An appeal supplementary to "Hospital elections and medical reform" addressed to the governors of St. George's Hospital, and to the profession / by Edwin Lee.

Contributors

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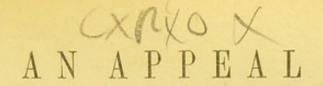
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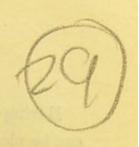
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SUPPLEMENTARY TO



"HOSPITAL ELECTIONS AND MEDICAL REFORM."

ADDRESSED TO THE

GOVERNORS OF ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL,

AND

TO THE PROFESSION.

BY EDWIN LEE,

CORRESPONDING AND HONORARY MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL MEDICAL ACADEMY OF VIENNA, THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE OF NAPLES, THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF PRUSSIA, THE SOCIETIES OF PARIS, BERLIN, LEIPZIC, GHENT, FLORENCE, BOLOGNA, MARSEILLES, BORDEAUX, &C.

LONDON:

JOHN CHURCHILL, PRINCES STREET, SOHO.
1848.

Having been informed from a source upon which implicit reliance can be placed, that the candidate supported by the staff was proposed at the Meeting by another Member, and not by Dr.————, who, however, took an active part on his behalf, I think it but right to rectify this inaccuracy.

Feb. 10, 1848. E. L.

Refers to page 4 " Hospital Elections."

REMARKS ON MEDICAL ORGANIZATION AND REFORM Foreign and English. 1846.

- "The great merit of the work is, that the author confines himself to a practical consideration of the various points involved in this complicated question, instead of bewildering us with ingenious theories. It strikes us that many of Mr. Lee's suggestions would meet some of the principal difficulties which have hitherto obstructed the adoption of a definite plan of reform."—John Bull,
 - "A very temperate and able work on a subject of importance."-Atlas.
- "Mr. Lee's remarks indicate an infinite acquaintance with the subject." West-minster Review.
- "Mr. Lee states his own arguments in a lucid and clear manner, and his work should be read by both parties of the medical world."—Dispatch.
- "Among our neighbours across the channel, more than anywhere else, the state of matters is such, that without an entire abnegation of opinion and personal interest on both sides, and unless enlarged views be brought to bear upon the question, for the entire remodelling of all the existing medical institutions, it will be impossible to effect any profitable amelioration."—Paris Medical Gazette.
- "We recommend to those interested in medical reform the present work, which it would have been worth while to have enlarged. The author treats the subject with a full knowledge of it, and with perspicuity."—Zeitschrift för die Gesammten Medicin.

THE MEDICAL REFORM QUESTION, a Supplement to the above. 1847.

These pamphlets may be obtained (gratis) on application at the publisher's.

AN APPEAL, &c.

At the Special General Board of the Governors of St. George's Hospital, convened for the 22nd of April, for the purpose of determining as to the propriety of appointing a second assistant physician; the proposition was carried after a good deal of discussion by a large majority; the party who originally mooted the question with the view of introducing a particular candidate, opposing the measure on finding that another gentleman likely to obtain a majority of suffrages would engage in the contest.

The repetition of these occurrences which have entailed upon St. George's Hospital an unenviable degree of notoriety, and the likelihood of their recurrence on future elections, together with other circumstances affecting the profession, induce me to subjoin to the pamphlet which I recently circulated a few words of appeal to the sense of justice of the governors, and of the profession, as to the continuance of a system so detrimental to some of the best interests of the public. How greatly these interests must suffer, when, instead of a fair and professional mode of competition, intrigue, purchase, and favoritism, are suffered to determine hospital appointments,* I have already endeavoured to show, inasmuch as it is from hospital physicians and Surgeons, that the

^{*} Instances might be adduced of the succession to vacancies both at St. George's and other hospitals, being made the matter of direct purchase; but whether determined from the cause, or by other private arrangement—the result is the same.

corporate bodies who have the entire control of medical affairs are composed; and that the exercise of the powers with which these bodies are entrusted, has been attended with much injury to the profession and the community, has been abundantly evidenced of late by the exposure of abuses, and the universal cry for reform. That there have been many individuals distinguished for their high qualifications and attainments, both in the hospitals and corporate bodies will be readily admitted, but the history of these institutions, even during the last twenty or thirty years, sufficiently manifests the corrupt principles of action, which have not failed to produce their prejudicial results, and must continue to produce them until a thorough change be effected in the medical organization of this country—though they may perhaps be to a certain extent prevented by vigilance exerted on the part of governors of hospitals, as to the bonâ fide claims of candidates when vacancies occur.

