THE BATTLE OF THE CLUBS.

SLATE CLUBS AND MEDICAL OFFICERS' FEES.

Much attention has been drawn recently to the low scale of payment for medical services. The doctor's remuneration has become by degrees less and less, and now that it has almost reached the vanishing point there seems to be some prospect that the profession as a body will take notice of it. The "Battle of the Clubs" in many parts of the country is a novel and significant feature, and although, in most cases, the struggle has been to prevent further lowering of the pitance usually paid, it is to be hoped that before long the contest will be to make the regular club rate considerably higher than it has been for a long time past.

We have always maintained that in 99 cases out of 100 where the working man pays a penny a week for his doctor, he might without much inconvenience pay twopence; that, in fact, without serious hardship being incurred by our industrial population, the rate of club payments might be reasonably doubled, and were there more union in the profession it can scarcely be doubted that this result would have been attained long ago.

As bearing on this subject a correspondent of the *Sidcup Times*, in its issue of December 28th, 1895, draws attention to the National Deposit Friendly Society, established by the late Canon Portal, M.A., in 1868. He says it is practically a sick benefit club, savings bank, and dispensary, all in one, and has been "quietly and unostentatiously working its way into the first rank of friendly societies." He gives a list of the payments to its medical officers, from which it appears that the society pay their doctor 2s. 6d. a visit with medicine for two days where the distance is under two miles, and 1s. 6d. for advice and medicine for the same period at the dispensary.

If a friendly society can pay such rates as these and flourish, why should the hard-worked practitioner as a rule be paid no more than a penny a week a member? Surely there is something wrong somewhere, and it is high time for the profession, in the light of such an example as this, to consider whether it is called upon to work in so many instances at the present low rate of remuneration.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

A QUARTERLY Council was held at the College on January 9th, Mr. C. HEATH in the chair. The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

On the recommendation of the Museum Committee, it was resolved:

That the third edition of the Dermatological Catalogue, as revised by Dr. Radcliffe Crocker with the assistance of Mr. J. H. Targett, be published at the price of 4s. per copy.

A report was received from the Committee of Management containing the following recommendations:

1. That the Bancroft School, Woodford, Essex, be added to the list of recognised places of instruction in Chemistry, Physics, and Practical Chemistry and Biology.
2. That the West London Hospital be recognised as a place of study during the fifth year of the curriculum.
3. That the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, Moorfields, be added to the list of ophthalmic hospitals recognised by the Board.
4. That the Examination in Elementary Physiology, applicable only to candidates under the four years' curriculum, which has hitherto been conducted by papers and written answers, be for the future conducted *vivâ voce*.

This report was adopted subject to the approval of the College of Physicians.

The Committee of Management further reported that they had granted permission for the meetings of the International Dermatological Congress and of the British Dental Association to be held at the Examination Hall during the first and second weeks of August respectively.

The Laboratories Committee reported that in the preceding two months 2,415 specimens had been examined for diphtheria bacilli on behalf of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. The average number of specimens examined per diem had been 34. During the past year, 10,374 cases had been examined, or an average of 35.6 per diem. Since October 5th, the Director had supplied about 2,075 doses of antitoxin

serum for the treatment of diphtheria in the hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and all the demands had been fully met. Six horses were in use, and three others were being prepared.

Dr. Sims Woodhead was reappointed Director of the Laboratories for the ensuing year.

Mr. BRYANT presented to the College, on behalf of Miss Baillie, some further letters of John Hunter, Edward Jenner, and other persons of note.

The best thanks of the Council were conveyed to Miss Baillie for her present.

The PRESIDENT reported the proceedings of the deputation to the Duke of Devonshire of delegates from the various institutions interested in the promotion of the proposals of the Gresham University Commission.

The PRESIDENT reported the proceedings of the half-yearly meeting of Fellows on January 2nd, and stated that there were 81 Fellows present, including 18 members of Council.

The first resolution carried at this meeting—namely,

That it is desirable to give to Members of the College direct representation upon the Council, was referred to the Deputation Committee to consider in connection with the subjects already in hand.

The President was appointed Hunterian Orator for 1897.

A letter was read from the Civil Rights Defence Committee enclosing a Memorial and asking for signatures of any constituents of Holborn. The memorial was signed by certain members of the Council.

