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*Editor of the Edinburgh Medical
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of the Assoc.*

ON

Scientific Medicine,

AND

ITS RELATIONS TO, AND CLAIMS UPON,
SOCIETY AT LARGE :

BEING AN ADDRESS READ BEFORE THE PRESIDENT
AND OTHER MEMBERS

OF

The North of England Medical Association,

AT ITS SECOND GENERAL MEETING, HELD AT CARLISLE,

ON TUESDAY, 15TH SEPT., 1840 :

BY WILLIAM ELLIOT, M.D., &c.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SAID ASSOCIATION.

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SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY

ITS RELATIONS TO AND CLAIMS UPON

SOCIETY AT LARGE

EDITED BY THE EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL

THE JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND THE HISTORY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES

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WITH AN APPENDIX

PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY

CAMBRIDGE

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1890

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The Council of the Association at whose request and expense the following Address is printed, having kindly committed to the Author's own superintendence the revision of the press, and other details of publication, he has taken upon himself slightly to alter the mere arrangement of certain passages, of an explanatory, illustrative, and particularizing character, besides adding a few references to, and full quotations from, other documents.

The form most convenient to adopt in the insertion of the two latter being that of Appendix, it seemed also advisable to place therein not a few of the former, leaving, of course, letters of reference in the places they originally occupied.

CARLISLE, Nov. 10, 1840.

ADVERTISEMENT

The Editors of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* are pleased to announce the publication of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for the year 1914. The *Journal* is published weekly, except on Sundays and other days of public celebration. It has been given throughly to the most important of the progress of the experimental, theoretical, and practical medicine, and is intended to be a permanent record of the progress of the medical profession.

The *Journal* is published by the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. The subscription price for 1914 is \$5.00 in advance. Single copies are sold at 15 cents. The *Journal* is published by the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

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ON SCIENTIFIC MEDICINE, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

Of the address now submitted to your indulgent hearing, no one can regret more than its author the hasty preparation and consequent defects. Yet, whatever may be the imperfections of the Essay, he himself will not readily yield to any one in zeal for the general objects of this and similar associations,—nor in anxiety that the proceedings of the present meeting may prove agreeable to all who attend it, efficient in furthering the business of the Association, and, above all, conducive to our grand and rallying object, viz., the wholesome organization and consolidation of the medical profession, institutions, and laws, of this empire ; and, by necessary sequence, the better assurance of the medical interests of its people.—Now, as this main object of our hopes and efforts is one of too vast importance, both to the medical profession and to the public at large, to require any apology for its introduction on this occasion, it needs only to be further premised, that in the present Essay will be offered a few remarks on the three following heads :—

1. On the characters, operation, and claims of regular and scientific medicine, as contrasted with those of an irregular or unscientific profession of the Art.
2. On the actual condition of the authorized medical profession in these realms, in reference to its internal regulations and constitution,—to the operation of statute laws,—and to the invasions of irregular practitioners connived at by government.
3. On the justice, public expediency, and necessity, of conferring on the medical profession a *well defined* and wholesome constitution, an effective legal recognition, and unassailable privileges.

I. ON THE CHARACTERS, OPERATION, AND CLAIMS
OF REGULAR OR SCIENTIFIC MEDICINE, AS CON-
TRASTED WITH THOSE OF AN IRREGULAR OR UN-
SCIENTIFIC PROFESSION OF THE ART.

The profession of medicine includes both a *Science* and an *Art*, the mutual relations of which, in a general sense, are thus expressed by Professor Whewell:—"Art and Science differ.—The object of Science is knowledge: the objects of Art are works. In Art, truth is a means to an end; in Science, it is the only end."

Medicine has various phases, relations, and applications, of which the chief are the *preventive*, and the *remedial*, operating either *personally*, or on *numbers*. Hence we have what we may style,

1. Personal preventive (or prophylactic) medicine;
2. Social prophylactics, embracing the comprehensive, all-important, and, in this country, much neglected subject, of public hygiene;
3. Remedial medicine applied personally; and
4. Remedial measures influencing a community.

Now he only who has been at pains to acquire the *science* is at all competent to undertake the *practice* of medicine in all or in any of its phases; and such an one, duly attested by adequate examination, constitutes a scientific and regular practitioner of the same. On the other hand he

who, for the sake of gain, attempts its practice without any, or at least an adequate, acquaintance with the science, or, whether ignorant of medical science, or well versed in it, neglects its appliances, and uses one exclusive remedy or method, or, habitually, uses any or all methods at random, is, *in whatever class of men he may be nominally ranked*, an unscientific, an irregular practitioner. Such an one is often designated by other titles, as empiric, quack, and so forth. (A)

The word "Empiric," originally Greek, signifies simply *an experimentalist*, one who tries, and is guided by the results of, personal experiments, (rather than of ordinary experience as usually stated); and seems all along to have been applied exclusively in a *medical* sense, to one, moreover, whose object was, upon that basis, to undertake the *practice* of medicine, probably for the most part in old times, as without exception in modern, for fee and reward.

In the dawn of medical science, such a character, whether viewed as a passive, yet faithful and profiting observer of facts, or as an active and reasoning experimenter, was entitled to the appellation of a medical philosopher. And, accordingly, we find that the so called sect of "Empirics," in former ages, included many eminent men and fathers of medicine, (amongst others, Asclepiades and his admirer and follower Celsus). Further, we find that in every age the medical philosopher whose more accurate and minute observations, whose more faithful records, more sound inductions, and more rational and successful practice, than those of his predecessors, constituted him a real improver of the science, was

in reality a *rational empiric*, some of whose observations and conclusions perchance maintain their ground even in our day. (B)

On the other hand, men whose observations were either limited or ill connected, palmed crude and ill based dogmas on the world, which were gradually dissipated by the slowly concentrated rays of demonstrable truth. (C)

It is thus evident that the value of the term "Empiric" is relative, and is determined by the advancement of the age, or rather of the science, in connection with which it is used.

It has been well observed that in many departments of medical science we are, in the present day, in the possession of more facts and observations than we have, as yet, been able to arrange properly, so as to use effectually for medical induction and generalization. Consequently, of the worthy Empiric, as known of old, it may be truly said that his "occupation's gone," just because his difficulties are gone, and his desiderata supplied, certainly not, as yet, by the construction of a *complete* science, but by the large accumulation, the progressive arrangement, and the already most fruitful theoretical results of the scientific gleanings of a world of enquirers that have preceded him. Before observing for himself, the medical enquirer of our day has to learn, in the aggregate, the experience of all the most experienced, the observations of the most acute, the conceptions of the most ingenious, and the generalizations of the most powerful and comprehensive minds. Before observing for himself, he must climb to the highest step attained by his predecessors, and must *submit* shall we say? nay

rather, in grateful and ardent recognition of a glorious privilege in the modern career of mental discipline, must *aspire* to enjoy the ingress, and appropriate the substance, of those bright revelations which it is imparted to men of genius to convey to their fellow-men. He must thus, even in his very pupilage, become familiar with such varied and extensive stores of useful knowledge, rich ideas, and confirmed theories and rules of practice, as a thousand years of patient observation and reflection might have failed to supply or suggest to himself; albeit that, when submitted to the mind of one man as the views of another of more favoured opportunities, or of loftier powers,—they are by the former generally at once apprehended, and incorporated into itself. This appropriation of mental treasure is, for the most part, accomplished with facility, and with that peculiar delight experienced by every student of nature, when permitted, either through the medium of his own unaided faculties, or of the interpretation of a Newton, a Herschel, a Davy, a Hunter, a Cuvier, or a Bell, to catch a glimpse of the mind and scheme of the Eternal Creator himself. Honoured, in every age of the world, be the names of these and of many other highly privileged instruments of *natural* communication, between the Author of the Universe and the mass of human-kind! But for their endowments and research, what would have been the progress of the physical and organical sciences, the study of which, as we now know them, is so efficacious in expanding and elevating, both intellectually and morally, the human mind, and supplies so many proofs of creative goodness, wisdom and power!