A chief source of abuse is, as I have before observed, to be ascribed to the circumstance that the fees paid by candidates for diplomas, are divided among the examiners, who thus have a direct interest in the numbers presenting themselves for examination—instead of (as in other countries) receiving a fixed compensation, whether few or many obtain the diploma. Hence the competition between licensing bodies, by facilitating the examinations, has produced the necessary effect of overstocking the profession more than in any other country, not only in point of actual numbers, but also from the influx of many persons ill-qualified to be entrusted with the charge of the health of the community, though such are not unfrequently more employed inasmuch as the public is not always able to discriminate, from their not hesitating to have recourse to means of advancing themselves, which others more scrupulous would repudiate.

The medical profession for the most part confiding in those to whom the superintendence of their affairs was entrusted, were scarcely aware of the extent to which the abuses in the medical corporations were carried until the more recent agitation of the reform question, and especially till the appearance of the manifesto and statement emanating from the council of the

College of Surgeons, the purport and bearing of which being exposed by the public journals, excited so much general indignation, which has since been kept up by the subsequent proceedings of that body, and by the publicity given to some aggravated instances of abuse.

It is with sincere regret that I feel it incumbent upon me to allude to the gentleman to whom these productions were mainly ascribed, but when, notwithstanding all that has been said, nothing is likely to be done to allay the generally prevailing discontent; a similar course of procedure being still persisted in, I consider that in the present state of the profession it is essential that one whose conduct has been so frequently censured both by the political and medical press of opposite parties, should not be suffered to take a leading part in regulating its affairs, and impeding efficient measures of reform. Several years ago, a correspondence took place in the Medical Gazette, relative to the reports then current, and direct allusions have been since made from time to time, up to the discussions on medical reform-when the most widely-circulated journal of the empire, repeatedly referring to the chief originator of the acts so energetically denounced, characterised him as "utterly untrustworthy." Were it worth while, I might, without breach of confidence, adduce instances of mean and indirect conduct, of which I have been informed on unquestionable authority; and can only infer that if several such can accidentally come to the knowledge of one person they must be very numerous, and fully justify the animadversions of the press. That these observations should apply to one cccupying a high station in the profession is a circumstance to be regretted-but on that account it is the more requisite to prevent, if possible, the further mischief which one so placed has the power to effect. Is this conduct to be expected from one who in public lectures (afterwards separately printed) so strongly inculcates upon students-integrity of character-self-respectthe resisting selfish interests-that above all they must be gentlemen, and so on? Or could any thing tend more to lower the character of the profession in public estimation; not only from these things being, as they are sure to be, generally

spoken of, but also from the prevalence of similar principles in public institutions, the effects of which have been apparent in the college transactions of late years, and in the obnoxious measures of so-called reform, which the then Secretary of State was obliged to abandon—as also in the disgraceful hospital manœu vrings and squabbles of such frequent occurrence. I will make no further comment upon these lamentable proceedings, further than that had they merely affected individuals, I should not have publicly noticed them, and if I have been led to express myself strongly, it is because I consider it imperative so to do, ascribing to the exertion of this pernicious influence during a series of years no small share of the present deteriorated condition of the profession.

As regards St. George's Hospital, the governors of which are told in the preamble to the lists annually published that, "in all cases of difficulty and danger, the sufferers have the advantage of a course of treatment formed upon the deliberate consultations of the most eminent members of the profession;" the effects of the system pursued is seen from the falling off of the school connected with it of late years—and in fact students have a right to expect that the great opportunities afforded by a large hospital should be made available for instruction beyond what they may acquire from elementary class books—so that, considering the large sum covenanted upon to be annually paid to its founder, no wonder that it is a losing concern, and a proposition was, as I have been informed, actually entertained of endeavouring to induce the governors of the hospital to relieve the lecturers of it.

In the late measures propounded as the basis of a new medical bill, by the combined colleges of physicians, surgeons, and (projected) general practitioners—the same animus is apparent as on former occasions, and indeed it would be futile to expect any efficient changes from such a source. Thus, there would be no superior controlling power against the perpetuation of the present abuses, no alteration in the mode of managing hospital elections, but all surgeons or general practitioners would perforce have to undergo an examination at both these colleges—paying of course for both—and all the physicians in England would become

members of its college on producing testimonials, passing an examination, and paying £25. It would appear, however, that the two former conditions would be dispensed with in the case of extra-licentiates, according to a leading article in the Medical Gazette. "We also infer, though it is not expressly stated, that there is no intention of compelling extra-licentiates to produce testimonials, and undergo a second examination."

