

specting this interesting case. It had, however, struck him, on both occasions, that the disease appeared to belong, strictly speaking, more to that class of malignant uterine affections, to which the term polypoid is usually given, than to the disease described by Dr. Clark as cauliflower excrescence. These two forms of uterine tumour were very often confounded under the term of cauliflower excrescence, which was certainly by no means desirable; the distinction being an important one with respect to treatment. Polypoid malignant growths of the cervix uteri presented the characteristics of encephaloid disease, and were more or less fleshy and firm, and sometimes admitted of entire excision, although almost certain to return. Cauliflower excrescence was formed by a mass presenting a vesicular and cellular structure, which melted away under the knife or ligature, and all but disappeared spontaneously after death, leaving only a few shreds behind; it was also generally considered to be much less malignant than the former. He had only met with one case of it, which returned, proving fatal after he had removed the tumour by ligature. He had not either met with more than three or four instances of malignant polypoid growth, one of which was in a woman of Clare-market, in whose case he and Dr. Murphy removed the tumour. In all these cases, the operation had been unavailing, and the issue fatal. He should not, however, hesitate to again perform the operation, were the disease susceptible of entire extirpation, as there were cases on record in which the operation was said to have been successful, Dr. Simpson's especially. Moreover, his own experience on the subject was as yet limited. He would not, however, refrain from mentioning a fact which he had mentioned in his work on "Uterine Inflammation," that cancerous disease of the uterus never came under his observation even when he was the first person consulted, in its first stage of development, only in the more advanced or ulcerated stage, and that he had never seen a case of well-diagnosed cancer end otherwise than fatally.

Mr. I. B. BROWN could not agree with Dr. Murphy, that cauliflower excrescence was to be regarded in the same light as cancer. The absence of any correct data on the important question of the real nature of cauliflower excrescence, and the fact of its being confined to the uterus, were strong reasons in favour of operating. The situation was favourable for the use of the knife, which might be easily applied. In his opinion, the great error in this class of cases was the delay which took place previous to the performance of an operation. The success would be influenced mainly by the early or late period of operating. He thought we were justified in operating, even to arrest the distressing hemorrhage frequent in these cases, and to afford comfort to the patient. Did the operation render the patient, in the event of the disease returning, less able to contend with the malady than if no operation had been performed? If not, there was another argument in favour of operation. If the disease was constitutional, was there no discovery to be made as to the best mode of diet and regimen to arrest the progress of it? As to the influence of pressure, that would still admit of much question.

Mr. HIRD said that in the discussion two kinds of cases had been spoken of—carcinoma and cauliflower excrescence of the uterus. Many cases of cauliflower excrescence had been operated upon by the knife and the ligature, and had got well. The disease Dr. Murphy had spoken of was carcinoma. If, as in Dr. Cormack's case, the disease was malignant, and in the system, what permanent advantage could be expected from the use of the knife? Pressure could not avert the progress of the constitutional affection. Still, however, we might be called upon to operate, to relieve pain and to prolong life. Pathologists considered that a tumour which was simple at its commencement might become malignant afterwards, from a variety of causes. The whole gist of the question as to operative procedure rested on this: if the disease was benignant at first, then an operation at that period would have every chance of success; but if it were malignant, then no good was to be expected from its removal. It was most important, in a discussion of this kind, to hold in view correct notions of diagnosis, not only that we might arrive at a definite conclusion respecting the nature of disease, but to prevent our resort to unnecessary operations.

Dr. MURPHY, in explanation, said that he looked upon "cauliflower excrescence" in the light of cancer; not so, however, the "vesicular" form of disease alluded to during the discussion.

Mr. CHIPPENDALE was inclined to doubt the statement made in the paper, that the tumour had its origin in a basement membrane, as such membrane was not usually pushed off so

far from its origin as in this instance. He thought the tumour more likely to be one of cell formation. If a growth arose from a basement membrane, excision would be usually successful, but if from cells, the disease was in the blood, and must end fatally. This was an important point of diagnosis as a means of guide in our future proceedings.

