

**The touchstone of medical reform : in three letters, addressed to Sir Robert Harry Inglis, bart., M.P. / by Joseph Henry Green.**

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**Publication/Creation**

London : S. Highley, 1841.

**Persistent URL**

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THE TOUCHSTONE  
OF  
MEDICAL REFORM;

IN THREE LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO

SIR ROBERT HARRY INGLIS BART., M.P.

BY

JOSEPH HENRY GREEN, F.R.S.

PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY; ONE OF THE SURGEONS  
OF ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL, ETC.

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LONDON:  
SAMUEL HIGHLEY, 32, FLEET STREET.

1841..

H. W. MARTIN AND CO., PRINTERS, BARTLETT'S BUILDINGS HOLBORN.

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RECENTLY PUBLISHED, Price 2s.

SUGGESTIONS RESPECTING THE INTENDED  
PLAN OF MEDICAL REFORM.

Respectfully offered to the Legislature and the Profession.

By JOSEPH HENRY GREEN, F.R.S.

THE TOUCHSTONE  
OF  
MEDICAL REFORM.

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LETTER I.

ON THE CHARACTER OF A MEDICAL MAN, IN  
CONNECTION WITH THE NATURE AND OBJECTS  
OF A PROFESSION.

SIR,

THE present Session of Parliament is perhaps destined to effect important changes in the medical profession ; and, as the interests of society at large, no less than those of the members of the profession itself, are seriously involved in the question of securing the efficiency, and of promoting the improvement, of those to whom are intrusted the indispensable functions of preserving and restoring the health of the community, it may be deemed scarcely less than the duty of every one who can claim any practical acquaintance with the subject, to offer such results of his experience and meditation, as may tend to pre-



vent the ill effects of crude and hasty legislation, and as may aid the profession, the public, and the legislature in bringing to a successful issue — the difficult undertaking implied in the term *Medical Reform*. It is in this spirit that I venture to offer to you the following suggestions, which, whatever their defects may be, will have answered their purpose, if they serve to assimilate the views of the parties interested in the discussion, by elucidating the grounds upon which the measure in question may be safely based, and the principles required for the guidance of those who undertake to re-model the medical profession, in consonance with its dignity and welfare, and with the needs and requirements of society inseparable therefrom.

Now I know of no mode better calculated to arrive securely and directly at the results which we are desirous of obtaining, than by considering the qualifications which the community would necessarily require in a medical practitioner, in accordance with the character of a member of a liberal profession. And if his qualifications are to be in relation to the dignity and efficiency of the medical profession according to its ultimate aim, it will scarcely be denied that they should consist in —

1st, The possession of *technical knowledge and skill*, in that degree which shall enable each member of the profession to apply all the resources of art, which the whole profession can supply. 2dly, *Scientific insight*, or the possession of the knowledge of



those laws or rational grounds, which form at once the principles and ultimate aims of all professional knowledge. And, 3rdly, *The character of a gentleman* ;—that his conduct shall be the pledge and proof that he pursues his profession as a liberal science, and that, in all his dealings with his patients, his professional brethren, and the community, he is ever guided by the principles of strict professional honour.

In addressing ourselves to a consideration of these requisites of the professional character, it might seem scarcely necessary to dwell upon the first ; and it is as evident that the public ought to require as indispensable the possession of adequate knowledge and skill, as that the medical practitioner, who aims at the performance of those duties which his profession demands, will possess himself of those requisites of knowledge, which, as essential to the practice of his profession, no honest man would be without. But it may deserve some inquiry, what we are to understand by the amount of skill and knowledge which may be legitimately demanded of the members of a liberal profession ; what is the goal, or ideal point, to which, however distant its actual attainment may be, it must ever remain our object to approach as near as we can. It is evidently this, that each individual should enable himself, as an accredited member of the profession, to be in his own person an adequate representative of the profession collectively. A competent geometrician, in the demonstration of any



problem or proposition, feels assured that, if all the geometricians in Europe were present to contribute their aid, the result would be the same,—the evidence no greater. Now, I need not say that this is an advantage that can belong only to the so called abstract sciences,—those which are concerned with the forms of the mind, wholly separate from the changeable materials and objects to which they may be applied. Nevertheless, it remains the ideal standard, however great the difference may be in the comparative distance from the goal, however actually unapproachable this may be;—this is the goal; and to that which we never reach, we may be gradually approximating. The history of all professions gives us proof and illustration. Compare the medical prescriptions and treatment of the various nations and climes of Asia and Africa, where the science of medicine scarcely exists, or even those of the different countries of Europe some centuries back, with the practice pursued by all regularly educated men in the present era; and the latter, with all its remaining differences, will appear almost unanimity in comparison with the strange, capricious, and contradictory ends and means of the former. In this country, and at the present time, this is so true, that the sameness or diversity of treatment of the same complaint by all regular members of the profession, may be taken almost as a criterion of the more or less perfect knowledge of the complaint itself, possessed by the profession at large. In no small proportion of



cases of the most ordinary occurrence, every man, who has fairly and in good earnest availed himself of the advantages which our medical institutions afford, feels almost as little doubt that he is doing what every other regularly educated physician or surgeon would do or prescribe, as the geometrician or arithmetician in the ideal case.