"It has been suggested," continues the same article, "as an answer to Dr. Hawkins' objection, that they who have paid the higher fee for the license have the extra benefit of metropolitan practice, with the exclusive use of the college and its library. We hold this to be a most frivolous view of an important question; the true object of sound medical reform is not to arrange practitioners into two classes by money payments, but under one course of study, one system of examination, one diploma, for which a uniform fee should be paid, to give the option of practice in London, or any part of the British dominions. Fellows and members of the College of Surgeons, who reside in the country, may as well claim a reduction of their fee for the diploma, because their brethren in the metropolis have the benefit of the college library, museum, lectures, &c. This is a low and degrading view of members of a college."

Thus also a correspondent of the "Lancet" [Dr. Laycock) observes: "Of late years the college has put forth a statement of its powers, and of the means which it possesses within itself of conferring the rank and privileges of physicians; and also of its determination to regard in the same light, and address by the same appellation, all who obtained its diploma, whether they have graduated elsewhere or not. Official communications from Dr. Hawkins left no doubt on the mind that many of the provincial licentiates were included in this statement, and in consequence a considerable number of gentlemen have of late years proceeded to London for the purpose of being examined by the authorities of the college to whom the power to grant letters testimonial to practise as physicians out of London is conceded by the statute, and have paid to these authorities about £4,000 in the shape of fees. The question is in fact simply one of

money payment. If it can be demonstrated to me that the payment of £25 by each provincial physician will be of proportionate advantage to the medical commonwealth, I will for one pay it cheerfully; but as I have already paid a fee, I hesitate on this point, and wait for further information."*

In fact, the proceedings of these corporations have ever more resembled those of a mercenary camaraderie than of scientific institutions, at the head of a liberal profession, little or nothing having been done by them for the advance of science, or the general benefit of the members: nor is this to be wondered at when the mode in which they have been in great part composed is considered. Hence, as might be expected, every effort is made to depress those from whom competition is to be apprehended, as shown in the unjust and illiberal treatment to which many distinguished members of the profession have been subjected, and beneath which not a few have succumbed, verifying the observation of the late Mr. Dermott, with reference to the case of Mr. King, who had obtained many distinctions abroad, viz. that whatever their claims, "without patronage medical men will not get preferment in England; where a man may be reduced to beggary by pursuing the same course which infallibly leads to the highest distinction in France." Such being too frequently the case, is it surprising that the profession should be wanting in dignity, and should not enjoy that degree of public confidence to which, under a different mode of organization, it might lay claim?-that underhand means should be had recourse to to obtain practice?—that members of the profession should so often look with jealousy on each other, or that some, instead of continuing to struggle in order to keep up appearances, should seek the means of obtaining fortune by sanctioning one or other of the forms of quackery which, owing to the present state of our medical organization, is more rife in England than elsewhere. Not long ago I was in the coffee-room

* A friend of mine writes from the country—"If they (the college) expect that provincial physicians will care a straw about their licence, they are very much mistaken, and yet they appear to contemplate the enrichment of their treasury from this source"—Hence we see the object of the charter to compel them to come in.

of an hotel where sat a gentleman evidently in a very bad state of health, who, on an acquaintance asking him why he did not have advice, intimated his distrust of the profession in the present impoverished state of many of its members, adding that he thought of trying the cold-water cure. And such an impression, though it may not be expressed, is by no means uncommon.