Mr. PETER MARSHALL related the case of a woman, twenty-seven years of age, whom he had attended in her second pregnancy. He had made an examination two hours after the commencement of labour-pains, and could detect no signs of the uterus. There had been no symptom of any disease during pregnancy, the patient only suffering from sickness. The child had to be destroyed before its removal could be effected. The patient died a few weeks after, and a large colloid tumour of the ovary was found. With respect to the detection of malignant disease in the early stage, he thought in two cases he had succeeded in doing so, even from its commencement, as he felt the slight mammary prominences on the surface of the uterus.

Dr. H. BENNET spoke on this point only from his own experience. When he had observed the disease in its early stage he did not think it was cancer.

Dr. SIMON regarded pressure as likely to be of service in a certain stage of the disease. Cancer had been arrested by such a proceeding. He then made a somewhat fierce attack upon Mr. HIRD, for hypercriticism, which, however, the President and the Society considered to be quite uncalled for.

Dr. CORMACK, in reply, said that he did not know whether the disease in the case was to be regarded as malignant or not. When the pain was great and the hemorrhage was rapidly tending to a fatal result, he did not think it could be doubted that an operation was proper. In his own case it had afforded great relief to the sufferer. With respect to the general question of operation in cases of cauliflower excrescence, he could offer no definite opinion; but certainly, if the conclusions arrived at by Dr. Anderson were correct, they offered much encouragement to the proceeding. He (Dr. Cormack) feared there was much reason to suspect that cauliflower excrescence was occasionally hereditary.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

MONDAY, DEC. 2, 1850.—DR. BABINGTON, PRESIDENT.

THE first meeting of the session was held this evening. About one hundred members and visitors were present.

Dr. BABINGTON made the following address:—"As the circumstances under which this Society originated may not be known to many here present, I deem it proper to commence what I have to offer by making a brief allusion to this subject. So long ago as February, 1848, sixteen months before the last appearance of epidemic cholera in this country, our honorary secretary, Mr. TUCKER, in a letter bearing the signature "PATER," and published in THE LANCET, first gave expression to the notion, that the members of our profession ought to combine for the purpose of accumulating experience with respect to the treatment of that disease. In July, 1849, this notion was further developed in a second communication, under the same name; but it was not until the following September that a new society, for the investigation of cholera and other epidemic diseases, was distinctly proposed, in a third letter from "PATER." In a fourth letter, published on the 1st of December last, I find it stated, that with respect to the formation of a new medical society, to take into consideration a systematic investigation of epidemic diseases, a few medical gentlemen had formed themselves into a committee, had occasionally held meetings on the subject, and, after due consideration, had come to the conclusion that such a society was greatly needed. In that letter, the author, who now, for the first time, wrote in his own name, remarked that there never had been a medical society in this country which had devoted itself solely to the investigation of epidemic diseases, and that had there been such an one before the late visitation, some more settled plan of treatment might long before have been resolved upon. It is painful to have to confess, says he, that up to this day we know neither the real cause, the means of prevention, nor the cure, of this awful malady; but it is hoped by the combination of talent in all branches of the profession meeting together under one roof, formed into one body for one good—one national cause, that what it is possible for man to effect, shall not much longer remain a mystery. Having, he continues, accomplished as much as this country, aided by others, can effect with respect to Asiatic cholera, we shall still have to combat other enemies to the human race, which at this moment are thought but little of—scarlatina,

