

Observations on the present system of medical education, with a view to medical reform / by a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of London.

Contributors

Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of London.
Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

Publication/Creation

London : Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1834.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hyuf9wtf>

Provider

Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh

License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. The original may be consulted at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. where the originals may be consulted.

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

*The Editor of Edinburgh Medical
Journal with the Authors Com*

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PRESENT SYSTEM
OF
MEDICAL EDUCATION,
WITH A VIEW TO
Medical Reform.

BY A LICENTIATE
OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.

Difficile est satyram non scribere.—JUVENAL.

LONDON :
SHERWOOD, GILBERT, AND PIPER,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1834.

Price Two Shillings.

OBSEVATIONS

ON THE

PRESENT SYSTEM

OF

MEDICAL EDUCATION

WITH A VIEW TO

Medical Reform.

BY A MEMBER

OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.

LONDON: PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,

DORSET STREET, FLEET STREET.

1834

LONDON:

PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

R35948

PREFACE.

UPON my return from the Continent last autumn, I found the cry for Reform in the Medical, as loud as it had been in the Political world ; and, as I have had some opportunities of drawing comparisons between the different modes of practising medicine at home and abroad, I venture to offer a few hints to those who, I understand, are engaged in so important and praiseworthy an employment as endeavouring to ameliorate what must be considered of vital importance to society in general.

I have drawn a picture perhaps rather too severe of the abuses which have long disgraced the study of medicine in England ; but I appeal to those, both young and old, who have passed through the different grades of medical education, if what I have asserted has not been often verified by their own experience.

I do not pretend to say that all medical students are such as I have sketched one individual ; I wish merely to impress upon the minds of those who may be occupied in investigating the abuses with which the present system is charged, that many such may be found among the number of students who come to London annually to walk the hospitals.

Many young men, on the contrary, do the greatest credit to themselves and to those with whom they have passed their usual period of bondage, both by their good moral character and by the zeal which they manifest to gain every species of professional information.

From such I fear no feelings of anger ; I look to them to support me in the assertion that, even under favourable circumstances, the greatest and most irreparable sacrifice of time is caused by the present system, and that in too many instances the future practitioner is ruined by the faults inherent in it.

As to Apothecaries in general, as I believe them to be most useful and laborious men in their calling, so should every thing be done to rescue them from the disagreeable situation in which their present system of remuneration often places them.

I would wish to see them hold the rank in society

which is due to their talents ; but how is this to be when they are classed with small shopkeepers, and are retail-dealers in tamarinds and leeches ?

One observation is necessary as regards London. It is not England. To say that the London apothecary is not a subject for such criticism is only to say that he enjoys, from his situation, the wholesale privileges of other tradesmen. I address the great body of medical apprentices and practitioners distributed over the whole country.

I have not ventured upon any hints as to reform in the medical education of Physicians in our two Universities, nor as to any change in that of Surgeons, who are not incorporated with Apothecaries.

Surgeons' and Hospital Apprentices in London and the larger towns are not included in this sketch. Their education is very different from that of the bulk of medical students. They do not commence the profession of physic before they have made sufficient proficiency in classical acquirements. They are not uneducated ignorant shop-boys, and they have opportunities of observation in public and private practice from the commencement of their career.

England is the only country where Physicians and Surgeons are considered as gentlemen ; for it is the

only country where their profession and education alone claim for them the title.

Let the opprobrious name of Apothecary be banished from the profession, and he will no longer have to struggle with what is frequently his only disadvantage,—the demerit of a name.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Importance of the English Medical Faculty—Age a passport to Practice—Career of the Private Physician—Advantages of a University Education—College of Physicians—College of Surgeons—Apothecaries' Hall—Division of Medical Labour—Difference between Medical Men in England and on the Continent—Necessity for a Class of Working Doctors—Medical Practice of the Higher Circles—Comparison between the higher and lower ranks of the Profession—Duties of a Physician . . . *page 1*

SKETCH OF EARLY MEDICAL EDUCATION.

The Apprentice—His professional and domestic Duties—The way to gain a good Character—Influence of bad Example—Drawing the first Tooth—Drawing the first Blood—Epsom Salts and Oxalic Acid—Scruples of Conscience, and how silenced—Certificates of Disability for the Militia—A Case of Midwifery—Case of presumed Infanticide—Letter from a Medical Apprentice—Medical Apprenticeship unknown on the Continent . . . *32*

THE HOSPITAL STUDENT.

Opinion respecting a Dropsical Female—Arrival of the Student in London—Obtains Tickets to the Lectures at the Hospitals—Academical Programme—The first Lecture, on the Essence of Life—Definition of Life—Experiments on Animals—Midwifery Lecture—Chemical Theatre—Demonstrations of Anatomy—Case of Varicose Aneurism—Fainting Students—Apprehensions about passing Surgeons' Hall—Consolation—A Medical Courtship and Settlement	51
---	----

HINTS ON MEDICAL REFORM.

Abolition of Apprenticeships—Place of Apprentices might be supplied by Compounders—Present Remuneration of Medical Practitioners—Income and Expenditure of general Practitioners—Expediency of separating the Dispenser of Medicines from the Practitioner, and thus abolishing the term Apothecary—System of Medical Education—On the propriety of taking Notes of Lectures—Medical Lecturers and Lectures—Advantages of Ocular Demonstration over Theory—Dr. Young's Table for Medical Education—Walking the Hospitals—Expense of a Residence in London and attending the Hospitals—Claims of Medical Science on the Government—Effects of the proposed Changes—Some Absurdities of the present System—Conclusion.	68
--	----

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PRESENT SYSTEM
OF
MEDICAL EDUCATION.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IT is surprising that, in a work which has lately been published on England and the English, and which touches almost upon all classes of society, no mention is made of the numerous professors of that science which has been denominated "God's second cause of health."

Among the characters introduced to illustrate British talent, much stress is laid upon the practical man, who knows to a nicety how much corn is in bond, and how much in the market; but has the ingenious author never heard of the practical Physician, the kill-or-cure Doctor? Is not such a character worthy of a place among radicals and reformers? Is there no connexion between politics and medicine? One of our colleagues tells us that

during his residence in the East the Physician was often commanded to prescribe politically.

As all things in this world have an absolute and relative signification, so this essay on the English character is a kind of comparison drawn between it and other national characters; and if the author congratulates his country on the plain-dealing, surly honesty of John Smith of Smithfield, he merely compares it with the fraudulent obsequiousness of Monsieur Pigeon of the Rue St. Denis.

So, throughout, with the statesman, the orator, the poet, the lawyer, and the politician,—all have their absolute and relative value. Nothing, however, is said of Physic, that rudder of the state. It is not permitted to find a corner in two thick octavo volumes.

Oh! shades of Buchan, are you come to this? You, who travel from the nursery-garret to the under-ground kitchen, and cause more commotion in the little community than the rise or fall of stocks, assert your claims on family gratitude, call loudly on some one to espouse your cause! Is there no comparison to be drawn between the British domestic medicine of which you are the author, and the pusillanimous *médecine sans médecin* with all the ptisannery of the French school? Are not blue pill and calomel decidedly British, and is the genuine mercurial treatment of all disorders to be classed with French ptisans, Italian contra-stimulants, Ger-

man magnetism, and Spanish Sangradoism ? Is there not, moreover, as marked a difference between the members of the profession at home and abroad, as there is between any of the most striking characters the author has sketched as illustrative of his country ? Not to make mention, therefore, of the English Faculty is as great an omission as leaving out the grave-digger in the representation of the tragedy of Hamlet.

In its highest degrees the English Faculty is amalgamated with the Aristocracy itself. Witness the number of "Barts." affixed to the names which stand on the lists of the two Royal Colleges ; nay, it is even rumoured that a medical Peer may grace the list of names in Pall-Mall East.

This favour, which is granted to Physicians by the higher classes of society, is attributable chiefly to their education, and to the connexions they have formed with these classes at public schools and universities. Nor do I agree with the ingenious author of "Pelham" that these connexions are greatly overrated. Had the author been a medical man, he might have found that a friendship formed at college has often proved of itself a fortune.

This more particularly to the young physician ; for, as his class of the profession is, or rather was, once remunerated, he has at his commencement of practice all the chances against him. The public is a calculating public, and will not pay the inexpe-

rience of twenty-five so freely as the experience of fifty ; for people count a man's years and take them for his experience.

The reasoning is often as logical as that of the schoolmistress who, grown grey with teaching children their letters, imagined she knew more about the matter than the beardless youth who had but just quitted Oxford. Age alone is everything for the physician. Why should Cicero have passed over this advantage in his panegyric on Old Age ?

The young physician must endeavour at first to get into society and make himself known as a gentleman, before he can hope to be called upon professionally. He must first make general acquaintances, and some lucky accident may bring him into repute, but this will only be by the assistance of his friends.

Such as have not the means of waiting for the commanding influence of age, endeavour to attach themselves to some noble family with whom they may pass many otherwise unprofitable years, and then hope that the patronage of this family will eventually introduce them to general practice. They commence, then, by becoming private physicians, and, as they are generally very locomotive, they are more frequently styled travelling physicians ; and I beg to be allowed to digress, and state what I consider to be the disadvantages of this plan. It is in most instances, I believe, fatal to medical reputation or subsequent success.

There are many causes which operate to prevent

a private physician from holding a high rank in his profession. In the first place, he is provided for at an age when he is most fit to pursue with the greatest advantage the practice of his art. He has not the stimulus of necessity to urge him to the pursuit. He has gained the top of the mountain without the pains of climbing up its sides. His occupations are changed, and his habits are now different from what they were formerly. Unless he be of such a character as few possess, he will prefer luxury and indolence to hard but wholesome labour. He will prefer the printed book to the wide book of Nature, and read in his study instead of taking notes at the bedside of his patients. He may perhaps become the learned, but never the practical physician. He may write a book and lay down rules for others, which he cannot appreciate himself. He may be the compiler, but not the author.

After ten years spent in doing little more than studying the phases of the moon, circumstances may oblige him to quit his mode of life. He is in a situation not exactly to starve, without being in a condition to live. With perhaps an increasing family, he sets out upon a road which is now new to him. He commences public practice, he is a stranger to it. He has not the caprices of one family, but of a public, to contend with, and of a public necessarily ignorant or unconscious of his abilities; for here he labours under one of the curses of his profession—he has the disadvantage of being judged

by those who are incapable of judging upon such matters.

He has not now the same disposition of mind, the same energy of youth, or the same professional enthusiasm which he had formerly. He cannot buffet the adverse waves, or struggle with the storm, as when, free from worldly cares, he had none but himself to think of. What is still worse, he cannot practise his profession upon the same terms which he might have done formerly. It is now rather the love of gain than the love of his profession. It is with him now no longer a science, but an art ; not a profession, but a trade.

He has to descend the hill upon whose summit he had been hitherto calmly reposing, and mount it again with a dead weight upon his back. He is often deterred from proceeding further, on the very threshold of his course.

His health perhaps, or his temper, his want of knowledge of the world, the backbitings and slanderings, the criticisms on his practice, the misrepresentations of his conduct, his want of tact, his too great susceptibility, probably his want of success in combating diseases which spring from mental causes, his too great anxiety for their recovery producing an unfavourable impression on his patients, (for finding he inspires no confidence in them, he loses what little he had in himself) — These and many more vexations crowd upon him at once ; and happy is he if he resist the accumulated weight of evils heaped

upon him, — if he pass safely through the purgatory of medical experience! I should not omit in this catalogue of ills, the good intentions he will meet with from his medical brethren. — The *odium medicorum* will play its part in his tragedy.

Now, had he commenced general practice ten years previously, all these vexations (for they assail us all at the commencement of our career) would have been gradually conquered, for the circumstances would have been widely different. Whatever temptations, therefore, this plan may at first sight offer, however great the advantages of fortune, patronage, and family connexions, whatever promises it may hold out for future success, still the private Physician will seldom be generally known in the medical world.

I can hardly call to mind a single instance of a travelling Physician having succeeded in public practice, attaching to this word that importance which it usurps in professional language. Few excel late who have not excelled early in life. This holds good with most professions; with none more than with the medical. A reputation formed early in life with those of the same standing, founded upon a solid basis, as great diligence, quick observation, excellence in any particular branch, and good moral conduct, are the means which sooner or later lead to the goal.

All have not the opportunity of adopting this plan, advantageous or not as it may afterwards

prove; there are still two classes of young Physicians, who have to wait their time. A sensible writer on medical education observes, that he has literally known a Physician *fifty years of age* objected to for his youth.

“ It is indispensably necessary that a Physician should be prepared, whatever his abilities may be, to pass at least *ten years* after his first establishment without the slightest emolument from his profession; and he may think himself singularly fortunate, if at the expiration of this period he is enabled to derive a competent subsistence from it.”