Medical interests being unrepresented in the legislature, and few of the members being acquainted with the state of the profession, as compared with that of other countries, it is not probable-considering the events which have recently agitated Europe—that the subject of medical reform will be entertained during the present session. Any partial alteration however of the existing state of matters would be of little avail, and it is to be hoped that the delay may subserve the end of procuring a full and impartial consideration of the various bearings of this important question, so as to produce such an efficient measure of reform as may prove satisfactory to the bulk of the profession, and most beneficial to the interests of the community. "Among our neighbours across the Channel," observed the Paris Medical Gazette, in reviewing my 'Remarks on Medical Organization and Reform,' " more than anywhere else, the state of matters is such, that without an abnegation of opinion and personal interest on both sides, and unless enlarged views be brought to bear upon the question, for the entire remodelling of all the existing medical institutions, it will be impossible to effect any profitable amelioration." In the above-named pamphlet, which contains detailed accounts of the organization of the profession in France, the German and Italian states, it was my object to facilitate such an enlarged and impartial inquiry as might conduce to the improvement of the profession in England. That such information was requisite, is shown by the course pursued in other countries where medical reform was contemplated, physicians having been commissioned by the government to travel and report upon the subject, as also by the just observation of the Medical Gazette: "It is not a little remarkable that they who have attempted to reform the medical profession in England have not endeavoured to procure some knowledge of the medical

legislation of other countries. Had this been done, we should not have witnessed the absurd attempt to enact, as a reformation of the law in England, provisions which had been tried for nearly half a century in a neighbouring country, and which had so completely failed, that the foreign minister had found it absolutely necessary not only to abolish them, but to introduce measures of reform on entirely different principles; such, however, was our position in 1845. While it furnishes a good lesson to medical reformers, it affords clear proof of the injury which may be done by crude and premature legislation." April 2. 1847.

In taking leave of the subject, I beg to recapitulate the heads of propositions which I ventured to suggest, after having had considerable opportunities of observing the results of the medical legislation in England and abroad, which accorded with the opinions of gentlemen well qualified to express a judgment upon the subject, and quoted in the pamphlet referred to, as also in the "Medical Reform Question," viz. that the same grades as at present, physicians, surgeons, and general practitioners, (of which latter a college, instead of the Society of Apothecaries,) might be preserved; the colleges, with representative councils, to be amalgamated into faculties of medicine in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, under the direct superintendence of government, with deans and professors, to lecture upon the branches of philosophical and medical studies, and to form examining boards. The distinction between fellows and licentiates in the London College of Physicians to be abolished. Students of medicine, whether intending to be physicians, surgeons, or general practitioners, to go through the same course of study in the first instance, comprising a stated attendance on the classes of the faculty, and to undergo two examinations—the first chiefly upon the accessory sciences before the professors of the faculty, (as in the French and German faculties,) the second more practical and clinical, not before the candidate has attained the age of twentytwo years, before a joint board composed partly of professors and of examiners of the colleges, (the examiners receiving a fixed salary not dependent upon the number of those who obtain the license.) This examination to confer the title of licentiate of the

faculty (general practitioners). Those licentiates who may desire the diploma of the College of Surgeons, or who intend to practise as physicians, to present themselves before the courts of examiners, in the former instance immediately or at any time subsequent to having obtained the license of the faculty, and at the age of 26, the member of the college to be further eligible to the fellowship. The examination for the diploma of the College of Physicians, when the candidate shall have attained the age of 26, and upon producing testimonials of additional hospital attendance. Licences to practise to be obtained only after examination at the central boards in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin. Canvassing personally or by friends for medical appointments in charitable institutions to be superseded by a method more in accordance with the dignity of the profession, better calculated to promote the objects of these institutions, and the advance of medical science. The establishment of courts of honour for arranging differences between practitioners, and for preventing or punishing offences against medical edicts. Becoming prizes to be annually awarded, and other means adopted for the furtherance of science. Dentists, artists, and all special practitioners of branches of the medical art, to be allowed to practise only after an examination and license, as is required in other countries. The abolition of stamp duties, and consequent sanction by government of the sale of quack medicines.

From what has preceded the injustice to the community, and to the profession, which presses more especially upon some of its members from the operation of the actual system, will, I think, be apparent; and, in conclusion, I will only add, as regards myself, that after receiving the best medical education, expending a fortune in acquisition of information, and endeavouring to serve the cause of medical science, having hundreds of times risen at an early hour in winter to attend the practice of foreign hospitals, having been moreover honoured with the regard of many of the most distinguished medical and scientific men of Europe, as well as received honorary diplomas from the principal medical societies; I am compelled to state, that owing to the causes specified, I find these advantages to have been more to my

