

**Observations on the education and examinations for degrees in medicine,
as affected by the New Medical Bill ... in a letter to the Right Hon. Sir James
Graham, bart. / by Richard Quain.**

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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

EDUCATION AND EXAMINATIONS

FOR

Degrees in Medicine,

AS AFFECTED BY

THE NEW MEDICAL BILL;

WITH REMARKS ON

THE PROPOSED LICENCING BOARDS; THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES; THE
REGISTRATION OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS; AND THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE "COUNCIL OF HEALTH."

IN A LETTER TO THE

RIGHT HON. SIR JAMES GRAHAM, BART.

—♦—

BY RICHARD QUAIN, F.R.S.,

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COLLEGE HOSPITAL.

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TO SIR JAMES GRAHAM, BART.

SIR,—The members of the Medical Profession and the public press have lately been much engaged in discussing some important questions arising out of the provisions of "A Bill for Regulating the Practice of Physic and Surgery," which you have laid before the House of Commons. On the same Bill I take the liberty to offer, in this form, some remarks; but it is no part of my object to make any observations on the questions which have excited so much discussion. My desire is to examine the Clauses of the Bill which relate to Education, with the intention of pointing out the effect which some provisions in those Clauses are calculated to produce on the character of the Medical Profession, as well as the influence they are likely to exercise on some Schools of Medicine.

It is provided in the Bill that the qualifications, both in general and professional knowledge, of the "Licentiates in Medicine and Surgery," (General Practitioners) as well as of "Licentiates of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons," shall be under the control of a "Council of Health." The Degrees of Universities are, and I think rightly, not placed within the supervision of the Council. If matters had remained thus; if the Bill made provision for the examination of Practitioners only, without interfering with University Degrees in Medicine, it is most probable that no observations from the writer of this letter would have been addressed to you. Not that the absence of remark should be understood to imply that I approve of those parts to which no

reference is made in this letter, but merely that attention will here be confined to some subjects of much importance, which, perhaps in consequence of the excitement existing with reference to other parts of the Bill, have hitherto, so far as I know, passed without public examination.

The twenty-second clause refers to the general and professional attainments to be required of candidates for Degrees in Medicine. It enacts that no such Degree shall be conferred by Universities, except after *two years'* study of Medicine, and after examination in Medicine and the allied sciences, as well as in the *Latin and English languages* at least.

The twenty-sixth clause provides for the coalition of certain Examining bodies, and this provision, taken in connexion with other clauses (the sixteenth and twenty-third), may, and probably will, confer on the Professors of certain schools the privilege of taking part in the examination of their own pupils for the Letters Testimonial of Physicians and of General Practitioners. It is to these provisions of the Bill especially that I wish to call your attention; and the observations to be submitted to your consideration will be directed to the following points:—

First: The small amount of *preliminary* education it is proposed to require for University Degrees in Medicine; together with the manner of testing the attainments of the Candidates for Degrees in general and professional knowledge.

Secondly: The share to be assigned practically to the Professors of *some* Schools, in examining into the fitness of their own pupils to receive the Diplomas or Letters Testimonial of Practitioners.

To the discussion of these, the main object of this letter, will be added some remarks on other parts of the Bill, which have a bearing on the same subjects.

Instead of entering directly into a statement of the objections to which the provisions of the Bill here referred to are liable, and placing before you the result of my own experience and reflection, I will, in the first instance, avail myself of the labours of eminent public men who investigated the same subject with great care and ability some years ago, under the responsibility of appointment for that purpose by the Crown

By pursuing this course I shall be enabled to place the results of the inquiry here alluded to in a connected form before you, and at the same time to show what has been recommended, and what has been done under the sanction of the Government, concerning the education for University Degrees in Medicine within the last few years. It will then be apparent how far the present proposed legislation is in harmony with the progress which has been already made.

Two Royal Commissions were issued for visiting the Universities of Scotland—one in 1826, the other in 1830—and both bear the signature of Sir ROBERT PEEL, who at that time was Secretary of State for the Home Department. The General Report of the Commission, with the Appendix, was “ordered by the House of Commons to be printed” in 1831. The evidence appeared at a later period—1837. To the Report are attached the signatures of the Commissioners, as follows:—

ROSEBERRY, CHAIRMAN.
GORDON
HADDINGTON
ABERDEEN
MELVILLE
C. HOPE
WM. RAE
D. BOYLE
GEO. CRANSTOUN
JAMES W. MONCRIEFF
JOHN HOPE
THOS. TAYLOR
GEORGE COOK
H. HOME DRUMMOND.

It may be stated here, as showing the attention paid to the details of their Report by all the Commissioners, that some Members, including those highest in rank, express dissent from certain parts. There is no evidence of any difference of opinion on the portion of the Report affecting the Medical Faculties of the Universities.

The views of the Commissioners will be best set forth in their own words. The parts to be extracted will be taken from the

"General Report," and the "Appendix to the General Report ;" and they will have reference to—

The amount of preliminary Education which ought to be required for a University Degree in Medicine ; and to—

The manner of conducting Examinations into the general and professional attainments of the Candidates.

In the "Appendix," p. 187, the subject of the General Education is thus treated :—

"Preliminary Education."—"It would seem a matter about which all might be agreed, that it is desirable that Medical Practitioners should be men of enlightened minds, accustomed to exert their intellectual powers, and familiar with habits of accurate observation and cautious reflection. It is also desirable that they should have that degree of literary attainment which will prevent them, when mingling as they must do with mankind in the exercise of their profession, from being looked upon with contempt, or from committing errors in conversation and in writing for which others would be despised : because, even upon the supposition that, notwithstanding this, they have high professional acquisition, the law of association will operate, and the conclusion will be drawn, that much confidence cannot be placed in them. This tendency not to confide in him is one of the most formidable difficulties with which a Physician has to struggle ; much, unquestionably, of the success of ordinary practice depending upon the feelings of trust and security with which he is regarded. There is, too, a connection between the Sciences, the cultivation of one certainly predisposing, or at least creating a facility, for the cultivation of another. And with a view to the general dissemination of knowledge, it would be of moment that a class of men so widely diffused, and mingling so much with society as the Members of the Medical Profession, should be so instructed as to be able to give a tone to conversation, or to promote among those with whom they associate the love and the pursuit of literary and scientific accomplishments. But after granting all this, the question still remains, whether there should be, before commencing the study of Medicine, or while that study is pursued, the acquisition of what is commonly called a learned education ; and it is as to this that most intel-

ligent men of medical proficiency are not agreed. Dr. Alison submitted to us a paper relating to this subject, which had been read over to the Medical Faculty [of the University of Edinburgh], and approved of by them; so that he says that he considered it to be their opinion as well as his own, all assenting to it except the late Dr. Duncan, who was understood to hold notions which did not agree with it. This paper advocates the side of the question which is unfavourable to high literary acquirements; and there are two principal grounds upon which the pleading is rested. It lays down, that 'experience does not entitle us to say that the skill of Physicians is by any means in proportion to their attainments in general literature and science. In fact we may safely assert, that the talents and habits of mind by which great and varied acquisitions of literature and science are made, and which a long-continued course of such study is calculated to form, are very different from those attainments by which the most judicious practitioners are distinguished. Every medical man has besides to acquire habits of business, observation of mankind, and a knowledge of the world. These acquirements of themselves make up to many medical men for the want of scientific knowledge, but the knowledge of all the Sciences cannot make up to them for the want of those; and in general, I believe, we may say, that the habits of a Student who has gone through a very long and varied course of literature and science, are not those which will fit a man for that kind of intercourse with the world by which a Physician must live.'

"The amount of this would seem to be," (continue the Commissioners), "that literature is a positive evil to a physician; that it unfits him for the habits and state of mind which he ought to cultivate; and that it will be an obstacle to his success in practice. It is difficult to conceive that the learned Medical Faculty could have intended to go so far as this; but it is plain that there is much fallacy in the assertions, for it can scarcely be called reasoning, which they here adduce. It is unquestionably true, that if a man were to devote himself in the manner stated to literature and science, making these the chief, or almost the exclusive objects of his

pursuit, he would not be a good Physician : but this is not at all what is intended ; the sole object being, that a Physician should have that liberal education which is implied in a Course of University attendance. By acquiring this, the mind would be invigorated for any intellectual pursuit, and it could superinduce no habit disqualifying for the activity of exertion, or for mingling in society as a medical man must do. Such education also, it is to be remembered, would be completed, or nearly so, before medical pursuits commenced, certainly long before practice was attempted, and would not therefore have the effect which is here supposed."

"But there is a different reason assigned for not making the standard of education, previously to entering upon the study of Physic, or even to conferring a Degree in it, very high. 'There are other Degrees,' Dr. Alison [who as Dean of Faculty, expressed the opinion of his Colleagues], proceeds to observe, 'such as Diplomas to Surgeons and Apothecaries, which are obtained by a less expensive education than that which is given in the University, and on which a great number of Medical men practise all branches of the profession in all parts of the country with success and reputation. Unless it can be made quite clear that any additional qualifications which we demand will raise the value of the Degree of our Graduates in the eyes of the public, and increase therefore their chance of professional success, the effect of making our Degree more difficult of attainment will only be to increase the proportion of Medical men practising upon inferior Degrees, and to lower rather than to elevate, upon the whole, the general average of the attainments of professional men.'

"It is thus represented, that because, which is undoubtedly true, there are men who practise with little or no literary attainment, the general tone of the profession should be lowered, or at least that no attempt should be made to elevate it, because, the expense being thus increased, the number of enlightened Graduates would be diminished, and practice would be surrendered, much more than it is, to those of inferior qualifications. But this reasoning is far from being conclusive. There is, it is to be lamented, too great a disposition in many to prefer

quackery to sound Medical Science; and by those who do so, the literature of Medical men will not be held in much estimation. But as no one would contend that, on this account, quackery should be preferred to knowledge, upon the same ground it would seem that want of literature should not be preferred to learning. In fact, the preparatory education for which some contend, does not interfere in the slightest degree with the Medical; it only tends to make the practitioner a more enlightened man, and it is not easy to see how the acquisition of it should have the effect which Dr. Alison and the Faculty assign to it. But the presumption is, that, upon the whole, the possession of it would prove an advantage, and would gain, among the thinking part of the community, a decided preference for those who enjoyed it. At present it is found, that although many may practise with inferior Degrees, they consider it as an object to get the highest Degree; and this can arise solely from the conviction that the having such a Degree would increase their respectability and their practice." (*Appendix to General Report*, p. 188.)

After some further remarks on parts of the Evidence, the Commissioners continue as follows:—

“ But it is requisite to bring under notice what some most enlightened physicians have asserted on the other side.

“ Dr. John Thomson states to us, that ‘ the improvement of the literary and scientific education of candidates for Medical Degrees might, I think, be effected by requiring of young men entering on the study of Medicine, with the intention of graduating, that they shall have received a proper preliminary education, consisting of a competent knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, and of the elementary parts of Mathematics; by making Natural Philosophy a necessary branch of the education of candidates for Medical Degrees; and by encouraging them to study other branches of liberal education, such as Logic and Moral Philosophy, either previously or subsequently to their entering on their Medical Studies. The importance of these elementary branches of education to Students of Medicine arises, I conceive, not only from the tendency which their cul-

tivation has to open, enlarge and strengthen the understanding, but also from a competent knowledge of them being absolutely necessary to enable Students to comprehend readily those lectures and books through which their professional information must be obtained.' Dr. Thomson adds, 'I am far, however, from thinking that it should be required of Medical Graduates that they should be profound scholars, or deeply versed in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, or Metaphysics; but I entertain no doubt whatever, that they who have previously gone through the mental discipline necessary for acquiring a competent knowledge of these branches of education, must enter on their Medical Studies, and pursue them with their minds infinitely better prepared for acquiring professional knowledge, than those who have not received such a preparatory education. The degree of preliminary knowledge, in Latin, Greek, and Mathematics, which I conceive to be necessary for Students of Medicine, can be easily attained, I believe, in every part of these kingdoms; and the time of Students, I am convinced, would be much more profitably employed in acquiring some knowledge of these branches, than in serving, as many of them do, long, useless, and expensive apprenticeships in the performance of mechanical and menial services.' . . 'I have no doubt that if this were done, after two or three years, every young man who came to the University would be prepared with those preliminary branches of knowledge which had been declared to be requisite.'