What are the inducements, then, to pass a great part of life in studious indolence, having a certain competency to live, which may be the case with one; or to suffer positive privation, as may be the case with the other? It is with both the same—the hope of eventually receiving professional emolument from such a rank of society as is alone congenial to the habits and ideas which their education has given them. They may proceed to work very differently: the one aspires to fashionable practice alone, and, having certain means, employs them, as he imagines, in the way most conducive to this end; the other is ambitious only of medical renown, and makes every sacrifice to obtain it, still with the hope, however, of commanding success in high circles of society; and both find themselves frequently in the situation of the faithful squirrel at the lion's court, who received the long-promised bag of nuts when he had no teeth to eat them.

Although Physicians may aspire to be amalgamated with the Aristocracy, and become Baronets or even Peers, it is only a certain class who can hope for this honour.

There are different kinds of Physicians; but the great difference consists in having been educated at one of the two English universities, which entitles you to become a Fellow of the College; or taking a diploma from some other university, and being admitted as a Licentiate, with the privilege of practising in London and seven miles around.

Situated in Pall-Mall East, emerged from the smoke of Warwick Lane and the shambles of Newgate Market, stands the Temple of Physic, differing from that of Janus, inasmuch as its gates are ever open. Here is felt the real influence of medical rank,—I might say of medical aristocracy. Though the temple is open to all, there are high and low places in the synagogue. To see the King, or to be at court—to sit on the Treasury, or on the cross benches—are not more different in their way than to be among the multitude who sip tea at the monthly meetings, and to be of the elect who retire afterwards to sup in —— Street.

So much for the highest class of medical men in England; and now for the second, or what are styled Surgeons, pure surgeons, or noun-substantive surgeons.

In the centre of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, midway between the east and the west, descending a little in aristocratic locality, near the Inns of Court and

the Piazzas of Covent Garden, stands the splendid mansion of the second Royal College. Here the manual operation concludes the business which the general remedies of the Physician have in vain attempted to terminate.

We mentioned, however, that in Pall-Mall East there are many places in the synagogue; here there is even a much greater subdivision of labourers, to give it the most genteel term. The Physicians we found divided into Fellows and Licentiates; but the Surgeons are subdivided into Surgeon-Oculists, Surgeon-Aurists, Surgeon-Dentists, Surgeon-Accoucheurs: each jealous of his privileges, and resisting any encroachment upon his peculiar branch.

Finally we come to Bridge Street, Blackfriars, and, dropping *Royalty*, approach the abode of the *Worshipful* Company of Apothecaries; and between royal and worshipful there is a great difference.

It is sometimes difficult to say to the two former bodies and to their subdivisions, "So far shall you go, and no farther;" but here no such difficulty occurs, for the Apothecary embraces all the branches of the healing art. *Omne tulit punctum* is the motto of the Apothecary, as he now hangs lackered and shining — "Surgeon, Apothecary, and Man-midwife; Chemical and Horse medicines sold here."

Where fashion and etiquette weigh so much in the scale, it is really a blessing that such a man is to be found. A patient unacquainted with the nature of his complaint feels embarrassed to whom

to apply. It may be medical, or surgical, or both ; and, unwilling to commit himself, he sends direct to the Apothecary, who comes forthwith and assures the patient that he did right to send to him, for the case is neither medical nor surgical, but something between the two, and belonging directly to his province ; and, to confirm the assertion, he sends him four draughts, four powders, and two pills daily. Such is the rank of the Apothecary, that he can go in the van or the rear, in the centre or on either flank, without in the slightest degree compromising his own dignity.

The Physician may hold himself a little higher than the Surgeon, though both may be Baronets ; the Surgeon may still unwillingly give him the *pas* ; but the Apothecary, sheltered under the wings of both, neither doubts nor hesitates about his rank — he is the servant of all.

This division of medical labour into three classes has long existed in England ; as may be seen by consulting the statute-books of some of the Royal hospitals, by which the Surgeons are only permitted to perform operations, but not to prescribe medicines for the patients operated upon. I believe this law has since been repealed. Though convenience may have established such divisions, yet, as regards the art of medicine, they are purely artificial.

It is not necessary to refer to Celsus, or older writers, to establish a fact which every day's experience proves, that the practice of physic comprises

all its collateral branches, and that, with the exception of operations, there is no real line of demarcation between the Physician and the Surgeon. A patient labouring under irreducible strangulated hernia may be treated by a Physician, who, unaccustomed to operate, sends for a Surgeon ; but, in doing so, it is not from his ignorance of the nature of the disease. He has used all such means as are recommended before an operation is finally resorted to ; and, if we consider these means, we shall find that they argue his knowledge of all the three branches of his profession : so that this simple fact proves at once that there is in reality no distinct line of separation, and that no one can be allowed to practise safely any one branch of the profession who has not at least a general knowledge of the whole.

The old and hackneyed assertion that Physicians are not anatomists cannot be substantiated in the present day ; for they would consider it a disgrace to be deficient in that part of their education which is purely demonstrative, and which it requires but a modicum of time and commonly assiduous application to master. A man can no more safely practise medicine without a thorough knowledge of anatomy than a mariner can securely put to sea without chart or compass. Even its minutiae are of more consequence than may at first sight seem evident ; for a knowledge of the minutest ramifications of a nerve is an essential point in pathology. Without a know-

ledge of anatomy, the most interesting part of medical study, viz. physiology, is a dead letter.

A practitioner, however, may be a good anatomist, but a bad Surgeon; for manual dexterity is not always to be acquired: it is a gift of nature, requiring practice for its perfection, to which in many individuals physical causes oppose an insurmountable barrier.

It has been objected to Sydenham that he attached too little importance to the study of anatomy, when he told the young anatomist that his butcher could carve a leg of mutton better than he could, and that bed-side practice was all. I remember myself hearing the late Surgeon of the Stafford Infirmary declare that the generality of his brother Surgeons were so little accustomed to operate, that they hardly knew a muscle from an oyster.

Hence the only real division allowable in the different branches of the profession. Although this can admit of but little doubt upon fair examination, still custom and convenience have drawn imaginary lines between the different modes of practising the same profession; for, between the science of medicine and the practice of medicine there is a wide gulf fixed, and in England the professors of the different branches are placed in different ranks of society: and as uncouth would the sound of the Watling Street Apothecary's voice be to the tender tympanum of the fair inhabitant of Portland Place, as his ring-

less groping fingers would feel to the soft skin which covers the radial pulsations of her fair wrist.

In taking a slight view of the art of physic, as it is practised and studied at home and abroad, we shall find that the difference is sufficient to allow it to hold a place in a work which treats of England and the English; and would it had fallen into abler hands than mine to fill up the blank. I can but offer a few observations upon the imperfections of the mode of studying and practising medicine at home, and these, too, confined to one class of practitioners, by far, it is true, the larger class, and one which exists nowhere but in England.

I had intended to have written an essay on the profession in general, as practised in England and on the Continent; but I have not seen enough of the latter to make such a work complete, and circumstances have come to my knowledge which prevent my awaiting such an opportunity. It is with the feeling that the dwarf on the giant's shoulders sees a little farther than the giant that I submit these observations to better authorities; too happy if I can prove that neither time nor distance can ever alienate an Englishman from the interests of his countrymen.

What is the real difference between the higher classes of medical men in England and their brethren on the Continent, as regards the opinion of society in general respecting them? It is difficult to answer the question without taking a view of society

in general, and this is not within the limits of this sketch.

When Dupin, in his work on England, quotes the saying of a person in the lower ranks of life, that "he may be a lord, but he is no gentleman," he makes an assertion that will hardly be understood in any other country; the converse would be more easily conceded on the Continent, that no one can be a gentleman who is not a man of high rank. Such, as far as I have been able to judge from some years' residence on the Continent and in different parts of it, is the real view there taken of the character of a gentleman. In this category Physicians are not often placed. Individual exceptions must and will occur; talent and favour are means of preferment, which can never wholly be put aside.

The rank which the foreign Physician holds in society is, therefore, on the one hand attributable to great supposed superiority of talent, in which case he is more valued than any man living, particularly when his services are demanded, because he is the instrument of relief, perhaps the prolonger of life. On the other hand he may owe his rank to court favour, and may trespass upon the privileges of the court philosopher, or the court jester; but he does not enjoy the same estimation which is granted in England to his education and profession. He is, in the eyes of the Aristocracy, decidedly *bourgeois*. Not enjoying the same resources in society as his class do in England, he becomes a philosopher in self-defence;

he applies himself to some pursuit in which by perseverance he hopes to excel, and obtain that power in the scientific world which is denied him in the aristocratic. He learns to content himself with moving in the sphere in which he has been placed by birth, and his only ambition is to shine in it.

If he have the means of settling at once and commencing practice, he naturally passes many years of his life in studious indolence; but he exists upon comparatively moderate terms. He has no high rank to support, no necessity for squandering his little means in pomp and speculative parade, no *voiture expectante*, none of those items which often ruin the English physician at the commencement of his career. He does not hope for success till he has done something to merit it; he is not buoyed up by trusting to chance alone; he is not without hopes, however, that patronage may do something for him. His education and general information stand him often in little stead; they may procure him pleasant acquaintances, but seldom can at once lead to professional emolument. His early years have been passed in society of a different kind from that into which he is afterwards introduced professionally. If he has received a university education, it is such as those acquainted only with our two universities can form no adequate idea of. The characters of the students in English and foreign universities differ as much as the two extremes of society can differ, but not more so than the opinions differ in

the different countries respecting university education.

In England the circumstance of having studied at Oxford or Cambridge is a passport to the best society ; it has the odour of aristocracy about it.—To have been a student in many of the Continental universities is condemnation enough of itself.

The sons of foreign nobility are educated by private tutors ; the clergy are educated by themselves ; and the universities, with some few exceptions, are filled with students of law and medicine.

The profits of the Physician on the Continent, when enjoying great professional reputation, are seldom such as lead to affluence, nor would they often repay him for so expensive an education as is pursued in our universities. As at home, so abroad, the public is accustomed to judge of a Physician's experience by the number of years he has lived in the world, and the wig and spectacles go far in the opinion of all.

Hence the younger men are long before they get into general practice, though, I should say, not by any means so long as in England. The same etiquette, the same division of labour, does not exist as in that country. The Physician on the Continent is a general practitioner ; he is not shackled by any of those customs which have so artificially divided and subdivided the profession at home. He combines all the branches of medicine in his practice,

except that of dispensing his own drugs. He is always at least a professional man, never the tradesman; hence he is called for on many occasions where the English Physician would think the request an insult to his dignity, and this general application of his talent introduces him sooner into practice.

Many however endeavour, at the commencement of their career, to attach themselves to private families for a moderate remuneration, and often combine the tutor with the doctor, and give lessons to the children. Their situation allows of various degrees of advantage or disadvantage, according to the different characters of their employers. In some few favourable cases it is even enviable; they are well treated, have time at their disposal, advantages of travelling at home and abroad, and almost a certainty of existence for the remainder of their days. Their salaries are but small, but, if they succeed in pleasing their employers for any length of time, they are generally converted into life-annuities. After having served for some years, they generally retire into the country; many get a village* for a dowry, practise among the lower nobility and peasantry, and, if scientifically disposed, have time and leisure enough for their pursuits.

Such is generally the career of those, who, not

* This applies to Poland and Russia, and may be equal to a pension of 100*l.* sterling annually.

having the means of establishing themselves in large towns, or the patience to wait for general practice, are denominated House Doctors, little Doctors, or what in England are styled Private Physicians. In both countries the object is the same, viz. to pass over the first years of medical life under easy circumstances; in both I consider the plan fatal to medical reputation.

To point out, however, the difference of rank that the English Physician holds in society, compared with his brethren on the Continent, (and I must state here that my observations have been confined to France, Germany, and the north of Europe,) would be to explain the difference that exists in the state of society itself between our own and these countries.

I should say, generally speaking, that the higher orders of medical men, in those parts of the Continent, hold about the same rank that the better class of educated Apothecaries do in England, and that the lower ranks find their corresponding level in the lower orders of the same body. The higher orders of English Physicians and Surgeons have no equivalents on the Continent; and consequently the degrees of respectability which the profession holds abroad and at home are very different.

It has been objected to Dr. Chalmers, that, in one of his late publications, he has made use of the term Working Clergy; and yet it cannot be denied that,

in that profession, as well as in law, or medicine, there is a class of men destined, from unavoidable circumstances, to perform duties which are more irksome and laborious than those which fall to the lot of some of their brethren. It cannot be denied that the Curate who maintains a family upon 150*l.* per annum, and toils in the vineyard with zeal and assiduity for the good of his flock, does not hold the same rank in society as the Rector, who receives 1500*l.* for comparatively easy duties ; nor does the Rector again rank with the nobility, or, like the Bishop, legislate for his country.

If these differences exist therefore in the profession of those who minister to the wants of that which is not material, and such distinctions have existed from the earliest periods of Christianity, and have been sanctioned by divine authority, and established by the practice of ages, there must be some reasons more solid than prejudice, or mere custom, to warrant and confirm, for so long a period, such an order of things. They are founded, in reality, on the nature of things themselves, and to say that all orders and ranks are merely artificial inventions, is as absurd as to say, that all men are born with the same intellectual faculties, the same muscular strength, and the same nervous energy.