Now with hosts of kindred (though perhaps less able) interpreters of nature than these, and with countless enlightening and ennobling views, is the well educated student of medicine brought in contact. And while of medicine, as of poetry, it may be said,

“A little knowlege is a dangerous thing,”

no position can be more safely assumed, than that a complete medical education conduces not more to mere practical attainments in the healing art, than to the formation of a generally elevated intellectual and moral character.

The conservative operations of the human frame in health, the curious alterations, and even the suppression of these, effected by a thousand morbid agencies, its frequent self-rectifying efforts in cases of disease and of accident, the best methods and means of promoting and inducing these,—the faculties also of the human mind, and its operations individually and collectively,—then the characters of animal and vegetable organizations, the qualities and uses of mineral substances, the analysis and antidotes of poisons, and the whole range of general and local terrestrial conditions and changes, embracing geology, soils, waters, climes, and weather,—*all* come under the notice of the regular cultivator of medicine; and patient enquiries into all and each of them concur in supplying the elements of that elevation of character already alluded to. Such being the scope and relations of medical science, and all its honourable cultivators feeling it imperative to bestow as impartial, skilful, and complete an application of its principles on the poor as on the rich,—it may at once be perceived of how great

public advantage and expediency it will be, that not only a *high*, but an *uniform*, standard of education,—admitting in all cases of extension, but not in any case of reduction,—should be prescribed to all who aspire to the difficult and responsible duties of the Healing Art, in any or in all of its relations. And by implication it will also be seen how unjustifiable,—because how publicly injurious, must be the course *both* of individuals, not thus disciplined and instructed, rushing, incapable and unwarranted, on these high duties, *and* of the government of an enlightened country that would, for the paltry pecuniary consideration of from 30,000*l.* to 50,000*l.* of stamp duties per annum, allow such characters to impose upon, and endanger the lives of, the nominal subjects of its rule and care. (D)

We shall next follow the medical philosopher on his emergence from that portion of his comprehensive curriculum of educational discipline to which we have briefly adverted.

His highest and most legitimate career, now, is that of accurate observation, occasional pertinent experiment, systematic research, careful induction, and sound generalization of as many facts as possible, bearing on what may, for the time, be the subject of his enquiry. These labours are preparatory to his engaging in the deeply responsible duties of medical practice; and upon them he enters, not single handed, but efficiently supported by the select lore of ancient repositories, and by the more numerous and splendid aids of modern proficiency. He succeeds in connecting together, and in thence drawing most important physiological and practical inferences, numerous

isolated phenomena which must, to the mere Empiric, appear single, and unexplained, and unavailable in the treatment of disease. Further, he has, in many interesting examples, constructed theories,—the soundness of which has been shewn *by the test of every true theory in any science*, viz., that “besides accounting for the class of phenomena that suggested it, it supplies an unforeseen explanation of other known facts, and predicts phenomena,” that would otherwise have been not at all, or only conjecturally, anticipated. From amongst many splendid instances of such an achievement in medical science, may be cited those of the incalculably valuable labours of Sir Charles Bell, and of Dr. M. Hall, in illustration of the functions of certain portions of the nervous system, perhaps previously *guessed* at, but certainly never previously *demonstrated*, nor so understood as to enable us to arrive at those important practical results, to which these highly gifted men have conducted us. To enumerate a tithe of the instances in which the laws of mechanical, electrical, chemical, acoustic, optical, and other sciences, have been applied to medical investigations with the richest results to the diagnostic and therapeutic branches of our art, would far exceed the limits of this address. Such as are unacquainted with these may rest assured that the “means and appliances” thence derived by modern scientific medicine are so numerous, so interesting, and so valuable in a practical view, as to have entirely changed its whole aspect and capabilities.

Medical science, thus reconstructed, amplified, and stamped with the sterling seal of inductive

philosophy, now begins to exhibit not only the features of her more "exact" sisters, but their powers and performances as well. To take one very intelligible instance out of many ;—After a due recognition of the independence and of the doctrines of general Anatomy, (i.e. of the intrinsic and distinctive characters of the different tissues composing the body,) the previously observed empirical effects of various remedies on certain organs were investigated in reference to each one of the several tissues entering into the composition of such organs,—were then localised in a certain tissue, and their operation rationally suggested and successfully applied in reference to the corresponding tissue of other organs, for the diseases of which they had either never before been used at all, or at least not systematically.

Now, not in medicine only, but, to take a familiar example, in navigation,—and in sundry other instances of the combination of a lofty science with a practical art of high utility, the common observations with which, as Whewell remarks, these and *all sciences* begin, must be *precise*. These are to be followed by *scientific observation*, then by *experiment*, then by the application of *tentative hypotheses*, in succession, until *one* be found capable of accounting for *all* the observed phenomena, and at the same time of explaining and of predicting others,—which characters, as before remarked, are the test of a *true theory*. Should any uninstructed or half instructed amateur, in either of these sciences, make observations which are *not* precise, his succeeding labours will be prejudiced, and his practical success precluded. Perhaps, however, he may observe well, and con-

duct experiments neatly, yet in too limited a way,—in which case he will be likely to rest on some vague, narrow, and misleading hypothesis, which will no more supply the invaluable services of a true theory, than a key, in no wise fitting a given lock, can be made to open or shut that lock. A man thus attempting to acquire, and, on the ground of so imperfect attainments, to practice the art of navigation, might be styled a *nautical quack*. Of works on navigation he may have read and studied *a little*; with nautical terms he may be pretty familiar; but for nautical practice he would be totally unfit. The most direct action of the breeze on the extended canvass,—the simplest effect of an acute inclination of the rudder, he would doubtless understand. But he would probably be ignorant of the greater part of the complicated cordage and other apparatus of the vessel,—would be unable to make a practical use of the sextant and compass,—incapable of the long continued, steady, and judicious efforts, requisite for the safe conduct of a long voyage,—quite incompetent to manage the vessel in a storm, and would be likely to do most direct and instantaneous mischief, in any emergency, by the hurried exertion of perhaps great, but unskilful, energy.

Precisely such are the relations of the science and practice of medicine.—In the first place, the very observation of non-professional persons, even of considerable acuteness of natural parts, is, instead of being *precise*, and complete, often singularly inaccurate, and limited in extent and bearing; while the analogies they trace are, in consequence, just as unreal and untenable,—and,

it need scarcely be added, their practice erroneous and injurious in the same proportion, save through the intervention of some fortunate casualty.