"Dr. Abercrombie, who is at the head of the Profession, and has had ample opportunities of knowing the circumstances and views of Medical Students, states, that his opinion as to preliminary education, is, that 'there should be an accurate acquaintance with the Latin and French languages, and Natural Philosophy; and afterwards, as collateral branches, a knowledge of Moral Philosophy and Logic.'

Dr. Abercrombie appears to have made a distinction between subjects which ought to be accurately known, and others of which a less accurate knowledge would be sufficient. In the "Evidence", a little before that part from which the preceding

extract has been taken, by the Commissioners, the following reply was given by Dr. Abercrombie to a question respecting the "previous Education" to be required for a Degree:—

"The first point which occurs to me, as worthy of attention, is an improvement in the preliminary education of Medical Students; particularly, that when they come forward, they should be very correctly acquainted with the Latin and French languages, with the Elements of Mathematics, and some competent knowledge of Greek; likewise, Natural Philosophy, particularly if it is taught in the more popular way, that is, by means of experiment, and not rendered abstruse by means of the higher Mathematics. There are two other branches, which appear to me to be of great importance, though I would not properly call them preliminary; I mean Moral Philosophy and Logic. With regard to Moral Philosophy, I think it cannot be studied with advantage, by a boy of the age of 16 or 17, when preliminary studies are gone through; and with regard to Logic, which is of great moment for a medical man, perhaps it cannot be studied with advantage, until the mind is previously well informed as to the facts of Physical and Moral Science, to which its rules are to be applied. So that those two branches might perhaps be called collateral, rather than preliminary, and should be taken as a part of the course of study, but at a more advanced period."

"Dr. Davidson (continue the Commissioners) thus delivers his sentiments: 'The first subject that attracted my attention, in reflecting upon the education of Medical Graduates, was that of preliminary instruction, for which but very slight provision is made in the *Statuta Solennia* of this University, an acquaintance with Latin being only required.' . . . 'I conceive that the branches of preparatory education should be Greek, Latin, French and Mathematics; whilst Natural Philosophy, Logic, Moral Philosophy, and Natural History, may be acquired, either before beginning the study of Medicine, or may be attended to along with the Medical Classes. I presume that although Natural Philosophy, Logic and Ethics, will probably be studied either at this or some other University, Languages, with Mathematics, may be acquired wherever any such instruction can be procured: and that the proficiency of the Students in those branches of

knowledge may be certified either by Diplomas, Certificates from respectable Schools or Academies, or by their undergoing an Examination by the Professors of this University. If I were asked the reasons for recommending a more extensive preliminary education for Medical Graduates, I should be puzzled, not from the difficulty of discovering them, but from the fear of that ridicule which attaches itself to advancing arguments in favour of an opinion which is so manifestly correct as to require no support. . . . 'Experience has convinced me that those students whose minds have been previously cultivated, make the most steady and rapid progress in their new pursuits, which are much less difficult to them than to those who are totally unscientific, and deficiently educated. I know, besides, that it is a common subject of regret among most Physicians, as it is with myself, that they did not make use of youth, leisure, and opportunity in laying a broad and deep foundation of general knowledge on which to rest their Medical acquirements. I may be permitted to add, that were I not convinced of the necessity for a liberal education preliminary to the study of Medicine, I should surrender my doubts to the authority of much wiser men in England, Ireland, France, Germany, and Italy, by whose influence it has been established in the Medical Schools of those countries; nor should I be inclined to submit less willingly to the decision of the Faculty of Arts in this College, who strongly recommended a preparatory education for the Medical Graduates, in a memorial presented, I believe, to the *Senatus Academicus*.' " (*Appendix to General Report*, p. 189).

To the foregoing Extracts from the Evidence of Eminent Physicians, given by the Commissioners in their "Appendix to the General Report," it may be well to add the opinions of another class of Practitioners. I find that, (the Right Honourable Lord Binning, who signed the Report as Earl of Haddington, being in the chair) :

"William Wood, Esq., a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh", delivered his sentiments on the same subject in the following terms:—

"By the new regulations, I observe that, at a private examination, previously to their being examined upon strict professional

knowledge, the candidates are to be tried as to their knowledge of Latin. So far it seems an improvement. But I would remark, with the exception of Latin, there is no regulation made to secure a knowledge of any of those branches of education, which I look upon as necessary for a Doctor of Medicine. There is no mention made of *Greek*. I conceive every man, who is to be a Graduate in the University of Edinburgh, or of any other respectable College, ought to have a knowledge of Greek. I do not mean to say that a man cannot practise Medicine in any of its branches who has not learned Greek; but I think his acquisition of professional knowledge will be much facilitated by it: and his education will not be considered as perfect, and he will not hold that respectable situation among medical men, or in society, which a Graduate of this University should hold, without a knowledge of this language. With regard to the Modern Languages, I do not know that I have to say anything, except that I look upon French as indispensable; I believe it is generally attained by students. I think the German and Italian would be useful accomplishments, but I do not think that they should be made essential. I look upon a knowledge of Mathematics as quite essential, before a young man enters upon his Medical education. It is not possible for pupils to pick up a knowledge of Anatomy, Chemistry, or any of the other branches, without a proper knowledge of Mathematics. Next to Mathematics, I conceive Natural Philosophy to be quite essential. I conceive that every Medical man, and particularly every Doctor of Medicine, ought to have a knowledge of Natural Philosophy, to enable him to understand professional subjects, particularly Physiology. There are two other branches which I consider likewise that a Graduate of the University ought to be acquainted with; I do not call them preliminary exactly, for perhaps it were better they were not taken at so early an age as that at which young men generally begin to study Medicine; I allude to *Logic* and *Moral Philosophy*. I conceive it to be of importance that a medical man, obtaining the highest honours in the profession, should understand Logic and Moral Philosophy. My reason for not mentioning them among the preliminaries is, that I think it would be more advantageous that Moral Philo-

sophy should be taken at a more advanced age ; and perhaps Logic is somewhat in the same situation. I consider it a defect in the regulations now in existence that they do not enforce attendance upon these."

With respect to the preliminary Education of Surgeons, Mr. Wood says—"I conceive Latin and Greek, and I may mention French, as it is an accomplishment so generally acquired ; Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, to be essentially necessary ; I would almost add Logic and Moral Philosophy. I really think the education of a Surgeon very defective indeed if it does not include these branches. In speaking of Logic and Moral Philosophy, I should mention that I speak with decision ; because these branches were not so commonly taken in the days I studied, and I have felt the disadvantage of not having got them, as I might or should have done." (*"Evidence Oral and Documentary,"* vol. i. page 335.")

And George Bell, Esq., Surgeon, gave his opinion thus :—

"In the first place they (Candidates for Degrees in Medicine) should produce either their degree of A.M., or testimonials of their having made proficiency equivalent to that degree in Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Logic, and Moral Philosophy ; or they ought to be examined by competent judges as to those points. I think French also would be a valuable acquirement, and Natural History ought to be attended in the course of the Curriculum. Secondly, they should give proofs of being acquainted with their own language." (*"Evidence Oral and Documentary,"* vol. i. page 447.)

The Commissioners thus proceed :—"There is much other evidence to the same effect, but it is sufficient to point out the leading views upon the subject ; the particular grounds of opinion it would be impossible, within the limits of this Report, to detail. The conclusion to be deduced seems unquestionably to be decidedly in favour of a superior preliminary education to that which is now required. This can be obtained, apparently, without the slightest hardship ; the more elementary parts of it being procured previously to the commencement of Medical studies, and the more advanced during the prosecution of those studies ; an arrangement which it is

in evidence could without difficulty be made. It would thus not be essential that there should be a Degree of Master of Arts, but merely that there should be an acquaintance with the learned languages and other branches of knowledge; and by combining with the Medical Classes what can be acquired only at a University, the residence in Edinburgh would not be prolonged. The character of the Medical Profession would thus be much raised, and provision made, as has been already stated, for spreading throughout the country enlightened and well-informed men, who might be instrumental in increasing to a great degree the advantages to be derived from social intercourse, while they would have access to sources of enjoyment peculiarly valuable in the sequestered situation in which many Medical Practitioners must spend the great part of life."

The conclusion, the Commissioners arrived at, is thus expressed in the "General Report," p. 56 :—

"On the subject of the Preliminary Education which should be required of candidates for Degrees in Medicine, we have had much deliberation, and received a great deal of evidence. It has appeared to us to be a matter of great importance that the persons who are to practise Medicine should be men of enlightened minds, accustomed to exercise their intellectual powers, and familiar with habits of accurate observation and cautious reflection; and that they should be possessed of such a degree of literary acquirement as may secure the respect of those with whom they are to associate in the exercise of their profession. We therefore thought it an indispensable qualification for a Medical Degree that the individual should have some reasonable acquaintance with the Greek and Latin languages, and with Mathematics and Philosophy; and though strong doubts have been expressed by many of the Medical Professors as to the expediency of rendering this an essential condition, from an apprehension that it might prevent many persons from taking the benefit of the instruction in Medical Science to be obtained in the Universities, we have found our opinion on this point confirmed by every one of the eminent Physicians and Surgeons, not belonging to the Universities, whom we examined, as well as by some of the Professors themselves; while we have

also been fully satisfied, by a due consideration of the matter itself, and of the evidence before us, that there is no solid ground for the apprehensions entertained.

“The necessity of some knowledge of Latin is universally admitted. The great importance of a competent acquaintance with the Greek language seems to be clearly established by the nature of the Medical Nomenclature, and by the fact that some of the books of Medicine, which are still of authority, are in that language; and no doubt has been expressed to us by any one as to the great assistance, in his Medical pursuits, which the Student must derive from having been previously instructed in Mathematics and the different branches of Philosophy. Taking, at the same time, a more general view of the subject, it has appeared to us that unless a man has passed through a course of education, embracing in some reasonable degree all these departments of knowledge, there can be no security that he possesses the enlargement of understanding which is alike necessary to guard him against rashness of speculation in practice, and to preserve the correctness and delicacy of personal conduct which the duties of a Physician so peculiarly require. And we are also of opinion, that as the Degree of Doctor in Medicine obtained in a University is a dignity conferred, not by the Professors of Medical Science alone, but also by all the Professors of Literature and Philosophy, it would be inconsistent with the nature of such Graduation that the distinction should be bestowed without any inquiry into the attainments of the persons receiving it in Classical Learning or Philosophical Science.

“An idea seems to be entertained by persons of great respectability, that the character of the Universities, as Schools of Medicine, is to be measured by the number of Degrees which are conferred by them; and that if any considerable extent of previous education were required, fewer persons would apply for them, Licenses to practice would be obtained elsewhere, and the number of Students attending the Universities would be greatly diminished. But, while we should not be satisfied of the sufficiency of this objection, even though the principle of it were well founded, and humbly think that it would go far to

sanction laxity of examination in general, we are of opinion that it is not correct in principle, or at all supported by experience. It appears to us that the reputation of a University does not depend on the *number* of the Degrees which are granted by it, but must depend entirely on the nature of the qualifications which the possession of such Degrees implies in the persons on whom they are conferred: and, being satisfied of the truth of this proposition, we see no good ground for thinking that, by raising the value of the Degree in Medicine in the Scotch Universities, we shall thereby lessen the demand for it; on the contrary, the only consequences which we can anticipate from any regulations reasonably laid down for this object are, that the Students will come to the study of Medicine better prepared to profit by the instructions they receive, and that there will be a more general desire to obtain a Degree in these Universities, when it has thus been rendered the more sure introduction to professional success or eminence." (*General Report*, p. 57.)