MEDICAL SICKNESS, ANNUITY, AND LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY.

THE usual monthly meeting of the Executive Committee of this Society was held at 429, Strand, W.C., on December 27th, 1895. There were present the Chairman, Dr. de Havilland Hall; Mr. H. H. Clutton, Treasurer; Dr. J. B. Ball, Mr. J. Brindley James, Dr. Walter Smith, Dr. F. J. Allan, Dr. W. Knowsley Sibley, and Dr. Major Greenwood.

The accounts rendered showed a considerable growth in the number of members during the autumn. As the advantages which the Society offers become more generally known to the profession the number of applications for new membership increases, but the unusually large number of new proposals received since July last is greatly due to the valuable assistance given to the Society by the British Medical Association at the meeting last year in London.

As usual the Committee was principally occupied in the investigation of the sickness claims. As the Society grows in age and size, the list of sickness claims necessarily increases. Not only are more claims sent in, but the experience which has been obtained during the twelve years in which the Society has been at work enables the Committee to examine them more fully. On the whole the claims experience of the Medical Assurance Society has been very satisfactory, being well under the amount expected and provided for in the table of premiums. But from time to time cases arise which require very careful attention on the part of the Committee, and a reference to the records of the more than 2,000 claims paid by the Society is often found of service.

Prospectuses and all particulars can be obtained on application to Mr. F. Addiscott, Secretary, Medical Assurance Society, 33, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.

ON THE NEW KIND OF RADIATION.

By ARTHUR SCHUSTER, PH.D., F.R.S.,

Langworthy Professor of Physics and Director of the Physical Laboratory, the Owens College, Manchester.

PROFESSOR ROENTGEN, of Würzburg, announces the discovery of remarkable photographic effects which he ascribes to a new kind of radiation. As the statements which have appeared in most of the daily papers are inaccurate in many respects, a short description of what Professor Roentgen claims to have accomplished may interest the readers of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL. The photographs which the Professor has kindly sent me fully bear out his statements, and there can be no doubt that a most important discovery has been made.

It has long been known that the highly-electrified particles which are projected from the negative pole of a vacuum tube produce a strong luminosity (phosphorescence) when they strike against the glass walls of the tube. Professor Roentgen's discovery is that, in addition to this phosphorescence, another radiation is produced which is capable of penetrating through all bodies, though not to the same extent—thus, aluminium is more transparent to this radiation than Iceland spar. The radiation passes in straight lines easily through paper, cardboard, or wood, and produces photographic effects after having passed through two complete packs of cards.

Professor Roentgen shows a photograph which has been taken in one room, the tube producing the radiation being in another room, the rays having passed through the door. One of the photographs in my possession shows a complete image of a compass needle, with the divisions into degrees of the circle over which the needle is placed. The compass needle, before being photographed, was placed inside a metal box. As flesh, skin, and cartilage are more transparent than bone, the photograph of a hand gives a complete outline of the bones of the hand and fingers, the outline of the flesh being only very faintly marked. It is not necessary to enter into the many possible medical applications which this photograph opens out.

One characteristic feature of this new radiation, which distinguishes it from all effects so far known of radiant light and heat, is that it cannot be refracted or reflected; that is to say, it will pass through a prism of aluminium having an angle of 60 degrees without being deviated from its original course. Hence lenses will not focus the rays, which will pass through a lens as they pass through an ordinary glass window. The photographs obtained are, therefore, of the nature of shadows, and their great sharpness is itself a testimony that the new radiation must be propagated in straight lines. The radiation produces fluorescence as well as photographic effects. Professor Roentgen does not give any information as to the length of exposure required, but any photographic plate or film seems to act. The photographs may be taken in ordinary daylight if the plate is kept in its dark slide, which will completely cut off all ordinary light rays and yet transmit the new radiation. It is, of course, at present impossible to say what this new radiation will turn out. Professor Roentgen throws out the suggestion that it may consist of longitudinal vibrations in the ether. One's first impulse is to ascribe it to vibrations of extremely minute length. But, in any case, the fact that the velocity of its propagation is the same in vacuo, glass and aluminium will be a puzzle to mathematical physicists.

DEGREES FOR LONDON MEDICAL STUDENTS.