typhus fever, small pox, measles, &c.,—which are said to have destroyed 12,000 annually in London alone. It is thought that the formation and working of such a society would give the highest satisfaction to the public, who anxiously look to the profession for knowledge in these matters, and that it would, ere long, prove a better bond of union between the public and the medical profession than any society which has ever existed. Mr. Tucker persevered in his exertions, undeterred by many difficulties, and at length succeeded in persuading others, besides the immediate friends who formed his committee, to join in the good work which he had undertaken. The result was, that a meeting took place on the 6th of March last, in the Hanover-square Rooms, over which Mr. Erasmus Wilson presided, when it was resolved to form a society for the investigation of epidemic diseases. From that time this Society might be considered as having at least an embryo existence. At a second meeting in Hanover-square, on the 30th of July, at which Lord Ashley kindly consented to take the chair, and which was very numerously attended by members of the profession and others, the objects of the Society were eloquently set forth by his lordship, who was followed by numerous other speakers, and the constitution of the Society was framed by the appointment of president, vice-presidents, council, and other officers. There has been no general meeting of the Society since that period. Whoever has watched the formation of a new street, of which so many have of late been constructed in this metropolis, cannot fail to have observed, that for a long time the line of way seems to make no visible progress towards completion, so as even to excite our surprise that house-building should be so slow a process. Yet, during all that period the work is going on, and the workmen are busily employed—some in digging foundations, some in excavating sewers and drains. We heed them not, because they are pursuing their silent labours underground, and there is little or nothing to show for all the pains that they are taking; but when once these preliminaries are accomplished, and they reach the surface, we are, on the contrary, astonished to find how quickly the houses spring up, as it were by magic, on either side, and how, in fewer days than it had before taken months, handsome edifices rise up before our eyes. Now, gentlemen, our Society, like the new street to which I would compare it, may seem for some months past to have remained in an inactive state, because our works have not been apparent. Our explanation is simple: we have been labouring at the foundations. These are, I trust, now solidly laid, and on this night we rise, for the first time, above the surface, and appear before the public. Let us hope, that ere long we shall erect such a superstructure, as by its beauty and utility may demonstrate that we have not been working in vain. To descend from metaphor to plain fact, the months that have intervened between the formation of our Society and the present time have been devoted by our council, and by committees formed from their body, to framing the laws, to arranging our mode of proceeding, and to determining, in more detail than a mere definition could convey, what are the objects which we propose to carry out, and how we may best effect their accomplishment. From the earliest ages to the present period, epidemic diseases have from time to time been the scourges of the human race; and the Sacred volume, at once the most ancient and the most authentic history of remote antiquity, records, as you well know, many awful visitations of the pestilence, which but too surely marked the anger of a justly-offended Deity—offended, but not implacable; for the plague was ever and anon stayed by the supplications of those whom the Almighty permitted to intercede with Him on behalf of his disobedient children. In later times, we have no reason to believe that the great Jehovah interferes with the laws which He, in his infinite wisdom, has laid down for the governance of mankind and of all created beings. The days of miracles are past, yet the Author of all visits us as surely and as fearfully as ever through the operation of natural causes; and it is one purpose of our existence, on which our welfare is made to depend, that we endeavour to discover and avert them. The means of doing so have, in these latter days, been greatly increased. The practical tendencies of the age lead towards the improvement of physical science, and much success has rewarded our researches in this department. The object, then, of this Society, I take to be, to endeavour, by the light of modern science, to review all those causes which result in the manifestation and spread of epidemic diseases—to discover causes at present unknown, and investigate those which are ill understood—to collect together facts, on which scientific researches may be securely based—to remove errors which impede their progress—and thus, as far as we are able, having

made ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the strongholds of our enemies, and their modes of attack, to suggest those means by which their invasion may either be prevented, or if, in spite of our existence, they may have broken in upon us, to seek how they may be most effectually combated and expelled. In an address which has already been framed by the Council, and which I doubt not most of those here present have seen, the circumstances which have led the profession to join in the formation of this Society have been so fully stated, that it would be superfluous to say anything more on this head. I cannot, however, refrain from quoting some observations of my lamented friend, Professor Hecker, of Berlin, peculiarly apposite, with reference to our meeting this evening: "It has long been my earnest desire," says he, "to address my honoured brethren of the profession, in order to impress on them a subject in which science is deeply interested, and which, according to the direct evidence of Nature herself, is one of the most exalted and important that could be submitted to the researches of the learned. I allude to the investigation of epidemic diseases on a scale commensurate with the extent of our exertions in other departments, and worthy of the age in which we live. The science of medicine has hitherto confined itself only to individual diseases, so far as human intellect can discern their nature. In this it has already succeeded admirably, and its success becomes every year more extensive and remarkable, but if we carry our inquiries into the diseases of nations, and of the whole human race, medical science is mute, and, as if it were not her province to take cognizance of them, shows us only an immeasurable and unexplored domain; for to the weighty opinions of Hippocrates among the ancients, to the doctrines of Fracastoro which contain the experience of the much-tried middle ages, and lastly, to the observations of Sydenham, only trifling and isolated facts have been added. Beyond these, even up to the present times, there exist only assumptions, which might long since have been reduced to their original nothingness, had that serious spirit of inquiry prevailed which comprehends space, and penetrates ages. Amid the accumulated materials which past ages afford, the powers and the life of one individual, even with the aid of previous study, are insufficient to complete a comprehensive history of epidemics. The zealous activity of many must be combined if we would possess a work which is so much wanted, in order that we may not encounter new epidemics in culpable ignorance of analogous phenomena. How often has it appeared on the outbreak of epidemics, as if the experience of so many centuries had been accumulated in vain. Men have gazed on the phenomena with astonishment, and before they had acquired any just notion of their nature, have pronounced their opinions, which, as they have been the offspring of party spirit, they have defended with all the ardour of zealots, wholly unconscious of the majesty of all-governing nature. In the descriptive branches of natural history a person would infallibly expose himself to the severest censure, who should attempt to describe some hitherto unknown natural production, whether animal or vegetable, if he were ignorant of the allied genera and species, and perhaps neither a zoologist nor botanist. Yet an analogous ignorance of epidemics in those who, nevertheless, have discussed their nature, has but too frequently occurred, and for this reason we cannot apply to ourselves, in this department, the significant words of Bacon, that we are the ancients and our forefathers the moderns, for we are equally remote with them from a scientific and comprehensive knowledge of it." Such are the opinions and observations of one who, had he been spared to witness the combined efforts which we are this night commencing, would have esteemed it as one of the happiest moments of his existence. The present period appears, indeed, peculiarly suited for instituting such inquiries as our Society contemplates. The peace of Europe, which it is to be wished no national jealousies may disturb, is very favourable to the interchange of scientific information among medical men of different countries; and the facility of communication which the powers of steam have created, enable us to carry on, almost simultaneously, observations at places remotely distant from each other. There probably never was a period in the world's history when human knowledge was so advanced in all its branches as at the present time. Those sciences, more especially, which are applicable to the elucidation of diseases and their causes may be said to be creations of modern date. Chemistry, or at least so much of it as is worthy the name of a science, is scarcely a century old, and that department of it which is distinguished under the name of animal chemistry, has risen to importance within the memory of many here present. To give you an instance of its progress, I will remember when Dr. Wollaston,