And the Report on Preliminary Education is ended in the following words:—

"After full consideration of this subject, and referring to the whole evidence relating to it, we have come to the resolution that a certain preliminary education in Literature and Philosophy ought to be required of all candidates for the Degree of Doctor in Medicine. We do not, however, propose to require that they shall have gone through the Curriculum of Arts in the University, but only that they shall, at the time of being taken on trials for the Degree, possess the information which the regulation prescribes.

"We have resolved accordingly, 'That the general attainments of Candidates for the Degree of Doctor in Medicine should embrace a competent knowledge in Latin, Greek, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy; and that this knowledge should be ascertained by an Examination, to be conducted by the Examiners for Degrees in Arts, in such works as shall be fixed by the Faculty of Arts, which Examination must take place previously to the Examination for the Medical Degree,

except in the cases where the Candidates have the Degree of Bachelor of Arts'." (*General Report*, p. 57)

Medical Education.—The foregoing observations are followed in the "General Report" (page 59) by an exposition of the opinion the Commissioners were led to form "respecting the course of study in the science of Medicine which ought to be followed by persons desirous of obtaining a Degree." Into the details of the recommendations made it is unnecessary to enter here, as the subject will come under observation incidentally in the sequel. It may be stated, however, that the Commissioners recommended four years as the period of Medical Study. They, at the same time, expressed the opinion that for the Degree of Doctor the term of study ought to be longer; but they did not think it prudent that the more lengthened course of study should then (1831) be enforced (p. 61).

Examinations.—Closely connected with the extent of Education, whether general or professional, is the method of Examination, for it is clearly of little use to prescribe extended and well devised plans of study unless the test applied to the attainments of the Student is adapted to support and develop those plans. As already shown, it was part of the "resolution" of the Commissioners with respect to the Examination into the general attainments of students, that the Examination should "be conducted by the Examiners for Degrees in Arts, in such works as shall be fixed by the Faculty of Arts." In explanation of the term "Examiners in Arts," it should be mentioned that a previous recommendation had been made to the effect that other persons than the Professors should examine for the Degrees in Arts, in these words:—"That Examiners for Degrees, not being Professors, should be appointed by the Senatus Academicus," and—"That every Examiner should be precluded from examining any Candidate who has been one of his own pupils." (*General Report*, pp. 40, 41).

The reasoning of the Commissioners on the proper conduct of Examinations for Degrees is contained in two parts of their "General Report." The more general observations, which equally apply to Degrees in all subjects, occur in discussing the

proper method of Examination for the Degrees in Arts, and some additional remarks having special application are made with reference to Medical Degrees. Both passages will be cited, in order fully to develop the views of the Commissioners on this subject. The views of such a body are now especially important, for, besides their immediate reference to the Examination for Degrees, they may be said to have direct bearing on the propriety of empowering Professors, as proposed in this Bill, to take part in the Examination of their own pupils for the Letters Testimonial of Medical Practitioners. At page 43 of the Report, the Commissioners write thus:—

“When the Candidates are examined by the Professors, there is always the greatest risk that the Examinations will degenerate into a mere form. The qualifications of many will be known to the Professors. The Professors will naturally be disposed to be easily satisfied in regard to the qualifications of those who acquitted themselves to their satisfaction as Students; and even if more rigorously conducted, the Examinations will naturally be made to correspond to the proficiency acquired in the Classes, and confined to the particular topics introduced in their respective Lectures. The character of the Professors will in fact be engaged in the success of the Candidate. Each will be examining his own pupils. His eminence as a teacher will be interested in the result, and the necessary bias of the mind will be to make the Degree the reward of the exertions and progress made in the class. Higher attainments will not be deemed necessary, and the Degree would thus soon become merely a reward for eminence in the Classes, without requiring greater exertion, or encouraging greater acquisitions in knowledge. We apprehend that any approach to such a state of things would counteract the objects which we have in view, and that the Degree would be so indiscriminately conferred that it would never be an object of ambition, or be raised in public estimation. The experience which has already occurred as to the Scotch Universities, demonstrates the truth of these remarks, and affords conclusive reasons for apprehending that the value of the Degree will not be raised, if the Examination of Candidates shall be left in the hands of the Pro-

fessors." * * "The nature of the duty of examining Candidates for Degrees appears to us also to be very different from that which the Professor has to discharge in examining his class. Indeed the very situation in which the Professors stand as instructors, seems likely to disqualify them from the peculiar duty of examining for Degrees, however great their individual eminence may be. When daily examining a great number of Students, the attainments of many of whom must be greatly inferior to the qualifications necessary for Degrees, it is hardly possible that the Professor should not form a certain fixed estimate of the average standard of the talents and knowledge of his class, and conduct his Examination for Degrees with reference to it. We are of opinion that the Examination for Degrees should be conducted both by a much more searching inquiry, and with a view of securing attainments of a higher order; and if provisions directed to this object, such as the appointment of separate Examiners, should lead to some intermediate study after the termination of the fourth Session, and before the Degree is taken, our object will only be more effectually attained.

"The appointment of separate Examiners for this special duty, appears to us to be essentially necessary for the success of any scheme intended to raise the value and the practical usefulness of the Degrees conferred by the Scotch Universities. It has been thought that there might be some difficulty in obtaining persons properly qualified to be Examiners; but if that is the case, it is an additional proof that the system of Education, as at present conducted in the Universities, stands much in need of improvement."

The following observations are made under the head, "Examiners for Medical Degrees:"—

"The Examinations for Degrees in Medicine have hitherto been conducted by the Members of the Medical Faculty, exclusive of the Professors of the Medical Classes recently instituted by the Crown, and each Candidate has been required to pay a sum of Ten Guineas, which is divided equally among the Examining Professors.

"We are of opinion that this system is liable to very serious

objections. The emoluments of the Professors who examine, ought not to depend on the number of Candidates for Degrees. At present, the fees drawn by the several Professors from this source are very considerable, in consequence of the great number of Candidates; and it appears from the evidence that the number of Degrees conferred has been continually increasing during many years, in a proportion much greater than corresponds to the rate of increase in the number of Students attending the Medical School of Edinburgh.

“No explanation has been given of this extraordinary increase in the number of Degrees, and we are satisfied that it cannot be accounted for from any external causes. We are of opinion that the present system has a necessary tendency to render the Examinations less strict than they might otherwise be, and practically to lower the standard of qualifications in the estimation of the Faculty. It is, besides, scarcely to be doubted that there must be a natural reluctance in Professors to reject Candidates, to many of whom the fees paid to the Examiners may be a very serious sacrifice. Although most of the Professors in the Medical Faculty entertain opinions adverse to any extension of the subjects of examination, and are strongly impressed with the idea that the importance and value of the University as a School of Medicine, ought to be estimated by the number of the Degrees annually conferred, an entirely different opinion has been strongly expressed by all the other Physicians and Surgeons whom we have examined, being persons very extensively engaged in the practice of their profession. It should seem to us, that the value of the Degree must bear a proportion to the nature of the qualifications required for it: and we have already observed that it does not appear to us that either the reputation of the University as a School of Medicine, or the number of Students resorting to it for instruction, will be regulated merely by the number of those who may obtain Degrees.” (*General Report*, p. 64.)

And now, Sir, arises a question—indispensable to the discussion of the proposal to give increased privileges to the Professors of some Universities which will find its place in the sequel—as to the influence the above-cited Report of the Royal

Commissioners has had on those Institutions to which it particularly referred. I believe it will be found that up to the present time none of the recommendations have been adopted. And as to the examination into the preliminary education of candidates for Degrees, it continues the same as the Commissioners (Report, p. 59) state it to have been before their inquiry—extending to the Latin language, and conducted by the Medical Professors.

The labours of the Commissioners have, however, not been without their influence, though the influence has been exercised in another place than that intended or contemplated. This will appear from the following statement of facts:—

A few years after the date of the “Report,” a vote for an Address to the Crown to grant to the Institution, now called University College, London, a Charter of Incorporation, with power to grant Degrees, passed the House of Commons; and some discussion arose concerning the manner in which the vote should be carried out, in consequence of two objections raised by the Government. One of these referred to the claim other Colleges would have for privileges of the same kind. *The other objection (which is material to the present purpose), was the unwillingness to confer on Professors the power of granting Degrees to their own pupils; and this impediment was suggested by the Report of the Royal Commissioners for visiting the Universities in Scotland.* After a little time, the Government proposed to establish a Metropolitan University which should have the power to confer Degrees on the pupils of several Colleges and Schools, the Examiners being appointed independently of the Colleges and of the Teachers. This plan was objected to on various grounds by many of the founders of the Institution in whose favour the vote in the House of Commons was carried; but the objections were not pressed, in consequence, it was understood, of a paper published at the time by the Professors. A short extract from that document will afford contemporary evidence of the facts here stated. After arguing on the increased diffusion of sound education in the country likely to result from the influence over many Colleges of a body controlled and directed by the Government, and the utility of

competition between the pupils of different schools, it continues thus :—

“ The Government plan removes a difficulty which has been felt whenever the subject of a Charter has been discussed. The Professors will not have to confer Degrees upon their own pupils. It is right enough that teachers should examine their pupils, in order to judge of their proficiency, or even determine their relative merit amongst themselves ; but there is an obvious objection to teachers conferring upon their own pupils titles of honour which are to pass current in the world at large. They are under a temptation to lower the standard of their honours ; and even if they conscientiously maintain it at a proper height, they are always exposed to suspicion.” *

The University of London was founded ; and, in conformity with the practice in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with respect to most Degrees, the functions of the University consist in determining the qualifications to be required of Candidates for Degrees in Arts, Law, and Medicine, as well as in examining and in conferring the Degrees ; while to the Colleges and Schools education is committed.

A short abstract of the “ Regulations respecting the Degrees in Medicine,” will show that the views of the Senate of the newly-formed University are in conformity with the recommendations made by the Royal Commissioners for visiting the Universities of Scotland, with respect to the subjects discussed in this letter, and that they are, in fact, an extension of them.

It is required of all Candidates for Degrees in Medicine (with the exception of those who had commenced their Medical Studies before the promulgation of the regulations) that they shall have passed a Preliminary or “ Matriculation Examination,” as a test of their General Education before they are allowed to enter on the prescribed course of professional study.

The Matriculation Examination is conducted by Examiners in Arts ; and it includes the Greek, Latin, and English languages ;

* “ Address from the Senate to the Council of the University of London, (now University College), on the proposed establishment of a Metropolitan University.” Signed—“ Somerset, Chairman.” London : Taylor. 1835.

the Elements of Mathematics, some Natural Philosophy, and History.

For the Degree of Bachelor of Medicine, the Candidate is required to have attended at a School of Medicine during four years after the time at which the Matriculation Examination has been passed. The Subjects of Examination are divided into two classes, which may be called Elementary and Practical. In the former are included Anatomy, Chemistry, Botany, and Materia Medica. The latter comprises Medicine, Surgery, Midwifery, Forensic Medicine, and Physiology, with some Comparative Anatomy. The Examinations for the first class of subjects are held at the end of two years, and those for the second class at the expiration of the full period of four years.

The Bachelor of Medicine is admitted to examination for the degree of Doctor in two years, if the time has been spent in a Hospital; or in five years, if the candidate has been engaged in private practice. The Examination for this, the highest degree includes Practical Medicine, the Elements of Intellectual Philosophy, Logic, and Moral Philosophy. But those candidates who have taken a Degree in Arts at a University are examined in Practical Medicine only.