Every ploughman can prove that there is no such thing as equality in nature ; for he can thrash, single-handed, half the tailors in his village, and

may himself be as soundly thrashed by his neighbour the bargeman.

Some are swift, others slow in the race; some strong, others weak in the arm. So, in intellectual, how much more visibly than in corporeal endowments does this inequality manifest itself; for talents are the original gift of Providence. The power of brute force developed the counteracting powers of cunning to evade it, and the different ranks and gradations of society have been formed slowly and imperceptibly on this principle. It has been the power of strength or intellect; and hence their results — patronage, protection, title, rank, riches, all founded on the unequal distribution of the gifts of Nature.

Many start for the cup, but few arrive at the goal. Those who have arrived at it, are contented with seeing others strive for that which they have themselves no longer any need of contending for; but still they are not useless members of society, for, standing at the goal to which all hope to arrive, they serve as encouragement to their successors in the race.

To apply this to our present subject, before we get farther out of our depth, we still think that the profession of Physic should always enjoy the same privileges which it does at present, in the different ranks its members hold in society, and it would be fatal to its interests to abolish all distinctions,

There must be a preponderating class of working doctors. All cannot sit in the President's chair, nor even drink tea in Pall-Mall East.

There must be classes of professional men of such a description as to be content to spend their lives in the exercise of their profession among the lower orders of society, for the latter must be provided for. It is not the man, therefore, who receives such an education as Dr. Young's table suggests, that will consent to live among miners and colliers; but still many a man of good medical education and practical information, though he may be deficient in German or Italian, will be found to labour willingly in his vocation among this class of society; and this the more readily, as he may hope to rise in his profession. He may aspire to medical renown, be transferred from his village to a neighbouring town, and progressively arrive at the metropolis, where he may reasonably hope to rise into higher circles of practice.

In raising the Apothecary, the intention is not to lower the two higher orders, because in reality they must possess advantages of education which a whole multitude cannot aspire to. All have not the means within their reach of prosecuting knowledge at so expensive a rate.

“ Finally (says Dr. Young, or rather Vogel whom he translates) the study of physic requires a certain degree of affluence, since, on account of the high

price of books, apparatus, and instruments, of the fees of various kinds, required in the pursuit of instruction, and the expense of travelling in foreign countries, which is so necessary to a physician, it cannot be undertaken without the possession of ample funds.

“ It is therefore idle to attempt to facilitate the study of medicine to those who are in extremely narrow circumstances. In France the most indigent often devote themselves to physic ; hence arises in that country the abundance of medical men destitute of all education, who do so little honour to their profession. For a similar reason, it is rather to be deprecated than desired, that the expense of living at a University should be extremely lowered.”

We have not the slightest objection to this, under the circumstances which it embraces. It is the result of that experimental knowledge of human nature which distinguishes the practical from the theoretical man ; but it has a certain boundary at which it must stop. As applied to the two higher orders of the profession, it is most salutary advice.

He who has practised in the higher circles will have soon found, that to treat actual and even dangerous disease is the least laborious part of his duty. Man lies prostrate before the hand of Providence when it afflicts him with pain. He yields to the opinions of such as are believed to be the instruments of the same all-wise power for alleviating sickness ; he has but the desire of losing what is

torturing him, what takes from him the illusions of rank and riches, which he would gladly exchange for repose. Such is human nature, and it is not most difficult to treat it medically under such an existing state. If the noble sufferer loses his own feelings of rank in others much more acute, he loses also the idea of rank in his attendant. It matters little to him what he calls himself; if he has confidence in his possibility of raising him soon from his sick-bed, it is all that he cares for and desires.

Here then all distinctions cease, both with the patient and the practitioner; and here we see neither necessity for an expensive plan of study, nor a certain degree of affluence, nor a university education. Nay, the veriest quack, could he gain sufficient ascendancy over the mind of the sufferer, to persuade him into the belief of a more speedy cure than the regular practitioner promises, would necessarily be preferred; for pain leans more towards credulity than scepticism, and "health brooks disease ill." It is not in cases of real suffering, that the uncouth appearance of the most uneducated practitioner excites nervous sensations. Can you cure me? is the question.

But for one such case in the medical practice of the higher circles, how many are there, where little or no pain is felt, where the suffering is but a modicum in comparison with uneasy feelings, malaise, spleen and vapours, indigestion, over-excitement,

slight chronic affections, hypochondriacism, and all the ills that fashionable life is heir to !

How much of that uneasy feeling produced by moral causes — blighted ambition, the loss of patronage, domestic vexations, unlooked-for disappointments, slight pecuniary difficulties, — and even a little more substantially — catarrhs and nervous feverishness from imprudent exposure at inclement seasons, — how many of such cases, although they are not to be found in Cullen's Nosology, nevertheless form the bulk of fashionable ailments ! They are uncomfortable to bear, and as medical advice is purchasable and the means are ample, why is it not to be applied for as any other article which tends to the conducement of comfort ? It is in such cases that the man of the world must be incorporated with the physician, and this is not a matter of slight consideration. Such persons form a large portion of society ; they have infinite means of good in their power, and they will be more useful to the rest of the community, in proportion as they are more comfortable in themselves.

Are not the conversation, the manners, the persuasions, the reasoning, of an educated practitioner — a man who has passed his time with his patients in a state of health, and by his more extensive knowledge of the world in general, and the various branches of science connected with his profession, has amused them in their hours of ease, more likely

to dispel their ailments than the attendance of one whose language and want of fashionable address are irksome to their feelings? And have not the rich, possessing the means, the right to employ him as they please? Does not their liberality often tend to the alleviation of real distress; if not in their own persons, in those of sufferers, who can seek gratuitous assistance from medical men, which, were they not recompensed in this way, they could not afford to dispense? How often has an agreeable conversation, a well-timed anecdote, an interesting history, or a ludicrous adventure, dispersed a fit of melancholy!

But to proceed to more serious cases; will not a man of high education place more confidence in the opinion of him who can discourse with him on subjects that are congenial to his own education, than in the mere operative, who can do well what use and custom have taught him, but can go no farther?

For such classes, therefore, all that is said in favour of University education and affluence holds good in all its bearings; but, when we descend in the scale and look upon the masses of uneducated people who require medical assistance, we must drop the physician, and find some less classical attendant to administer to their wants. For to them the knowledge of languages avails not; the more simple and plain the man about them, the more confidence he is likely to inspire. They must

be allowed to speak, and he must understand their jargon ; and, though he should not be deficient in medical education, for this is as necessary in one case as the other, he may be advantageously deficient in too great learning.

Such individuals, whose circumstances and birth would never lead them to aspire to the former, will still make an honourable existence even in this line of practice ; for every man may be respectable in his sphere, and do credit to the line of life in which Providence has placed him.

For this, therefore, by far the larger class, there should be a distinct system of education, suitable to themselves and to those with whom they are to be in constant relation.

If the division of the profession be artificial as regards the ranks which its members occupy, it is so because society is artificial also ; and it is not for us to inquire, how this state arose, but to find the means of ministering to its wants.

We find therefore, that it may be in the power of the Physician to alleviate human grievances, to chase a desponding idea, and even in many cases where his own high moral character is guarantee for his sincerity, perform more important offices and smooth the bed of death.

May we not again draw a comparison between the higher dignitaries of the Church on similar occasions, and venture to say that learning and eloquence, combined with the piety of a Blair or a Porteus,

have more influence upon the morals of the higher classes than the prosing of a Welsh curate? Is he not again, however, more useful in his mountains than such characters can be? Is not the simplicity of his life and manners congenial to his peculiar flock? Each, then, in his sphere—let each endeavour to excel in his vocation, to excel in his duty.

Society will not be benefited in doing away with the working class on one hand, or with the more refined on the other; the great desideratum is to ameliorate the education of the former, and to give them more means of doing good.

There is much truth in the exclamation of Dr. Johnson, who, speaking of the profession of physic, says, “It is a melancholy attendance on misery, a mean submission to peevishness, and a continual interruption of pleasure.” No doubt, the Doctor listened to his calling, when he took his degree in laws; a character less adapted to practise medicine never existed.

What, says Vogel, are the duties of a Physician? “It becomes on many accounts absolutely necessary that he should lay a restraint on his passions, his inclinations, and his feelings, which are so often and so variously excited, and that he should support with patience the most disagreeable sensations, whenever the good of the patient requires it; that he should forget himself when the situation and circumstances of the patient call for sacrifices which

are of importance for his tranquillity and his recovery ; and that even the most untoward and disgusting conduct of the patient, whatever difficulties and contradictions and impediments may occur, should not prevent his applying the whole force of his intellect, and the entire powers of his invention, to the investigation and consideration of all the symptoms of the disease, and to conducting and combining the means of recovery, in the best possible manner with the cool wisdom of a mind perfectly at its ease."

It is the Physician's duty to take every man who entrusts himself to his care, as he is, with all his failings, and to treat him in such a manner as to obtain his confidence and to fulfil his wishes.

It appears, therefore, that the practice of medicine is not a sinecure, and yet, with all its annoyances, many willingly embrace it. The agreeable part of it has not been touched upon by either of the two professors, and still it has its sweets. All resolves itself into the question, whether it be a mere trick and imposition, or whether there be any truth in it?

Those who profess the least confidence in it when they are well, are the first to fly to it when they are sick. Has no man been in the situation to believe, that his agonies have been relieved, that he has perhaps been restored to a family dependent upon him, or that his darling child has been saved by medical assistance? We receive occasionally something like

manifestations of heartfelt gratitude for services rendered to suffering humanity. Such is often ample remuneration to our feelings, and sufficient to make amends for a larger portion of whim and dissatisfaction which we must necessarily encounter.

But man is not always the same, and no man differs more than when well or when sick. He is often, morally speaking, hardly recognizable in these different states.

When Macbeth said, "Throw physic to the dogs," he was in a state wherein medicine would have been but of little use to him; but Macbeth rushing to the fight, and Macbeth with a broken leg, would have acted very differently. So says Horace:—

"Si noles sanus, curres hydropicus."

When these worthies were well, they made fun of the doctors also.

We shall proceed to draw a sketch of the manner in which the early education of youth is, or was conducted ten years ago in England. Some changes may have taken place since that period, which may make some of these observations superfluous. As it then was known to us, it demanded a radical reform, and such only could be of any service to the cause. The evil lay in the very roots, and whatever ameliorations may have occurred since we

quitted England, still the cause of half the evil exists in the system of apprenticeships.

The few days we spent in England in the autumn afforded us no opportunity of ascertaining if any important change had taken place.

THE APPRENTICE.

IN attempting to make any observations upon medical reform, we must commence with the system of apprenticeships, and insist upon their abolition, as the groundwork and basis of all hopes of improvement. In doing so, we shall lay some stress upon the evils originating in this system, and give a sketch of the way in which too many of those destined to the profession occupy the most important period of their lives.

Quitting school at fifteen, a lad is bound apprentice to a surgeon and apothecary in a country-town, for the space of five or seven years, upon paying a premium of a hundred pounds or upwards. The indentures specify the different relations which are to exist between the contracting parties; but, as they are never perused by either, so neither is bound to fulfil what he therein promises.

He has at this period as much knowledge of the Latin language as will allow him, during the first six months, to make a mistake in the preparation of every prescription he compounds. He gives Hydrocyanic Acid for Tincture of Hyoscyamus, and Turpeth Mineral for Submuriate of Mercury.

His first duty, after having swept the shop clean in the morning, is to make himself acquainted with the labels upon the drawers and bottles; but, as these are of old date, and he is unacquainted with chemistry, he is at a loss to understand the meaning of any thing he reads upon them. They bear no relation, in his untaught mind, to the nomenclature used in the recipes he has to prepare; for how is he to know, unless by instinct, that the Sulphate of Soda is the *Sal mirabile Glauberi*; the Copperas of commerce, the Sulphate of Iron; and the Sulphate of Magnesia another name for Epsom Salts? It will be replied, that his master is there to instruct and initiate him in the business till he be sufficiently *au fait*; but it may happen, and it often does happen, that his master is not there; he is engaged with some poor woman at a distance, whose real situation, or his ignorance of it, confines him to her bedside for hours or even days.

The apprentice however, proud of his new situation, which confers upon him a degree of authority that he did not before possess, and unwilling to allow himself to be ignorant of any thing, prefers blundering away in the dark; and the more readily, as he has to deal with such as can only by sad experience recognize his blunders. Left to himself, and not having occupation enough to employ a third of his time, he in most instances contracts idle habits, or makes vicious acquaintances. Should he be really of a diligent turn and disposed to read, he has no one to point

out to him any plan of education by which he may employ his leisure-hours. A few old books, or others wholly unintelligible to him at this period, compose the whole of the library to which he has access, and often is he prevented from even making use of what he has within his reach by the menial services which are exacted of him.