It would, as I have already observed, mark the absence of all reflection to expect in any practical profession, or indeed in any applied science, the actual attainment of the advantage, which the purely abstract knowledges, arithmetic, pure geometry, and the like possess—namely, that each individual adept in the science should be the adequate representative and substitute of the whole body of its cultivators. And it would be scarcely less irrational to demand or anticipate in a science, the subjects of which are so complex, multitudinous, and fugitive as those presented by the frame and functions of the living organic body, any such approach to this ideal perfection as we see actually attained in astronomy. For it is scarcely necessary to remark, that this so close approximation to the excellence of abstract science has been attained under the condition of reducing external bodies, selected as the subjects of this science, to the nature of abstracts, by contemplating them exclusively in relation to mass, motion, weight, distance — in short, to those common properties of matter and mass that are strictly susceptible of number and mensuration. Nevertheless, most needful it



is to bear in mind that the comparative distance from a fixed goal, and the lesser or greater practicability of reaching it, neither affects the existence of the goal itself, nor its position. In every liberal art, the cultivation of which by a class of society constitutes a profession, in contradistinction from a trade or mechanic art, there must be a scientific element, either as the ground of its knowledge and practice, or as the proposed object. Even where, from the imperfection of our attainments, we are unable to refer the facts and phænomena to intelligible principles, it is still our aim and endeavour so to arrange and connect them, as to bring them more and more under the conditions which facilitate the discovery of a principle.

Hence it is, then, that in stating the qualifications of members of the medical profession, we have placed as the second requisite — *scientific insight*, or the possession of those laws or rational grounds which form at once the principles and ultimate aims of all professional knowledge: and this in accordance with the essential character of a liberal profession, which may be defined as “the application of science by the actual possessors of the same to the needs and commodities of social man.” And if, on the one hand, the universal needs for the well-being of social man, may be comprised in his *social security*, his *moral cultivation*, and his *bodily health*, and consequently, that the professional class will assume the distinctive characters of the three universal pro-



fessions, the *Legal*, the *Theological*, and the *Medical*;—so, on the other hand, it becomes evident that the root of a profession, as distinguished from a mechanical art or trade, is *science*.

Disjoined from, or undervaluing and neglecting, the patient and persevering details of observation, the search for facts, and the wakeful attention to them when presented, the healing art would soon fall back to the state in which during a portion of the middle ages it actually existed, when medicine was little better than a fantastic branch of logic. On the other hand, wholly separated from all speculative science, from all reference to law and ultimate principles, it would necessarily become a mere collection of cases, of facts without any *copula* that might render them severally or collectively intelligible,—nay more, without any security or warrant that the supposed facts are actually such, or that the most important incidents may not have escaped the notice of the observer, while non-essential or merely accidental circumstances have taken their place. The *compendia* of medicine would amount to an ever-enlarging recipe book, a collection of recipes with asserted cures; no small part of the credibility of which must rely on the old, often-detected, but always powerful sophism, *Cum hoc, ergo propter hoc*;—the man was ill;—he took this or that medicine, he got well again, and therefore this medicine cured him! Those who have amused themselves with the history of new medicines in each successive age or



generation will not ask for further proofs of what I have here advanced. But this is not all. It is not in the nature of the human mind to remain satisfied with the mere record of always imperfect cases, of sight without insight, which must always be imperfect, and will often be erroneous. If the processes of the observing and recording understanding are not organized by the reason; if they are not contemplated in the light of a law, or in preparation for the discovery of a law, the imagination and the passions will take their place. Ostentatious affidavits and displays of particular cures will become legitimate proofs of the efficacy of medicines, and the *methodus medendi*; and the charmer and the poisoner will display as numerous trophies of successful practice, as numerous a list of strange recoveries from fearful diseases, as the soberest and most sensible dealer in authorised recipes. And the only legitimate test of skill and science will be the answer, which the shrewd empiric made to the physicians of Louis XIV, who had demanded on what qualifications he presumed to prescribe for the king,—“Your drugs have not cured his Majesty of his complaint, and mine will.” Fortunately for his Majesty the *nostrum*, it appears, was Peruvian Bark. But the same answer, with less provocation, and tenfold insolence, has been returned in our own days, where the drugs have been of a less innocent nature, and the results have shown that those who pretend to cure, without knowing, or wishing to know, why or how, will likewise kill or muti-



late with as little remorse, relying as they safely may on the old rule, that where hope and desire are in play, one lucky hit will be remembered where twenty failures are forgotten. "*Eadem est ratio fere omnis superstitionis; homines advertunt eventus ubi implentur, ast ubi fallunt (licet multo frequentius), tamen negligunt et prætereunt.*"—BACON NOV. ORG. APH. xlv. The conflict of science and systematized experience with quackery, of the liberal cultivator of science with the contraband trader in nostrums and stolen fragments of knowledge, is indeed a sacred war! Though I fear it would be hoping too sanguinely of human nature not to admit, that it will endure as long as physical or moral infirmity place men in those states which eminently favour the predominance of the passions and the imagination over conscience, reason, and judgment. But, assuredly, if such be the sources of the success of fraudulent empiricism they ought to excite a wholesome jealousy, an honourable solicitude in the legitimate candidate for the medical profession to stand aloof, at a far distance, from the very appearance of tampering with such unholy aidances. "To act in the spirit of science where I can; by the mere light of experience without scientific insight where I must; but with the uniform avoidance and contempt of quackery in all cases"—this is, or should be, the code of morals for every medical practitioner.

And with these views I hold it as little less than indisputable, that, as the legitimate claim of the pro-



fession to its due estimation by society at large can be dependent only upon science ; so for the attainment of this science the medical profession must be engrafted on the trunk of universal science, and must be cultivated in connection with the liberal arts and sciences—therefore entitled liberal because they are cultivated, without hire or compulsion, on the score of their own worth and dignifying influences—and which form so many diverging branches of the great trunk of human knowledge, so many forms of one and the same spirit of truth. In enumerating the attainments, which an enlarged course of professional study implies, it would be difficult to exclude any sort of knowledge as undesirable ; but assuredly on a consideration of the aims and objects of medical education we cannot but regard as indispensable requisites :—

1. The knowledge of *words*, their definite import and right use, as grounded in grammar, and evinced by a *correct style*.
2. The knowledge of the elements of *mathematical science*, as the discipline of the pure sense.
3. The knowledge of *experimental science*, as affording the requisite discipline of the senses.
4. The knowledge of *logic*, as the laws of right reasoning, the forms of all legitimate conclusion, and the criterion of truth and falsehood.
5. The knowledges properly *medical*, grounded on physics, physiology, and psychology.