To take *small-pox* as instancing the correctness of this allegation :—It is an eruptive disease, preceded and accompanied by fever, and of which many die. Now, exactly the same circumstances can be predicated of measles and of scarlatina. But in these last mentioned complaints it usually holds good, that when the eruption is most abundant, the danger is least ; whereas of fully-developed small-pox no one, probably, ever died, without a copious eruption. Medical observation and reasoning having caught, and rightly estimated, the distinctive characters and tendencies of these respective eruptions, have established the excellent rule of lessening the eruption of small-pox, by early exposure of the sufferer to cool air, and by other means, with the direct view and the direct result of diminishing the danger of the attack. Yet, overlooking facts, and misled by false analogies, the universal popular observation and belief, except of those who have learnt the truth from a professional source, amount to this,—that it is an advantage in small-pox to have an abundant eruption—to force it if deficient, and for that purpose to apply external warmth, and internally cordials and warm drinks—an idea and a practice founded in error and fraught with danger.—Again—The popular belief is, that the more severe an attack of small-pox may be, the more effectually will it protect against another attack ; whereas the reverse is the actual and invariable fact. And further, the practice of small-pox in-

oculation—a step that, 80 or 100 years ago, was, comparatively speaking, so beneficial to individuals as to conduct safely through the disease six out of every seven subjected to it—has been too generally looked upon, by an uninformed public, and by ignorant pretenders in medicine, as a public boon, and even as entitled to maintain its ground against the incomparably superior operation of vaccination; whereas the fact is, that in former years the introduction of small-pox inoculation, now most properly proscribed by statute law, increased the mortality from small-pox by nearly 10,000 deaths annually, in consequence, simply, of the virus being every where disseminated, and every where in active operation.

These few, from among vast numbers of similar examples, are merely adduced for the purpose of proving what is generally admitted, yet is apt, in particular instances, to be overlooked, viz., 1st, that the mass of human kind are not found, nor can they be expected, to observe, to know, nor to carry into effect, scientific and systematic truths, elicited and established only by systematic and scientific investigators; and 2nd, that such having been the predicament of the multitude, in all ages and countries, and still being so, though to a gradually lessening extent, in our own age and country, the interests of the physical health, comfort, and prosperity of every community, *loudly demand*, in their own name, and in that of truth, reason, and policy, that the credulous minds of the passive majority be forthwith, on this subject, enlightened, disabused, and undeceived, by an impartial setting forth, on the one hand, of the claims of legitimate medicine to the

unqualified support of the nation and of its government, and, on the other, by a faithful exposition of the hollow pretensions and dangerous practices of modern empiricism.

We do not deny that of the whole tribe of unauthorized practitioners, there may be some who exercise observation of medical facts, but we affirm that their observations are of too limited extent and bearing. We do not deny that the modern "Empiric" institutes *some* experiments, and hence the unworthy application of the title to such a character,—but we affirm that they are all defective, and involve too little of discrimination to subserve the strict purposes of either the philosophic student or practitioner. We affirm, that instead of obtaining comprehensive views of the varied and vastly extended domain of medical science, the gaze he bestows on it, if indeed he ever gaze on it at all, is vacant and unreasoning; and, in short, that his method, if method we may entitle his career of one idea, is baseless,—insecure,—practically barren of good, but of ruinous consequences most prolific.

Advancing from the meagre and imperfect education in medical matters that quackery can boast, to the consideration of the large and varied class of phenomena of healthy and of diseased bodies, we find that the only glance she can bestow thereon is that of the uninitiated, of the ignorant, and of the indiscriminating. She has profited nothing by the accumulated, sifted, and well-reasoned lore of bygone ages;—she is unenlightened by the discoveries and interpretations of contemporaneous genius; she is unenriched by the appropriation to herself of

the best lessons of the best masters ; by native talent she is, generally, wholly uncharacterized ; and as for any elevated moral faculty, incompatible with empty pretensions, and with conscious imposture, to quackery we look in vain.

Wholly ignorant of *anatomy*, she cannot suggest, improve, nor practice any, even the simplest operation, nor the simplest medical diagnosis, *based upon its knowledge*. Such suggestions and improvements are, it is true, often long in occurring to the minds of even the scientific cultivators of medicine, but to the minds of these alone they do occur. And in some instances, it is curious to observe how (perhaps) a tolerably obvious principle may be introduced into general and successful practice by one individual, who applies it to a given species of cases, —while it devolves on other individuals, in succession, to extend its application, with equal éclat and success, to other, yet analogous, cases, not attempted by the originator of the practice. For example, a few years back Stromeyer, of Hanover, publicly established, openly communicated, and minutely described—[for true science disdains to keep an improvement secret]—the transcendent success of a peculiar method of dividing the tendon of one or more muscles of the foot, in case of distortion. But it was left to others to apply the same principle in the cure of other distortions, such as wry-neck, lateral curvature of the spine, and squinting. “So true is it,” as remarked by the learned historian of the inductive sciences, “that a certain succession of time and of persons is *generally* necessary to familiarise men with one thought, before they

can advance to that which is the next in order." That such succession is, however, not *always* necessary to that end, we have splendid proof in the extensive, varied, and nearly complete category of the physical thoracic signs, partly discovered, partly conceived, and entirely wrought out, by the immortal Laennec.—Have any similar examples of acuteness, genius, and disinterestedness, ever been furnished by the ranks of quackery? Has she ever either accomplished, attempted, or conceived, a connected series of investigations, with a view to throw light on the structure and functions of the human body, or to develop rational modes of preventing or of curing disease? When did any of her host, at an immense expenditure of intellectual labour, of time, of pecuniary means, and of health, ever conceive, propound, and succeed in generally establishing, so transcendently beneficial a measure, as the substitution of the *vaccine* for the *human* variolous fluid, for the purpose of inoculation?—Never.

But if quackery has not, on any occasion, *taken the lead* in so useful and meritorious a career,—has she ever even *assisted*, or attempted to carry out, the scientific labours of regular medicine? In further reference, for example, to vaccination, has she done aught towards the investigation of the origin, affinities, and powers, of cow-pox, or of the utility of re-vaccination, or of the means of renewing the supply from the cow? Never.—In regard to vaccination, all that she has done has been, according to her usual custom, blindly to take up its practice, without at all understanding its nature. And to the indiscriminating way in which the various uninstructed,

unauthorized, and self-constituted operators of this country have practised vaccine inoculation, (apparently a most simple proceeding, but really involving many most delicate and important points of distinction,) is to be chiefly ascribed the equivocal success of the measure in the case of some localities and of some individuals. For, by irregular and careless practice not only is the success of any one case of vaccination most readily prejudiced, but every subsequent infection from that source will, through whose-soever hands it may pass, in all probability fail equally (or even more) in affording protection. But these are results, be it observed, that cannot with any fairness be charged upon true and proper vaccination, performed, *from the commencement*, by competent persons, and with due care and discrimination.

To proceed with our contrast.—Ignorant of chemistry as a science, quackery is incapacitated from giving us instructive and practically useful analyses of the solids and fluids of a diseased body or organ; is incapacitated from the rational conception and accomplishment of new combinations of elements, not previously known nor used as remedies, or otherwise; and is equally incompetent to suggest or to apply, on rational principles, and in a successful method, these and other remedies in conditions of the body adapted to their use. Ignorant of physiology, that is—of the science of vital phenomena, she knows nothing of the many recondite and curiously established sympathies existing between various and often distant parts of the living body, nothing of the medium of their manifestation, nor of the method nor of the usefulness of either exciting or repress-