He is required to give out the oats and to saddle his master's horse occasionally, because the stable-boy is drunk, to go to the baker's or the post-office, to run of errands for his mistress, to shell peas and beans for dinner, or to bump the daughter upon a pillion to Farmer Tubbs' harvest-home. The first thing impressed upon him is, that the study of his profession is the least part of his duty. He has to unlearn any gentlemanlike feelings that may either have been innate in him, or that he may have acquired at school.

Addressed by his Christian name of Tom or Jack, the servants look upon him as their equal, and treat him as their inferior. For each of these has some definite duty in the house to perform, and will even resist any encroachment upon his privileges; whereas the apprentice has not this advantage, and is made in reality the servant of all work.

He is admitted probably to table, where he is made to feel his dependence; he does not suffer decided ill-treatment, such as may be punishable by law; for I am not pleading against any physical hardships he may endure, but against the system of

moral degradation to which a noble and ingenuous youth may often be subjected.

As soon as he has swallowed his food and has heard some galling insinuations concerning the price of provisions and the voracity of his appetite, his eating more bread than potatoes, or a few more such degrading observations, he retires broken-hearted to chew his cud in the shop, and ruminate on his situation. He is indignant at such treatment, and is determined to resist it; he retires to his bed, which is the garret or hay-loft, and passes the night in tears, interrupted only in his reveries by the snoring of the stable-boy.

The following day he expostulates with his master upon the treatment he receives; he is mistaken in the choice he has made of the profession; he came to learn medicine, to be a doctor, and he finds himself a menial, and he begs to return to his parents. He receives for answer, "that he is proud and high-minded; that he is not to suppose that he came to be idle; that there are disagreeables in all professions; that he must *rough* it, as others have done before. What right has he to give himself such airs? a good horsewhipping would take the pride out of him. That he is a sulky hound, and ungrateful for all the kindnesses he has received; that he has been treated hitherto as one of the family, but that he may live to learn the difference. As to returning to his friends, he may do it if he pleases; but the premium will not be given back." He has gained little by the

expostulation ; and the knowledge of the penury of his relations weighs too heavily upon his conscience to dare to propose the sacrifice which his return would cost them.

Time steals on, and with it the endurance of the evil ; but it gets lighter as he plods along : finding that no care is taken of his professional education, that no questions are asked him, and provided that he does not make any egregious mistakes in the preparation of the prescriptions, he is sure to pass quietly through the day. He is more callous than formerly to the indignities which are offered him ; having, in fact, from necessity contracted idle habits, he considers these indignities as no longer such.

He prefers going of errands to standing behind the counter, and would rather dig in the garden than study the pharmacopœia. He is now civil and obliging, performs all menial offices with *gaieté de cœur*, and his master and mistress rejoice in the sudden change that has taken place in his temper.

He is now a handy, useful lad, and gets an additional allowance of pudding, and a glass of currant wine on Sundays. Even the servants observe the change in his manners ; he is no longer as proud as Lucifer, but is hail-fellow-well-met with them all. He has a predilection for the housemaid, and he finds himself quite another thing ; he is astonished at his own stupidity, that he did not before appreciate the advantages of his situation ; how preferable

to school, how preferable to home : he is, in fact, his own master ; he pats Sally on the cheek, and feels himself a man.

This change is attributable to two causes : the natural tendency to run wild at that period of life, and the friendship which he has contracted with the lawyer's clerk, who is three years older than himself.

There is nothing so destructive to the morals of youth as the bad example of those who are a little older than themselves. Boys form very erroneous ideas of the sanction of age. The eldest boy at school is sure to carry a certain degree of superiority with him. So with vicious habits and propensities ; a boy will spurn doing what another of his age or his junior may be guilty of ; but, should his senior set him the example, he will often follow it, nay, justify it even in his own mind, because it is sanctioned by seniority. In some measure the same principle holds through life, which Alfieri defines a continuation of childhood.

The lawyer's clerk, with whom he has passed much of his leisure time, had opened his eyes to things to which they were formerly closed. He had a smattering of philosophy, and had the advantage of a language new to the young doctor. He soon persuaded him that there were many situations worse than his, and that it was his duty to make himself contented and enjoy himself as much as he could. He was willing to do all in *his* power to make his

leisure hours pass agreeably ; they could talk about the nature of things and the epicurean philosophy, and might live to be the founders of sects and systems. Sally had also some share in reconciling him to his present situation. He now turned to *con amore*, and became anxious to enter upon the practical duties of his profession. He found, in fact, he had a decided talent for it, — a calling, and he took to it with a zeal quite exemplary.

His master, delighted with him, boasts of his abilities, of his care, method, and punctuality. His classical acquirements, he confesses, are greater than his own ; for he himself left school early, and all such knowledge is very fleeting. He congratulates himself upon the acquisition of such an assistant ; for he drops the word Apprentice in his enthusiastic praises of him.

His master, in fact, knows very well, that if he can persuade his patients to believe all this, he relieves himself of a mighty deal of trouble, and can play his rubber an hour longer, because his apprentice can supply his place on all ordinary occasions. He declares publicly, therefore, that he has made more progress in his profession in six months than some of his predecessors had done in five years. If his master says so, is he not to believe him ? He does not see the plan of operations, and he wonders how he has acquired such knowledge and inspired such confidence, where formerly he only gave discontent.

He communicates with his companion, who sees farther than himself, and acts upon the master's principles, so that the young doctor is persuaded into the belief that he is a very clever fellow ; he becomes, in fact, "*un medecin malgré lui.*"

He promises himself the following market-day some scope for his abilities ; he is to draw his maiden tooth, and employs himself for some days previous in polishing up some old instrument, which, like Hudibras's sword,

"For want of fighting has grown rusty,"

and practises upon a sheep's jaw with decided success.

The day arrives, and with it Giles, who, asking for his master, begs to have a tooth drawn. "He is not at home," quoth the lad, "but I'll do your business in a crack." Giles demurs, and seems reluctant. The apprentice tempts him by offering to do it gratis. Giles feels in his mouth, and finds the tooth loose : "He can't hurt me much," he thinks, "and I shall save a shilling." He consents, and sits on the chair. It is too high for the young operator, who puts him upon the floor, squeezing his head tight between his knees. The key is fixed on, and the tooth snapped in two, or the wrong one pulled out, or two instead of one, or the jaw splintered ; and the patient gets up and roars lustily, and the Apprentice abuses the instrument, and Giles d—s the Apprentice, and goes away growling to spend

the shilling he has saved at the first public-house, and to suffer from the toothache and a broken jaw. Such is generally the odontalgic *debut*!

Nothing daunted, and finding he has not the talent for this particular department of surgery, he is determined to try his skill in phlebotomy, and an opportunity soon presents itself; for at spring and fall the good people in England like to be bled.

The stately matron, in a red cloak, and with a basket of eggs under her arm, conducts a pale chlorotic girl in the other, and, stalking into the shop, asks for the master. "Not at home," replies the youth: "what is your pleasure?" — "My daughter wants bleeding," replies the matron.—"Oh, is that all? I'll stick her directly: sit down, my good woman." The woman makes no resistance, for she knows every barber can bleed, and has seen her own husband drive the phlebotomy into a horse's neck; and the chair, and red tape, and long pole, are all put in requisition. The arm is tied tight, and the lancet pushed deep into it, through the vein and into the artery; the blood flows *per saltum*, like a fountain; and the boy, patting her cheek and rubbing his own hands, congratulates himself upon so well performing his maiden operation. As the pewter basin fills rapidly, and the girl looks pale, the mother thinks he has taken enough. Too pleased, however, with his success, and declaring the blood highly inflamed, he thinks he had better take another cup—"he hated half measures,"

he said. In the mean time, some one asks for an ounce of Epsom salts. The boy, in his hurry, and thinking more of his fair patient who is bleeding so nicely, puts up by mistake an ounce of Oxalic acid.

It is now time to undo the arm, and, having nicely folded up the rag and smoothed out the bandage, he unties the fillet. What is his consternation when he finds the blood spout out faster than before! He is quite bewildered at so strange a phenomenon; he had seen his master bleed twenty times, (had himself practised upon the veins of a cabbage-leaf,) and always found the blood stop as soon as the fillet was removed from the arm. Losing all presence of mind, and the girl losing her blood, and her life fast ebbing, he runs into the street to look for assistance. In the mean time the girl faints, falls from the chair, and nature stops the hemorrhage and saves her life.

The village barber, being the only person he sees capable of assisting him, enters the shop, and, finding the girl upon the floor, the blood stopped, and no pulse in the other arm, shakes his head and says, "It is a bad job, for she's dead as a door-nail." At which the mother, horror-struck, falls senseless by the side of her daughter. A crowd gathers round the shop, and in the midst of the consternation arrives the master.

The girl began again to manifest some return of life, and the arm to bleed afresh. The nature of the case was evident, the artery had been wounded;

the means of repairing it not so easy. Nothing could be done but tie up the arm, and that so tightly as to prevent all circulation.

But the mother returning in a few hours to know what was to be done for the pain and swelling of the arm, the master finds it necessary to undertake the defence of his apprentice—in fact, his own defence. He comments upon the good qualities of the lad, and even his experience, for he had been with him some months, and assures the mother the same accident would have happened had he bled her himself, for there was an anomaly in the distribution of the artery, which no doubt she understood; and she was pacified for the moment. He bids her go home, and he will follow her in half an hour.

He now proceeds to deal very differently with the apprentice, who, upon his master's return, had made his escape and hid himself in the cellar; but, as he commences his lecture, a horseman arrives, to seek assistance for a man who, having taken some Epsom salts, is in great agony. The Oxalic acid had taken effect, and the man died before the apothecary could get to him.

The loss of time proved equally fatal to the girl's arm, which mortified and was finally amputated at the County Infirmary.

No inquest was held upon the poisoned man; it was asserted he died drunk, for he had been seen at the public-house the day before. He died "by the visitation of God."

The apprentice, however, in whose breast "the still small voice" was not yet quite stifled, took the affair much to heart, and became disgusted with his profession. The idea of having maimed one fellow-creature and killed another by his own negligence preyed upon his mind; he became dull and silent, and his sleep was interrupted by horrid dreams. The taunts of his master, mistress, and all the servants, aggravated his distress.

He decided, at last, to write to his friends, and inform them that he repented the choice he had made of his profession; it did not suit him, and he begged to return home and enter some honest trade. To which he received in answer a positive refusal, and many animadversions upon his conduct; with an assurance that he could only hope to be forgiven when his master sent a better account of his attention to his business.

This might have driven him to despair, had he received it in the mood in which he then was; but time had already changed that mood. Though at first he was dejected and downcast at what he had done, Thomas the lawyer soon contrived to reason him out of it, and show him the true philosophy of the matter. He was what is styled a free-thinker, and his actions were as free as his thoughts. He began by joking upon the subject, and told him it was the saying of a wise physician that no man could practise till he had half-filled a church-yard; which causing a smile upon the lad's counte-

nance, he threw in his philosophy, in which he proved to him that life and death were quite relative terms; that there was nothing positive in either; that the circumstance of a little blood flowing in another channel could not influence the totality of matter, which only changes its state; and that he was not the executor of his own will, but was predestined to act in concordance with the whole, of which he was but a part, and consequently subordinate to it. All of which he had picked up in a magazine which warned youth against the influence of such principles.

Such jargon as this, and the promise of drinking a bottle of wine with him the next time his master and mistress went out to spend the day, dispelled by degrees the remains of conscientious feeling which he had upon this subject.

He resumed his station in the shop, and in the course of time, and by repeated experience, with some occasional failures, drew teeth and bled very tolerably. He had a predilection, however, for the medical department of the profession. Surgery was more a mechanical operation, and it told tales: people can judge in surgical cases, whereas the arcana of medicine are closed to the vulgar.

It is easy to ascertain if a broken leg has been well or ill set; but it is difficult to determine if a fever has been well or ill treated, because, treat it as you will, it is an escape or a cure; or, treat it how you will, you will find authority for what you do. This his

companion pressed strongly upon him, and he took the hint, for he learned from him that bad surgery was actionable, and damages might be claimed in courts of law.

He had now spent three years in learning the art of surgery without having seen a single surgical operation, or, in fact, any case requiring it, except the case of the varicose aneurism which he had himself manufactured. He had forgotten what little classical knowledge he possessed, and he had lost all gentlemanlike feeling. He had made, however, very great progress in his profession, as far as his master could judge, who sent him as his substitute upon all occasions where he dared try the experiment.

In his master's absence he had sat in council, and given certificates of disability to a number of Militia recruits, who found more ways of cheating the young surgeon than of evading the ballot. The blind saw much clearer than he did, and he would have found it difficult to come up with the lame in a fair race. Ulcers were manufactured on the legs by rubbing off the skin and binding a halfpenny upon the wound, which produced a green sore, and very uncouth to look at. Some had St. Vitus's dance, and could not remain quiet as long as they were under examination. Others filled the scrotum with air, and produced ruptures; some had dislocated shoulders, others complained of the hip-joint. Some were deaf and dumb, and could neither

hear nor answer when spoken to, till, receiving the certificate of non-capability, they thanked him for his kindness. The paralyzed arm was eagerly stretched out to receive the same certificate; others left their crutches in the room, and all got drunk before night closed in, boasting how they had cheated the young doctor, who was at this period but a very sorry servant of his Majesty.