And surely if the legitimate object of medical study be that of establishing a *science* of medicine, it will be necessary, in order



to achieve it, that we should ascertain by observation and comparison, the essential constituents of all living beings ; all their possible combinations, under all circumstantial influences, with their results ; and no less so, the manifestations of mind, and the mutual influences of life and mind.

But finally, we ought never to permit ourselves to forget that the paramount object of such a course of education, is the discipline and training of the mind to the discovery of that which is universal and necessary, in order to the enunciation of those *causative principles*, and immutable *laws*, which are manifested in the living forces and their aberrations, and which enable us, in order to a rational insight of the facts of sensible experience, to view them in their laws and causes. Neglecting this inherent aim of his rational being, the professional man would forfeit the great attributes of his humanity—the desire of knowing for the knowing's sake ; the necessity of finding or assuming a cause for every effect in order to understand it ; and lastly, a purpose or final cause as the reason for that cause, and in order to explain its connection with the general system in which we exist. The intellectual instinct implied in the three questions—What ? How ? Why ? or the craving to understand under a presumed conjunction of efficient and final causes, as the conditions under which alone we can be satisfied with the notices communicated by our senses and sensations—these, I say, are the proper characters, the birthright and heirlooms of our hu-



manity. And if the inquiring and reflecting *understanding* be the faculty of arranging and schematizing the particular knowledges by theory or hypothesis, it is the *reason*, which either in the discovery of the antecedent law rests from its labours, or consciously employs the intellectual faculties with all the aidances of observation, experiment, hypothesis, and theory, in order to the discovery of that law, which is to supersede or perfect all these.

If further evidence of these truths were needed or required, I would direct the attention of the reader to the circumstances and auspices under which, together with or consequent on the Reformation, physical and physiological science—with the *pure mathematics* as its legislative or architectonic principle, and with *scientific experience*, now as registered *observation*, and now as preconcerted *experiment* for its material source—arose, throve, and flourished. We see with it the growth of a study of medicine, purified from superstition on the one hand, and on the other raised above a mere empiricism by its new and increased bearings on physiological science; and, with this, ascending *pari passu* a distinct medical profession, the continued advance of which, in the universal estimation of civilized man, has been equally proportioned to the ever closer and closer connection both of the profession with the science, and of the professors with the growth, progress, and expansion of the sciences.

If, then, we may assume that in the establishment



and maintenance of a medical profession, the aim of those who regulate its affairs must be that of forming a learned class, united in the common object of the cultivation of that science, the application of which to the preservation and re-establishment of the health of the community, implies in the members of the profession, individually, the possession of technical knowledge and skill grounded on scientific insight, I proceed lastly, to the illustration of the scarcely less indispensable qualification of the professional man comprised in the *character of a gentlemen*, namely, "that his conduct shall be the pledge and proof that he pursues his profession as a liberal science, and that in all his dealings with his patients, his professional brethren, and the community, he is ever guided by the principles of strict professional honour."

It has been my aim to prove the vital connexion between the profession and the science corresponding thereto, so as to establish a balance of sight and insight, between individual skill and the general principles which predetermine its application, and hence likewise the connexion between the profession and the universal sciences, between science itself, and the habit of sciential thought, in the unity of its spirit and essence. It is herein that we find the ground of a *liberal education*, common to the professions, and to the gentry of a country, of an education fitted to maintain the continued succession of a class of *Viri liberales*, of gentlemen, of men imbued with the liberal sciences, of professional men, who in



full possession of a liberal science, apply it to the needs and benefits of their fellow citizens. Nor can it be deemed of slight importance, that those destined for the medical profession should partake of that education which is required in common for the liberal professions as an integral part of the gentry of the country, with the sense and habits of a common training in their duties, moral and religious, in their obligations as citizens, and in their sentiments of professional honor as gentlemen. And if the conduct of the medical practitioner is to be the *proof* of his pursuing his profession as the result of a liberal education—of the cultivation of the sciences, as the grounds of the professions, with the common bond in all, that the several sciences are branches of that universal science, the essence of which being the reason tends to give distinct insight, and ultimate aim to all professional knowledges—we may add that the cultivation of science for its own sake, as the predominant object, can alone entitle him to the rank of a gentleman, and must ever constitute the essential difference between a profession and a trade. For, as in the latter, the art is rightfully considered as the exclusive means of gain, so the former must inevitably be degraded into a trade, whenever mercenary and sordid motives supersede the scientific aim. It is not indeed an entire elevation above empirical practice that constitutes the difference between the professional man and the empiric; for both the imperfections and the difficulties of the art, which has



so complicated, and at the same time so endlessly variable and fugitive, a subject as the human body in health and disease, will long continue to impose the necessity of practice more or less empirical on the wisest and most profound of the profession. But it is the absence of science, or the contemptuous neglect or disclaiming of the same; it is the elevation of a blind empiricism above science, and as superseding all connection therewith, that constitutes the empiric, and in all reason degrades him to the carrier on of a trade, a business, or at best an equivocal art. These positions are strictly applicable to the medical profession. We demand of all its members scientific aims and objects; we denounce as empirics those who neglect or disclaim science; we reject as tradesmen those for whom the profession is only a lucrative business; and we brand as quacks those who dishonestly make it the means of levying a tax on the hopes and fears of the ignorant and credulous.