The Examiners, except those who are Members of the Senate, are appointed from year to year by the Senate of the University, and they have no interest in the number of the degrees conferred. The Examinations are conducted in writing. There is likewise an oral examination in each subject; and in some, as Anatomy, a practical one. The written questions are published.*

Having thus, Sir, placed before you the reasoning and the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners as regards the amount of education which ought to be required for Degrees in Medicine in Scotland, and with respect to the manner of conducting Examinations; having also shown the recognition of the Commissioners' recommendations by the Government; and having stated the course of Education prescribed, together with the manner of conducting Examinations by the

* "Papers—London University; ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 5th August, 1840."—"London University Calendar," 1845.

University of London, acting under the Government (for I believe the acts of that body are subject to the revision of the Secretary of State for the Home Department), I now return to the provisions made with regard to the preliminary and professional Education for University Degrees, in the "Bill for regulating the Profession of Physic and Surgery."

The twenty-second clause runs thus :—

"And be it Enacted, That after the *passing of this Act* it shall not be lawful for any University of the said United Kingdom to confer any Degree in the faculty of Medicine, except by special license of the Council of Health, upon any person, unless he shall have been matriculated in the same University, and shall have duly attended the courses of public lectures prescribed by the same University to Students in Medicine at the seat of the same University, or in the case of the University of London, at some Medical School recognised by and in connexion with that University, during at least *Two* Years after he shall have been matriculated in the same University, and shall have been examined at some time before the grant of such Degree by the proper Examiners of such University, and found by them to possess competent skill and knowledge of Medicine, and of the sciences connected therewith, and of the English and Latin languages at least; and every Diploma or certificate of a Medical Degree granted by any such University after the *passing of this Act*, shall set forth distinctly the time which has elapsed since the matriculation of the person to whom such degree shall be granted, and the time during which, and place where he shall have actually studied as aforesaid, and the fact that he has passed such examination as last aforesaid."

An alteration has been made in this clause from the Bill introduced last year, by confining the term of Medical Education required to the seat of the University granting the degree, except in the case of the University of London.* The alteration which

* In the Bill of last year the clause ran thus :—"And be it Enacted, That after the *passing of this Act* it shall not be lawful for any University of the said United Kingdom to confer any Degree in the faculty of Medicine upon any person, unless he shall have been matriculated in the same University, and shall have duly attended

has been made requires remark; but as there is no connexion between it and the subjects noticed in the foregoing extracts from the Report of the Commissioners on Scotch Universities, the other provisions of the clause will more conveniently come under observation in the first instance.

The clause is marked in the margin "RESTRICTION ON MEDICAL DEGREES;" and it was so marked in the former Bill. I have failed to discover in what University the provisions with respect to the most important points, viz., the duration of Medical Education and the amount of General Acquirements, could act as a restriction. As to the extent of *Medical Education* which the Bill would sanction, little need be said here, inasmuch as this is a point which usage in the profession will determine. The general tendency of the clause will sufficiently appear from the fact that the Society of Apothecaries in London require that the candidate for their License shall have followed a defined and regularly registered Course of Attendance in a School of Medicine and Hospital during *Three Years*, superadded to an apprenticeship. The duration of the apprenticeship is five years, but it is permitted that attendance on a School of Medicine during the prescribed period (three years) should form part of the term of apprenticeship; and this has been actually the practice in many cases during the last few years. Under this arrangement it might be fairly said, that, inasmuch as the apprentice gained a necessary acquaintance with practical pharmacy and minor details, which caused one year of the two allotted exclusively to apprenticeship to be not unprofitably spent, the education of a Licentiate Apothecary is equivalent to about four years at a School of Medicine.

Neither can I find evidence that the Examination in the Latin and English languages would in name at least be a restriction. The Universities of England and Ireland demand of the candidate for a Degree in Medicine a much larger amount the courses of public lectures prescribed by the same University to Students in Medicine within the precincts of the same University, or of some Medical School recognised by and in connexion with the same University, during at least *Two Years* next before the granting of such Degree, and shall have been examined." The marginal note of the clause when in this shape was "Restriction on Medical Degrees."

of preliminary education. Those of Scotland require as much ; and there is no body in the kingdom charged with the Examination into the fitness of persons for any branch of the Profession which requires less.

But if not restrictive, this clause is susceptible of another, even an opposite interpretation ; for if privileges of a particular kind cannot be given except under certain conditions, it is evident that, the conditions being complied with, the privileges may follow, if it should be the will of those in whom the power is vested to concede them ; and thus it becomes virtually, though not technically, an "enabling clause." That it can have no other effect is evident ; that it is likely to be acted upon, and was probably intended for this purpose will hereafter appear. In this view the provisions of the clause can have no other than a prejudicial tendency ; a tendency, in the words of the Commissioners, when speaking of a similar amount of Education, to lower "the general tone of the profession."

To point out, in detail, that the amount of attainment for the University Degrees which this part of the Bill would sanction in no way conforms with that recommended by the Royal Commissioners, is unnecessary. So far from having any such conformity, it is, on the contrary, nearly identical (as far as Preliminary Education is concerned) with that required in the Scotch Universities before and since the date of the Commission—the insufficiency of which was so fully demonstrated by the Commissioners. And if the provisions in question be compared with the actual practice in various Universities, and even in other Corporations concerned in directing the Education of Medical Practitioners, of any class, in the United Kingdom, the injurious tendency above ascribed to these intended enactments will not be less apparent. In the following statement, reference will be made only to Preliminary Education.

The Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin, require of those who are to Graduate in Medicine either that they shall have taken the Degree of B.A., or that they shall have received a certain extent of Education in Arts in a College of the University.

The Matriculation Examination in the University of London,

which must be passed before the Medical Course begins, includes, as stated at a former part of this Letter, the Greek, Latin, and English languages, the elements of Mathematics, with some Natural Philosophy and History.

The Universities of Scotland demand an acquaintance with the Latin language.

The Society of Apothecaries in London likewise enforce an Examination in Latin for their License; and the Society recommend that the Student shall be acquainted, likewise, with the Greek and French languages, and the Elements of Mathematics.*

The College of Surgeons, in Ireland, require of the Candidate for their Letters Testimonial, "a Certificate from the Examiners of the College, that he has passed an Examination as to his acquaintance with the Greek and Latin languages."†

The Preliminary Examination of Apothecaries, in Ireland, is stated, as follows, in their rules:—

"Every Candidate for the *Certificate of Apprentice* will be examined in the following Books:—the Works of Sallust; the first six Books of the *Æneid* of Virgil; the Satires and Epistles of Horace; the Greek Testament; the Dialogues of Lucian; the first four Books of Homer's *Iliad*; the first six Books of *Telemachus*, or the History of Charles the Twelfth (in French); the first two Books of Euclid; and Algebra—to simple Equations."‡

It will not be irrelevant to insert here an account of the primary Education required of those embarking in the Medical Profession in France, where increased attention has been given to this subject within the last few years. Before the Medical Studies begin to date, the Pupil must have been admitted a Bachelor of Letters (*Bachelier ès-lettres*). This regulation, as far as regards the time at which the "diploma" of Bachelor must be obtained, appears to have come into force in 1836.§ To qualify for admission to the Examination for Bachelor

* "Regulations," &c., 1841.

† "Bye-laws relative to the Education and Examination of Candidates for Letters Testimonial, and Fellowship."

‡ "Laws regarding the Education of Apothecaries." November, 1844.

§ "Nul ne peut être admis à prendre sa première inscription dans une faculté de

of Letters, attendance at any particular School, or College, is not required. The Subjects of Examination are the following:—The Greek and Latin languages, Rhetoric, History, and Geography, with some Mental Philosophy, and the Elements of Mathematics and Physics. At a certain period of the attendance at the School of Medicine, the Student who proposes to qualify for the Degree, must likewise become Bachelor of Science (*Bachelier ès-sciences physiques*). The Examination includes Elementary Geometry, some Algebra, Statics, Chemistry, and Natural History (*Arrêt du 3 Février, 1837, Art. 2*). In the case of the “*Officier de Santé*,” this Examination (for Bachelor of Science) is dispensed with.

From the foregoing statement an inference can be drawn as to the quality of preliminary knowledge which may fairly be demanded of the Candidate for a Medical Degree in England and Ireland. A few words may be necessary as regards Scotland, where the Universities, with the exception of the University of Aberdeen, have always advocated, and still continue to advocate (notwithstanding the Report of the Royal Commission), the lowest amount of previous Education. That no apprehension need be entertained with respect to imposing a liberal preliminary Education on the Graduate of Medicine in that country, will, I think, sufficiently appear from the statement which follows.

“The Marischal College and University of Aberdeen” (it is stated by a Professor of that University*) in the year 1826, required that no Candidate should be admitted to Examination for a Medical Degree, unless he held a Degree in Arts; and having allowed reasonable time to elapse for intimation before enforcing the rule, the University did not alter the regulation till the end of fourteen years, when it was compelled to abandon

médecine (the admission to attend lectures and hospitals), à quelque titre que ce soit, s’il ne justifie du diplôme de bachelier ès-lettres.”—“*Ordonnance du 9 Août 1836.*”

* “Memorandum of a plan for composing one board for licensing General Practitioners in Medicine and Surgery, out of all the existing examining bodies, with suggestions for the improved regulation of Medical Degrees. By a Professor in Marischal College and University of Aberdeen,” (generally known to be the able Professor of Chemistry, Dr. Clark).—London, July, 1842.

it, finding itself unable to maintain the regulation single-handed ; and it experienced the mortification of being obliged to adopt too low a standard of attainment in preliminary Education, although, in fixing on the new Standard, the University still went somewhat above what is demanded in any of the other Universities in Scotland, as well as up to the standard that was required by the London University until the present year ; and, in addition thereto, included some knowledge of General Physical Science, in a manner similar to what had been enacted in the rules of license by the College of Physicians in London.” (*Memorandum, &c.*, page 4.)

In the same paper the Professor writes thus on the subject—“The deficiency of attainments of the Medical Graduates of the Scotch Universities, in preliminary literary and scientific Education, is a defect which a prudent exercise of the constitutional authority of the Crown could most easily remedy, but which, the writer has learned with surprise, the University of Edinburgh has urged the Government to perpetuate” (page 3).

As indicating the kind of Education universal among the members of another widely diffused and frugally endowed profession, it may be mentioned that the Candidates for the Ministry of the Established Church of Scotland are required to attend for a considerable period (and exclusive of their Theological studies) the Classes of Classical Literature and Philosophy in a University or College ; and a similar course of study is enforced for the Clergy of Presbyterian Dissenters also. Indeed, the Royal Commissioners direct attention to the circumstance that a Medical Professor of the University of Edinburgh, in his evidence before them, rested his defence of the scanty amount of general knowledge required for Medical Degrees in that University, not on its adaptation to the state of Scotland, but to the small opportunities of acquiring adequate education in England and Ireland ; from which countries, as the Professor said, “a large proportion of our Graduates come.”—(*Appendix to Report*, page 188.)

But all question on this point is set at rest by the consideration that the Royal Commission, whose Report has been quoted, was composed of Scottish noblemen and gentlemen who formed

their opinions with regard to the course that would befit the Universities of Scotland at the time of their inquiry, after full investigation of the subject in all its bearings; and their opinion on the subject was (to use their own words), "confirmed by every one of the eminent Physicians and Surgeons, not belonging to the Universities, whom they examined, as well as by some of the Professors themselves."