ing them as occasion may require. These sympathetic and other phenomena of the living body she may see with the outward eye, yet she understands them not: of their connections, causes, and relations generally to disease and to cure, she either entertains an erroneous view, or none at all. Of the operation of her thousand panaceæ on a frame of whose structure and functions she is quite uninformed, she knows, she enquires into, nothing beyond whatever mere outward visible effect may happen to occur. Many most important elements of the therapeutic problem are thus hidden from her view, and therapeutic success effectually placed beyond her reach.—Of the vastly different susceptibilities to the operation of many remedies, especially of narcotics, characterizing infant and adult life, she is either deplorably ignorant, or culpably heedless. In short, of all the essential and complete means of discriminating diseases, remedies, and occasions, she possesses no knowledge, she affects no estimation; and even the probable effects of her own nostrums, whatever she may confidently pretend, she has no rational means of predicting. She must, in consequence, be pronounced totally incompetent to undertake the treatment of any disease. Her pretensions rest not on the scientific and legitimate basis so easily available in civilized countries to all upright enquirers after truth, and deserve on that account to be viewed suspiciously, to be exposed thoroughly, and to be silenced peremptorily and lastingly. Her professions to cure and alleviate suffering are necessarily, in an overwhelming proportion of instances, put forth in the spirit of lying ignorance, of wilful

fraud, and of insatiable and reckless rapacity, and are consequently fraught with many and great dangers to the indiscreet individuals who put faith in them, and make personal trial of their validity. In a populous—even though generally enlightened—community, the ignorant yet artful pretender will, when permitted by inadequate laws, find an abundant harvest of credulous and incautious dupes, whose disappointed expectations and injured health will ever remain a secret in their own bosom, rather than that their imprudence should be generally known. And further, such is human nature that a very large proportion of those who would hesitate whether more to blame or to pity the victims of the quack, would themselves, when affected by real or imaginary disease, lend a ready and a believing ear to the confident and seductive assurances of the same deceiver.

It is by no means asserted, nor meant to be conveyed, that the remedial means applied by a well educated medical practitioner invariably succeed in a proportion conformable to the completeness of his education, to the extent of his knowledge, and to his subsequent more or less ample experience. But by the avowed frequency of the occurrence of most complex and difficult problems in the practice of medicine, the position of the instructed practitioner is not at all lowered, nor the awful defects of the empiric one whit compensated or excused. For *in all cases* the former has the advantage over the latter; and whether, in the conscious possession of superior knowledge and means of cure, he achieve what the other neither knows nor can accomplish, or whether he satisfy himself with alleviation, or

even with non-interfering observation, in cases where the latter would unskilfully and injuriously meddle, he alike feels, enjoys, and becomingly manifests to others, the superiority of even limited science, so far as it goes, over nearly unlimited ignorance and assurance.

Neither do we mean to assert that no irregular practitioner can originate an useful plan of treatment, or may discover an useful medicine. The latter contribution to the good of human-kind has, doubtless, usually been the result of accident, and might come from the hands of one far below even the European quack in various kinds of knowledge, just as, for example, the anti-periodic power of Peruvian bark was discovered by an American Indian. But without a thorough knowledge of medicine neither the quack nor the savage can rightly wield that potent remedy, which, without discrimination in applying it, may just as easily be the vehicle of serious danger as of healing power. And so also of antimony,—(the reputed non-medical discoverer of whose activity had nearly therewith caused the death of his fellow-ecclesiastics,)—of opium, and of all the more active medicines.

Having thus laid modern empiricism along-side modern medicine, having tried her in the balances of truth and found her awfully defective in every scientific and practical qualification, little more need be added to point out the gross immorality of undertaking, of practising, and of allowing under the apparent sanction of legal authority, a system that can only be designated as one of atrocious imposition, fraught with danger and with death. By way, however, of complet-

ing the contrast, it may not be amiss to conclude this portion of the Address by an enquiry into the amount of any benevolent, disinterested, or costly labours, that quackery may, perchance, have voluntarily undertaken on behalf of that public which so suicidally tolerates and endows it.

So liberal, and constant, and freely given, is that endowment and patronage, that one might with reason suppose, either that the host of charlatans of all descriptions had long been in the habit of conferring great favours upon and of making great sacrifices for the good of the community, and that the latter was using daily efforts to pay off its debt of gratitude,—or at all events that the former, if they possessed a spark of that generous virtue, would doubtless, in return for value received, be impelled to carry out their plans of philanthropy to the utmost possible extent, neither would hesitate, if able, to give to the world incontestable proofs of practical skill and benevolence, by the gratuitous treatment of the poor, by suggesting and concurring in the institution and support of dispensaries and hospitals, and by numerous other noble exertions, calculated alike to promote the interests of science and of humanity.

And on the other hand, one might expect to find the well educated and duly authorized practitioner of medicine, not merely expressing the discontent, disappointment, and indignation of an upright mind, on the discovery that his hardly won titles may, with impunity, be assumed by any unqualified pretender,—that his diploma avails him not except for official engagements,

that his scientific qualifications are lost sight of amid the meretricious display and the nauseous repetitions of contraband competitors, and his just rights openly and shamefully infringed,—but further, denying gratuitous public services to an undiscerning and unjust community,—apathetic towards the penniless and uninfluential poor,—and indifferent to all the physical and moral interests of society.

But into the real facts of the case, we entreat the public to institute a most strict scrutiny. We entreat it to search “whether these things be so,” and to act with us, or against us, according to the result of the enquiry; being well satisfied that, in the case of the British public, nothing more is necessary than a complete understanding of the question, to induce it at once to declare for and take the right side. In the meantime, it may not be amiss to recount a few of the circumstances which such a scrutiny would disclose. It would find medical men almost every where and in every way engaged in attempting, oftener gratuitously than otherwise, to ameliorate the condition, to increase the happiness, and to promote all the best interests, of the human race. It would find them, year after year, conducting the laborious medical and surgical duties of dispensaries and hospitals, without any further remuneration than the satisfaction of doing good, and the gratitude of their suffering fellow-men. It would find them, both in public and in private practice, undertake, without shrinking, the most arduous and responsible duties that may chance to devolve upon them. It would always find them readily and disinterested-

ly inclined to impart to the public a knowledge, not only of the means of cure, but of the means of preserving health, of preventing disease, and so of avoiding the necessity even of their own ministrations. And it would find them not only thus devoted to every laudable form of professional exertion, but amongst the foremost in the attempts now being universally made to supply popular instruction in literature, in science, and in natural history.—No such traits, however will be found to characterize the empiric. One cannot, indeed, fail to admire the artful disposal of his lures and of his snares, nor his just appreciation of human nature and of fitting opportunities. These he knows too well to doubt that, by reiterated assurances of skill and announcements of cures, he will succeed in entrapping numbers of ill-informed and unwary persons, and even not a few of the intelligent and discreet.

But difficult as it may be for the unenlightened and the thoughtless to distinguish between true and false pretensions to medical competency, and anomalous and inconsistent as may appear the spirit of the laws that at once establish a legitimate profession, and yet give a tacit sanction to a trading empiricism, there exist, nevertheless, a few decisive criteria of the *real*, the *conscious*, and the *legally understood* inadequacy of the latter. And these are as follow :—1st, The title and pretension to medical practice, put forth by the empiric, are self-assumed, and are neither given, nor guaranteed, by any competent examining board.—2ndly, It is a remarkable circumstance that, in general, quacks of all descriptions neither have credit with the public, *nor dare to take upon*

themselves, personally to treat acute and dangerous diseases, nor to perform operations requiring anatomical skill. Fully aware of their incompetency to undertake such offices, they discreetly leave them to the instructed practitioner, and confine themselves, in most instances, to the indiscriminate and confident recommendation of one or a few remedies, or perhaps of many remedies at random, as a career in which there will be less risk of direct personal discomfiture and exposure.—3rdly, no one whose medical qualifications are not high and well attested, is allowed to enter into the official service of his country. Hence the charlatan, *however freely permitted to tamper with the health and lives of civilians*, is effectually excluded from all opportunity of compromising those of the more immediate servants and wards of the government, as, for instance, in the army, navy, and prisons of the empire.