But we say likewise that, as the member of a liberal profession, the medical practitioner is to evince in his whole conduct the character of a gentleman. And it is impossible that the members of the medical profession should have that due weight in society, and occupy that place and rank to which the science entitles them, unless their qualifications and conduct individually, are consonant with the requirements of the professional character, and unless they show by the whole tone and tenor of their conduct and demeanor, that they are fully actuated by its spirit.



The character and dignity of the profession, of which each individual member is to be the representative—the education, manners, and habits of those with whom it should be his ambition to associate, namely, those who form the gentry of the country, and constitute its mind by virtue of elevating pursuits, scientific attainments, literary refinement, and moral excellence—and no less the demands of society at large, dictated by that high degree of civilization, to which it has attained in this country, all these challenge those excellences, which are distinctive of our humanity, and which indeed, are therefore required of every man, but which no calling is more fitted to elicit, and which no calling more imperatively requires, than the medical profession. Professional knowledge, even when based on science, and intimately allied with the liberalising acquirements and pursuits of the cognate sciences, and with the refining influence of literature, does not therefore comprise all that we desire and expect in the character of a medical practitioner. Need I say, that I refer to the moral attainments which are required of him as a man, which concern him in an especial degree as a medical man, and the possession of which cannot fail, as it ought, to have an important influence on his professional success.

I cannot, I believe, give a more correct and comprehensive description of the minor yet essential moral duties of the profession, than is comprised in the simple maxim, “Think, act, feel, and demean



yourself as a gentleman." Every member of the profession owes this to the profession of which he has been admitted a member, and from the respectability of which,—laboriously and most honorably attained by the splendid merits of a few, and by the worth and general excellence of the majority, he derives at least an increase to his own estimation. And, independently of this, it may be hoped—as indeed it ought to be one of the main objects of medical reform to effect—that none will be so unfortunately placed as that the character of a gentleman should not be of vital importance to his success. The word, gentleman, to every man capable of becoming such, conveys its own meaning so fully, that it may be superfluous to say that he is the gentleman, who in the whole detail of his demeanor, and with the ease and unconsciousness of a habit, shows respect to others in a way that implies the anticipation of a correspondent respect to himself. It is scarcely possible that a medical man can rightly perform the duties which he has undertaken, unless he is respected; and this he will not fail to be, no moral cause counter-vening, if he recognizes in every man on the one hand the respect due to himself as a human being, and by prerogative of his humanity, and on the other the distinctions and particular rank, which each enjoys by the established laws and usages of society. The sufferings incident to human nature, and which it is his office to remove or soften, will at times constrain the highest in rank and station to treat him as



an equal ; and he will be undeserving of the name of man, much more of gentleman, if the sight of the same sufferings — the forerunners perhaps of death in levelling the distinctions of artificial life,—do not influence him to treat the lowest as his brethren.

It is true indeed that in meditating on the requisite conditions of this sentiment of self respect, implying as its counterpart and correspondent the respect of others ; a sentiment the very reverse of selfishness, because grounded on the cultivation of those attributes of our proper humanity, which imply the merging of the self in that divine image, which is at once the causative principle and final aim of the moral excellence of man ;—in meditating, I say, upon the causes and conditions of the self-respect, which constitutes the ideal excellence of the professional character, the name of gentleman assumes a more august and intensive meaning than is ordinarily conveyed by the designation ; and we are led to look deeper for that vitalizing principle of humanity, which gives reality to the character, of which the manners and deportment of a gentleman are the appropriate form and garb,—a principle, without which it would be a counterfeit, a mere outward, without the inward and indwelling life.

The character of the professional man is not a mask or cloak, under which ignorance, meanness and selfishness may play the part, and assume the port of knowledge and virtue ; and as the medical prac-



itioner cannot hope to serve his interests even, except by seeming to be what he ought to be, so he cannot expect to preserve and maintain his character, unless he be what he seems. We must ever bear in mind the necessity of a sense of the worth of the man, and of moral duties, the due performance of which can only flow from the deep sense of responsibility implied in a conscience actuated by those higher motives, which under the name of religion induce on every conscious rational being the self-admitted obligation of conforming his life to the model of the highest perfection prescribed by the light of reason, of regulating his conduct towards others, as to beings who have the same aims and duties in a scheme of moral relations, of which he forms with them an integral part, and of assimilating himself to the most perfect standard of wisdom and goodness, which has been vouchsafed by revelation—as far at least as he is capable under the sense of imperfections, which require for their correction the continual aid and support of the Divine Power, who has implanted in man the needs and capabilities of a spiritual life, and to whom he trusts with the boldness of humble faith for their completion and fulfilment. And if these truths have been only fully set forth in Christianity, in pointing to the reliable pages of its Scriptures, in which are revealed the gracious conditions under which the hard and otherwise ill-understood obligations imposed by reason and conscience are to be converted into a life of spontaneous love, and of acts,



which voluntarily move and breathe Christian charity, we are relieved from the task of re-iterating that which is better taught, and from the necessity of showing that the character of a gentleman is included in that of the universal man, and that the former, if it ought to be distinguished at all, is distinguished only by those graces, which are the natural blossom and fragrance of Christian love.