Having made the foregoing statement in support of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, that a liberal preliminary education should be demanded of Candidates for Degrees in Medicine, it remains to determine the time at which the inquiry into the general knowledge of the student may be most advantageously instituted, as well as the method of examination. In England and Ireland the investigation into the preliminary knowledge precedes the Medical Studies, and this is the natural and obvious proceeding. But in Scotland the "Latin Examination" is held at any time during the Medical studies at the option of the pupil; and the same arrangement would be allowed under the "Bill for regulating the profession of Physic and Surgery." The disadvantages of this course—namely, the delay of the examination into the preliminary knowledge of the student—will readily appear by reference to the objects of general education. These have been comprehensively set forth in passages previously cited from the Report of the Commission (*ante*, page 4). They may for the present purpose be briefly stated to be—without making allusion to the more general advantages of a liberal education—that the knowledge acquired enables the young student of Medicine at once to understand the language and the reasoning of science; and that by obtaining an adequate education, the mind, invigorated in the exercise, is enabled to enter without difficulty on the new study. It is well known to every one conversant with Medical education that, to instruct in any branch of Medicine a person whose previous Education is defective, and whose mind has been unaccustomed to application or labour up to the time at which professional studies ought to begin, is a most difficult task. And looking to the real interest of the pupil himself, it must be added that to have been suffered to remain without

incentive to mental exertion in youth, (such an incentive as a proper examination before the commencement of professional studies would afford) is a most serious, and, in many cases, an irremediable evil. For these reasons, I would express the conviction, formed from no inconsiderable experience, that, to abstain from enforcing the examination before the required Medical studies begin to date, would be to forfeit the larger part of the advantages which the examination into the previous education is calculated to confer.

The constitution of the Examining Board is a point of much importance; for any regulation as to the subjects of examination will be valueless unless proper provision is made respecting the Examiners. The Commissioners recommended that the examinations into the general acquirements of the Students should be held by the "Examiners in Arts,"—that is to say, by disinterested persons of proved acquaintance with classical literature and exact science; and not by the Medical Professors, who in deciding on the fitness of the Candidate to enter on the study of Medicine, would, at the same time, have to decide whether or not he was to become their own pupil, and ultimately to receive the Degree at their hands. In the Universities of England and Ireland, it need scarcely be mentioned, the examinations are altogether in the hands of the Examiners in Arts.

I have quoted largely from the Report of the Royal Commissioners on the preliminary education of Candidates for Degrees in Medicine, and have here dwelt at some length on that subject, regarding it—as those who are conversant with Medical Education, and unprejudiced, will admit it to be—as the basis on which all improvement of the profession must rest. There is no such necessity for insisting on the importance of adequate Medical instruction, because there is no striking defect as to its extent in the curriculum of any University; and Medical Teachers, it may be added, cannot anywhere be charged with a proneness to diminish its amount. In concluding this part of the subject, I would observe that, as in England and Ireland the Degree in Medicine implies the possession of a fair amount of attainments in general knowledge, while in Scotland this is not the case, the

present Bill, apparently adopting the Scotch system, would recognise the lowest amount of general education, and in doing so would, at the same time, discountenance the practice of enforcing a higher order of preliminary knowledge, and afford legal sanction and encouragement to any Universities that now, or hereafter, may desire that kind of advantage which results from conferring Degrees on much easier terms than other Universities require.

So far with regard to the proposed Enactments respecting Education.—Reference will now be made to the provision which has been introduced into the present Bill, but was not in the former, namely, that the minimum period of medical study (two years) shall be spent “at the seat of the University” granting the Degree, except in the case of the University of London. This provision appears to be in principle at variance with the ancient practice in Universities of admitting a person from other Universities “ad eundem gradum”—“ut sit eisdem anno, ordine et gradu apud nos [], quibus est apud suos [].” Moreover, a different rule is laid down with regard to a foreign Degree, inasmuch as residence at the seat of the University during a single year (clause 16), is enough to make a Degree granted out of the British dominions available for the purposes of the Bill. The restriction could not, I believe, in any way contribute to an improved education. Now and then a case may arise in which it would have the opposite effect, by compelling a student to take a larger part of his Medical education than he might otherwise be disposed to do, at an indifferent University, rather than at a good School of Medicine.

It now becomes necessary to recite the twenty-third clause of the Bill, which, it may at the outset be observed, is, in its main provisions, linked with and seems a corollary of that which has been under consideration.

“And be it Enacted, That it shall be lawful for any University of the said United Kingdom to grant the Degree of Inceptor in the Faculty of Medicine, subject to the restrictions hereinbefore contained concerning Medical Degrees, to any Student of the same University who shall have attained the age of *Twenty-two* Years; and that every such Graduate

in the Faculty of Medicine, being also examined, and having received Letters Testimonial of his qualification in the manner hereinbefore prescribed in the case of Licentiates in Medicine and Surgery, shall be entitled to be registered by the said Council of Health as an Inceptor in the Faculty of Medicine, with all the rights, privileges and liabilities of a Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery, subject to such general regulations as shall be made by the said Council concerning the registry of Licentiates."

The *degree* of "Inceptor," substituted for "Bachelor" in the new version of the Bill, has never, I believe, been heard of in any University. In the University of Cambridge, the Bachelor of Arts, at a certain time, incepts to become Master, and the Bachelor of Medicine incepts in becoming Doctor of Medicine. The term "Inceptor" is applied to the Candidate for the Degree before he has attained maturity—so to say; and the Inceptor bears the same relation to the Degree he is about to receive that the "Questionist" does to the Bachelorship of Arts.* In the College of Physicians of London, the title "Inceptor Candidate" was applied to the Candidate for the License who passed Examinations before admission to the Degree of Doctor of Medicine at a University. And the person so designated was authorised to enter into practice; but if he failed to take the Degree of Doctor, within a certain limited time, his name was erased from the List of Candidates.†

The term "Inceptor," in each of these cases, and as far as it is in use, implies incompleteness, or an unfinished state, and the actual meaning of the word seems to accord with this use of it. Considering, therefore, that the word is already appropriated to another purpose, and that the interpretation of it would suggest a want, or an unfinished condition, the "Degree of Inceptor of the Faculty of Medicine," would not, I appre-

* The Bachelor of Arts, on taking his degree, is admitted "*ad respondendum questioni.*" The Master of Arts is admitted "*ad incipiendum in Artibus;*" the Bachelor of Physick "*ad intrandum in Medicina;*" the Doctor in Physick "*ad incipiendum in Medicina.*"—"Forms and Proceedings in all Degrees, by Adam Wall, M.A., Fellow of Christ College."

† "Statuta Collegii Medicorum Londinensium, 1811," caput 9. § 18.

hend, be considered a desirable one. There is another and a prior objection to the proposed Degree. It is the objection to creating an additional Degree. Would the new one be higher or lower than the Degree of Bachelor? If lower it would be of no real value to the Licentiate.

Assuming that it will be desired to connect with the Letters Testimonial of the General Practitioner, a Degree already known in Universities, and understood by the public (say Bachelor of Medicine), we may now inquire how far the other provisions of the Bill are calculated to effect this object in an advantageous manner. No doubt can be entertained, when the provisions affecting the qualifications for Degrees in the 22d clause are recalled to mind, that the connexion established in the last recited clause between the Degree and the Letters Testimonial of the General Practitioner would not, as far as the operation of this Bill may be concerned, involve any increase of attainment, however small may be that required for the latter. The association of a Degree with the Letters Testimonial in the manner which may be said to be done in the Bill, namely, without elevating the Licentiate, would certainly have the effect of augmenting the number of the Degrees, and so would promote the interest of those conferring them. And it might prove of some advantage to the possessor of the title of a Degree, if this should pass current with the public for what, under the circumstances, it would not be, a sign of superior attainments; but assuredly such a measure would not promote the real respectability of the profession, or contribute in any way to the advantage of the public.

And when it is considered that the License to practise will be fixed (for this may be assumed) at a minimum of acquirement, and that the University Degree might, under proper arrangements, operate as a stimulus to the Student as well at the Grammar School as at the School of Medicine, to labour for the attainment of more extended knowledge, no inconsiderable injury will be inflicted on the Profession if the means of producing such a result should be lost or impaired. Under suitable restrictions, then, as to the quality of knowledge (*preliminary*

and professional) required for its possession, the acquisition of a Degree would undoubtedly be a source of great improvement to the General Practitioner if it should be—what under the circumstances it could scarcely fail to become—an incitement to increased application. But to obtain a Degree on the same terms, or very nearly the same terms, as the Letters Testimonial, would be nothing more than the purchase of a title intrinsically of no worth.

I have been here led to discuss the extent of the qualification for University Degrees in Medicine, at the same time with the Letters Testimonial in Medicine and Surgery, in consequence of the connexion established between them in the twenty-third and twenty-sixth clauses of the Bill. But the Degree must now be regarded in a different point of view; for it is not to be overlooked that, while it is not required for the license in Medicine and Surgery, its possession is indispensable to the Candidate for Letters Testimonial of the College of Physicians (Clause 16), and it is obviously in connexion with these that the Bill, to be consistent with itself, ought in the first place and chiefly to regard it. Now, the Candidate for the Letters Testimonial of the College of Physicians must have attained the twenty-sixth year of his age before he becomes admissible to examination (Clause 16), and this increase of age beyond the time at which a license for general practice is attainable, is obviously meant to carry with it a proportionate increase of acquirement. But this effect it must fail to have, as far as general knowledge is concerned, if a Degree in Medicine should be conferred with the amount of general education which the Bill would sanction.

It may be said that even if a very low amount of general attainment should be fixed for the Degree connected with the License of the General Practitioner, the proper addition might be made to the Degree immediately required to qualify for examination before the College of Physicians. Such an arrangement would in every point of view be open to serious objection. Should the general education be neglected, or—what will practically amount to the same thing in most cases—should the examination not precede the commencement of Medical studies, the advantage to be derived from early mental training (one great object of

education), and the use or help of a fair extent of literary and scientific acquirements during the study of Medicine, will be lost. Moreover, much of the time which ought to be devoted to professional study will be consumed in getting "made-up to pass," what ought to be in fact, as it is in name, a preliminary examination. Indeed, it is well known by those conversant with the subject, that, when deferred till after the Medical career is advanced, this examination virtually becomes a mere form; for, the rejection of a person of mature age on any other grounds than professional ignorance, is so painful that few Examiners can be found to recommend it.

It will be seen, on reference to a former part of this letter, that the propositions to which objection is here made, were discussed before the Royal Commission. From the evidence before that body, it is apparent that the desire of the Universities of Scotland as represented by the Professors, was to place the Degree within the reach of those who received the smallest amount of preliminary education. The Professors assigned as a reason for not requiring a liberal previous education, that many persons "practise all branches of the profession in all parts of the country with success and reputation" upon "other Degrees, such as Diplomas to Surgeons and Apothecaries, which are obtained by a less expensive [Medical] education than that which is given at a University," and that, therefore, "the effect of making the Degree more difficult of attainment would be to lower rather than to elevate the general average of attainments of professional men." These arguments of the Professors have, so far as England is concerned, long since lost whatever weight might have attached to them when they were submitted to the Commissioners, inasmuch as the education, both General and Medical, of "Surgeons and Apothecaries," gradually improving from that time, has, during several years, been as extended as that of Doctors of Medicine in the Universities of Scotland. And if this were not the case, it is to be presumed that the arrangements to be made for the education of General Practitioners, under the control of the Council of Health, will remove the alleged necessity of depreciating Academical Degrees. Moreover, if at the time the

Royal Commission was engaged in its inquiries, the attainments required for the Degree were in advance of those required for the Diploma of the Surgeon or General Practitioner (and there can be no doubt they were), ought they not at present and in future to be equally in advance, so as to attain the alleged object of the Professors—namely, “to elevate the general average of the attainments of Medical men?” They are, however, no longer so in Scotland; for, while the education for the Diploma or License has been much raised, that for the Degree has been nearly stationary; and both forms of qualification are now on the same level as to the extent both of general and professional acquirement.