II. ON THE ACTUAL CONDITION OF THE AUTHORIZED MEDICAL PROFESSION IN THESE REALMS, IN REFERENCE TO ITS INTERNAL REGULATIONS AND CONSTITUTION,—TO THE OPERATION OF STATUTE LAWS,—AND TO THE INVASIONS OF IRREGULAR PRACTITIONERS CONNIVED AT BY GOVERNMENT.

It is to be feared that the comparative sketch which has now been given, of regular medicine and of modern empiricism, may seem tedious. But the hope may, on the other hand, be entertained, that its fulness will enable the two remaining heads of this Address to be much more briefly disposed of, and their matter and positions to be much more convincingly expounded and enforced. Thus, not only have the relative characters of medical science and of medical charlatanism been descanted on, but of necessity also not a little of their relative position and of their unseemly—their disgraceful—contact, in these realms.

And again;—the contrast which has, less ably than faithfully, this day been exhibited, will suffice, with many, to establish the exclusive title of scientific medicine to the countenance and support of the public and of the government, and will render it unnecessary to urge many arguments on the justice, public expediency, and necessity, of the measures enumerated under our third head.

As to the internal condition of the profession in these realms, it is anomalous, and devoid of

that consenting uniformity of elements and sympathy of members, that are at once the sign and the pledge of a healthful organization.—Is it on this account objected, that the views entertained by, and the complaints emanating from, such a body, are undeserving of public attention? The answer is no less valid than prompt. Just as in the case of an individual some members of the frame may suffer without involving the intelligent powers, so we allow that our profession may be *painfully* sensible of corporate imperfections, introduced or maintained by injurious external agencies; but we also affirm that the loud and unanimous appeal of above five thousand of its members, on matters of vital interest to the public, and of which they court the most open and searching scrutiny, ought, on that very account, to receive the more consideration. For, the corporate evils of which we complain are not intrinsic blemishes of the profession itself, but mainly result from a defective, unmethodical, and patched system of *state* legislation and interference. And when those who are able and willing to try the question by the test of reason and truth, put forth repeated complaints, and unanswerable proofs, of receiving such treatment at the hands of their country's laws and government, as at once is unjust and impolitic, retards the progress of medical science, and thus robs the public of rich yet growing advantages,—it surely behoves their country, their legislators, and their rulers, (who are themselves accused parties as well as judges in the matter,) to rest not until the grave charge be thoroughly cleared up.

As human judgment, in the main, is weak and

erring, while human passions are strong, quick in improving an opportunity, and powerful in perverting the judgment and in silencing the conscience, so in all human institutions and affairs "offences must needs come." Now one of these, amongst others, in the administration of medical matters, is the circumstance of injudicious legal arrangements opening a wide door to ignorant and pretending cupidity. Hence, while shewing the justice of our cause, and the manifold public and private evils resulting from the mal-administration of medical affairs, we disclaim all hostility to *individuals* beyond that which we bear to a *system* of error, danger, and misrule,—and all intention of charging on them, personally, what appears to result from certain profoundly settled laws of human nature in its present phase. And inasmuch as nothing more favours the licentious, imperious, and wayward sway of the passions over reason, than does a condition of ignorance, we are willing to believe that, be human nature what it may, it is by ignorance that many of its greatest errors are fostered, and from ignorance that many of them spring. Our confidence in the reasonableness and security of our positions is, therefore, fully equalled by the assurance we entertain, that when these shall have been fully demonstrated to and understood by the British public and government, importunate entreaties for justice at their hands will be no longer necessary. It is from the general ignorance of medicine and its relations, (too effectually encouraged by the present anomalous condition of things,)—that we have the most to fear, and from the dissipation of that ignorance that we have every thing to hope.

It is obvious that, previously to the consolidation of the realms now composing the United Kingdom, their political independence and opposition would demand the *separate* existence in each of, (amongst other institutions,) one or more ruling medical incorporations; and that as one of the characteristics of these, *uniformity of plan, of education, and of title conferred*, could not at that time be reasonably expected to be found. Now, however, that England, Scotland, and Ireland form one empire, the existence of *nearly twenty* SOURCES OF MEDICAL TITLES, (not to speak of the number of educational institutions, to which, simply as such, these remarks do not apply,) is found to occasion much needless and hurtful confusion and variety, to encourage depreciating competition, consequently to give birth and currency to not a few instances of professional incompetency, and thus to retard, rather than to advance, the progress of medical science, and to restrict its capability of efficiently serving the public. Further, it has been well remarked that many defects in our numerous medical corporations "have arisen from the *limited and imperfect nature of the powers* confided to them, and that for these they must not be held accountable. The College of Surgeons in London, for example, could not prevent persons practising surgery without its diploma." (E)

But besides these evils of superfluous number, conflicting plans and operations, and too limited powers, our licensing institutions have also, of themselves, fallen into various errors replete with prejudice to the best interests of medical science, to the respectability of the profession at large, and to questions of public health. When first

founded, it is alleged that they considered the knowledge and art of healing as embracing alike the treatment of all internal and external diseases, and that of all conditions and accidents requiring manual assistance and operations. In other words, medical and surgical science, education, and practice, as now distinguished and separated from each other, *were then held as constituting parts of one indivisible whole.* And that view alone accords with nature, with reason, and with the most perfect plans of practical utility, whether privately or publicly applied. For the fact is incontrovertible, and has been well and amply stated and illustrated by eminent men, practising in both departments, (for instance by Carmichael and O'Beirne,) that no one can adequately engage in *either*, who is not, by education, master of *both*. Thus, the treatment of a surgical case frequently involves points of the nicest medical discrimination and tact, while on the other hand many medical cases necessarily require for their happy termination, competent surgical inspection and interference. Yet the colleges have originated and maintained these and other unscientific, unnatural, and injurious distinctions. (F) But just as of the three last mentioned criteria of quacks (p. 24) one that was pointed out was the legal recognition of their incompetency in their exclusion from all official situations, so we may here adduce, as proof of the legal recognition of the unity of physic and surgery, the fact that each regiment, ship, and gaol, is provided with a competent practitioner *combining all necessary qualifications in his own person.*

Again, when the acting members of the pro-

profession are slighted, insulted, and overlooked by the government, and their valuable and competent labours either superseded or inadequately remunerated,—no council, board, hall, nor college, has ever stepped forward on behalf even of its own licentiates, to defend their rights, to recommend their claims, or to remonstrate against their oppression and degradation. To take one series of instances: it has happened, in the course of certain preparatory and public enquiries in reference to epidemic pestilence and other matters, that youthful barristers have received from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 times the amount of daily pay given to medical men of considerable experience and practice, besides that travelling expenses were allowed the former, and withheld from the latter. (This occurred in Ireland.) And while the remuneration of barristers, engaged in administering the poor laws, and in other public duties, has been uniformly high, medical men have found *themselves* aggrieved and insulted, and the sanitary interests of *the poor* most unworthily estimated, (G) by the adoption, in reference to their services, of what has, by a sad misnomer, been called the “tender” system. And will it be believed that in carrying out to its farthest extreme this system of medical degradation, certain poor-law authorities would condescend, in public advertisement, to hold out to embarrassed members of the profession the bait of an opening in private practice on their official introduction? Yet such is the fact. [See cover of *Lancet*, March 28, 1840.] And very lately, when it was proposed to enquire into the sanitary condition of Scotland, notwithstanding the valuable and almost exclusive labours of

medical men in vital statistics, the commission devolved, as usual, upon a legal official, (viz. Mr. Chadwick).