He soon afterwards commenced the practice of Midwifery, though he could not tell one bone of the pelvis from the other, but his gratuitous services found him customers. A case of twins, however, which he met with at the commencement, puzzled him so much, that he lost all presence of mind. The first child came well enough, but the second would not come at all, and, but for the assistance of a midwife much more expert than himself, the woman might have been lost. He took, however, such a dislike for this branch of the profession, that he closed with this case his obstetric career.

His knowledge of medical jurisprudence was soon afterwards put to the test. A young woman was delivered of a natural child still-born, and she had not declared her pregnancy before her confinement. The young doctor, in his master's absence, attended the inquest, and opened the child's chest, for, having read in some book upon forensic medicine, that if a child's lungs float in water, it is a proof the child was born alive, he put them to this test, which they not standing, he was about to deliver his opinion

to the Jury of the village, when the arrival of the Coroner superseded his opinion concerning the case being one of unequivocal infanticide. The Coroner being an old surgeon was of a different opinion, and the young woman escaped incarceration.

Such are some of the advantages of apprenticeships to society; and, having now with great credit to himself and satisfaction to his master completed the term of his bondage, he is rewarded by a handsome and flattering letter to his parents, and a gift of five pounds to pay his coach-hire to London, whither he goes in the course of a little time to walk the hospitals.

If the picture I have sketched here of a medical apprenticeship be a rare one, it is not exaggerated; all I have here stated has come under my own cognizance, and all the misdemeanours, though not all perhaps combined in one individual, have been literally committed.

I have heard it urged in debate, and at a Medical society, that the Apprentice might learn morality from the good example of his master and mistress. It is true; but for one such, how many will be found to intrigue with the maid, and commit peculations to further their designs.

But, put every thing on the best possible footing and upon the most advantageous terms, still what does medicine, what does society, gain by this species of bondage? The following letter, addressed to me

by a young man of excellent character and good abilities, and who is now by persevering industry and close application to his professional studies endeavouring to retrieve the time he lost during six years spent in a country-town in Wales, will perhaps add weight to the opinion I have hazarded in the sketch I have drawn above.

“I have now concluded the term of my bondage, though in fact I have a year to expire before my apprenticeship is legally finished. It is an act of grace which allows me to escape at present. I have spent six years in acquiring what is styled the rudiments of professional knowledge. How little is to be gained by such a system of education! All depends upon individual exertion, which, supposing it to be considerable, would be employed to tenfold advantage, if directed into another channel.

“Where laziness and apathy prevail in a character, such loss of time is irreparable, and will be felt during the remainder of life. It is not to be supposed that mine was a peculiar case, or that I laboured under greater disadvantages than others; so far the reverse of this, I had opportunities which occur but seldom in the commencement of a professional career. A six years’ apprenticeship may, however, in all cases be estimated at five years’ loss, for all the art of pharmacy may be acquired in one twelvemonth, and all that will be required is, that the draughts be neatly tied over, the labels plainly written, and the shop swept clean.”

For this, all classical, all general knowledge will be put aside; and habits of idleness and dissolute conduct often supply their place.

The age of the apprentice is, of all others, the most dangerous, and most liable to fall into temptation. Escaped from the schoolmaster, the boy handles the pestle in triumph of his having broken loose: with just enough knowledge to know nothing, he thinks he has no more to learn, although he cannot read an ordinary prescription, or construe the Latin Pharmacopœia; and now he has no time for classical studies, he must forget what he has learned and acquire nothing in compensation. If he be methodical and dexterous, he will certainly learn the art of dispensing, and may draw a tooth or roll a leg; but are six years to be devoted to this, which will be better acquired in six months' diligent attendance in a hospital?

If he be naturally fond of reading, and disposed even to make the best of his time, where, in a country town or village, is he to find the means? And, in many cases, who is to direct him? He will be left to himself, select companions often beneath him, and if he turn out well it will be indeed a miracle. Had he devoted five years of his time to general education, he would have laid a foundation upon which he might afterwards have raised a solid superstructure. It is, I believe, considered a bad principle, even in arts and manufactures, to tie a youth down by law for so long a period as has been hitherto

established by custom. Even the mechanic has to complain of the loss of time and the erroneous system of education to which he is subjected. There is something degrading in the very name, not to be compensated for by riding in the Lord Mayor's coach, which Hogarth has painted as the goal to which industry may aspire. The reverse of the medal is a journey to Tyburn.

This system of medical apprenticeship does not exist upon the Continent, because, as the dispenser is never combined with the prescriber of medicine, the latter has no need of such assistance.

The foreign medical student begins by attending lectures and dissecting-rooms, visiting the sick in the hospitals, and labouring hard in his professional duties from the very commencement of his career. As soon as he quits the classes of general knowledge, he enters the medical classes. He wastes no time in compounding medicines behind a counter, and though I can draw no comparison in his favour, still he has more means of acquiring knowledge, and much less temptation to be idle, than the English student.

Were the same means as he enjoys afforded to respectable English youths, they would, I venture to say, equal German or French students, both as to the proficiency they would make in their studies and in moral conduct. In the one case the fault rests with the individual, in the other it lies in the system of education itself.

THE HOSPITAL STUDENT.

THE short period between the termination of the Apprenticeship, and the commencement of the Hospital career is spent at home, where the young doctor contrives, as much as possible, to convince the natives of the progress he has made in his studies. This is not so difficult a matter with the medical as with most other professions. People can judge of the manual dexterity of a lad, or even of his general mental endowments, but no one can say whether he will be a good or bad doctor.

The suppositions are, however, in favour of the young student of medicine (for he has dropped the name of apprentice) from the good testimonials he produces, and his opinion upon a dropsical female, who had been operated upon eight times with success, established his reputation.

He was decidedly of opinion, that the swelling was caused by a bulk of fluid in the abdomen, and not by pregnancy; and as she had been tapped already eight times, she might perhaps undergo another operation without endangering her life, though in reality life was a thing very ill-defined. It is true, he observed, that this would make the

ninth time, and much stress was laid by the ancients upon odd and even numbers, but this opinion stood not the test of modern philosophy. He recommended in fact another operation, but would not commit himself by specifying any particular time. It was with great diffidence he gave his opinion, but he thought the constitution might be injured by repeated tapplings.

This opinion gained him great credit, both for his modesty and learning, and his friends thought that the 100*l.* premium had not been thrown away, and his father was the more disposed to part with the money he had put aside for his hospital career, as he saw with pleasure that there was every probability of its being well employed.

The day arrives for his departure, and, after a little sermonizing about temptations and bad company, and sacrifices, &c. the student finds himself the following day with his pocket full of money in Tooley-street in the Borough. He was now his own master in a private lodging, and every comfort about him; he felt a strange sensation as he counted over the half-notes, for the precaution of cutting them in halves had not been omitted, and he rejoined them with a wafer. He walked up and down his room, which allowed of about three strides in each direction; but it was a palace to him, it was his own, and he could ring his bell as often as he pleased. It was the 29th of September, and the lectures were to commence on the 1st of October; the following day

therefore he proceeded to the hospitals, which were situated about five minutes' walk from his lodgings. He meets upon the road a young man with a catheter in his hand, turning into the gates of Guy's, and, addressing him, begs he will conduct him to the office for entering to the different courses of lectures. It happened to be a dresser, a kind of non-commissioned officer, and he proceeds with him direct to the apothecary's shop. Here he saw for the first time a hospital laboratory, and he shrugged up his shoulders, when he compared it with his old master's shop. It is in reality an aristocratic establishment ; and he who gets one foot into Guy's may hope in time to get both into a carriage, and himself into an apoplexy.

He was a little astonished at his morning's disbursement, and the more so when he found that he had taken out no tickets for surgery and anatomy, which he came to London to study. He was soon, however, directed to another office, where, upon paying another considerable sum, he became perpetual proprietor of as many courses as he pleased. He had now disbursed almost the whole of the sum with which he was supplied on leaving the paternal house. He returned to his lodgings with the best resolutions, and immediately informed his friends of the legal claims already made upon his purse. The sundries did not hitherto figure in his cash-book ; all was fair and legal.

He had received tickets of admission to each

course of lectures. These were printed in ink of various colours, with appropriate Latin mottoes ; but he had so far forgotten his Latin as not to be able to construe them, and he determined upon buying a dictionary and grammar, and sticking this winter close to his classics.

He already regretted his former life, and the frivolous, unprofitable manner in which he passed five years of his existence. He finds himself deficient in the very elements of education, and ignorant of such things as are necessary to his comprehending any part of his medical studies. He is now obliged to go to school again, and devote a portion of that time to elementary education, which is of itself much too limited to teach him what he came to learn.

Upon reading over the academical programme, the following claims are made upon his time :

Midwifery, from eight till nine, A. M.

Chemistry, from nine and half to eleven, three days in the week.

Practice of Medicine, at the same hour the alternate days.

Walking the Hospitals, every day from one till two.

Anatomy, from two to four.

Demonstrations of Anatomy, in the morning at eleven.

Physiology, from six to half-past seven, twice a week.

Surgery, from half-past seven to nine the same evening.

Materia Medica, twice a week in the evening.

Lectures on Natural Philosophy (optional).

Meeting of Medical Society, every Saturday evening.

Upon adding these together, he finds that he has but three or four hours in the day for taking his food and brushing up his Latin, and Thursday evening for the play or other recreations.

The following evening at seven o'clock the lectures were to commence, and, having completely armed himself for the fight, he finds himself for the first time in a medical theatre. Six benches from the Professor, with an ink-bottle tied to his button-hole, some loose paper in a black leather case, somewhat resembling a sermon-case, pen in hand, ears erect, and mouth half open, he is watching to catch the meaning of what he hears, that he may transcribe it in his book.

The subject is of all others the simplest for a Tyro, viz. the Essence of Life, or a Preface to Physiology. The thing in itself startles him amazingly; he has no idea that life can require any explanation. He cannot doubt that he and all his brother students around him are all alive, or that the bodies he saw in the dissecting-room in the morning afforded unequivocal proofs of precisely the opposite state, viz. that of death.

It was not in fact till he had heard a full and clear

explanation of what life really was that he was aware of his own ignorance of the matter. The following lecture explained to him how difficult it is to understand the nature of any thing, and it is related here as he sketched it in his book, with some few corrections.

“Gentlemen,” commenced the Professor, “we are going to talk about life, and life is a very ticklish thing to deal with.

“Who can say what it is, gentlemen?

“Who can say what it is not?

“Various definitions have been given of it, but hitherto all are exceptionable — but the fact is, gentlemen, that life is life, and this is all we can say; but not so of its functions.

“These will allow of very full discussion, and open a wide field of enquiry; and, beginning with the higher order of animals, in which we have the honour to rank, gentlemen, we shall proceed through the chain of creation from the highest to the lowest organized of living beings.

“We shall find, gentlemen, there is some difference between a man and an oyster, for the one is locomotive and the other not, but both possess life, gentlemen, in different degrees. This is a very interesting subject, and demands all your attention; and I must crave your indulgence if I exceed the limits of an ordinary lecture, or trespass even upon the hour of my colleagues; but when you consider the importance of the subject, you will, I trust, par-

don me in claiming so much of your attention. Physiologists have made many experiments, gentlemen, to prove that other animals are much more tenacious of life than man. They have extracted certain organs from them, and made incisions into their bowels, and removed their spleens with impunity.

“ Now the human frame could not support all these experiments, but the animals will live after them ; and so, you see, they are more tenacious of life than man.

“ If you cut off the head of some animals, it is true they will die, but not so with the snail ; for you may remove his head without doing him the least injury, as you will learn by examining this preparation. You will find the brain of the animal not seated in the head, but a little below it, and you may remove the head with impunity.

“ Now, gentlemen, the cerebellum is the principal seat of vitality, and you may make some very interesting experiments on this subject. Take a rabbit and slice away his cerebrum by degrees like so much brawn, and the animal will exhibit no symptoms of unpleasant feeling, but as soon as you come to his cerebellum, he will go into convulsions and perhaps die.

“ There are some animals, gentlemen, whose brains you may remove *in toto* because the vitality resides in the spinal marrow.

“ Spallanzani, the father of experiments, scooped out the brains of a turtle without doing the animal

any serious injury. It lived a twelvemonth afterwards in very comfortable enjoyment of all its intellectual faculties.

“As you descend in the scale, you will find the tenacity increase in an inverse ratio with the development of intellectual powers. The polypus may be divided into twenty pieces, gentlemen, and each becomes a new animal.

“Insects are very tenacious of life : you may keep them alive for months, impaled upon pins, and they are perfectly happy, ‘for they make love during the time, and they eat each other, and what more is necessary to prove that they are happy?’