THE METROPOLITAN COUNTIES BRANCH AND THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

THE very important vote in regard to the proposed teaching university for London, which is to be taken on Tuesday next in Convocation necessarily directs attention afresh to the subject under consideration. It has been publicly stated by way of reproach that the demand for "reform" in the existing university is a teachers' agitation, and has no public opinion behind it. The inaccuracy of this view, at any rate in reference to the medical faculty, is shown by the action of the Metropolitan Counties Branch during the last eleven or twelve years. The fact that there has been a continuity of policy on this question in the Branch during these many years is the more remarkable, and shows more strongly the general consensus of opinion amongst the members, when it is further recalled that most of the officers of the Branch change annually, and that consequently the number who have actually assisted this movement for the reform of the University is very large.

In 1884 a Subcommittee of the Branch drew up an elaborate report which showed the necessity of further increased facilities for graduation called for on behalf of the London medical students. A deputation from the Branch waited on the Senate of the University to urge their views, but without much success. Various members of the Branch have also at different times given evidence before the Royal Commissions that have inquired into the subject; and many resolu-

tions similar to the following, which were passed in 1892 at a general meeting, have been carried at other meetings of the Branch:

That it is eminently desirable that a degree in Medicine, based upon a sound, thorough, and practical standard, should be placed within reasonable reach of students educated in London, as is already done in the case of students educated in certain English provincial towns, in Scotland, and in Ireland.

Again:

That it is desirable to establish a teaching university in and for London.

Thirdly:

That the Council of the Branch be authorised to address itself, when it shall deem opportune, to the members of the House of Commons sitting for metropolitan constituencies, and to solicit on behalf of the Branch a personal interview for the purpose of laying before them the views of the Branch as regards facilities for graduation in medicine in London, and that all members of the Branch be invited to join in such an interview, should it be granted by the said members.

Committees of the Branch have also been from time to time appointed to watch the course of events generally, and to further the views of the members whenever opportunities might occur. Some modifications, it is true, have in recent years been introduced into the examinations (such as their more frequent occurrence in the year, and the division of their subjects into sections, which may be passed at different times), by which the facilities of obtaining the degrees have been somewhat increased, but the notorious difficulty of graduating in medicine at the University of London still remains practically unmodified, and leads to the dispersal of London students to other universities, the portals of which are less jealously guarded.

An occasion of great importance, consequently, is this coming meeting of Convocation, to which we refer at length elsewhere.

It is to be feared that should the views of those who are opposed to the alteration of the constitution of the University prevail when votes are counted, the subject will be indefinitely postponed, unless the Government should intervene and overrule the vote of Convocation. This, however, is an unlikely course of action, in view of the extreme regard for the opinions of country graduates lately evinced by the Duke of Devonshire. The further memorandum on the past views and votes of Convocation recently presented to his Grace by delegates from the institutions named in the report of the Gresham Commission is, therefore, in many ways, of considerable interest at the present juncture. This document explains much in the recent proceedings of Convocation which to anyone not versed in the ways of that assembly, must appear enigmatical. The members of Convocation number about 4,000, and the only way in which it can express its decision is by a majority vote of the members assembled at a regularly convoked meeting. Voting papers by absent members are not allowed except for the single purpose of nomination to vacancies on the Senate. Thus those who attend the meetings and vote at Burlington House represent chiefly the metropolitan members; whilst country members are usually conspicuous by their absence.

The recent action of graduates in Convocation and otherwise with reference to the Gresham scheme, has been as follows:—In April, 1894, the Annual Committee of Convocation, being hostile to the scheme, presented a report to Convocation which was not adopted, and in the following month that Committee was replaced by another set of members favourable to the scheme. In the summer of 1894, in reply to a circular, 1,155 graduates approved of the draft charter for the proposed Gresham University, whilst a number, stated to be 900, affirmed that "if a local teaching university for London be desirable, it should be constituted apart from the existing University." Thus, a considerable majority of the 2,000 who replied to the circular approved informally of the scheme. In January, 1895, Convocation voted in favour of the Gresham scheme, by 206 against 175 votes, on a motion that there should be one University of London, and not two, care being taken to maintain the efficiency of the University in respect to external students, and expressed approval of the proposals contained in the report of the Royal Commission by 157 to 133. In May last a motion to rescind these resolutions was defeated by 240 to 119.