At all events, if the due performance of the functions assigned to the medical man, and the proper regard to his professional character, require for their ground and actuating spirit the predominant sense and influence of his moral responsibility as a rational being, the standard, which I have ventured to place before him, will not be thought too high, nor I trust, here out of place. The medical man, who aims at the performance of those duties which his profession requires, will, I need not say, possess himself of those requisites of knowledge which are essential to his practice, since no honest man would be without them ; but he will aspire to something more,—he will seek to combine them with those knowledges, and that love of truth for its own sake, which tend to liberalize the profession, and in liberalizing it, to raise it from the narrow aims and interests of a trade, and to secure it from degenerating into hollow routine or dishonest quackery. As he will be above the ordinary vices, so likewise he will guard against the faults, that insensibly blunt all finer sense of honor, and end in the utter corruption of the moral character. In the



neighbourhood, town, or parish, where he may have fixed his residence, he will avoid the vulgar ambition of distinguishing himself in parish squabbles and factious politics. Towards his patients he will betray no sordid selfishness; he will take no advantage of that weakness, which disease often produces on the mind as well as the body: he will be kind without sycophancy or sentimentality; firm without harshness; cheerful without coarseness; the confidence reposed in him will be sacred; and in all things he will treat his patient with a respect and consideration so expressed, as to imply his habitual expectation of the same towards himself. Towards his professional brethren, knowing the fallibility of his own judgment, he will be lenient where error may appear; slow to condemn, and ready to praise where praise is due, he will cheerfully join and co-operate with them; and all gossiping, scandal, and detraction he will utterly abhor. In short, he will be a gentleman in his conduct, manners, and feelings; and next to the approval of his own conscience he will prize the honor of his profession, as formed by a body of men similarly actuated.

Let it not however be supposed, that, in stating what is desirable to the full efficiency of the profession, I leave it to be inferred that it has neglected or abandoned the course of which its ideal excellence is the goal. If it be with a feeling of humiliation that we look back to a former state of the medical profession, it is nobly redeemed by our knowledge of its



rapid advance, its mature vigor, and by the assurance that it not only is progressive, but that it contains within itself the power of still continuing progression. Who shall deny this, who has duly considered the present state of medicine in its close relation to, and connection with, the great body of science and truth? In all its observations, researches, and deductions, it bows to no authority save to the laws of reason; it has no object but truth,—truth for its own sake, and truth in the service of human well-being; it seeks to establish only that which may have permanent worth. It brings to its aid in this great work the operations and results of all other liberal pursuits and sciences: for what shall we exclude from the legitimate acquisitions and desirable knowledge of the scientific medical man and medical philosopher? And as the consequence of this truth, and its confirmation, we may confidently ask in what department of human knowledge have not medical men distinguished themselves as successful cultivators and discoverers? Need we in answering these questions refer in detail to anatomy and physiology, human and comparative, to experimental philosophy and physics, to botany, zoology and chemistry? These are indeed but the everyday pursuits, and the prescribed studies of even the *tyro* in medicine; but for the scientific possession of these, for an enlarged view of the causes of disease, and their remedies, for bringing his observations into a scheme of philosophic unity, or the application of the same to all the detail of his labours, how much



more varied and deep must the student's researches be! He must direct his studies to meteorology, geology, mathematics, physical geography, the discoveries and accounts of travellers and voyagers, the records of history, the various states of society, the effects of occupations, trades and arts; nor can he be said to have attained a mastery of his profession who is ignorant of the mutual relations of life and mind, who is unversed in psychology and metaphysics;—though indeed in all these researches he will feel that he is but laying the foundation for a future medical science and philosophy, and that as yet every extension of his knowledge is for him a proof of his ignorance, and a ground of humility. Follow him again into society and the practical exercise of his profession, and I need scarcely call your attention to those who, favoured by a residence in the capital, are found foremost in the society, and in the promotion of the objects, of scientific men; or to those who imitate their example in the provincial towns. But trace the medical man into the market towns and obscure villages, where with the clergyman he forms the nucleus from which cultivation may spread; or, trace his footsteps in the remote colony, or as the companion and fellow-labourer of those who are traversing the globe in order to carry on the great work of civilization and of religious instruction; and who will be considered as a fitter harbinger of the blessings of peace and good-will to the savage and barbarous, than he who prepares the way by soothing



and relieving their sufferings? If it were necessary or expedient to exhibit yet further the beneficial influence and effects of our profession, how easily might it be proved that there is no calling more calculated to bring into exercise the best feelings of our nature; none certainly more fitted to stimulate to the active practice of humanity; and I think it would be difficult to name any body of men, whose time and labour are in an equal degree, or to the same extent, given gratuitously and cheerfully to services often revolting in their nature, the only inducement to which is the promotion of science, or the individual's own sense of duty.

It may be said that this is an overdrawn picture, and I should be unwise to assert that all is done in all times and places that the profession, even in its present state, is calculated to foster and produce; but that the tendency of medical education and of medical practice is such as I have described, no one I think will be prepared to deny; and in the actual result I will fearlessly declare my conviction that I need not abate one *iota* of the gross sum of practical good, in comparison with the influence of any other calling or profession whatsoever, and that in the same degree it is entitled to the esteem, reverence, and fostering care of society. And, considering the paramount importance of a well organized medical profession to the welfare of society, in the construction of which it forms an indispensable constituent, I do not hesitate to call upon the Legislature and the

community to aid the profession itself in defending it against the attacks it may have to encounter from ignorance and conceit, and of establishing it securely according to the Idea, in the faint sketch of which here offered, I have endeavoured to show the vital connection of the needs of society with its efficiency and dignity.



## LETTER II.

ON THE INSTITUTIONS CALCULATED TO EDUCE  
AND FOSTER THE PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER.

