

interests and duties of the University had been duly preserved.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
Cranley-place, S.W., May 25th, 1891. M. BAINES, M.D. Lond.

* * Dr. Baines will see from our remarks in another column that the question will now come before the Privy Council without waiting for any other scheme which may be proposed by the University of London.—ED. L.

THE PRELIMINARY KNOWLEDGE OF MEDICAL STUDENTS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—As you say in your leading article in this week's issue, the present standard of preliminary education is far too low, and it is much to be hoped that the Medical Council will direct its serious attention to this fact, especially as the military authorities have gone so far as to call its notice to the marked want of orthographical knowledge displayed by some qualified men. If the information given in the last Students' Number of THE LANCET be correct—and I have no reason to doubt its entire accuracy,—the preliminary knowledge required from medical students is far smaller here than in any other country in Europe, now that the *officiat* has been abolished in France. It is simply disgraceful that in such a matter we should be behind Spain and Portugal. I suppose it is hopeless to expect that the Council should enact that all students must be graduates in arts or science of some respectable university. If it were to do so, it would raise the status of the profession—educationally at least, and probably also socially too—to the level above that occupied by the Church and the Bar, and would do much to arrest the present unseemly practices so generally deplored by all right-minded members of the profession which are so difficult to deal with by legislation directed against them. If such a standard is too high to be thought of just yet, surely it might be decreed that a university "little go," or an examination accepted instead by universities such as the senior certificate of the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board, should be required. That would ensure either a university or a public school education.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
Woolwich, May 23rd, 1891. THEODORE MAXWELL.

SEQUEL TO A CASE OF ABDOMINAL SECTION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Dr. Malins is mistaken in supposing that I attempted any explanation of his facts. My only comment was that the days of miracles were fortunately not past. Here is a statement of my facts, and I am perfectly ready to substantiate them.

E. M.—, a girl of twenty, came to me on Jan. 22nd, 1885, she and her mother asserting that her left ovary and tube had been removed on July 24th, 1885, by Dr. Malins at the General Hospital. She had the usual abdominal scar. If such an operation had not been performed upon her, how could I for a moment imagine that she and her mother could get so vividly impressed with the idea as to come to me and state that the pain which had formerly existed on the left side had been cured by the operation, and had returned on the right—a very common result of unilateral operations, and completely consistent with the patient's statements? They expressed a strong desire to have the other set of appendages removed, and I admitted the girl for the purpose. I wrote to Dr. Malins on the 23rd, asking him for the particulars of the operation he performed. My letter came back *unopened* and *unread*, enclosed in another envelope. I operated on the 26th (though Dr. Malins will have it that I operated on the 22nd), and my account of the operation is fully confirmed by Mr. J. W. Taylor, who was then my assistant, in his letter in THE LANCET of to-day, except in the unimportant incident of the removal of the knot. But the removal of the knot in this case is well remembered by others who saw it done, and Mr. Taylor's notes are in error in this matter, as I could very easily show in his own handwriting if it were necessary. For the second time I wrote to Dr. Malins on Jan. 30th, and I received a reply from some subsidiary and irresponsible officer of the General Hospital. To this gentleman I wrote on Feb. 2nd, and again on Feb. 4th, to

the effect that his communication did not convey to me the information required, but to neither of these letters did I receive any reply. I then applied to the committee of the hospital for access to the records of the case, and this I succeeded in getting after much trouble in September, 1885. To my amazement I saw there a statement that nothing had been removed from the patient, and from the characters of the entry I had no doubt that its origin was of much later date than that of the operation. If this is the kind of statement of case which Dr. Malins likes to have brought up against him, he is welcome to it, but I cannot say I admire his judgment. For my own part I have to say that whether this case is an example of miracle or mistake, the merit in either case must rest with Dr. Malins. The real trouble about the letter to the governors of the General Hospital, which has so much, apparently, exercised Dr. Malins' mind, arose out of the fact that in 1884 the authorities of the Queen's Hospital stopped the performance of abdominal sections at that institution on account of the high mortality. Discussion in private was taking place about the necessity of doing the same thing at the General Hospital when Dr. Malins published an article in your own journal in which occurred the following sentence (THE LANCET, Nov. 1st, 1884):—"The majority of the [twenty-five] cases were done in the General Hospital under the conditions expressed in the record of the previous series. The amount of success justifies the conclusion then drawn, that abdominal sections may be successfully performed in any institution with proper precautions and care." It then became necessary to go into the whole question, and to show, as was shown in that letter, that the general mortality of abdominal sections performed in the General Hospital was between 20 and 30 per cent, and that of thirty-five ovariectomies 11 had died, giving a mortality like that of the old days of the clamp, of 32.2 per cent. As Dr. Malins very aptly says, "I will leave your readers to draw their own conclusions."

I am, Sirs, yours truly,
Birmingham, May 23rd, 1891. LAWSON TAIT.

THE INFLUENZA.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have observed several times of late in persons who had suffered from the so-called Russian influenza in the epidemic of 1889-90 a train of symptoms which suggest to my mind a second attack of the complaint, of an incomplete or abortive kind. At any rate, they seem to point to something more than a mere coincidence. I have taken notes of five cases in all. In general the earliest and leading symptom is giddiness, not by any means of an intense nature but sufficiently uncomfortable, the patient usually complaining that the ground seems to heave under his feet as he walks. The giddiness is most marked when he commences to walk after sitting for some time, and is generally absent when he is sitting or lying down. Other symptoms, more or less pronounced in character, and given as far as possible in order of frequency, are: lassitude, sometimes with slight muscular tremors, especially referred to the knees; drowsiness, heaviness, and dull aching of the eyes; depression of spirits; lumbar pain; constipation; slightly furred tongue; perhaps anorexia. In most of my cases the urine was high-coloured, and in some urates were deposited, but in other respects it was normal. One patient, a gentleman aged forty-one, after having ailed for nearly a week, had a syncopal attack; his heart seemed perfectly sound, and he had never fainted before in his life. None of the patients had elevation of temperature (in two it was subnormal), or acceleration of pulse, rigors, pains in limbs, marked headache, respiratory or pulmonary complications, and in no case did one feel bad enough to lie up. I was mostly consulted for supposed liver derangement after the symptoms had been hanging about for several days, but in almost every case the patient informed me he had never before been troubled with his liver. The indisposition generally lasted from five to fourteen days or more, and though a trivial one, yet it seemed an odd coincidence that each patient should have suffered months before from epidemic influenza. In treatment I seemed to get some good results from a blue pill and seidlitz powder, followed by a mixture containing quinine, strychnine, and nitro-hydrochloric acid.

I am, Sirs, yours obediently,
E. G. YOUNGER, M.D., M.R.C.P.
Great James-street, Bedford row, May 26th, 1891.