(one of the most acute philosophers, the most scrupulously attentive to minutiae, which the world has ever produced; whose goniometer, camera lucida, differential thermometer; whose discoveries in metallurgy, whose experiments on sounds,—so acute that earless sensitive than his own could not even hear them,—all mark the extreme acumen of his intellect.)—I well remember when this accomplished chemist was asked by his friend, Dr. Marceet, to analyze the blood in diabetes mellitus, for the express purpose of ascertaining whether it contained sugar. In a letter of reply, which will be found in the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1811, he details numerous experiments which he had made, as well with diabetic blood as with healthy blood in which minute portions of sugar were purposely dissolved. The conclusion to which he came was, that diabetic blood contained no sugar in any quantity that he could appreciate. We now know, and it was several years since ascertained, by Dr. Rees and others, that diabetic blood does contain sugar in a notable quantity. The existence of urea in the animal fluids of those labouring under albuminuria, is another fruit of modern discovery, and from these, and many similar instances of chemical research, we are led to hope much from its application, even to the objects which come within the scope of this Society. Physiology has made prodigious progress of late years; I need only recal to your minds Professor Schwann's theory of cell formation, whereby he has established, by observation with the microscope, the proposition that there is one common principle of development for the elementary particles of all organized bodies. This discovery, so brilliant as to have won for its author the Royal Society's Copley Medal for 1845, and which must be ranked amongst the most important steps by which the science of physiology has ever been advanced, evinces how the improvement of a scientific instrument leads to the improvement of science itself, and encourages a hope that our investigations may be enriched by this powerful means of interrogating Nature with regard to her most minute and secret operations. From meteorology, pursued, as it now is, under the guidance of a master mind, by a Society expressly devoted to that branch of science, we have grounds for expecting many valuable facts applicable to the elucidation of our subject; and I trust that one of our earliest acts may be an endeavour to form a close connexion with that Society. The progress of medical science itself has been no less conspicuous of late years than that of those branches of natural knowledge to which I have just alluded. The great discoveries of Laennec have created a new era in medicine, and have given an importance to physical diagnosis, the influence of which has extended far beyond the limits of those diseases which he made the particular objects of his study. Statistics, too, have supplied us with a new and powerful means of testing medical truth, and we learn from the labours of the accurate Louis how appropriately they may be brought to bear upon the subject of epidemic diseases; his report, when engaged on a French commission for investigating the yellow fever at Gibraltar, in 1828, being a striking instance of their successful application. As a matter for scientific inquiry, the subject of epidemics seems peculiarly well suited to occupy the attention of a Society. Diseases which affect only individuals here and there admit of investigation by single observers, and perhaps are thus best studied; but those which affect masses of mankind, and whose ravages are spread over a wide extent of the earth's surface, require the combined efforts of numerous labourers, and the various researches of minds directed to different branches of the inquiry, and contemplating the phenomena from different points of view. They require that observations should be simultaneously carried on in many and widely-distant places, in order that deceptions may not arise from causes which, though in appearance general, are really only local and accidental. When the cholera first broke out at Bombay, bleeding proved so successful a remedy, if practised at the commencement of the attack, that many persons, not of the medical profession, learned to perform the operation, that no time might be lost; and according to the testimony of a near relative of mine, hundreds of lives were thus saved. The same treatment, pursued in Bengal, proved entirely abortive,—the inevitable inference being, not that the essential disease differed in the two places, but that the various success of the treatment depended on some accidental, though unknown, circumstance. In the infancy of geology, first studied in this country, many phenomena observed in the arrangement of the earth's crust, as it is found in this island, were supposed to furnish fixed laws; and this gave rise, among our philosophers, to divers ingenious generalizations. But when these same philosophers had, from the establishment of universal peace, the opportunity of taking a wider range, and of study-

ing the earth's structure, not in this country alone, but over the whole surface of the globe, they discovered, in many instances, that what they had supposed to be general laws were, after all, only exceptional cases. We require, therefore, in the study of epidemic diseases, as of geology, a wide field, in order that we may found theories on a sufficiently broad basis to avoid the risk of coming to partial and erroneous conclusions. When the phenomenon of the migration of birds first attracted attention, how ridiculous were the notions of it entertained by philosophers. We have a paper in the *Philosophical Transactions*, written to refute a belief, confidently stated by a Dutch writer of less than a century ago, that swallows lie immersed at the bottom of the ocean, and other waters, during the winter season. This is no bad illustration of the effects of partial observation and of the absurdities to which it may lead. The welfare and prosperity of the people at large ought to be a main object with all good governments. It seems, therefore, to be matter of sound policy that they should facilitate by all available means the study of morbid phenomena which have so extensive an influence over the destinies of mankind. Commerce, agriculture, manufactures, have on many occasions been deeply injured, and the progress of civilization itself been seriously impeded, by the outbreak of destructive epidemics, and it is not easy to estimate the evil that has been caused by the imposition of strict quarantine laws arising out of the fear of these visitations. Again, a careful study of the sanitary arrangements which affect the health of our military and naval forces, fall legitimately within the scope and object of this Society, and ought naturally to lead the ruling powers to aid our endeavours to promote the public good, and to take an interest in our proceedings. How much benefit, for instance, may we not confer on the state by making the proper structure and site of military barracks and hospitals, and improvement in the accommodation and ventilation of ships, subjects of investigation and study. Even the most recent intelligence from our new settlement of Hong Kong, in China, leads to a belief that much of the mortality among her Majesty's troops at that station is owing to the defective and ill-adapted construction, arrangement, and situation of the buildings appropriated to the reception of the sick. As governments are thus so much interested in questions connected with the subjects which we have taken up, let us hope that they will be kindly disposed to afford us every facility in their prosecution. That a thorough knowledge of epidemic diseases very nearly concerns the welfare of all classes of the population in a mere individual sense, is a fact which hardly needs illustration. There is scarcely a family to be found that has not lost some of its members by small-pox, measles, hooping-cough, or scarlet fever, diseases which are always more or less prevalent among us, and respecting all of which there are yet many questions which remain to be solved. The length of the radius of infection,—the question of mediate contagion, to third parties, through clothing, and other channels,—the period of the attack at which the infection in each disease is most active,—the length of time that it may exist in an infected locality, and the means of its destruction, have never yet been determined with accuracy. The causes of exemption in individual cases have never been made out. The period of incubation admits of further investigation; uncertainty prevails as to the efficacy of preventive measures; and, finally, there is much difference of opinion as to modes of treatment. Respecting febrile diseases not exanthematous, such as plague, yellow fever, and typhus, many interesting questions remain for solution; and, among them, the very difficult one of contagion is of paramount importance. The testimonies against and in favour of its existence are most conflicting; and although we must be on our guard to avoid degenerating into mere disputants on this point, where so many others should claim a due share of our attention, yet it cannot be denied, that if by more comprehensive views, and a larger collection of well-authenticated facts, we could determine this *rezata questio*, we should be conferring an inestimable boon on the whole human race. Epidemic febrile diseases will no doubt be the subjects of our chief study, as being immeasurably the most common occurrence, and most fatal in their results; but we must not forget that there have in times past existed, and there may exist again, epidemic visitations of diseases of a nervous character, as, for instance, tarantism, the dancing mania, and other allied affections,—of a hæmorrhagic nature, as apoplexy, which has been known to exist epidemically in Holland; and even of a cachectic nature, as leprosy and scrofula, in which diseases the endemic character has occasionally past into the epidemic form. Our labours, then, being connected with subjects of such universal interest, ought to ensure us the support of all classes of the community;