From the time of Hippocrates and the Hippocratic school to the irruption of the northern nations, numerous as the successive schools of medicine were, yet in a philosophic point of view, they may be distinguished into two classes, according as one or the other of the two elements of medical science, theory or experience, predominated. And if to the sects, which ostentatiously excluded all theory, and assumed the hopelessness of arriving at any insight, or the power of assigning a reason for the choice or success of their medicaments, other than a presumption of the future from the analogy of the past,—if to these I say, we owe many and bold additions to the *Materia Medica*, and a more extensive, accurate, and graphic description and record of disease, it is equally true that the tribe of audacious quacks and impostors took shelter in their train, and derived countenance from their views. While on the other hand, if the rationalists by hasty generalizations and a mistaken theory, founded on a false or very imperfect system



of physics, of the elements, the humours and the qualities, reduced the profession to a routine made up of ignorance and conceited pedantry ; yet to the same men, rationalists or Galenists, or by whatever other name they are distinguished in the histories of medicine, we owe both the idea and the continued sense of the necessity of a *system*. But above all, we owe to them the invaluable boon that the specific knowledge of medicine, and the profession arising out of it were preserved in a living connexion with the great trunk of human knowledge generally, as it then existed, with science and with philosophy. And thus from the first gradual separation of medical practice from religion, and the ministers of the Church, the doctors of medicine still remained members of the fraternity, members and *alumni* of the Universities, and as such members of the *National Clerisy*. "The Clerisy of the nation, or National Church," (says Coleridge) "in its primary acceptation and original intention, comprehended the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence, of medicine and physiology, of music, of military and civil architecture, of the physical sciences, with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding ; in short, all the so called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country."\* And as such and because they all contain as a necessary ele-

\* On the Constitution of the Church and State according to the Idea of each ; third edition, p. 49.



ment a knowledge which is its own reward, which needs no higher nor accidental benefit as a motive for their cultivation, these arts and sciences acquire and merit the name of liberal; and without which, we might still have most useful trades, with ingenious, well informed tradesmen, operatives and artizans, but no claim from the profession to the name and privileges of gentlemen.

Nor is it one of the least advantages which we derive from the systematized form of medicine and the incorporate character of its professors, that it has facilitated the final and ostensible separation of quackery. It has enabled the profession to cast off as a slough the low and wily empiric by presenting and establishing one simple and universally intelligible test or criterion. Every vaunter or vender of a *nostrum* or *arcanum*, whether it be a drug, a manipulation, or a new fact, is ipso facto a *quack*, self-excommunicated from the profession, who attempts to impropriate the free light of heaven, to inclose the breathing air of our humanity, to convert knowledge, as knowledge, to a selfish exclusive property, instead of relying for his superiority on the superior attainment of a light common to all his brethren, or which if discovered by himself, he ought to feel it his first duty, his pride, his ambition to disimpropriate, and to diffuse as widely as the minds capable of receiving it.

But there is another, and relatively to the progression of the art a not less important, benefit from



a profession of medicine existing as a department of liberal science, and recognized among the branches which spring and diverge from the great trunk of universal truths—namely, that as such, it stands in connection with the great bodies or associations, the ornaments and privileges of Christendom, the universities and scientific schools, the character of which has been well described as guardians at the fountain-head of the humanities, employed in preserving and enlarging the knowledge already possessed, and in sending forth throughout the community a succession of labourers competent to apply that knowledge to the needs of social man, in his three primary interests — his property, his health, and his moral being; and alike, whether under the names of law, medicine, or divinity, capable of becoming in district, town, and village, germs of civilization, centres around which whatever is of better tendency may, as it were, crystallize and brighten.\* And in addition to these more awful benefits of general humanization, an especial advantage may be stated as accruing to the medical and chirurgical profession from this vital connection with the seats of philosophy and universal truth—that, without involving the risk of diverting the attention of the medical practitioner from experience, or of substituting hasty generalizations and premature theories at once for facts which they overrule, and for law and its resulting insight which they but counterfeit, it yet permits and encourages that cultivation of speculative medi-

\* Church and State. Third edition, p. 78.



cine, without which the practice itself must forfeit all hopes of rising above pure empiricism, and exclude all prospect of gradual approximation to science in the higher sense. For never let it be forgotten, that however remote or perhaps (from the limits of our faculties and the subtle nature of the objects) impracticable its absolute attainment may be, it nevertheless still remains the ultimate aim of every liberal profession, that each duly instructed and accredited member of that profession should, in his knowledge and the practical application of that knowledge, represent the whole body, and that the possibility of this must ever be proportioned to the approaches which the art itself makes towards a *science*. And it may not be amiss to add that, in the history of the advances of human knowledge and of the discoveries made by man, scarce any of high moment and extensive use can be mentioned, that have arisen from exclusive attention to that one particular branch, but that it has in almost all instances arisen from the lights reflected from other and often seemingly most remote departments of science.

Having long entertained these convictions—the fruit both of meditation on the end and aim of medical education, and of my practical acquaintance with medical teaching—I gladly accepted the Professorship of Surgery, in King's College, on its establishment; and embraced the opportunity of an Address which I had the honour of delivering at the opening of the Session of 1832, and afterwards



published, of stating and explaining my view of the connection of the professions with the sciences severally and with universal science, and as its result the beneficent connection and fraternity of all the professions with each other, and the legitimate parentage and derivation of all the professions from those national institutions to which the name University can only be properly applied. The success of the medical department of King's College, and its progressive increase in the estimation of the public, have strengthened my conviction, that in universities and colleges, a medical education may be best grounded on those universal elements of science, which are the essential constituents of every liberal profession; and that a medical education cannot be complete, or even adequate, except in such institutions where alone discipline, both moral and intellectual, systematic instruction, and a pledged direction and supervision of the studies can give the requisite security for the progress and completion of the students' labors, and where the *alumni* are induced habitually to regard themselves as members of one body, brothers in the same household, to form among themselves a correspondent law of honour, of self-respect, and of respect for each other as fellow-collegians—with all that habit of despising the hollow, the tricky, the ostentatious, the littleness which consists in the ambition of being great to little minds, and the low arts of levying a lucrative tax on ignorance and folly, for the maintenance and worldly



thriving of pretended knowledge—in short, to form that sentiment of honour and gentlemanly feeling, in which the moral life of the individual breathes as in its natural atmosphere with that unconsciousness, the result and accompaniment of the habit, which gives the charm of unaffected manners and conduct.