Further, the superintendence of the effectual and ready extension of Jenner's valuable discovery to every hovel in the land, has lately been committed, over the heads of those to whom it belonged by every title of production, of right, and of reason, to the poor-law commissioners, whose original jurisdiction did not at all include many districts now subjected to them in their new capacity of comptrollers of public vaccination. And this has been done, too, while there already existed a National Vaccine Establishment, with a complete and rather expensive staff, paid out of the national exchequer, and under the direction of the president and others of the College of physicians, who appear to have viewed the proceeding with unbecoming apathy. (H) Now assuredly, no consideration can justify the infliction of these and similar wrongs, on a noble and learned profession, by a liberal and enlightened government in the nineteenth century. But what judgment remains to be passed upon the culpable remissness of nearly a score of *medical incorporations*, that would forbear, in this or in any age, to vindicate the rights of the profession at whose head they nominally stand, or on the conduct of the College of physicians in the particular instance just cited?

To recount all the defects of the existing medical corporations, in reference to constitution and powers, would far exceed the limits of this Essay; it must, therefore, suffice to point out only a few.—The incorporated Halls and nominal

superintendents of Physic, Surgery, and Pharmacy, in this country, *are not* bonâ fide representatives of the profession. They embrace not *the principle of representative government*, so especially applicable in the case of learned associations and professions, (as of all methods the best calculated to ensure the selection of the best men,) and so beneficially adopted in those of France. The three Halls in England have, in consequence, interests and objects too far from being identical with those of the profession, to induce or even to allow them to co-operate with it in great measures of general medical improvement. Neither have they interests nor objects in common amongst themselves. Thus, one of them succeeded, in 1815, in procuring the enactment of a law that involves the twofold evil of vexatiously coercing, without any exception, the licentiates of the other Halls; albeit that it, in common with every other, passes over with impunity the totally unqualified dabbler in medical practice, in surgery, and in drugs. We must, however, admit, and we do so with great satisfaction, that instances are not wanting of a University, or a Hall, opening wide its portals to the brightest rays issuing forth from the advancing luminaries of modern science, raising its curriculum and examination,—and thereby infusing a notable increase of merit into the ranks of the profession. The “frankness, energy, and spirit of self sacrifice,” lately evinced by the Irish College of Surgeons, deserve honourable mention, and, with other examples, yield a delightful pledge and foretaste of the splendid efforts and ameliorations that, instead of forming

the exception, as now, would be *universally* achieved on the establishment of a general measure of consolidation and uniformity.

The composition of the profession, including as it does, members emanating from eighteen or nineteen rival sources, is thus, of necessity, vastly heterogeneous,—its materials ill-organized, its boundaries ill-defined, its relations to society at large fluctuating and uncertain, its competency irregularly guaranteed, and its labours inadequately protected; while the laws affecting it are, generally, most imperfect, discordant, and unjust. And from whom do the present complaints and remonstrances proceed? We entreat those to whom we appeal ever to bear in mind, that they come from *the members themselves* of our various disjointed institutions; in the amendment, uniformity, and firm consolidation of which, they foresee certain promise of advances in medical science, improvements in practice, and benefits to personal and public health.

Of the relations of *empiricism* to the laws and government of this country, little requires to be stated; but *that little* is of weighty and painful import. No medical institution is empowered either to prevent, or to suppress, the unqualified and incompetent practice of any branch of the healing Art. No legally authorized and enjoined scrutiny of the countless nostrums palmed upon public credulity, attests the zeal of “the powers that be” for the sanitary welfare of the community. *On the contrary*, any palpably ignorant adventurer, without exception, may actually procure *an apparent recognition*, at the hands of government, of his right to deal out mischief, and even

death, to thousands that are sufficiently credulous to intrust themselves to his reprehensible ministrations. And we even witness the distressing and degrading spectacle of the British government condescending, without scruple, to draw from 30,000*l.* to 50,000*l.* annually, from the sale of stamps (D) affixed to endless varieties of quack medicines, most noxious either in themselves, or by indiscriminate and unskilful application. When we reflect that the government that confers this seeming sanction on empiricism, and that allows any individual to prepare and sell, with impunity, medicines prescribed by himself or by another, is the same which concurs in enforcing every law, just or unjust, that directs and coerces the regular student and practitioner, and is the same which concurs in the prosecution, at the instance of Apothecaries' Hall, of duly qualified physicians and surgeons who should choose to prepare and make a charge for their own patients' medicines,—we must at once acknowledge that it stands rightfully charged with inconsistency, injustice, and neglect of the public weal. And these faults, which we will admit may be more of a passive than of an active kind, appear still more glaring when we look to the relations existing in France, Germany, and other countries, between their governments and medical Faculties respectively; the former giving every laudable encouragement and just countenance to the latter, appealing to them on all great questions of public health, and deriving from them most effective aid and counsel in every medical emergency affecting the community. Such a survey would also shew convincingly, how splendid a series of results can be elicited by well

organized and competent medical enquirers in the important public questions of vital statistics, salubrity of occupations and of localities,—the best measures to be adopted in case of epidemic visitations, and many others deeply affecting the public health; and would, doubtless, have the effect of creating generally throughout Great Britain an urgent desire to enjoy in the same, or even in a greater degree, the advantages of a good system of Medical Police.

III. ON THE JUSTICE, PUBLIC EXPEDIENCY, AND
NECESSITY, OF CONFERRING ON THE MEDICAL PRO-
FESSION A WELL DEFINED AND WHOLESOME CON-
STITUTION,—AN EFFECTIVE LEGAL RECOGNITION,
AND UNASSAILABLE PRIVILEGES.

Sufficient evidence has now, it is hoped, been adduced, to show that the interests of the public health, no less than those of medical science, of truth, and of justice, stringently demand the interference of the legislature in the matters under consideration. They loudly call upon it, on the one hand, to use its influence and delegated powers in assisting to suppress every lying oracle, in extinguishing every false light, and in drying up every known and accessible source of public delusion and suffering; and on the other hand, to establish firmly, and give free scope to, those men and those institutions only, that are willing to be tested by the touch-stone of truth, and are conscientiously desirous of promoting the sanitary interests of the whole community, the advancement of science, and the worthy and free exercise of the almost divine Art of healing *on sound principles alone*.

The profession itself, however, must be remodelled; there must be conferred on its members universally, so high an *education*, as to exclude from its ranks the incompetency of which we have complained in others; and it must possess a *constitution* adapted to surrounding social cir-

cumstances and wants, according with the nature and spirit of medical science and art, and embracing sound and effective principles of *self-government*. In these two vital points, of EDUCATION and of GOVERNMENT, will doubtless lie the chief strength and efficiency of the legislative measures that we demand. For in an age daily advancing in intelligence, the relations between regular medicine and empiricism will undergo a necessary and spontaneous (though probably a very slow) change, *without legal interference*; and the mass of the people, after much and dearly-bought experience, will gradually withdraw their ill-bestowed patronage from the latter. But no such change can occur, without legal interference, in the constitution, and in the multifarious, conflicting, and otherwise exceptionable operations, of the numerous chartered corporations. Hence the necessity, the method, and the details of their re-organization, have been often and ably laid before the public by various writers; especially by Drs. Webster, Barlow, Maunsell, and O'Bierne; by Mr. Carmichael; and, though last, yet by no means least, by the zealous and talented Honorary Secretary of our Association, Mr. Carter. (I)

After the excellent Report which the latter gentleman has this morning read to us, it would be a superfluous and needless repetition to add any thing on the subject of future measures to what was presented to your consideration in that document; the general views contained in which are those unanimously adopted by the various associations. (J) Instead, therefore, of giving, by way of conclusion, a sketch of the *grounds* and *nature* of the proposed changes, as was my original purpose, you will permit me to entreat

you to carry in your memory, and, if occasion permit, to peruse, re-peruse, and make yourselves masters of, the plans so judiciously arranged and lucidly expounded in the able Report of our Council, already alluded to.