“Now mankind, gentlemen, the human being, *will* not admit of such experiments, because he has the greatest share of intellectual faculties ; and he *will* not stand them, for he has the least tenacity of life. So I would advise you to content yourselves with making experiments upon animals only, and lose no opportunity of doing so. It is by far the most important part of your studies ; and if you neglect it, you will regret it as long as you live.

“There is a general cry against experiments, but it is a spurious and sickly sentimentality. Do not we every day sacrifice animals to our bellies, and may we not be allowed to feed our minds ? Is the belly all, gentlemen ? God forbid ! We are feeling and rational creatures, and require intellectual food also ; and how are we to have this without making experiments ? No, gentlemen, this is the real way

to eminence in your profession, and without the help of this how are you to discover what life is ? And with this I shall conclude, begging that if I have not made myself thoroughly well understood, which I hope I have done, any gentleman who has not comprehended my meaning will have the kindness to say so, and I will endeavour to explain."

Making a few blunders in transcribing these observations into his book, such as life being more developed in the oyster than in the human subject, he found, upon referring to his notes afterwards, that either he must have made many mistakes, owing to his want of practice in taking notes, or that in reality he did not understand the meaning of the professor ; and, wishing to know more upon the subject, he consulted some essay upon life, which puzzled him most amazingly. He began to think, in fact, as he had at the very commencement of his career, that he had mistaken his calling, and was not predestined to shine in his profession. The jargon of the lawyer's clerk about the nature of things and the rule of right, the epicurean philosophy, were a spelling-book to him, compared to all this definition of living matter. He hoped, however, that time and application would conquer it, or that some parts of the profession at least would be less obscure.

The idea of being rejected by the Company of Apothecaries, though at so long a distance, already frightened him.

How am I to answer, he thought, if one of the

board should ask me how to define life? and that he would ask him there was no doubt. Again he referred to his books, and read over with attention something as intelligible as what follows :

“Life and organization are the same; life consists in the totality of its functions. It is a forced state, and depends upon a just relation between excitement and excitability. If the excitement is greater than the excitability, the latter is overcome, as a slow fire is extinguished by throwing on too many coals at once. It is only produced by gently blowing the flame. The proof is plain that it is neither electricity nor galvanism. It is not any thing that can be separated from itself, it is the totality of itself.”

He could not make more out of this, than what he heard in the lecture; but as there could be no mistake in a printed book, he copied it out and spent the remainder of the evening in learning it by heart, and flattered himself he was upon this point a match for the Apothecaries.

There was one thing which struck him in this lecture, viz : the invitation and encouragement afforded him to pursue experimental inquiry. He thought to himself, that all the tricks he had played upon animals, the horsing of toads, the tying bladders to cats to make them fly, and the divers amusements which are practised at the expense of animal feeling, as represented by Hogarth, were nothing in comparison to the cruelties which were here mentioned, and his mind was made easy

upon a point on which he had before upbraided himself.

The utility of experiments is not to be doubted in the science of medicine ; if human life is to be benefited by the sacrifice of animal life, let it be so, but there are bounds to be set to the practice. The circulation of the blood, and the important consequences derived from this knowledge in surgical operations, to wit, the cure of aneurism, sufficiently justify the principle, and as much good has arisen, still more may arise ; but an indiscriminate abuse of animal suffering under the hands of Tyros cannot be sufficiently reprobated.

To make experiments for experiment sake, and to make them upon some inductive principle with a view of ascertaining an important point, are two different things. The one is wanton cruelty ; the other a legitimate pursuit of knowledge, and the end may justify the means.

Few, however, are capable of prosecuting this subject so as to produce any real benefit to science, and therefore it should be entrusted but to few. We reprobate a wanton sacrifice of animal life ; it hardens the heart, it blunts the feelings, and has an immoral tendency. We may incur the displeasure of some of our colleagues by stating such opinions ; but we do not hesitate to say that we would reform this part of medical education.

The Midwifery lecture commenced at eight o'clock the following day, and a good practical lec-

ture it was, which the venerable but caustic Dr. H. delivered to a half-sleeping class. Our student gets through the hour and returns to his breakfast, which having swallowed he goes into the Chemical Theatre, and does not understand a word of what he hears or sees. He is pleased with phosphorus burning in oxygen gas, but when the lecturer comes to the atomic theory, when it is necessary to know something of arithmetic and algebra to understand the combinations, and something of geometry to make out the forms of crystallization, he is bewildered and filled with remorse, and says to himself, I must brush up my arithmetic. He attempts to take notes and draw a diagram, but in vain ; it is an unknown character to him. As he ruminates upon his little knowledge, and finds that he knows nothing in reality, though his master flattered him, it is time to go to the Demonstrations of Anatomy.

This is a kind of reprieve, and, seeing none of his companions with note-books in their hands, he blesses his stars and puts up his note-book.

He learns more here than at any previous lecture ; he comes down to the bones, and the bones raise him up ; he sees, and hears, and comprehends, and leaves the theatre with gratitude, and in ecstasies with his profession, for he feels how much more easy anatomy is than he anticipated, and is determined at least to be a good Anatomist ; he tries to catch the smile of the teacher as he makes his exit, and looks down upon many who had not paid so much attention

as himself. It is now twelve, he feels hungry and rewards himself by going into the pastry shop. His happiness is not of long duration, for this happened to be a Friday, what is technically called a field day — *i. e.* an operation day.

He had seen in the surgery the boards labelled with operations by ——— at one o'clock, and he goes early into the theatre to get a good place; he finds it already filled, for all had the same desire to get near the operator; he squeezes in at last, keeping his arms in the air.

A poor woman is brought in, carried by two men, and seated in a chair. She is covered partially by a white sheet, and her countenance is more indicative of the terror she feels at the sight of so many witnesses, than at the dread of pain; women seldom flinch from this. The operator follows. The student had not yet seen him, and is lost in admiration at his countenance, so full of good-natured expression; and the fine noble appearance of the man himself quite bewitches him. But silence, the operator speaks.

“Before proceeding, gentlemen, to perform this operation, it is proper to give you a description of the case. It is one which I trust, gentlemen, will never happen to any one here present. I should be sorry to think that any pupil of mine should have been guilty of such a blunder. It is a case of bad surgery, of great and shameful carelessness. It is what is called varicose aneurism,

which I shall explain to you hereafter ; it is caused by pushing the lancet into the artery."

And so saying he uncovered the arm, which presented an immense tumour. A noise was heard in the theatre ; our student had fainted : he thought he saw his own patient again, and that the lecturer was speaking to him ; as they say in the East, "his liver turned to water," and the being hard squeezed for room, added to his mental emotions, numbered him with the dead who soon rise again.

He was carried out, soon restored, and no notice was taken ; for, before the operation was finished, two more fellow-students were in the same predicament, for this is a usual occurrence on the first good field-day.

As nothing was said to him, he kept his own counsel, and time soon wore off the impression, and he was quite sure in the end that he was not the individual pointed at by the operator in his harangue. He continued the first two months to attend the classes regularly, to go from lecture to lecture, and to take all the notes he could manage to write, and spent half his nights in copying them out.

He falls ill from fatigue, from the unhealthy situation of his lodgings, and from the effluvia of the dissecting-room. He is visited by some officious, idle friend, glad to have a pretext for something to do, and he persuades him that he will kill himself if he go on in this way.

"But how shall I pass the College?" he na-

turally asks. — “ Pass it as I did,” replies his friend: “ attend some of the morning lectures; take no notes, and amuse yourself in the evening. This is quite enough for the first winter; you have another before you. Remember, you will not have an opportunity of seeing what you now may see, when you will leave London. I never saw Kean act as he did last night: he electrified the house! Come, cheer up, and when you are well enough, go with me and see Kean and Miss Stephens.”

“ But how shall I get through the Apothecaries?” — “ Leave Gallipot alone till next winter, and I will get you through both when the time comes. Shut yourself up for two months, get questions and answers by heart, and I warrant you may examine the Examiners.”

“ Where did you serve your time?” — “ At ——,” replied the youth. — “ What, with old ——?” inquired his friend. “ And where do you mean to settle at?” — “ There: he takes me into partnership, if I marry his daughter, which I think I shall do.” — “ Has she any cash?” — “ Yes.” — “ If that’s the case, my lad, give yourself no further trouble: you may humbug old —— at any time; a greater —— does not live. Talk to him about the theories of life. But, really, you are a lucky dog! Marry the daughter, step into the father’s shoes, and get his practice. I wish I had such an opportunity. Has he any more daughters?” — “ No.” —

“Bad job. Well, good night. Get well for the Pantomimes: two new ones—must see them both, you know. Going half-price to Adelphi to see Tom and Jerry—sorry can’t take you—will call again in a day or two.”

This was another lawyer’s clerk come in time of need. He began again to see that he took things in a wrong light, and that all this study was really of no avail. He was confirmed in this belief from the knowledge that his new friend had passed both his examinations; he had arrived at the *ultima Thule* of the Student’s ambition. Why should he not be as lucky? He laid much stress, too, upon the idea of having another winter before him to make up his time, and he did little more the remainder of this. He was neither debauched nor vicious, but he had contracted idle habits, and found he could not shake them off for any length of time. He would occasionally read and attend the lectures; but as he had left off taking notes, he often awoke from a reverie in the midst of a lecture, without knowing where he was. He had always the consolation of knowing he had another winter before him. The spring arrived, the lectures closed, he purchased some new clothes, and went to his friends, who not knowing how he had spent his time, took it for granted he had turned it to the best advantage.

From thence he proceeded to see his old master, where he passed the intervening time between the two medical seasons. The master welcomed him hear-

tily, found by some means that he would finally inherit some little property, gave his daughter the hint. She was pleased with his dress—Cossack pantaloons had never before been seen in Wales. He imitated Kean so well, that she said it was as good as the original, though she had never been in a theatre in her life. The mother soon speaks to him as her future son-in-law, and persuades him that she has given her consent, before he himself asked or thought of asking for it. The girl cries and looks pretty; he is tender-hearted, and proposes. The rest belongs to romance. Thus far it is a strictly medical courtship.

He proceeds to London a second time, and is neither so diligent as in the first part of the first winter, nor so idle as in the latter part of the session. He gets both his diplomas more easily than he anticipated—casts a longing, lingering look behind—goes into the country—marries the daughter—practises on joint account with the father: the latter dies and leaves it all to his son-in-law, who inherits a practice of a hundred and fifty pounds per annum—makes some sad mistakes in surgery, and finds his own ideas perfectly correct, that he has mistaken his calling.

HINTS ON MEDICAL REFORM.

WITHOUT attempting to offer anything like a regular system of Medical Reform, I shall humbly endeavour to point out what I consider to be the deficiencies in the present system of education, and repeat what I before said, that the abolition of apprenticeship must be the ground-work and basis of all medical reform.

When everything is undergoing some modification of reform, it is too flattering to our profession to suppose it to be the only thing that is really perfect, and that the black draught is consequently the only legitimate sauce to the College puddings, in the composition of which nothing has been changed. It is not, however, from a mere spirit of reforming for reform's sake that some observations are suggested to the higher powers to ameliorate and render more respectable a body of men who, if there be any truth in the efficacy of their profession in relieving human suffering, must be allowed to be most useful to the community.

It is necessary to reflect well upon any interests which might too severely suffer from a sudden

change in the existing state of medical practice; but it occurs to me that much might be done to ameliorate and improve it with perfect safety to the interests of all who are engaged in it. In abolishing the system of apprenticeships, we certainly propose a very great change, and which could not be accomplished as an isolated measure, because the present practitioner has need of an assistant: some person must compound his medicines, whilst he is engaged in visiting his patients. This is at present the office of the apprentice, and stands for the education he is entitled to for his hundred pound premium.

His place might be supplied in many cases by a mere compounder, a man educated for the purpose only; but he would require such a salary as it would be impossible for many country apothecaries to pay, if the man were really competent to the task. It is not often that a man is to be found with Livy in his pocket, able to criticise his master's bad Latin, as was the case with John Hallett, Miss Mitford's worthy friend.

I am aware that some difficulties may be raised upon this point, and I am ready to meet them. I must return to the plan I have adopted throughout this sketch, and, resuming the practical character, state the case in point.

It may be asserted that the public would lose by separating the compounder of medicine from the

prescriber, because the patient would have to pay two instead of one; and so he would, if only one item were to be changed in the system.

At present the practitioner receives no other remuneration from those patients who reside in his town than what he charges upon the drugs he sends them; he cannot, in a disputed point, have any other legal claim upon his debtor.

He has a patient, we will suppose, ill with an acute disease, requiring his attendance twice a day, and this for a month. It cannot be in conscience supposed that a man should claim less than from four to five shillings per day for such an attendance, provided the patient be in circumstances to remunerate him. He consequently, if he be himself a moderate man, prescribes only four draughts daily, at 1s. 6d. each, to warrant this demand. The illness we suppose of thirty days' duration, which at 6s. per day amounts to nine pounds sterling; as less medicine may be supposed necessary towards the end, let us deduct 3l. and leave a balance of 6l. How might the practitioner be paid under other circumstances. Allow him 3s. per day for attendance, which will make 4l. 10s. and then let me put it to the candour and good faith of all the profession, if the whole sum of 6l. paid for the draughts may not be reduced to 1l. 10s. and leave a sufficient profit to the druggist?