detriment in my own country, than the reverse: my claims being set aside, and my prospects of a course of useful activity being destroyed by the efforts to depress me. Some of my well-meaning friends, unacquainted with the condition of the profession, have objected to my leaving England, to practise during a portion of the year abroad. This, however, has been in great measure obligatory on my part, from observing that so many gentlemen who had distinguished themselves were unable to find scope for the exercise of their abilities, - some succumbing beneath the tracasseries of a state of privation,-others after struggling for a few years, emigrating, or accepting non-medical appointments in the colonies,-I had no reason to expect that it would fare better with myself; while on the other hand, it is a matter of common experience that many illqualified persons meet with support from the public, and flourish like the Taunton pastrycook, who, after a year's sojourn in London, was able to return with the diploma of the College of Surgeons; the present deficient system of medical organization being eminently calculated to depreciate the highly-educated and scientific man, who would scorn to adopt dishonourable or indirect means of advancing his interests, and to encourage the charlatan and the trickster, who can boast of his savoir faire.* To this state there is no other means of redress than appeals to public opinion; and the community, as well as individuals, must continue to suffer from its effects, and the profession to become more and more deteriorated, till such time as the legislature shall be induced to give their serious attention to its condition.

* What for instance would have been the fate of Sir C. Bell, whose name is a lasting honour to his country, but for the income which he derived from his lectures? who nevertheless was obliged to leave London at an advanced period of his career, and whose widow was left principally dependant upon the pittance of £100 per annum—accorded by Government.

Curzon Street, May 1848.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

MR. LEE'S WORKS,

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM THE CRITICAL NOTICES.

MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICE.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRINCIPAL MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICE OF FRANCE, ITALY, AND GERMANY; with Illustrative Cases, &c., and a Parallel View of English and Foreign Medicine and Surgery. 2nd Edition, enlarged.

Mr. Lee's work deserves particular attention; it is written with more independence and justice than are usually met with. His comparative observations are almost always just, and do as much honour to his knowledge as to his judgment."—Revue Medico-Chirurgical.

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NOTICES OF SECOND EDITION.

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tinent, and the protracted residence which he has made in many of them, impart to most of his judgments a justness of appreciation, and a character of truthfulness rarely met with."—Gazette Médicale de Paris.

- "The principal points (especially as respects the Paris hospitals) are described with great accuracy. In the parallel between English and foreign medicine the impartial appreciation and the sound judgment displayed reflect great honour upon the author."—Schmidt's Jahrbucher der Medicin.
 - " A very useful and justly popular work."-Sunday Times.
- "We recommend this work to the perusal of the profession: it is full of interest."—Atlas.
- "That this work should have reached the honour of a second edition, is no matter of surprise, when the interest to a wider circle than that of medical readers, and the commendable style in which the subject is treated, are considered."—Morning Herald.
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- "We can recommend the work as by much the completest and best published on the subject in this country."—British and Foreign Medical Review.
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- "The account embraces every point of practical interest or importance connected with the subject. We consider Mr. Lee's work an extremely useful publication. Its general accuracy on all important details, and its conciseness, recommend it strongly to the notice of the public, and especially of the medical profession."—Dublin Journal of Medical Science.
- "None other than a favourable judgment can be given upon this book, which must be ranked among the best handbooks on the subject; even of those published in the German language."—German Medical Review.
- "This work is from the pen of the talented and indefatigable gentleman who, by his various and valuable publications, has laid the medical profession and the world at large under peculiar obligations to him. We can

cordially recommend this volume, for, in our judgment, it is the best practical work on mineral waters in the English language."—Atlas.

- "Mr. Lee's production deserves the popularity it has attained. A work so clear, so circumstantial, so free from technical terms or pedantic abstruseness, is worthy of the praise that has been so generally bestowed upon it."—Sunday Times.
- "From the few publications of Mr. Lee that have fallen under our notice, he appears to possess considerable medical knowledge; and what is of quite as much importance, great common sense, and a rational judgment. To point out the different disorders to which the German baths are generally adapted, and to offer a variety of hints to guide the patient and his medical attendant, as well as to suggest the best mode of using the waters, is the object of this work."—Spectator.
 - " An interesting work."-Augsburg Gaz.
- "To explain which (the properties of the waters) Mr. Lee sets himself, with scientific and professional accuracy, in this certainly very satisfactory volume."—Literary Gaz.
- "The Principal Baths of Germany, by Mr. Lee, the author of several works distinguished by the scientific knowledge they display, but perhaps still more for the comprehensiveness of his views, explained with singular brevity and perspicuity, and the soundness of his judgment, as well as the force of his logic."—Monthly Review.
- "This volume is evidently the result of much study, and exhibits much natural acuteness, and considerable scientific knowledge."—Britannia.
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