The Commissioners, it has been shown (page 5), forcibly combated the views of the Professors, on the subject of general education, and the Commissioners “found their opinion on this point confirmed by every one of the eminent Physicians and Surgeons, not belonging to the Universities, whom they examined, as well as by some of the Professors themselves.”—(*General Report*, page 56.) Yet, with those views of the Professors, the provisions of the twenty-second and twenty-third clauses of the Bill, are in accordance. They contemplate the association of Academical honours with the License in Medicine and Surgery; and, apparently to effect this object, the attainments for the University Degree are permitted to be so low, that no curriculum of study that will be named for the License, by the Council of Health, can be lower than that which it is now proposed to sanction for University Degrees, by legislative enactment. The age, indeed, is different by a year; but additional age in itself, it must be remembered, does not necessarily imply additional attainment, and any tendency which it may have in that direction, is easily avoided by the Student making the commencement of his Medical studies a year later.

The accordance between the provisions of the Bill and the arguments of the Professors submitted to the Royal Commissioners who visited the Universities of Scotland, is not, I believe, to be considered accidental, as I find that in a series of “Clauses respecting Scottish Universities,” which “the Medical Professors

of Edinburgh and Glasgow " had an opportunity of adding to "The Heads of a Bill for regulating the practice of Medicine and Surgery" (the rough draft of the present and former Bill) the following propositions occur :—

"The Education of Bachelors of Medicine to consist—

"First, of an *equal amount of General Education* with that to be required of General Practitioners under the Act."

"Second, of an amount of Professional Study somewhat greater than is to be required of Candidates for the License of General Practitioners."

Again, as regards Doctors of Medicine :—"The Examination on General Studies to be taken at any time during or before his Professional Studies as the Candidate chooses."

And in another part of the same paper it is proposed that the holders of the Bachelors' Degrees from the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow shall have the privileges of General Practitioners.—But of this hereafter.

Thus it appears that the same low standard of Preliminary Education, made low with the same object, namely, to place the Degree within the easy reach of the greatest possible number, though repudiated by the Royal Commissioners for visiting the Universities of Scotland fifteen years ago, is now (notwithstanding that much improvement has in the mean time been made with respect to Education in different branches of the Profession) virtually embodied in the "Bill for regulating the Profession of Physic and Surgery," to influence the course of study in the Universities of the United Kingdom—to become law for the Empire.

This discussion may be closed in the words of a Scottish Professor, whose experience with respect to the General Education required for Medical Degrees, has been already referred to (page 27). "It is respectfully suggested that the taking out of the License should be made imperative on every Practitioner in Medicine and Surgery, in order to entitle him to legal recognition as such in any part of the United Kingdom, while the taking the University Degree should be voluntary; and that every reasonable precaution should be adopted to insure that the University Degree shall never come to be lowered to the

standard of the mere License. Nobody that knows the practical working of the Scotch Universities, and is aware of the weaknesses as well as the excellencies of their system, will believe that strong precautions for this purpose are superfluous."—(*Memorandum*, &c., page 2).

One other material point must be noticed before parting from the twenty-third clause. It is that the connection there established between the examination for the Degree, and for the License, (making one necessary, under certain circumstances, to the attainment of the other), brings them within the meaning of the twenty-sixth clause, which it is best to recite in extenso:—

"And be it Enacted, That where by this Act it is provided that the concurrence of more than one body is required for qualifying any person to be registered by the said Council, the examination before such bodies for his Degree or Letters Testimonial, or both, may be conducted either separately before Examiners appointed by each body, or before a joint Board of Examiners, to be appointed by each body separately or conjointly, and the Examiners shall be appointed in such number, manner, and form, and shall hold their examinations at such times and places as such bodies shall, with the approval of the said Council, agree from time to time among themselves, or as shall be determined by the said Council with respect to any point in which they shall not be agreed; and where there shall be separate examinations on different subjects before Examiners appointed by each body, the subjects and fees of examination shall be divided among such bodies as they shall from time to time agree among themselves, or as the said Council from time to time shall determine with respect to any point on which they shall not be agreed."

The Degree of Bachelor or Doctor of Medicine being necessary to qualify for the Examination for the Letters Testimonial of the College of Physicians (clause 16), and another Degree being connected with the privileges of the Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery (clause 23), it follows from the provisions of the clause last recited (twenty-sixth), that the Professors or Examiners of a University are empowered to coalesce with the

Examiners of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in an Examination for the Degrees and Letters Testimonial together. It is not easy to determine which of the Universities will be enabled to take advantage of this provision ; nor is it necessary to inquire concerning all the Universities which may come within its scope, for the principle of the proposed coalition may be discussed by reference to London and Edinburgh, where two of the three Licensing Boards reside. Reference to Scotland is necessary because of the materials furnished for the inquiry by the labours of the Royal Commissioners.

In London the coalition referred to would be wholly unobjectionable, because Teachers, as a body, have no control in the management of the University. And though a few Professors or Lecturers from the Colleges and Schools are engaged by the Senate of the University to examine for Degrees, the engagement is entered into from year to year, and the selection is made from different Schools. By this arrangement, a Candidate, even if educated in London, may, when under examination for the Degree, meet none of his instructors, or if one should form part of the Examining Board, he is associated with members of the Senate, with Teachers from rival Schools, and with other persons chosen by the Senate of the University.

But, unobjectionable as it would be, there is no likelihood that the Examiners of the University will be conjoined with the Examining Board for the most numerous class of Practitioners, Licentiates in Medicine and Surgery, in consequence of the extent and kind of the preliminary and Medical Examinations for the first Degree in Medicine. It is to be hoped, too, that this University, continuing to act as it appears hitherto to have done on the sound principle stated by the Royal Commissioners, "that the value of the Degree must bear a proportion to the nature of the qualifications required for it," rather than to "the number conferred," will not, under any circumstances, depress unduly the standard of education in order to confer numerous Degrees. Against a change of this kind there is, however, full security in the names of many of the Senate, and in the entire absence of interested motives in the body.

To the Scotch Universities, Medical Pupils resort as to a

School of Medicine only, and in this respect there is a clear difference from the system pursued in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin. The Professors confer the Degrees, and by the clause of the Bill now under consideration, they would be authorised to examine their own Pupils for the Letters Testimonial of Physicians and General Practitioners likewise. On this account the provisions of the clause, in their present form, are highly inexpedient. To show the grounds of their inexpediency, reference may be made to the Report of the Commissioners for visiting the Universities of Scotland quoted at page 17, where the objections to Professors granting University Degrees to their Pupils are fully detailed. A few of those objections may be recalled here. In the first place, the Teachers are, themselves, concerned in the success of the Candidate. On their zeal and ability depends, in no small degree, the Pupil's progress, and the Examination may be regarded as a test of the merits of both the teacher and the Candidate. It is, therefore, obvious (and the eminence or ability of Professors, whatever it may be, does not in any degree detract from the force of the argument, or alter the question), that to allow the Professors of a Medical School to decide on the fitness of their pupil to receive a Degree in Medicine, which is to pass current with the public as a proof of the possession of superior general and professional attainments, is liable to this objection, among others, that they are thereby constituted judges in what is partly their own cause. Moreover, the personal acquaintance and the kindliness of feeling which always exist, or ought to exist, between the Professor and the pupil, in some degree unfit the former for the discharge of the duty of Examiner where his Pupil is the Candidate for the Degree; and this feeling is likely to have most influence where a professional Degree is concerned. After stating the foregoing more general grounds of objection, which equally apply to Professors, whatever may be the department of Literature or Science they are engaged in teaching, the Commissioners adduce facts and arguments to show that the easy terms on which Degrees are granted in Scotch Universities, augment unduly their number. Their conclusion is thus expressed:—"We are of opinion that the

present system has a tendency to render the examinations less strict than they might otherwise be, and practically to lower the standard of qualifications in the estimation of the Faculty." To this it must be added, that the same cause has, in some cases, a tendency to add to the number of the pupils likewise. This follows from the circumstance that the Candidate for the Degree must, according to the laws of some of those Universities, be resident at the seat of the University, during a year at least before he is admissible to Examination; and the present Bill, by lengthening the period of residence to two years, augments the temptation to afford undue facility in conferring the Degree. This reasoning applies especially to Universities to which Medical pupils resort as to Schools of Medicine only. Such is an outline of the objections to Professors granting honorary Degrees to their own pupils; and it is plain that if they have any validity as applied to the Examinations for those honours, they must apply, with greater force, to the Examinations for the Letters Testimonial of Practitioners.

But the Professors, it will be truly said, are only to have a share in the examination for the Degree and the Letters Testimonial together—that is to say, retaining, as before, the unrestricted power of granting Degrees, they may, if so disposed, seek to coalesce with the Examiners of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in a single examination for the Degree and Letters Testimonial—and it becomes necessary to inquire into the influence these bodies are likely to exercise in a conjoined examination. As in the new edition of the Bill the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow does not appear, while the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of Edinburgh retain their position, the inquiry must here be confined to the last-named bodies.

The College of Physicians of Edinburgh consists of a small number of resident members, among whom the Professors of the University are understood to have large influence and control as a constituent part of the body. Hitherto the College of Physicians has determined the fitness of Graduates of Medicine for admission into their body by means of the ballot only, without any examination into their attainments. The opinion

of this College with respect to the performance of the duty of investigating the qualifications of the Candidate to undertake the responsibilities of the practical Physician may be at once inferred from the course it has hitherto pursued in conferring its License to practise.

The resident members of the College of Surgeons, with very few exceptions (three or four), are General Practitioners. The examination is calculated for General Practitioners, including among other subjects Pharmacy.

Now, let me suppose the Professors, under the authority of an Act of Parliament, to take part with these bodies, or one of them, in examining their own pupils. Each Professor, it is to be borne in mind, has been constantly occupied with the study of one of the subjects of examination in order to teach it, and has examined from week to week his pupils (now the Candidates) to assist them in their progress. Add to this, that, in the words of the Royal Commissioners, "the character of the Professors will, in fact, be engaged in the success of the Candidate. Each will be examining his own pupil." Surely, under such circumstances, the result cannot be doubted. The supposition that a Practitioner engaged out of his ordinary pursuits, and without any deep personal interest involved, would be likely to influence materially the result of the examination in a subject which has formed the life-study of the Professor, who has a personal interest in the success of the Candidate, could not be seriously entertained.

It has been shown in a former part of this Letter, that the principal provisions of the Twenty-Second and the Twenty-Third clauses of the present Bill correspond with suggestions made by the Medical Professors of Edinburgh and Glasgow in "Clauses" which they added to the Draft of the Bill. With those clauses occurs another, which will be found to furnish the motive or object with which the others were constructed. The Clause is as follows:—"Bachelors of Medicine and Surgery of the *Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow*, qualified as by the Clauses on Scottish Universities, to have the same privileges as General Practitioners under the Act, on their names being registered by the Central Council;" &c. From what

has been previously said of the influence Professors might exercise where they take part in the examination of their own pupils for Letters Testimonial, there can be little doubt that the privilege here claimed for certain Bachelors of Medicine would be attained under the clauses of the Bill before examined—not indeed directly, but not the less certainly. And the exclusive privilege apparently sought for, would, likewise, be practically attained; for, judging by the course of general education hitherto required by the Universities of England and Ireland, those bodies are not likely to bring down the Degree to the License in the manner the Bill would allow. To the Universities of Scotland, therefore, would remain all the advantage which schools would be likely to derive as far as the number of pupils is concerned, from the exclusive exercise of the powers to confer the Degree and Letters Testimonial together on the same terms as the Letters Testimonial only.

The practical working of the clauses of the “Bill for regulating the Profession of Physic and Surgery,” which have now been examined, will receive further illustration from shortly tracing the career of a Candidate seeking a Degree, as well as the Letters Testimonial of a Physician, or of a General Practitioner, under the two different systems, the details of which are contained in the preceding pages.