And if there be here present any of the non-medical members of the public, let them rest assured that their interests are as intimately bound up in the enquiry, and in the proposed measures, as are those of the profession itself. On this ground, and because, also, the public itself frequently remarks, suffers from, and justly condemns the many divisions and varieties exhibited by the medical world, we maintain, without reference to what is due to the interests of truth and science generally, that our non-medical friends lie under the greater obligation to afford us their hearty co-operation in this momentous work. They will, however, do the profession the justice to bear in mind, that the present movement is altogether, as yet, *internal*; and that, considering its unsatisfactory constitution, and its disadvantageous position and relations, its innate merits and strength must needs be great indeed, to enable it to commence and continue those gigantic efforts in the cause of truth, justice, and public utility, that now characterize it. From these efforts it now pledges itself never to cease, until it shall have cast aside every corrupt and heterodox connection and incumbrance, however long and closely yoked in dishonourable fellowship therewith; and shall have *regained*, with the prospect of ever henceforward *maintaining*, that dignified, untrammelled, and useful position in an enlightened community, that is its indisputable birthright.

APPENDIX.

(A)

p. 4.

It may not here be amiss to give the solemn assurance, that the Medical Reform Associations have a much higher and nobler purpose in view, than to define, and apply to any individuals, names that may be needlessly offensive, or at all unmerited. Any other than the most rightful and publicly useful purposes, we altogether disavow.

We assume to ourselves also a title,—that of reformers, (to wit, of medical institutions and laws,) which we are well aware may, while agreeable to the ears of some, carry with it a strong prejudice to the minds of others. But in explanation of that title we wish it to be distinctly understood, that our project, though having reference to society, embraces *professional* and not *social* politics,—that similarly expressed questions in medical and in social politics stand on totally different grounds,—and that many most enlightened and influential advocates of the said medical reforms are, in general politics, of an opposite creed. Indeed, in the words of the eloquent and zealous CARMICHAEL, “we are much more deserving of the name of *aristocratic* than of *democratic* reformers. For, our object is to raise the qualification of candidates to the very highest standard, and thus to elevate the profession itself.”

And in reference to existing medical colleges and halls, we may add the assurance that of such we by no means seek the *suppression*, but merely the *restriction to such offices* as they can undertake and accomplish *becomingly, honourably, and effectively*, for the public and professional good.

(B)

p. 5.

In proof of this assertion, the well-sketched instances adduced by Dr. Bostock, in his History of Medicine down to the present century, may be appealed to; in nearly all of which, similar habits of independent observation and induction are recorded, in almost identical terms. See *Cyclop. Pract. Med.* vol. 1.

(C)

p. 5.

Between these extremes there have arisen *some*, who have, “by the force of original and unaided genius” assumed certain positions afterwards legitimately established, yet have founded thereon methods of practice that are now generally condemned, as, in modern times, for example, BROWN: while *others* have constructed and promulgated *inaccurate* generalizations from a patient observation of facts, whose dogmas, never-

theless, are, when duly qualified by the impartial observer and sound reasoner, of the greatest theoretical and practical value,—as in the instance of BROUSSAIS.

(D)

pp. 8 and 34.

For a detailed exposition of the most important features and relations of quackery in these realms, reference may here be made to Dr. COWAN'S (of READING) masterly account of its statistics, and to his occasional Reports to the Council of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, published in its Transactions.

(E)

p. 28.

See the able "Statement" of Mr. C. T. Carter, read by him to the Council of the North of England Medical Association, in August. *Dublin Medical Press*, Sept. 2, 1840.

(F)

p. 29.

"The College of Physicians in London, which was instituted to preside over every department indiscriminately, long ago discarded surgery and pharmacy, whilst midwifery had been stigmatized by its president as an occupation foreign to the habits and feelings of gentlemen.—The College of Surgeons has displayed a similarly exclusive spirit with regard to the department more particularly under its control; and the Company of Apothecaries has always declined interfering with surgery, whether from a feeling of courtesy towards the College of Surgeons, or from a modest distrust of its fitness to meddle with that branch of science, we are unable to determine." (*See Mr. Carter's "Statement," loc. cit.*)

To avoid misconception on this subject, I shall here take leave, with deference, to express a little more fully the views respecting it which, I believe, I entertain in common with many, whose opinions are entitled to the highest consideration.

A knowledge, respectively, of the practice of Medicine, of Surgery, of Midwifery, and perhaps we may add of Pharmacy, constitutes one indivisible whole, which it is the province of one indivisible SCIENCE to treat of and to expound, and of one pretty high (and of course nearly uniform) standard of EDUCATION to confer; which last should not, in any case, be fallen short of, how far soever it might, in other instances, be surpassed at the candidate's option.

This statement, however, is not to be so mis-interpreted, as to be made to involve *any rule whatever* respecting the PRACTICE of *all* the branches, or of *any one* severally, of the healing art. Each course of procedure may, undoubtedly, have its advantages, under circumstances respectively allowing or demanding it.

The fault alleged against the present arrangements and practices of many of the Halls, (and in an especial and unqualified sense of the English Halls,) is, that they appear to have established, and still to maintain, such distinctions and subdivisions in medical science, in their curricula of education, and in the variety of their *diplomas*, or licenses, as can only,

with propriety, be recognised in the *practice* of our Art; in *every department* of which, moreover, with a single oppressive exception, any one thus *partially tested and licensed* is at liberty to engage.

(G)

p. 30.

"A statement was made to Lord John Russell, when Home Secretary, that out of 1830 practitioners employed under the Poor-Law Amendment Act, 327 had not been examined in Surgery, 323 had not been examined in Medicine, and 233 had not been examined at all!" *Dr. Cowan's Report to the Provincial Medical Association at its meeting at Southampton, 1840.*

(H)

p. 31.

We have, however, a most gratifying proof that an enlightened public and its press are now interested on our behalf, in the emphatic protests of *The Times* and *Courier*, published a few days ago, (Sept. 1840,) in denunciation of the delegation of such an office to the Poor-law Commissioners, and of the paltry remuneration recommended by them for vaccination,—a step which, as *The Times* remarks, is most impolitic as well as mean, because not likely to command adequate vaccination from *any*, much less from *self-reporting* and, probably, often self-entitled surgeons,—and which is, further, an instance of that shabby and restrictive economy, the reputation for which would alone seem to account for the bestowal of the office on the said Commissioners.

(I)

p. 37.

Reference may, in particular, be made to the concise and argumentative "Statement" of Mr. Carter before cited (*Dublin Medical Press, Sept. 2, 1840*); to the Report of the Council of this Association, founded on that "Statement," and read by him this day, copious extracts from which will be found in the following pages; to Reports of the proceedings and correspondence of the British Medical Association, published in the *Lancet* of the years 1838, 1839, and 1840; to the Transactions of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association; and to accounts in the *Lancet* and in the *Dublin Medical Press* of the meetings, in Dublin, of the Irish College of Surgeons and of the Irish Medical Association, which were characterized by sound reason, fervid eloquence, and manly resolution.