Now, it cannot be doubted that the numerous hospitals of London afford a field for medical observation and experience probably unequalled, but which assuredly is no where surpassed. These advantages have been indeed so fully understood, that numerous students flock yearly to the metropolis to partake of these benefits; nay, the great majority of the practitioners to whom is entrusted so much of the weal and woe of populous England, her fleets, her armies, and her widely spread colonies—the great majority confessedly depend for their education on the metropolitan schools. And yet it is melancholy to reflect, that in a matter of the highest national concern, these vast opportunities should have been so long neglected as an object of *national* interest, and should have been left without the pale of legislative control and guardianship to private interests—not to say the casualties of intrigue, and of individual caprice.

The number of universities in a country must vary under changes of wealth, population, and empire; change of time, of circumstances, the increasing number, wealth, demands, and modifications of a nation, must and will exact a corresponding expansion and accommodation of these venerable institutes,



the birth-places of the higher humanity—always, however, with the proviso, that they are in their ground and essential constituents *one*, and as nurseries of the professions, of the head and heart of the country, are co-organized in the spirit of national unity. It cannot, indeed, but happen, that locality and other circumstances will give to one university an advantage in reference to one of the professions; to another, the advantage in respect of another; and it is in this respect that the different universities in the same realm may each, not only without injury, but to the advantage of all, be distinguished, and furnish to the students and their natural protectors wise and intelligible grounds of preference, without any implied detraction. Thus it is possible, and should it prove actual, no subject of regret, that in the cultivation and progressive extension of the pure and most austere sciences, and in the sedulous research of ancient learning, the elder universities, Cambridge and Oxford, will take the lead;—and they will ever, I trust, remain the principal outlets of the most important, because the most universal, profession, because wanted at all times, in every place, and for all men, who are not wanting to themselves. But on the other hand, for the *physical sciences*, and for the knowledges which have the forms and products of organic and inorganic nature as their material, for the continued application and elaboration of these for the wealth and well-being of the community, as their objects in the professions that have arisen, or



may arise, out of them, and in which the medical profession, in all its different branches, must at all times fill the largest space and occupy the most prominent situation — for these I am at a loss to determine which to declare the greater — the peculiar facilities furnished for the realization of these advantages, and the extent to which the power of participating in them may be augmented, in an institution appropriate to the needs and commanding the resources of this great metropolis—or, the necessity and public urgency of providing for that spirit of intellectual expansion which, in some form or other, must exist as a living energy for good and for evil, throughout the whole empire.

It would be easy to show the strong, the peculiar expediency, nay, moral necessity of giving to the physical sciences, and the medical, as their correspondent profession, a high and important place in such an institution; but I am in a great degree relieved from this task by the already existing establishment of the Metropolitan University, with its components, University College and King's College. In alluding to this institution, on the one hand, I should be acting an unworthy part, if I were to flatter the predilections of its unconditional admirers; and on the other hand, I should be unwise to withhold my approbation of an institute, which possesses both the power and the means of exercising the most beneficent control over the future prospects of the medical profession. And I trust, that under its autho-



rity, we may yet see the medical schools of the metropolis connected with colleges, in each of which we might find a *school* for elementary instruction, a *senior department* for instruction in those knowledges which are common to all the professions, the proper objects of collegiate education, and heretofore named the liberal arts and sciences, and a *medical department* for the studies properly medical; and these provided with their due appointment of accredited teachers and professors. And I no less fervently hope that the means will be in each case provided of residence within the walls of the college; as I am sure that we cannot estimate too highly the advantages from this provision for an intermediate state between that of the full-grown school-boy and the independent young man—a state during the most perilous period of human life, in which the individual may remain *sub tutela*, yet no longer as a boy, but as a man influenced by the principles and estimation of his equals, by the example of his seniors, by the habits and laws of the college in which he dwells, and mildly coerced by a peculiar discipline, which even at the time he feels to be an honourable distinction, and which he knows will be hereafter considered by others as entitling him to a distinct rank in society. Lastly, in the co-organization of all the colleges in the unity, and by the bond of universal science, we may hope to find the common grounds of professional excellence gradually reduced to the most effective system, as a complexus of means to various ends, ideally re-united in the same ultimate end.



So best, and so only by the institution and protection of this and similar great seminaries of learning, in which is cultivated science anterior to the sciences, as the sciences to the especial professions, so only by the sense of a common derivation, by the fraternizing habits of a common training, will the members of all the liberal professions, thus acknowledging a common birth-place, tend once more to a re-union as a *national learned class*, every member and off-set of which will be enabled and disposed to regard the practitioner of another profession in the same district as a brother—as a co-operator in a different direction to the same end, whose authority and influence, whenever rightly exerted, he is bound by duty, and prepared by impulse, to support and render effectual. So best may we prevent the effects and consequences of a contrary plan ; that of an extensive, active, multiplying profession, detached from universal science, and abandoned to an ever-increasing tendency to empiricism and empirical novelties,—detached from all ancient institutions, from all the hereditary loves, loyalties, and reverences that have been the precious birthright of an English gentleman ; — professions divided from each other, having no common bond, and in separation from the *nation* and the *national church*, — the latter taken largely as the universal organ for educating, harmonizing, and applying all the elements of moral cultivation and progression, of which religion prescribes the aim and sanctifies the use.



## LETTER III.

ON THE REGULATION AND ECONOMY OF THE  
MEDICAL PROFESSION.