Under one system the Candidate is examined before passing the threshold of a School of Medicine by “Examiners in Arts” in several subjects of classical literature, and exact science; and he may be stopped from further progress for the time; and at all events he has had the fear of this check to stimulate his exertions in previous years. He takes a Degree and the Letters Testimonial of General Practitioner after repeated Examinations; or the higher Degree with the License of a Physician, perhaps at one time. And his Instructors are not parties to any of the repeated Examinations through which the Candidate must enter either branch of the profession. This would be the course of proceeding in London.

Under the other system the Pupil enters on the study of Medicine without any inquiry into his general knowledge. He “passes his Latin,” (as the phrase is, in such circumstances) at

any time he chooses, perhaps after having been prepared to go through a certain form of Examination; and the Medical Professors are the Examiners. Desiring to be a Physician, the Candidate receives the Degree of M.B. after Examination by his Teachers, and subsequently appears before the College of Physicians to be examined for the Doctorate in Medicine, and the Letters Testimonial together, and here his Teachers are empowered again to meet him. Or, his object being General practice, he takes a Degree and the License at the same time, the Professors forming, on the authority of an Act of Parliament, a part of the Examining Board. The Practitioner, thus qualified, transfers himself to any part of the kingdom where the more stringent form of proceeding is in force, his name is enrolled in the general registry (clauses 19 and 20), and he appears before the world as if he had passed the Examinations, and had been originally admitted to practise in the same place. This would be the system in Scotland, and it would be authorised by the "Bill for regulating the Profession of Physic and Surgery."

From what has appeared in the daily press, I believe, Sir, that your primary object in constructing the "Bill for regulating the Profession of Physic and Surgery," has been to connect equality of privilege with equality of qualification among the members of the Medical Profession in all parts of the Kingdom. I would respectfully submit that facts have been adduced in the previous pages which lead inevitably to the conclusion that under the Bill, in its present form, equality of qualification, or any reasonable approach to it, will not be attained in any case where Degrees in Medicine are concerned. The Bill would in fact confirm the inequality at present existing with respect to Degrees in different Universities, and would create a like inequality in the Letters Testimonial of Practitioners, where these are associated with Degrees. The differences which have always existed between Universities respecting the attainments required for their Degrees will doubtless not altogether cease to exist under any law. But when the Legislature undertakes to regulate the course of study to be required for Degrees, it may be urged, at least, that the adoption, as a standard for all Universities in the United Kingdom, of the system which, in one most material

point, is the least eligible prevailing among them,—the system, namely, which may be said to exclude from its requirements the literary and scientific knowledge generally understood to form the distinctive character of a University Degree,—cannot be considered the course of legislation most advantageous to pursue. The proposed enactment, concerning the preliminary Education of Graduates in Medicine, and the authorised Examination of Candidates for the Letters Testimonial of Practitioners by their instructors, while they would not (and this may be said on the authority of the Royal Commissioners before referred to) promote the interests of the public or the profession, would be calculated, I venture to suggest, to promote the peculiar interest of some educating establishments at the expense of others.

It has been necessary to refer more than once, in the foregoing pages, to the University of London, because of the time and the circumstances under which it was founded. And after having bestowed some attention on the subject of Degrees in Medicine, and having read with care the elaborate and able Report of the Royal Commission, so often alluded to, I feel desirous, before closing this Letter, to add a few more words respecting that University. A more fitting occasion than the present will not arise. It may be as well to state that with the University of London the writer has not, and never has had, any nearer connexion than Medical teachers in other parts of the Kingdom. That the University confers no advantages on a Medical teacher in London, which it does not equally confer on teachers in all other parts of the kingdom, whether of Birmingham, Manchester, Aberdeen, or Dublin, is generally known. A special or separate interest cannot, therefore, be promoted by directing attention to the Institution in question.

The constitution of the University may be said (as far as the subjects treated of in this Letter are concerned) to have resulted from the Report of a Royal Commission, issued under one Government, adopted and carried into practical operation by another Government.

The Rules for the Examinations, and the Examinations themselves (reference is made only to the Medical Faculty), are, take

them for all in all, a model for Medical Examinations. Exceptions may, without unfairness, be taken on some occasions to an Examiner, or to an Examination-paper; but any evil of this kind it is in the power of the Senate to remedy at any time. And it may be asked what system is there to which some exception, in detail, might not be raised? If there is a general fault in the Examinations, it is certainly not on the side of insufficiency or laxity.

The University is peculiarly circumstanced. Established by the General Government for the public, it promotes the individual interest of no School, equally recognising Candidates for its honours from all, if they submit to periodical written and (where the nature of the subject admits) practical examinations. It confers no profit or privilege on those holding office in it. For these reasons the claims of the University are not likely to be warmly advocated by many. Contrasting, moreover, with other Universities and other Corporations which do confer advantages on those connected with them, it is not unlikely to meet with disfavour at the hands of some. But, for these very reasons, and because it is under the control of the Government and the Parliament, it is submitted that the University, or rather the Degrees in the Medical Faculty (for with this department only is there any concern here), considering the manner in which they are conferred, have a claim to some recognition in any public measure which has reference to Medical Degrees. Such recognition, by the Minister of the Crown, of the principle on which the Examinations are conducted would not be devoid of general utility; and it might, I think, be afforded without interfering with the privileges of any other public body.

In taking leave of the subjects, which it has been the chief purpose of this letter to urge on you, Sir, for reconsideration, I would take the liberty to state the conclusions to which the facts and arguments adduced seem to lead, in the following propositions:—

That a University Degree in Medicine ought to be a Title of Honour implying higher attainments than a mere License to practise.—In the Universities of England and Ireland the

Degree is considered in this light. The Scotch Universities, on the contrary, have made their Degree (the Degree of M.D.) a mere License to practise, not as a Physician but (in a great majority of cases) as a General Practitioner; and the Bill instead of correcting the abuse sanctions it.

That, in any legislative measure affecting the qualifications for University Degrees, the regulations should be such as would ensure the possession, on the part of the Graduate, of a reasonable extent of the literary and scientific knowledge (not medical) which usually characterises University Degrees.

That the Examination into the general acquirements of the person who intends to qualify for a Degree should *precede* the medical studies.

That the Examinations in General Knowledge should be conducted by "Examiners in Arts."

Such regulations would be in conformity, as far as they go, with the practice in all parts of the kingdom, except Scotland. Regulations to the same effect have existed for several years in France (*ante*, p. 26), where, it may be mentioned, the great body of the Profession take Degrees in Medicine.

As regards Medical Examinations :—It is probable that the Professors of Universities who now confer Degrees on their Pupils, will continue to exercise the privilege; and the evil may not admit of an easy remedy. But, at all events, it appears indispensable—

That Professors who grant Degrees should not be empowered or permitted to coalesce with the licensing boards in the Examinations for the Letters Testimonial of Physicians or General Practitioners.—The necessity for this regulation applies especially to the Professors of those Universities which are resorted to by the Student of Medicine for medical education only, and which are therefore (so far as he is concerned) nothing but Schools of Medicine with the privileges of Universities. It does not apply, with anything like equal force, to Universities in which Graduation in Arts is a necessary preliminary to the study of Medicine.

I now, Sir, proceed to consider those other provisions of the "Bill for regulating the practice of Physic and Surgery," which, at the beginning of this letter, were said to require some comment. Of these the first in importance is the constitution of the Licensing Boards.

The Examining Boards for different Classes of Medical Practitioners.—Under the system proposed in the present Bill, the power hitherto exercised by the Apothecaries' Society of London as Examiners for the Letters Testimonial of General Practitioners in England and Wales, is transferred to the Colleges of Physicians* and Surgeons of London, the authority of each of these bodies over the members of its own Class, being continued as before. At the same time the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of Edinburgh (and the same arrangement is proposed for Dublin) are empowered to confer the Letters Testimonial of General Practitioners, as well as of Physicians and Surgeons—each College (as in London) acting singly in examining candidates for admission into its own body, the two being combined for the Examination of the General Practitioners. And a person who has taken a license to practise in one part of the kingdom, is authorised to enrol himself (without further examination) a Member of the College which presides over his department of the profession, in the part of the kingdom in which he may take up his residence.

The most important alteration as regards England and Wales is that which affects General Practitioners, because they are far the most numerous body in the Profession. In order to convey a correct idea of the contemplated change, and at the same time to direct attention to some points which ought to be kept in view in the details of any new measure, it is necessary to review briefly the arrangement now in existence with respect to the class of Practitioners in question. This involves a notice of the Society of Apothecaries, who have for many years been charged with the regulation of their course of study and with the Examinations.

The Society or Company of Apothecaries in London is com-

* The College of Physicians is to be "assisted by the Court of Examiners of the Society of Apothecaries."

posed of a number of Surgeon-Apothecaries (General Practitioners) who elect a Board of Examiners from among themselves. The corporation is engaged in trade, but the members or proprietors of the trading establishment have, of course, no personal connection with the business transactions. They number among them some of the most respectable Practitioners in London.

Much praise has been given to the Apothecaries in consequence of the improvements which have been in late years made in the professional acquirements of the body over whose education they preside; and, on the other hand, obloquy has from time to time been unsparingly heaped upon them. An unprejudiced examination of the facts would show, that the acknowledged improvements which have been effected in the education of the Practitioners of this country, are, in the first instance, due to the energy and perseverance of educating establishments. To the exertions of these institutions, and to healthful competition among them, progress in education must always be owing. Examiners cannot raise their standard of qualification with any prospect of success, if they have not first seen that Students are likely to come up to it. But to the Society of Apothecaries—to their willingness to adopt improvements, and their generally judicious regulations—truth must allow a large share in the elevation of the General Practitioners of the country to the highly respectable position they have attained. Still the constitution of the Society is obviously very defective. The General Practitioners at large have no control in the examinations, and no voice in the election of a Managing Council or of Examiners; and however usefully the Society may have hitherto exercised their functions towards the profession, a change appears indispensable.

In this place it may be useful to call attention to a circumstance connected with the exercise of the authority vested in the Society of Apothecaries, which is not without interest at the present time. The Royal Commissioners for visiting the Universities of Scotland have shown (*ante*, page 6) that these Universities desired to accommodate the Education required for Degrees to the General Practitioners of England and Wales, as well as of other parts of the country; and if those

Degrees had been allowed to pass current as qualifications to practise throughout the kingdom (a right which was claimed for them), the Professors who conferred the Degrees, would, by their use of the privilege (what seemed to the Commissioners an improper use of it) have gained a large advantage over others who conferred Degrees in a different manner, or who were not possessed of any such privilege. The Apothecaries allowed entire freedom as regards the place or the school at which education was received. They paid no regard to any Degree which the Candidate for their License might have taken, but placed education at a University on the same level with education in other places, where the attraction of a Degree conferred by the Teachers could not be offered; and they insisted on examining all their Candidates for themselves. This just course has been strongly objected to by interested persons. It was complained of as a grievance by the Scotch Professors, although it was notorious that even for several years after the Society of Apothecaries began to exercise their new functions, Medical Degrees were conferred by some Scottish Universities without due precaution;—nor is the evil absolutely extinct at the present day. The complaint was made, too, notwithstanding that the Society of Apothecaries exercised no control—had no existence, so to say—in Scotland. The fact of the body who acted thus being Apothecaries and Traders, has given point to the satire with which they have been assailed, and has diverted attention from a due consideration of some material facts of the case. But the principle on which they acted was one of impartiality and fairness to schools generally; and care should be taken that, neither directly nor indirectly, shall a less just system be suffered to creep into operation in reorganising the profession.

As the beneficial operation of the new system proposed in the “Bill for regulating the Practice of Physic and Surgery” will depend on the constitution of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and as the influence of each of these bodies, whether in London, Edinburgh, or Dublin, is to be extended over all parts of the Kingdom, their fitness to exercise powers affecting so many interests, is a fair subject for inquiry. The inquiry

will here, however, be made in a very brief space, and little will be added to the statement of a few broad facts which seem to have important bearing on the subject.