The patient will have the same attendance, but less medicine, and the practitioner will have the

same fee, and lose only the epithets of an exorbitant charger, and a *pourer-in of medicines*. Supposing he pays but seven visits daily, which is not much for a general practitioner, he still nets, at 3s. per visit, three hundred and sixty-five guineas per annum, free and clear of all disbursements.

Cases of surgery and midwifery are, in the present order of things, separate charges, and so let them remain. Visits at considerable distances from his residence do not come under this category.

I am not however offering a code, nor stating any particular plan. I am merely opening a discussion, which I leave others to take up more effectually than the information I have in my possession will allow me to do. I am perhaps antiquated in my remarks. Much may have been changed since I left the country, but I am inclined to think that many abuses still exist, if I may judge from the accounts of those who return from England, whose faces when they speak of apothecaries' bills are, like the Persian ambassador's, "turned upside down."

Notwithstanding these grimaces, however, the incomes of general practitioners are very much over-rated, and it is so necessarily from the high and apparently exorbitant charges made upon the medicines they dispense.

A farmer's wife will find in a receipt-book how to make a thousand pills for about nine-pence, which pills would be retailed by the apothecary at sixpence apiece.

Hence the knowledge of his gain upon the raw material, if we may thus speak, leads to the natural belief, that great profits must produce great fortunes ; and the necessary inquiries to substantiate this, such as whether the competition be great or small, and upon how much he can exact his exorbitant charge, are left out in the inquiry : the apothecary is considered the richest man in the village, and his bill is always the last to be paid.

In spite, however, of these exorbitant charges, in spite of the fact, that a thousand pills give a profit of almost twenty-five pounds sterling, we have no hesitation in asserting, that the general practitioner works harder and gains less for his labour, not merely than all other professional men, but less than most dealers in soap and candles.

It is not large fortunes made by a few individuals in the metropolis, or in some of the great towns, that militate at all against the assertion ; for it might be equally said, that every shoeblack is rich, because Day and Martin have made thousands. But take that useful and hard-working class of men, called Surgeons and Apothecaries, or general practitioners, as they are so numerously distributed all over the country. What are the incomes of these men, and what are their duties ? I can state from my own personal knowledge, that a general practitioner, whose books show an income of 500*l.* annually, is considered to be a man in extensive country practice, and often has a partner to share it with him.

Let us suppose, however, that he is in the receipt of 500*l.* all paid, for we will waive all the bad debts, all the little half-guinea midwifery cases, &c. which are due, but let him receive into his treasury 500*l.* on the first of January. *Ter quaterque beatus!*

What are his disbursements?—He must have two horses at least. His druggist's, his spirit-merchant's, bills, his glass bottles, and sundry other demands upon him, for things furnished to his shop, will average, at the most moderate calculation, 100*l.* per annum. His apprentice eats him 40*l.* worth of food. His stables cannot average less than 60*l.* So that here is a deduction of 200*l.* from the annual income, leaving him but 300*l.* to support a family, which may be large or small as chance may happen.

His profession and presumed education allow him to move in a circle which is called genteel, and his appearance in the world must be such as will do credit to his profession, or he will not be employed by the *aristocracy* of the village.

What are his duties, what has he to go through to entitle him to such an income, to allow him to dine with the squire and smoke his pipe with the parson?

Upon an average of three hundred and sixty-five days (for we have no Sunday in our line of business) he labours eight hours per day: at all times and seasons, in snow and hail, as in fine weather, by day and by night, well or ill, he is the servant of a capricious and often merciless public. It is only wea-

ther for a dog and doctor is a phrase common in the country.

He may calculate upon being roused from his slumbers eighty nights in the year; he will be obliged to spend whole nights and days in a miserable hovel, with the wind penetrating through the doors and windows, and a few burning embers all that help to make darkness visible to him. For such attendance he will book a half-guinea debt, payable at the time only when all debts will be paid off.

If such is the condition and labour of a man receiving 500*l.* per annum, and I appeal to the profession in general if this be an extraordinarily hard case, how many perform all this, and do not reap more than half the sum specified!

The number of naval and military surgeons, thrown upon half-pay since the peace, has much reduced the incomes of country practitioners. Each takes a little from the general mass, for each has his connexions, and this little added to his half-pay allows him to eke out an existence.

This is the first item, therefore, we should venture to suggest in a plan of medical reform, *that the dispenser of medicines should never be combined with the practitioner*; and consequently, the compound term apothecary should be banished from the medical dictionary.

As an immediate consequence of this, the apprenticeship is abolished also; for the practitioner will no longer require such assistance.

The number of chemists and druggists must necessarily be increased, but considerable reform will be requisite here to prevent the fatal accidents which too often occur from carelessness and ignorance in the compounders of medicines.

The preparatory and general education of the youth should be extended to the age of seventeen at least, before he commences the study of medicine.

His medical education should be at least of four years' duration ; but with respect to any definite plan, or any particular order in his studies, it will suggest itself to those fully competent to point out the best line of study.

The examinations which entitle him to practise his profession should be stricter and more extended than they are at present. Too little stress is at present laid upon a competent knowledge of pharmaceutical chemistry, toxicology, and medical jurisprudence. If midwifery be confided, as it is in England, to male practitioners, more pains should be taken than at present to ascertain the competency of the student to practise this branch.

It is singular that Fellows of the College of Physicians are not allowed to practise the obstetric art ; when I was in Edinburgh, the professor of midwifery was not included in the *Senatus Academicus* ; yet surely there are few branches of medicine in which (it is true but rarely) more decision, more character, more anatomical knowledge, are requisite than in this particular department. The parturient

woman stands often in as much need of surgical skill as the bleeding soldier.

The wise framers of medical laws have made it requisite to attend so many courses of lectures in a given time to *qualify* for examination, and two seasons, of eight months' duration each, are considered necessary to this ordeal. A student is therefore qualified for exercising his profession in sixteen months. It is true that five years of preparatory education are required, but we have already stated how this part of the task is performed.

He enters therefore to several lectures at the same time ; for, provided he takes out his respective tickets, he has the *bond* in his favour.

Hardly has he heard the last sentence of the medical professor, before he is ushered into another theatre to hear another science discussed, and he must have such a cerebral arrangement as few possess to allow him to profit by such a transition. Happy is he if he can learn and inwardly digest lectures upon four different subjects in the same day. And yet many attend more than four, and pass half the night in writing over their notes. And as to the propriety of taking notes, much has been said on both sides of the question ; but in all disputed points there is generally one mistake made, viz. that the person himself is left out of the question.

It is not, I conceive, therefore, whether the system of taking notes of lectures be bad or good, but

whether it be good for John and bad for Thomas, for there is the secret.

It is argued on the one hand, that it is a waste of time, and the student is often diverted from what is before him by his being absorbed in copying down the words of the lecturer; that three-fourths of the lectures are to be found in every book upon the subject, and that it is a superfluous tautology to inscribe "that the blood is a red fluid, circulating in the veins and arteries, that it separates into two parts when drawn from the body, viz. serum and crassamentum," &c. This is trebly so, for it is first heard from the lecturer's mouth, then scribbled into loose paper in the theatre, and afterwards written out at home in a fair hand, and then the student possesses no more information than he had previously to going into the lecture-room.

On the other hand, it may be said that it arrests the attention of such as are apt to wander or be listless; that the student is occupied at least for the time being; that he picks up something; that if, in going over his notes, he does not exactly understand them, he refers to books to see where he has made his mistakes, and that in doing all this he impresses the lecture upon his memory.

Now this all resolves itself into the character of Thomas and John, and one loses by it, while the other gains.

There is a medium, however, and a very useful one which may be applicable to both; and were I to

recommence attending medical lectures, I should propose to myself the following plan. Knowing the subject of the next day's lecture, I should carefully read over the preceding evening the subject in some class-book. Were it a lecture on aneurism, I should read this article in Cooper's Surgical Dictionary very attentively, and, when in the lecture-room, I should endeavour to note down such points as appeared to me to be original, or to differ from the opinions of others on the subject, but never miss noting down a single case. Of all things this is the most useful, it is here that the real practical professor has the great advantage. Definitions, theories, controversies, opinions, all pass away, but a good case in point remains written in indelible ink. It occurs and recurs continually in after-life.

Farther, I would not recommend taking notes, but inasmuch as they give you the experience and opinions of the professor himself, not of the profession at large.

This is the only advantage in attending lectures which are not demonstrative. In all other cases, more is to be learned from books, but individual experience is invaluable.

Did the same prejudice exist against Junior Professors as the public have against Junior Physicians, no man under fifty would get a class to lecture to; and yet I believe in one case it may often be called prejudice with more truth than in the other. A young teacher, whatever may be his talent, can only

lecture from the lectures of others, or from his own reading. An older man tells you his experience. The one presumes to speak of curing diseases which he never saw, the other tells you how he has failed after thirty years' practice. Even then, he has perhaps not gone practically through more than two-thirds of Cullen's Nosology, which the young lecturer despatches in a few lectures, as if he had treated the whole catalogue of diseases successfully and successively.

The introductory lectures suppose the student to know more than he really does, or than he ought to be supposed to know. How can he enter into the disquisitions concerning the nature of the blood, its coagulum, its red particles, its specific gravity, its salts and serum, before he has the slightest idea of chemistry? How understand the different opinions concerning nervous influence? How comprehend muscular motion, or enter into all the farrago of nonsense regarding the doctrine of fevers, the muscularity of arteries, and the proximate cause of inflammation?

He has, hitherto, never seen perhaps a nerve or denuded muscle, is unacquainted even with the circulation of the blood, and hence such subjects are to him as unintelligible as metaphysics. They should be given, like the preface to *Waverley*, at the end of the third volume.

It is the best rule in teaching to lead the mind by degrees from what is known to what is unknown,

from simple to compound subjects. The mind receives the impression more firmly and more indelibly, because the mind is itself progressive. We do not enter into a discussion concerning the mind, its nature or its essence, but we say that no one with his eyes open can deny the progressive development of its powers more than he can deny the gradual growth of the body ; and such being the case, the aliment with which it is fed should be administered progressively. We have Scripture for our authority, which says, "give milk to babes," and it is spoken in an allegorical sense.

I know not how these matters may be arranged at present, but when I was myself a pupil at the Borough School, and it was in the acmé of its prosperity, when it boasted among its professors a Cooper, a Cline, and a Travers, when the eloquence of a Currie commanded the attention of the whole class, strewing even the path of medicine with captivating flowers, and when the Patriarch of the school, the ever to be regretted Babington, inspired sentiments of virtue into the breasts of the most dissolute, still it appeared to me to be a serious defect that the lecturer should be too far advanced for the student in his introductory lectures. This arose necessarily from the limited period allowed the teachers for their lectures, which could not take any thing like an extensive range.

Each Professor gave a course in four months, and some of them only lectured three times a week. Now,

take sixteen weeks for each course, and we have forty-eight lectures for the Practice of Physic ; just three days and nights to complete the study of medicine, supposing each lecture to be of an hour and half duration. Some of the courses, as *Materia Medica* and *Physiology*, were discussed in two-thirds of this time.

It is evident, therefore, that all extraneous matter must have been rejected, and all elementary matter passed over, and the student must be supposed to be no novice, but to have made such proficiency in his studies, as to render it unnecessary to repeat the alphabetical part. This arises again from the system of apprenticeships, which are considered to be employed in the medical education of youth ; and truly, if they were so, the lectures would be long enough in conscience. This may be the case with those who have been apprentices to Surgeons in the Metropolis, or in large towns, where there are hospitals and infirmaries, but these are few comparatively.

Let any one refer to the notes which the student has taken, when the lecturer has discussed the doctrine of fevers, the Brunonian system, or the Stahlian and Boerhaavian Theories, to ascertain how far he has comprehended the lecturer. For short as the time is, still these favourite topics must be discussed, and the proximate cause of inflammation rendered as intelligible as the essence of life.

There is a point in preparatory education disputed by two fair combatants, and it is one not foreign to the present subject.

Mrs. Marcet, in one of her very useful and popular works, insists upon the propriety of familiarizing children with names and terms to which they cannot at the time attach any definite ideas. In her opinion, it makes the future study more easy, and is upon the whole a saving of time. It is going over ground which is not altogether strange to them, because they have planted certain land-marks on the way. Thus, in treating of natural philosophy, she observes, that children at an early age should be taught such words as centripetal and centrifugal forces, axis, focus, meridian ; at least, I much mistake the author if this be not her meaning. Madame de Staël, on the contrary, asserts that such a system has its dangers, and that the child learns the term and is content with it alone. It should, in her opinion, be made to understand simultaneously the application and the term.

Leaving the fair disputants to argue upon general applications of their ideas, how shall we apply them to medicine?

