.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following case, which I met with during my residence as house-surgeon of the Wrexham Infirmary, may be of some interest, inasmuch as it presents many points analogous

to the case of a "Peculiarly Furred Condition of the Tongue in Disease of the Bladder," which appeared in your "Mirror of Hospital Practice," published in THE LANCET of Nov. 9th:—

Jonathan F—, aged sixty-eight, a collier, was an out-patient several times during a period extending over three years. He invariably complained of the same thing, difficulty of micturition. His bladder was extensively diseased, and his urine under the microscope showed blood-corpuscles and cystic epithelium in large quantities. What, however, more especially drew my attention to this man's case was the "peculiarly furred condition of his tongue." This organ was constantly coated with a thick brown fur, extending along the dorsum to within an inch of the tip, in a triangular form. Examined with a simple lens, it had all the appearance of "rat's" hair. It was most tenacious, and from the man's own account, which I had no reason to doubt, was persistent. Unfortunately I did not examine it with the microscope, and consequently cannot say whether it contained any vegetable growths or not. The man's health, with the exception of the urinary affection, was tolerably good, bowels regular, digestion active, &c. No remedies seemed to have the slightest effect on the condition of the tongue. I had the opportunity of watching this case for upwards of three years, and the "fur" invariably continued of the same colour and consistence.

I remain, Sir, yours, &c.,

Ripley, November, 1861.

J. ALLEN, M.R.C.S.L.

THE MEDICAL ASSISTANTS' BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I am persuaded by the praiseworthy letter of "A Surgeon" that the above Society is viewed favourably by principals, but I must say it somewhat surprises me that the majority of them are blind to the benefit this Association must ultimately be to them *individually*; this, however, is evident, or why do so few enroll themselves as honorary members? But as it is just possible that many, though they may have thought favourably of the Society, have been unable, from want of sufficient time, to see into the "interior," I will not say anything further about their apparent backwardness; but I must add that I sincerely trust the letter above alluded to, coming as it does directly from a principal who has carefully perused a copy of the rules of the Society, will be sufficient evidence not only of the sound principles the committee intend to work upon, but also of the great utility such an Association must of necessity prove to those who become connected with it, especially principals; for, be it remembered, it is impossible for any person to become a member who cannot produce such certificates of gentlemanly conduct from his present or last employer as shall satisfy the committee that he has behaved himself in a manner becoming a member of the profession; and hence the certainty that must ultimately exist of obtaining a gentlemanly assistant by applying to the secretary of this Association.

In conclusion, I am permitted to say (by authority of the honorary secretary, Mr. Monckton) that arrangements will shortly be made to carry out the valuable suggestions of your correspondent.

I have much pleasure in being able to state that seldom a week passes without an addition to our number of members.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Nov. 27th, 1861.

A MEMBER.

PARISIAN MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

M. BOUSSINGAULT read a paper of interest at the Academy of Sciences last Monday, on the subject of vegetable respiration. This communication embodies the details and results of a series of experiments made by the author with a view to ascertain the precise nature of the gases eliminated from the atmosphere by the green tissues of plants under solar influence. The conclusions arrived at confirm, in a measure, those already advanced by De Saussure, Bonnet, Priestley, Ingen-Houtz, and Senneber, and may be briefly enumerated as follows:—Of the oxygen formed during the decomposition of carbonic acid gas by the leaves of plants in sunlight, part is set free and part is absorbed by the roots. During the process, in addition to the evolution of oxygen, two inflammable gases, the oxide of carbon

and the protocarburet of hydrogen, are developed; such at least were the products obtained from plants placed in the rays of the sun, and under water charged with carbonic acid gas. In thus announcing the formation of one of the most deleterious gases known, the oxide of carbon, by the action of the green tissues of plants upon the atmosphere, M. Boussingault contrasts his conclusions with those of Priestley, which went to prove the disinfecting and renovating action of vegetable respiration, and points to his discovery as likely, at no remote period, to assist in the detection of the mysterious principle of marsh malaria.

M. Trousseau commenced his course of clinical lectures a few days back, at the Hôtel Dieu, by some observations on rheumatoid arthritis, and its amenability to treatment by the internal exhibition of large doses of iodine tincture. Of the two cases which served as text for the discourse, the one was that of a female, the other a male. The former, a woman aged forty, of feeble constitution, a sempstress by profession, and consequently ill-lodged and ill-fed, had stated that no member of her family had ever suffered from gout or rheumatism, and that she herself, previously to the commencement of her present malady, had never been seriously unwell, except on one occasion, and that eight years ago, when she had scarlet fever. The lecturer here reminded his audience, that there does exist a form of "rhumatisme scarlatin" less severe and less tenacious for the most part than ordinary rheumatism, and unaccompanied by the same train of general symptoms. Another circumstance in the history of this patient noticed by M. Trousseau was the existence of violent periodic headaches, associated with nausea and vomiting. Such headaches, remarked the Professor, are frequently observed in females affected with rheumatoid arthritis, and remind one of a similar predisposition common to gouty men. They are indicative of the existence of the special diathesis, and persons who in early life suffer thus, very generally towards its decline experience symptoms of either gout or rheumatism. In the present instance, the articular affection commenced when the attacks of cephalalgia began to diminish in violence. The malady first showed itself two years ago, and has since that period progressed steadily without the occurrence of febrile reaction. The movements of the knee-joints were first impeded; walking was found to be difficult, in the morning more especially, the stiffness disappearing as the day advanced; the wrists then became affected, and later the whole hand, and subsequently nearly every articulation in the body was implicated, until the poor creature, become perfectly helpless, presented herself for admission into the hospital. After three months' treatment by the tincture of iodine, in doses varying from twenty to sixty drops daily, a striking amelioration, as evinced by a return of mobility in the joints of the hand, has been attained. In detailing the case of the male patient, M. Trousseau observed that this malady is comparatively rare in men, and that in nine cases out of ten those attacked are females—a circumstance affording fresh evidence, if such were wanting, that this complaint has nothing to do with gout. This man, now an attendant in the hospital, was admitted seven years ago into the wards as a patient. The disorder had followed much the same course in this instance as it had done in the other; its subject had been bedridden for seven months, being bent double and unable to rise. He was under treatment for three years. At the end of the first twelve-month he was sufficiently well to undertake the duties of man-nurse, and since that time has remained at the Hôtel Dieu in exercise of these functions. The amount of iodine swallowed in this case has been simply enormous; during one year he took full doses of the tincture, gradually increased up to a drachm and a half daily, and this without the slightest detriment to the digestive functions, or other untoward effect. "In rheumatoid arthritis," observed M. Trousseau in conclusion, "you will seek in vain for any cardiac lesion, and even in those cases of the longest standing, where patients for twenty years have been coerced by this malady into almost total immobility, not the slightest pathological change can be detected in the heart."

In a subsequent lecture, the same physician has registered a protest against the indiscriminate use of blisters for the relief of chronic bronchitis and other obstinate complaints, basing his objections upon their tendency to set up in debilitated constitutions ecthyma, furuncles, anthrax, erysipelas, and such other complications as are often sufficient of themselves to jeopardize the patient's existence.

Dr. Marion Sims, the American surgeon, whose skilful performance of the operation for vesico-vaginal fistula I mentioned as having excited much attention at Paris, after a practical illustration of his method at the Charité last week, gave, at M. Velpeau's special request, a clinical lecture on the subject.