In London the Physicians and Surgeons are each a numerous body, and there are, it is well known, many schools and hospitals. The same may be said of Dublin, excepting that the numbers are of course less. But in Dublin, as well as in London, the candidate for the Letters Testimonial of a Practitioner might be examined by persons having no interest in the school at which he was educated.

But how does Edinburgh stand in these respects? There is one hospital and a single school (the University), with some "extra-mural" lecturers in its immediate vicinity. The College of Physicians is a small body. With a single hospital it could scarcely be otherwise. Its jurisdiction extends over Edinburgh and a small suburb; and the members are admitted by ballot without inquiry into their attainments by examination. It is now proposed to charge this College with the Examination of Physicians for the United Kingdom, and with the Examination (in connexion with the College of Surgeons) of General Practitioners also. And the question arises, is the College of Physicians, judging from the number of resident members and the nature of its functions up to this time, such a body as ought now to be entrusted with these extensive powers? The College of Surgeons consists, with a few exceptions, of General Practitioners (see *ante*, page 42). At present this Corporation has authority over some counties of Scotland.—It is worthy of observation that while the General Practitioners of England, who, through the Society of Apothecaries, hitherto exercised jurisdiction over the education of the members of their own class throughout England and Wales, will not, under the arrangement now proposed, have a voice in the regulation of their own department of the profession,—except as assisting the College of Physicians in examining perhaps in Pharmacy,—the General Practitioners of Edinburgh, under the name of the "Royal College of Surgeons of Scotland," are to share in the examinations for General Practitioners, and, at the same time, to be entrusted singly with the privilege of

examining Surgeons ; and both these functions are to be exercised not only for Scotland, but also for England and Wales, as well as all other parts of the British empire. The writer of this letter has no desire whatever to make a single disrespectful remark concerning either of the bodies which are now alluded to ; at the same time, he would take the liberty to observe that the portion resident in London of those who had been educated at a large London school of long standing (say St. Bartholomew's or Guy's Hospital) would constitute a body about as large in number, and as well entitled to exercise the extensive powers in question, as the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of Edinburgh. But to intrust, on the part of the nation, the examination of the pupils of a London school of Medicine, for the Letters Testimonial of Physicians, Surgeons, and General Practitioners, to those who had been educated in that school, and were resident in its neighbourhood, would be an arrangement bearing, on the face of it, too much, if it may be so expressed, of a domestic character. And if so, can the same objection be said to be without force as regards Edinburgh ?

In the Bill of last year, the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow stood nearly in the same position, respecting privileges to be conceded to it, as the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in other places. The name of this body has been omitted from the present Bill, because, as appears from the reports of parliamentary proceedings, it was found on more careful examination that the Faculty did not possess the powers they claimed. Now that the jurisdiction of each Licensing Board is to be co-extensive with the empire, another important subject of inquiry is added to that which concerns the legality of the local power any may have hitherto exercised, namely, the sufficiency of the body for the more extended authority to be imparted to it at this time. Looking to the Colleges in Edinburgh, or the Faculty in Glasgow (the Universities are excluded from consideration here), either is just such a body as could be formed in a town in England of equal size—say, Manchester, Birmingham, or Liverpool. Neither appears to have a sufficient number of resident members, nor, in consequence of

the intimate association which exists between persons educated in the same School and Hospital, and which continues to exist in comparatively small communities, do the members of either appear to be sufficiently disconnected from the schools, or their teachers, to exercise the functions which this bill would impose, so as to inspire a feeling of confidence in other parts of the Kingdom. On these grounds the concession, at this time, of large and augmented powers to one of these Colleges does not appear to be advisable. But the coalition of the Corporations of both places—that is to say, of the Colleges in Edinburgh with the Faculty in Glasgow—for the purposes of the Bill (each retaining its individuality in other respects), would, it is submitted, be an arrangement calculated to give more general satisfaction. The distance between Edinburgh and Glasgow, is as that between London and Brighton; and as it may be passed over in a couple of hours, examiners could, without difficulty, go, at stated intervals, from one College to the other to exercise their functions.

An objection has been raised against the exercise of any power over the profession by Glasgow practitioners, on the ground that the practice of the profession, in that city, is not conducted in as dignified a manner as is desirable, and I am informed that this objection is not altogether devoid of foundation. But other considerations must be allowed their due weight in devising arrangements which are made for the future, as well as the present time. The population of Glasgow having rapidly increased, and being likely to increase still further, the number of Medical men will be proportionally large; and the hospital accommodation, which always grows with a growing commercial and manufacturing community, will afford a large field of medical experience. This cannot fail to have influence on the quality of the practitioners connected with the hospitals; and it seems self-evident that the addition of so large a body of Practitioners to the number of those from whom a selection of Examiners is to be made, would improve the constitution of the Licensing Board in Scotland.

The view here taken of the Medical Corporations of Edinburgh and Glasgow, suggested itself when it was proposed to

establish two licensing boards in Scotland. The omission of one makes no change in the facts or the argument which it was intended to present in support of that view. If the contemplated changes had respect only to Scotland, the writer would not have presumed to offer any remark concerning the Medical Corporations of Scotland; but seeing that those changes affect the whole Kingdom, the bodies to be charged with new powers, so extensive in their nature, are fairly open to remark. He has intended to say nothing regarding any Institution in Scotland, that he would not equally have said of an Institution elsewhere, if similarly circumstanced.

Registration.—It appears to be intended that the registry shall contain nothing more than the names of qualified practitioners arranged “in their several classes” (Clause 13)—as Physicians, Surgeons, Inceptors in the Faculty of Medicine and Licentiates of Medicine and Surgery. If the object were merely to enable the public to judge who are legally qualified to practise, such a mode of registration would doubtless be sufficient. But the registry might be made to serve a more important purpose. It would be an encouragement to the General Practitioner to labour for the acquisition of additional honours—for example, the Degree of Bachelor or Doctor of Medicine—if the fact of his having attained those claims on public confidence should be made to appear in connexion with his name on the registry; and surely it could not be otherwise than beneficial to afford such encouragement in this and in all other cases. Besides, it appears no more than just that a person who has laboured to acquire superior knowledge, should be enabled to place the official record of his industry on any document which professes to afford correct information to the public with respect to the qualifications of Medical men.

Again, Practitioners would apparently be enrolled as legally qualified without any statement of the place at which their Letters Testimonial or other qualifications had been received. If the provision for registration is thus rightly interpreted, it is probably founded on the belief that the “Council of Health” will be able to enforce equality of examination in different places. This, however, I confidently believe will

not occur. Equality in the examinations cannot be attained under any regulations, however well devised, or any supervision the Board will be able to exercise. The quality of the examinations it is well known depends not so much on the general rules laid down as on the persons by whom these rules are carried into practical operation. The "Council of Health" will probably exert a beneficial influence over the regulations for courses of study, and over some other matters of importance; but every one who has had practical acquaintance with oral or even written examinations, must know that any amount of supervision which the Council may exercise cannot effectually control the proceedings of Examiners whom it does not nominate. In time it will come to be believed that those who conduct the examinations in one place are less strict, or otherwise held in less estimation, than those in another place; and it is but fair that each person should have the advantage or disadvantage of the character of the tribunal before which he has chosen to appear for examination.

The transfer of practitioners from the Colleges in one part of the Kingdom to those in another.—The foregoing observations lead to the conclusion that the provision made for the easy transfer of a person who has received Letters Testimonial in one part of the Kingdom to any other part, would be liable to abuse, inasmuch as it would hold out an inducement to seek Degrees or Letters Testimonial wherever either or both might be obtained with most facility. This, however, is only an argument to suggest precaution against the abuse referred to. It is not adduced with any view to raise objection to such a provision in itself.

The words of one of the clauses (20th), which relate to the subject now adverted to, are these:—"And every such person who shall afterwards remove into any other part of the United Kingdom, and shall practise there as a Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery, shall be required to enrol himself as a Member or Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons of that part of the United Kingdom to which he shall so remove, and in each case shall be entitled to be so admitted and enrolled without further examination, and on payment of the like fees of

admission, and on complying with the same conditions as are required of other persons who have passed their examinations and paid their examination-fees for the purpose of being admitted Members or Licentiates of the said Colleges respectively." And the same enactment is proposed for Physicians and Surgeons likewise (clause 19).

By this provision the pecuniary interests of the Colleges empowered to confer Letters Testimonial are protected; but the College in one part of the Kingdom may still be made the portal to the College in another part on payment of additional admission fees; and the payment of fees is not the most efficient or most suitable protection of the interests of education, or of the public. Without entering into any detailed discussion of this subject, which there are obvious reasons for avoiding as much as possible, it will be enough to say, that no person can claim for those who confer, or for those who are Candidates for Letters Testimonial, exemption from all liability to be influenced by the motives which, on the authority of the Scottish Commissioners, may be said to have exercised influence in the case of University Degrees. It will be assumed at once that it is desirable to take away all temptation to a misuse of the privilege the Bill confers. The end here aimed at might, in a great degree, be attained, and without any expense to the Candidate, by means of a change in the clause above quoted, which, without affecting its principle, would be to some extent a bar to any abuse of it. The change I would respectfully suggest is the introduction of a "proviso" to the effect that if the transfer to the roll of another College should be made within a limited time (say three years), the examination should not be dispensed with; but that after such period the transfer might be effected in the manner at present provided. Under such a provision, those Candidates for Letters Testimonial who had determined on their future place of residence would (wherever they had been educated) at once resort to the examining board presiding in the same part of the kingdom; those who had reason to change their residence at a time when further examination might justly be considered a hardship, would be exempted from it; while, on the other hand, a second examination would be no bar to the

few who would actually require to submit themselves to it, provided the first were an adequate examination. Such a restriction, while it would produce no injury, and no inconvenience that could justly be complained of, would have much effect in guarding against the imputation of laxity of examination in any Licensing Board, by removing, in great part, the motive for it; and would diminish the necessity for active supervision of the proceedings of Examiners on the part of the Council of Health.

Constitution of the "Council of Health."—To this, the last subject on which observation will be made, it is proposed to refer only so far as the selection of the Members of the Council from Schools of Medicine is concerned. It is provided in the second clause of the Bill, that the Schools of Medicine in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, are each to be represented in the Council by a Regius Professor. The University of London, it will be observed, is not represented in the proposed Council;—to others belong the duty of putting forward for that Institution any claim which they deem it proper to urge on its behalf.

It is to be presumed that Professors are to occupy the place assigned them in the "Council of Health," by reason of their connexion with the Education of Students in Medicine. On this ground it must be that the Professors' official claim to a position in the Council is rested.* Now, looking to the numbers receiving Education in the five Universities which are named in the Bill, it may be confidently stated (excluding Dublin, because the numbers there have not reached me), that the Students of Medicine in London are more numerous than those in the four other Universities together; and yet no representative is assigned to the Colleges and Schools of Medicine in London.

There is no intention to express the smallest objection to the

* It has been suggested that the selection made from schools was determined by the existence in them of "Regius" Professors. Without dwelling on the improbability of this test having been applied to the value or importance of schools, the omission of the University of London may be said to show that the suggestion is not well founded, inasmuch as all the Members of the Senate of that University are nominated by the Crown.

place the Universities alluded to occupy in the Bill. Indeed, no place can be assigned to the principal representatives of the Learning, if not of the Medical Science or Medical Education of England, that would not be as respectfully and as willingly conceded by me, as by any other person. But I would venture to urge, that no Schools of Medicine are entitled to take that precedence of the Schools in London, which seems to be awarded to several by the manner of constituting the "Council of Health."

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

R. QUAIN.

LONDON, MARCH 31ST, 1845.