I must confess I believe the foreigner to be right in her opinion. I have known many diligent students, who have learned anatomy by books in the country, declare that they would have been glad not to have known the name of a muscle before they denuded it with a scalpel. The name of the individual muscle gave them no assistance in studying the arrangements of its fibres, its relative position and bearings, or its peculiar mode of adhesion to the

bone to which it may be attached, the capability of its expansion and contraction, its peculiar operation in raising or depressing singly or compoundly the part it acts upon, the class of lever to which it belongs, its appearance as insulated from its sheath, or as covering or covered by other muscles, the vessels distributed to, and running contiguous to it : all this is not facilitated by nomenclature alone.

Ocular demonstration alone impresses these things on the mind, and, whilst the student is studying all this upon the subject before him, the mere name forms but an insignificant item. We form ideas of things which we have not seen, as we do of strangers, who nine times out of ten are precisely the reverse in their physiognomy of what we expected to find them.

Anatomy is to be learned only in the dissecting-room ; chemistry must be studied in the laboratory : in studying a muscle its name will not be forgotten, and in combining an alkali with an acid, we best understand its compound term.

Let us now see what the late Dr. Young lays down in his table for medical education, and he begins from the cradle.

At 2, 3, or 4, Reading and reciting English.

6, Latin ; writing.

8, Arithmetic.

10, Greek.

12, French.

14, Italian ; geometry.

At 16, German ; mathematicks.

17. Natural philosophy ; drawing.

18. Chemistry ; botany.

The studies more strictly medical will be distributed nearly in this manner :

First year.—Anatomy ; theory of medicine ; chemical lectures ; continuation of chemistry and botany ; mineralogy.

Second.—Practical anatomy ; physiology ; hospital practice of physic.

Third.—Comparative anatomy ; surgery ; midwifery ; materia medica ; Clinical lectures.

To this is added a proper course of elementary reading, which assists the plan of the lecturer and student.

It is evident, upon consulting this table, that such an education is within the power of few ; nor, even could it be accomplished by all, would it lead to a good practical result : it is only adapted to the higher ranks of medical practitioners, as I have before specified.

As to the points to be attended to in medical studies, I conceive that the latter are not sufficiently extensive, or of sufficient duration. To those who may object to a longer period passed in the metropolis as only protracting the duration of temptation, it may be answered that individual abuses are no objections to general rules, and that two, or even one winter is too long for such as spend their time improperly. I do not see why medical schools

should not be established in some of the great towns in England : Scotland has two large and one or two smaller medical colleges.

The time at present devoted to medical study, or what is technically styled "walking the hospitals," is much too short for those who arrive from the country as ignorant of the subject as if they had been apprenticed to other trades. A great fault in the London hospitals is, or used to be, that the medical officers do not attend at stated hours, nor always on stated days, and the student frequently loses much time in waiting for the visit.

To attend the hospitals is to read in the great book of nature, and must be paramount to every other consideration, for this opportunity can occur but once during life. It is quite a different thing, however, to watch disease of all kinds and in all its stages, to follow a case from its commencement to its termination,—and merely to walk round with the medical officer, and trust to chance whether you get a view of the patient. This is walking the hospitals only in its literal sense.

A great mistake too is made by the students in attending only to the most extraordinary cases, such as may never again occur to them during the practice of a long life, and, on the other hand, neglecting all those of minor importance, but such precisely as they will often encounter in future. Thus they crowd round a bed where a patient lies with aneurism of the aorta, and yet never see how a

finger is cut off, a stump dressed, or an ulcerated leg properly bandaged.

Some will talk of performing the amputation of the hip-joint, who cannot bleed as they ought to do. If they would attach themselves to one of the dressers, and regularly attend with him, they would learn how all these little matters are performed, and they would not find the knowledge superfluous in after-life.

A great deficiency is, or used to be, the want of clinical, surgical, and medical wards, as they are conducted in Edinburgh. This gives the northern school a decided superiority. Having myself been Clinical Clerk to three of the Professors, who once did honour to their profession, but are now no more, I can safely say that I profited more by this than by all the other items of my medical education.

The students take a decided interest in the cases, and make them their own: each has his book, in which he copies from the clerk, who reads by the bed-side, the history of the case, when it is admitted, the prescriptions of the medical attendant, and the changes which take place daily in the disease or the plan of treatment. This is an invaluable acquisition.

Lectures are subsequently given in the theatres upon all the most interesting cases; and where dissections are considered necessary, the appearances which they present are detailed; so that the student

has a complete history of the case impressed upon his memory.

The means of prosecuting anatomical knowledge are much too limited in the schools; nor is there any possibility of ameliorating this fundamental part of study so long as prejudice holds out as it does against it. All legislative interference will tend to retard rather than promote its advancement. Our hospitals are established upon a different system from those on the Continent; they are receptacles for the poor, but not for the refuse of society: should the patient succumb, his body is claimed by his friends. Not so abroad; many enter who are perfectly unknown, and whose bodies, under similar circumstances, are never claimed. This gives the foreign student a preponderating advantage in prosecuting anatomical study.

It is necessary to specify the items in the student's education, and the present expense of them, in order to meet the objections that will occur on fair grounds to these innovations.

The future apprentice leaves school at fourteen: his friends have no more to pay for his schooling.

He pays a hundred pounds premium to his new master.

He passes two winters in London, or rather two seasons of eight months each; and, upon looking over some old accounts we find, upon an average, that he disburses for medical lectures, hospital at-

tendance, and subjects for dissection, together with his two diplomas from the College of Surgeons and Apothecaries' Hall, as nearly as possible a hundred and fifty pounds sterling.

His board and lodging will average, for the sixteen months, a hundred pounds sterling; making upon the whole two hundred and fifty pounds. Some contrive to spend less, others contrive to spend more.

Having sacrificed this capital, he purchases the privilege of practising in England only as surgeon and apothecary, for we confine our observations to England and the English.

What will be the difference of expense upon a new system?

The medical education need not be more expensive, for the student has purchased, under the existing order, perpetual tickets of admission to the lectures and the hospitals. We propose four seasons of study instead of two, which will double the expense of board and lodging, and make the whole amount to three hundred and fifty pounds. Instead of five years' apprenticeship, we propose three years more added to the schooling; but this will be obtained for the hundred pounds premium, now no more required; and good schools are to be found in the country, where boys are educated for thirty pounds per annum. These two items, then, balance themselves.

The additional hundred pounds, then, is all we have to account for, and this is easily done by

observing that nothing is now necessary to purchase the stock-in-trade; nothing is now to be disbursed for

“ The alligator stuff'd, and other skins
Of ill-shap'd fishes.”

And hence, so far from the education being more expensive, it will be less so, but it will be more complete, and will raise the practitioner and his profession above the taunts of the poet.

Why should not the expense of medical education be at the charge of Government? Why should not a sum be voted annually for the prosecution of so useful a branch of knowledge? The lectures should be gratuitous, and a kind of college established for the education of general practitioners only. Let the professors be paid by Government, and leave the hospital admissions and diplomas to be paid by the students. This would relieve them of half the *onus*.

As a previous classical education, and even testimonials of good conduct when at school, might be made a *sine qua non* of admission into the medical classes, there would be no danger of swamping the profession with low-lived individuals.

In establishing a third class by name, it is not to be supposed that they will be all equal, for perfect equality does not exist unless in the heads of those who suppose it possible: such may claim the privilege of being *equally* blockheads. Talent will always distinguish its owner from the common herd; subject

to hydrostatic laws, it always finds its level, and a superior man has no difficulty in maintaining his superiority.

It must be remembered that education and the means of education are two very different things ; let all have the same means, still all will not profit equally by them. Many are lost to the world for want of them, many lose themselves because they neglect them, and some again have not the *means* within themselves of profiting by those which are afforded them.

Education will and has done wonders ; but it can never put all upon an equality. The sheet of paper, which Locke instances as resembling mind at birth, has many advantages. The difficulty is far from being solved however. There is still a great difference. It will take the impression very differently, as it is prepared for the press. It may be hot-pressed or fool's cap, and the type may be clear and distinct in one case, and in the other so run together and confused that the printer himself may not be able to read it.

In the medical as in all other professions, a certain number will do credit to themselves and to their study ; others will disgrace both.

Governments need not fear that education will lead to equality ; they may fear that power may get into the hands of the strong, and that they may use it tyrannically : but the hoped-for millennium, when all will be equal, can only arrive when the inhabit-

ants of the present earth are made so by a general crush of the globe itself, or when they mount individually to another sphere.

Nothing can oppose the present ardour which pervades all classes of society to gain instruction; let the means be provided of furnishing what is sober and good, and thus prevent that which is bad from being taken by force. It is absolutely necessary, for the good of the community, that a class of *working doctors* should exist, and it is desirable that many of them should be better educated than they are at present. Is not the subject as worthy of attention as the education of negroes, or the conversion of Otaheitan and Esquimaux? Are we for ever to look abroad for means of spending superfluous cash, and neglect that which is immediately under our eyes? It is a poor philanthropy which shuts its ears to the cries of its own countrymen, to catch every sound which may come across the Atlantic. People complain of distress at home, and squander their cash in useless attempts to relieve those, to whom such relief, if it ever reached them, would be rather a curse than a blessing. Let some of the money be devoted to supplying the poor with the means of procuring the necessary medicines which the medical men may order them. Drugs cost but little when they are not stamped with the apothecary's seal.

Such was the case in a severe illness in Petersburg; the physicians prescribed, but Government paid for the medicines. It was necessary only to prefix

“pauper” to the recipe. The dispensaries in England are excellent institutions, and alleviate a host of human suffering. Every large town should have such an establishment. They are the most economical plan of medical relief. A patient in a hospital costs a large sum of money. A hundred may be relieved at their own houses for what one individual costs in a hospital.

Now, this is the stumbling-block to all systems of reform, that when once a commencement is made in one branch, it must go through the whole, and no part of the system can remain intact. So that, by abolishing apprenticeships we change the whole order of medical study as now conducted in England, for I speak not of Scotland or Ireland, knowing how little reform is required in the former, and being unacquainted with the system adopted in the latter.

The change will operate upon several classes of society.

1. The schoolmaster gets his pupils three years longer than usual.
2. The lawyers lose their fees upon drawing up the indentures, and the government the stamp duty.
3. The lecturers must change their mode of lecturing, and work harder than at present.
4. The apothecaries will disappear.
5. Druggists will multiply ; but they must be well reformed also.

6. The diplomas of the College of Surgeons must be remodified.

7. Parliament must interfere to establish some legal remuneration for general practitioners, which may be claimed in case of dispute.

8. Many other items, which will suggest themselves to those occupied in forming a new code, particularly the competency of the future compounders of prescriptions.

But we trust, in all this, there is nothing dangerous to the state, or to the liberties of the people.

Will the public have to regret the abolition of apprenticeships, which only tend to demoralize youth, and subject individuals to all the faults of inexperience? It will hardly be credited that such cases as I have detailed in this sketch can ever have happened, because people are little aware how the apprentice is made the practitioner. I have known lads of seventeen practise among the poor, attend women in labour, give certificates to militia recruits; the bleeding and tooth-drawing are of common occurrence; but even the case of infanticide came under my own observation.

Will patients regret the diminution of draughts and pills, powders and electuaries, the only means at present of giving a medical man food?

Dr. Paris tells us of an apothecary who declared he put as many ingredients into his mixtures as he well could; for, in shooting out many arrows, it is probable that some will hit.

Another gave three different kinds of draughts—one to produce heat, the other to produce cold, and the third to modify the effects of the other two. This is the nullifying system with a vengeance; but still the patient had to pay at least 4s. 6d. for what the prescriber himself confesses could be of no service.

I had myself an opportunity of witnessing the absurdity of the present system in nearly the first case which I attended. It was a case of confirmed enteritis: neither bleeding nor leeches had been applied, and I attended the case in consultation with the late Dr. T. The apothecary, or rather druggist, who preceded us, had sent draughts, pills, and powders, with the following directions:

One draught to be taken every two hours.

One powder every two hours.

One pill every two hours.

The stomach rejected every thing taken into it. The patient recovered by bleeding copiously from the arm, and leeches.

It was a case where no medicine could be taken by the mouth but with disadvantage during a certain stage of the disease; it was consequently a case either to starve the apothecary or destroy the patient.

Does not such a system need reform? Does not society demand it? Does not the apothecary, in his own defence, call for it?

The fault is not always with the apothecary; the

system leads to great abuses, and sometimes to unavoidable ones. Men of the highest education are found among this body, as well as men of the lowest : let them no longer be confounded together because they both live by charging time and talent upon drugs, and cease to be looked upon as mere tradesmen.

It is impossible to say how far such innovations may be adopted, or how they will work ; but it will be our regret and mortification if they do not tend to the good of all classes of society, should they be put into execution ; for I trust the time is near at hand when the satire of the old practitioner will no longer be applicable—

“ Juvenis, tua doctrina non promittit opes ;
Plebs amat remedia.”

THE END.

