

violence were registered; and 53, or nearly a third, of the deaths occurred in public institutions. The causes of 20, or more than 10 per cent., of the deaths in the city were not certified.

THE SERVICES.

ARMY MEDICAL STAFF.—Surgeon-Major (ranking as Lieutenant-Colonel) Thos. O'Farrell, M.D., to be Brigade Surgeon, vice J. Wilson, M.B., F.F.P.S. Glasgow, retired (dated Feb. 14th, 1891); Surgeon John Lees Hall is placed on temporary half pay on account of ill-health (dated March 3rd, 1891).

ARMY MEDICAL RESERVE OF OFFICERS.—Surgeon-Major Walter Duret Aubin, M.B., 1st or West Regiment Royal Jersey Militia, to be Surgeon-Major, ranking as Major (dated March 18th, 1891); Acting Surgeon Thos. Lyndon, M.D., 4th Volunteer Battalion, the Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment), to be Surgeon, ranking as Captain (dated March 18th, 1891).

BOMBAY MEDICAL ESTABLISHMENT.—The Queen has approved of the retirement from the Service of the under-mentioned Officers: Surgeon-Major Bernard Callan Keelan (dated March 15th, 1891), and Surgeon-Major Septimus Jesse Goldsmith (dated March 4th, 1891).

NAVAL MEDICAL SERVICE.—Staff Surgeon James Long Sweetnam, M.D., has been promoted to the rank of Fleet Surgeon in Her Majesty's Fleet (dated Feb. 27th, 1891).

VOLUNTEER CORPS.—*Rifle*: 2nd Volunteer Battalion, the Suffolk Regiment: The undermentioned Acting Surgeons resign their appointments:—H. P. Leech and A. W. Aldrich (both dated March 14th, 1891).—5th Volunteer Battalion, the Cheshire Regiment: Surgeon P. M. Davidson is granted the rank of Surgeon-Major, ranking as Major (dated March 14th, 1891).—1st (Inverness-shire Highland) Volunteer Battalion, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders: John Dewar, M.B., to be Acting Surgeon (dated March 14th, 1891).

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

TRICHLORACETIC ACID AS A TEST FOR ALBUMEN IN THE URINE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The practical value of trichloroacetic acid as a test for albumen in the urine is so great that any sources of error in its employment should be carefully noted. In a letter from Dr. C. F. Heywood of New York, which appears in the February number of *Merck's Bulletin*, the writer, after speaking in very laudatory terms of the value of the test, says: "I have yet to find that it declares any other elements of suspected urine than albumen," and he recommends that a saturated solution should be carried about in the pocket. I have long been employing this test, both in private and in insurance examinations, and can speak very highly of its results. I have been in the habit of comparing its reactions with those given by nitric acid and picric acid, and while I have never found it fail to react in specimens in which albumen has been discovered by other tests, it has given a line of opacity in numerous samples which have been unaffected by nitric acid or picric acid. In some of these the trichloroacetic acid appeared to be a more delicate test, since in cases with a history of an acute attack of nephritis the urine has often given a line of opacity after it might have been declared free from albumen when the customary tests were employed. On the other hand, the need of the warning originally given by Boymond (*Repert. de Pharm.*) has been very strongly impressed upon me by several cases—viz., that when the urine is rich in urates the reaction may appear without any albumen being present, and this possible source of error can only be avoided by free dilution of the urine before making the test.

With regard to the desirability of carrying this reagent in the pocket the effects of a crystal on a piece of blue paper or on the blade of a knife have been sufficient to deter me from making the experiment. Although

trichloroacetic acid may be used either in a solid or liquid form, it gives the most striking results when a good-sized crystal is dropped into the test tube containing the urine. The crystal speedily liquefies, and, if albumen is present, produces a zone of turbidity in the urine just above it, otherwise a sharply defined line marks the junction of the white acid with the yellow urine. The zone of turbidity appears immediately when due to albumen, but when due to urates it forms more slowly, and is not so wide.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

NESTOR TIRARD, M.D. Lond., F.R.C.P.,
Senior Assis. Physician, King's Coll. Hosp.

Weymouth-street, W., March 17th, 1891.

RECONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—It is very important that the latest revised scheme of the Senate in reference to the reconstitution of the University of London should be well considered in all its bearings, and not only in those connected with the Faculty of Medicine, especially as many of the medical graduates possess degrees other than those of medicine. For this purpose I beg to offer these few remarks in supplement to those furnished lately by Dr. Collins. By the present scheme, which will be presented to Convocation for acceptance, there will be at least three different standards of arts and science degrees according to the "arrangements" made with the various colleges in London and the provinces; and in accordance with the powers reserved by the Senate, these schemes for these degrees may be, if required, multiplied to any extent to meet the demands of the colleges individually. If such be the case, how can we hope for any uniformity of standard, the syllabus of each college or of each combination of colleges necessarily varying and being of unequal value? Let such arrangements be carried out as desired by the London and provincial colleges, and the University also carry on as of old its own examinations in Arts and Science on its present lines, in all common reason the question may be asked, Of what value can such varying degrees be deemed, or how can they be designated for the comprehension of the world at large, and what probability will there be of their ever remaining at any proposed standard? Since such multifarious degrees cannot be accepted as equivalent to each other, some fanciful distinction must be made, and, taking the University examination, as *the degree par excellence*, we can suppose that some

B.A. fractional designation must be devised, such as $\frac{\text{King's}}{\text{B.A.}}$, or B.A., with some London or provincial College as the denominator, before the public can value their relative merits. The same observations equally apply to the Matriculation and that for the Preliminary Scientific Examinations. Hence it behoves Convocation to realise the probable future of the University which submits to such arrangements as ultimately must destroy itself as a degree-giving centre. With respect to the medical aspect of the scheme, the Senate has gone further out of its way than in the matters of Arts and Science, and actually proposes to give to the two Royal Colleges great, if not absolute, control over the M.B. Examination. This seems inconsistent on the part of the Senate which now seeks to form a Teaching University, for neither of these two Colleges has any pretensions whatever to being considered as teaching bodies except so far as their few endowments for special lectures can be considered as partaking of a teaching quality. To these bodies it really will delegate its powers, subject to "arrangements" which, knowing the desire of those two Colleges, must ultimately by pressure of time and influence not only entirely control the Pass M.B., but will considerably modify the Honours Examination for the same degree, and in the end absorb the M.D. degree also. Indeed, it is reported that the teachers at one of the proposed Constituent Colleges in Medicine have already expressed a demand for such privileges. Another point in connexion with these degrees is the price at which they are to be obtained. As matters are, it is impossible to believe that they will be granted for the moderate fees which the University now receives. Any one knowing the fees exacted for passing the Conjoint Examination will readily doubt if the present scale will be adopted, especially if they are to be shared between the corporations and the University. These doubts are equally