and, as our inquiries are of a nature which must involve considerable expense, if efficiently carried out, on a scale commensurate with their importance, I cannot help feeling that our success will in a great measure depend upon the encouragement and assistance which we receive from the public. We must not, however, forget, in looking to others, that it is our part to prove, by the fruits of our exertions, that we are able to furnish a full equivalent for the aid which we may receive. Gentlemen, I cannot close this address, already, I fear, extended to undue length, without adverting to two circumstances which have excited in me sentiments of gratitude, shared, I doubt not, by every member of our Society. I allude, in the first place, to the kind manner in which our efforts have been noticed, and our views have been furthered, by the support of the medical press. Of their power to serve us none can doubt; and I am thankful to be able to state that the desire to do so has in no degree fallen short of that power. Secondly, I wish to remind you that our best acknowledgments are due to the Council of the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society, who, with a liberality worthy of the distinguished body for whom they act, have granted us permission to hold our general meetings in this most suitable apartment. Not only are our finances thus relieved from a considerable burthen, but from the very fact of our being allowed to assemble within these hallowed walls, we take an honourable position, which I trust it will be our especial care jealously to maintain. (Great applause followed Dr. Babington's address.)

Part of a paper was afterwards read by Dr. Bryson, of the Admiralty; in consequence of its length, the other part was postponed until the next meeting, which is to be held on the first Monday in January, 1851.

Correspondence.

"Andi alteram partem."

THE BALLOTING-PAPERS, FOR TAKING THE VOTES OF THE PROFESSION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Having passed your judgment, in a "Leader" of the 23rd of November, on a controversy, in reference to your own balloting-papers, will you do me the justice to reprint the two questions which those papers contained, and allow me space for suggesting to your readers a few questions respecting them?

"VOTES"

of all legally-qualified members of the medical and surgical profession, residing in England and Wales, should be taken on the question—'Whether the Charter of the Royal College of Surgeons of England should be so amended as to admit practitioners in medicine, surgery, and midwifery, to seats in the Council of that College, on the principle of representation?'—or, 'Whether the practitioners in medicine, surgery, and midwifery, should be incorporated in an independent College, on the principle of representation?'

1. Is it right to ask legally-qualified members of the medical and surgical profession, *not practising generally*, to become parties in legislating for the general practitioners?