(J)

p. 37.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH OF ENGLAND MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

(*Drawn up by Mr. Carter, and read at Carlisle, 15th Sept., 1840.*)

* * * * * "Not that there is in this kingdom a lack of Medical Colleges or Corporate Bodies—for of these there are no fewer than *eighteen*; but, unfortunately they are as dissimilar as they are nu-

merous. Each varies from another in character, regulations, government &c. The precise limits of their respective powers and authority are as imperfectly defined, as are the duties which should devolve on them individually. In their present disunited condition, the country is without any competent Board to which Government or the Legislature can apply for advice, in cases wherein it may be required, on behalf of the public safety or welfare—a fact which is strikingly exemplified in the circumstances which have recently occurred, in the passing of the 'Vaccination Extension Bill,' and in the inquiry now going on as to the health of towns by the Poor Law Commissioners, as well as in the existing arrangements for supplying the pauper population of England, (and perhaps it may be said, of Ireland also,) with medical relief.

"On the ground of education, the Corporate Bodies are equally defective. The curricula of study enjoined, and the examinations instituted, by each, differing essentially from those of another, an inducement is thereby held out for students to repair to those institutions from which their credentials can be obtained on the easiest terms. Medical *practice* being the same in ALL parts of the empire, it may be asked, Why should the modes of admission into it be so various? Why should there not be one code of regulations, instead of several? Why, furthermore, should a person who has been educated and licensed to practise in *one* division of the United Kingdom, be restrained for pursuing his avocation in another? or why should the same individual be obliged to appear before one Board to be examined in Medicine, Materia Medica, &c., while it is left to his own option whether or not he shall stand before another to be tested as to his acquirements in Surgery? In some of the Universities and Colleges, the same gentlemen act in the capacity both of teachers and examiners of their own pupils—a custom manifestly open to animadversion. In some, also, the fees of the examiners are dependent on the number of licenses and diplomas granted; and nearly the whole [of them are principally supported by the funds arising from the admission of members. No wonder, therefore, that laxity of discipline should sometimes prevail, or that in some of our chartered bodies certificates and honorary distinctions should be so much more easy of attainment than in others.

"So far as the interests of the practitioner of Medicine are concerned, the Medical Institutions of this country have subjected themselves to just and well-grounded complaints. That these interests should have been neglected, needs not, however, to excite surprise; for the greater part, if not the whole of the Corporations, are under the dominion of self-elected and irresponsible officers, the members at large having no control over establishments which they have contributed to support. Indeed, it may be asserted, that they possess no substantial privilege in virtue of their connection with those bodies; for after expending time and money in the acquirement of knowledge, they are not more protected and encouraged than is the avowed empiric, or the impostor, who, under an assumed title, is permitted to usurp the character and to exercise the calling of a medical practitioner. The unimpeded progress of quackery, for which this country is notorious, and the absence of proper control over druggists and other compounders of medicine, may be attributed, in a very great measure, to neglect of duty on the part of the Medical Corporations.

"A satisfactory administration of medical affairs is not to be expected, whilst our Colleges, &c., remain in their present isolated state. The profession evidently requires to be consolidated. Its members have

waited long, and not impatiently, for some spontaneous movement on the part of those bodies, which might tend to bring the several branches into union and harmony, and to create amongst them something like uniformity of operation; but they have been disappointed, and have consequently been led to reflect on the best means of accomplishing that which the Corporations seem unwilling to attempt; and a very general opinion prevails, that their object would be most effectually accomplished by the establishment of a General Medical College or Council, comprising three Executive Departments—one in England—another in Scotland—and a third in Ireland. * * * * * In the minds of some persons, a considerable degree of jealousy appears to exist with regard to the supposed extent of power with which the formation of such a Council as is here spoken of, would invest the members of the profession. It should, however, be borne in mind, that a National College of Medicine would act as an *executive*, and not as a *legislative* body. It would have no power to *make* laws, but to superintend their due enforcement after they should have been made by Parliament, or to suggest the propriety of new ones. The operations of such a Council would be restrained by the connection which would subsist between it and the Crown; and its bye-laws, even, would probably be subjected to the inspection of the Judges.

"It should likewise be remembered, that as the profession is not represented in either branch of the Legislature, a Representative Council is the only medium through which its wants and feelings can be communicated to the ruling authorities of the country; and a momentary consideration of the little sympathy which has hitherto existed between its members and the present irresponsible Corporate Bodies, will explain the reason why they should wish to have a voice in the election of their Governors.

"The establishment of a General Medical College, it is believed, would be productive of benefits to the whole community.—Under its auspices the Public Health might be adequately protected, and Medical Police become a prominent object of cultivation. Sanitary precautions might be adopted in times of pestilential or epidemic diseases; the practice of Pharmacy might be placed under suitable control; and the dangers of empiricism exposed, and their baneful consequences materially diminished. The country might be supplied with a well-educated and highly-competent body of medical practitioners; and as a registry of all such would be preserved, any man who should assume a title in Medicine to which he had no legal claim, would be detected and subjected to punishment.

"In opposition to the views here stated, it may be urged, that if the changes contemplated in the foregoing remarks were carried into effect, an irreparable, if not a fatal injury, would be inflicted upon every Medical College and Corporation at present existing throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Such need not be the case: and no greater mistake can be committed than to suppose that the objects of Medical Reformers are to *destroy* those institutions. They wish not to *annihilate* but to *modify* their functions, leaving them to exercise those (and those only) which they are calculated to fulfil with efficiency. An attempt has been made to show, that, *under existing circumstances*, they are wholly unsuited to the purposes of good government, and, for reasons already assigned, that they are no better adapted to regulate education, or to superintend the examining and licensing of candidates for medical practice or medical honours. With respect to these particulars, there can be little doubt,

that uniform arrangements should be enforced throughout every part of the empire; and if this principle be conceded, there will be no considerable difficulty in proving the necessity for entrusting their direction to a number of *different*, and (according to their own statements) of conflicting institutions. It has been said, if education were assimilated, and a high standard of proficiency were required, rural and thinly-peopled districts would be unprovided with medical attendants; but such an argument is untenable, and might easily be disproved.

"The appointment of a uniform test as the qualification for a license to exercise any or every branch of the healing art, need not prevent the licentiate from still further prosecuting his studies in a recognized University or School, or whilst engaged in actual practice; nor (it is conceived) can any valid objection be raised against the conferring of appropriate distinctions or titles, as the reward of well-ascertained superiority in either case.

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"Under a new arrangement of the profession, the duties of examining and licensing would perhaps no longer devolve on those institutions by which they are at this time performed. * * *

"Medical Reformers are not desirous to *destroy* any existing College or Corporation; but, on the contrary, they are anxious to secure to it adequate resources for the fulfilment of every object which, from its nature and constitution, it is fitted to promote, at the same time that they are endeavouring to obtain, for the general superintendence of the whole profession, an efficient and comprehensive governing Council. If it be asked, in what manner finances sufficient for both purposes are to be provided, it may be answered, that the admission fees of licentiates would raise an income which would afford a surplus after the disbursements required for the support of existing establishments should have been made; and if this were inadequate to cover the expenditure of a National College, it might be augmented by the exaction of a small annual registration-fee from each member thereof, independently of the claim which the services of such a College would give it upon the public revenue. * * *

"Medical Reform is a subject which presents strong claims to the attention of men of all shades of political opinion, for all are equally interested in the benefits it would confer. The designs of its advocates will bear the most searching investigation. They are neither selfish nor exclusive. They aim at placing the profession in the position it ought to occupy as a branch of national polity, and rendering it eminently conducive to the welfare and happiness of mankind."