2. Is the Editor's question of May, simply asking for ("trifling alterations") a few general practitioners (they could not have many) to have seats in the Council of the College of Surgeons, the same question as his definition of it in November—"a full, just, and extensive reform of the College of Surgeons,"—to which definition he has now added "the Fellowship," and "various other important points, sought for by Mr. Cartwright and his friends"?

3. Was the solicitation of votes from members of the profession, *not general practitioners*, who were to be numbered as dissentient general practitioners, more likely to advance, or to mystify and retard, the settlement of the vexed question?

4. Was it not doubtful whether or not many medical men might have voted for one single object, whilst their votes might have served for very different purposes from that intended?

Since the issue of the balloting-papers, I have not had any communication from the Institute on the subject of them.

As I did not receive your unstamped number of THE LANCET, by stationer's box, before this evening, I must apologise for having sent my note so late in the week.

I remain, Sir, yours very truly,

East Retford, Nov. 26, 1850.

WM. ALLISON.

. We shall reply to these questions; and, with the exception of Mr. Allison, very few of our readers will, we think, be dissatisfied with our answers.

1. Yes. It is *one* profession, and it is *impossible* to legislate for any large portion of it, without affecting the whole. Did not the Council of the Institute enter into "Conferences" with the Colleges of pure Physicians and pure Surgeons, respecting the provisions of the "General Practitioners' Bill"? To be sure they did; and in so doing, that body acted correctly.

2. When the context is considered, the questions of the two periods are, in spirit and tendency, precisely alike. The admission of a few general practitioners to seats in the Council would, we believe, have the effect of producing "a full, just, and extensive reform of the College of Surgeons."

3. The votes of members of the profession, "*not being general practitioners*," will *not* be numbered as dissentient general practitioners. On the contrary, the votes returned to the scrutators have been *classified* according to the *qualifications* of the voters. The whole plan, in fact, is so perfect, that it is proof against a deception. The *classification* of the votes, in conformity with the *qualifications* of the voters, will indicate, with mathematical precision and certainty, the relative numbers of the different ranks of the profession who are *for* and *against* a new incorporation. Mistake on that point there can be none; hence the answers to the two questions in the BALLOT PAPERS will furnish Sir George Grey and the House of Commons with the best information which it is possible to obtain, on the subjects to which they relate. Is Mr. ALLISON certain that his dislike of the questions is not caused by the inherent power they possess of eliciting facts, which altogether overthrow his opinions? We strongly suspect that the sting points in that direction.

4. Incomprehensible.

AN EFFECTIVE MODE OF VACCINATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I know not whether the following mode of vaccination has been before practised; if not, perhaps you will favour me by its insertion. It consists in forming a blister, by means of a piece of emp. lyttae, the size of a small pin's head, retained on the arm by adhesive plaster sufficiently long to raise the blister, detaching the cuticle with a lancet, and applying the vaccine virus to the raw surface.

The struggles of a strong child having prevented inoculation by the ordinary methods, I adopted this plan with success. It was rapidly performed while the child slept; and it appears, in addition, that a fairer surface for absorption is presented, and that this little operation, insignificant in its execution, though important in its results, is much facilitated, and rendered more certain of success.

I beg to subscribe myself, your obedient servant,
Nov. 21, 1850. EDWARD CROSS, M.R.C.S. &c.

. A successful method of introducing mercury into the system, and producing salivation in the shortest possible space of time, has been lately practised at the Royal Free Hospital. The practice consists in sprinkling with calomel the raw surface made by a blister. A full description of the method practised, and the cases in which it has been used, will be published in THE LANCET on an early occasion.—ED. L.

"SELF-SUPPORTING" DISPENSARIES.

[LETTER FROM MR. SMITH, OF SOUTHAM.]

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In some strictures you have been pleased to write on my plan of self-supporting dispensaries, discussed at Dr. Moore's last week, you have exhibited your accustomed want of information and understanding on the subject. You have never from the first had the slightest comprehension of the plan I have for so many years advocated, and which will now be brought to bear generally. As you profess to influence the professional mind, although with your head against a post, I appeal to what should be the characteristics of every journalist—a sense of justice—to insert my simple denial of all your assertions and assumptions on the matter. I shall not trouble