AN ancient philosopher, on being once asked — “What benefit is philosophy calculated to confer on its followers?” is said to have answered — “That laws would be superfluous.” And it will scarcely be denied that, if the cultivation of the professional character recommended in the preceding pages worked successfully, the very question of Medical Reform would be needless, and that in such case the character of the members of the profession, individually and collectively, would be a most advantageous substitute for legislative enactments. Melancholy experience convinces us, however, that the radical defects of human nature betray our professional brethren, no less than other men, into the overlooking or neglecting of these almost obvious truths; and with feelings of regret and humiliation, which it is impossible to suppress or evade, we unwillingly invite the attention of the Legislature to a consideration of the means for the better regulation and constitution of the medical profession, and for increasing its efficiency in the service of science and of the community.



In the establishment and maintenance of a medical profession, it may be assumed that the aim will be that of forming a *learned class*, united in the common object of the cultivation of medical science, and of providing an adequate number of *skilful practitioners*. And it may be added, that the formation of such a class can be effected only by adequate instruction and discipline, and will essentially depend upon the nature of the institutions for instruction, and the qualifications of the teachers. The qualification for admission to membership of such professional class must necessarily be ascertained by suitable *tests*; and it is unnecessary to repeat what has been stated at large in the first Letter, that these qualifications should consist in — 1st. The possession of technical knowledge and skill; 2nd. Scientific insight; 3rd. The character of a gentleman. But it is a self-evident corollary, that, in order to apply the requisite tests, and to protect the public from the intrusion of unqualified persons, there should exist *legally constituted authorities*.

The question has indeed been mooted, whether the Legislature would be justified in limiting the freedom of individuals in their choice of a medical or surgical attendant; but, waving the decision of this moot point, as one which rather belongs to a question of the forms of civil government than of the mere regulation of a profession, it cannot be doubted that it is incumbent on the Legislature to provide, no less for the maintenance of a medical profession, than for those of the Law



and the Church, and to establish such *criteria* of the competency of the members as the public shall be qualified to estimate in guiding their selection. This at least the Legislature is bound to do, if, as cannot be doubted, it is the duty of a government to provide for the well-being of social man, in his relations and duties as a citizen, by suppling the requisites for his moral cultivation, his social security, and his health; and it is rather a consideration of the practical difficulties, than any doubt of the principle of interference, that would prevent my urging the Legislature to withdraw its countenance, accorded under a specious and misused plea of liberty, from the knavish quack, and to protect, by penal law, his patients, who vindicate their civil rights at the expense of being robbed, maimed, and poisoned. Certainly it is disgraceful to the country that its government should derive a revenue from so unholy a source as that of patents granted to secret remedies and pernicious nostrums. And, at all events, as the writer of the excellent article on Medical Reform in a late number of the Quarterly Review, has pointedly argued, if every individual is to be at liberty to choose his medical adviser in his own case, he ought to be restricted at law from making others the victims of his whims and caprices; and whenever his functions impose on him the duty of selecting a medical practitioner for a public office, or of appointing him to the charge of others, his choice ought to be limited to those whose qualifications



have been tested and approved by the legally constituted authorities.

Now the existing authorities, to whom the functions are delegated, or by whom, at least, the powers are presumed to be exercised, of investigating the qualifications of candidates for the medical profession, and of protecting the public from the pretensions of unqualified practitioners, are the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and the Society of Apothecaries in London. Besides, as the Regius Professor of Medicine in the University of Oxford has lately observed, in a valuable paper on Medical Reform,\* no less than sixteen other different sources,—universities and corporate bodies, exist for examination of licenses or degrees in medicine. It is notorious that the qualifications which these institutions require, are almost as various as the institutions themselves, and differ, where it would be difficult to assign any plausible reason for the difference; that their powers are diverse, and in many instances conflicting; and it will be admitted, as indeed it has been loudly complained of by the profession, that they very imperfectly, if at all, answer the purposes for which we must presume they were designed. It does not form any part of my plan to enter into the question of the nature and extent of the examinations of the acquirements of candidates for practice instituted by these learned bodies, in order to weigh their relative merits, comparative advantages, or positive excellence in relation

\* Observations on Medical Reform, by T. Kidd, M. D., &c.



to the final aim of professional competency in the candidate; but it will scarcely be doubted, that the objects and intentions being the same in respect of the requirements of the community, an urgent necessity exists for so far assimilating the qualification, that the privileges conferred by the diploma or license should never be used as a lure by any licensing body, who may choose to enrich themselves by lowering the standard of education and debasing the character of the profession. And it is most noticeable that, in respect of so general a need of society as *midwifery* is intended to supply, the provisions for ascertaining the qualifications of those who practise this indispensable branch of professional ministration have been almost wholly neglected, and thereby the paramount duty abandoned of supplying a primary condition of the welfare of families. Neither is it my purpose to discuss here the powers of the corporate bodies and instituted authorities of the profession; but it is right to state that, notwithstanding any care and diligence the existing authorities may exert in licensing only duly qualified practitioners, yet their powers are notoriously defective in protecting the public and the profession from the mischief of uneducated and dishonest pretenders to medical skill and knowledge. This is sufficiently attested in the case of the College of Physicians in London by the limited extent of its jurisdiction and by the facility with which it has been evaded; it is evinced in the instance of the Society of Apothecaries, by the difficulties, nay, the practical impossibility, which it has experienced in convicting



offenders against the statute regulating the privileges and qualifications of general practitioners, and especially in preventing the invasion of their rights by druggists and chemists ; and in respect of the College of Surgeons in London the absence of regulative authority is such that, with certain exceptions, the practice of surgery is wholly unrestricted, and though the fact is scarcely credible, it has been questioned whether the death of a patient resulting from want of surgical skill would subject an unqualified practitioner of surgery to any penalty at criminal law.

Without, however, wasting the time and attention of my readers in discussing details, I would beg of them to connect the above facts with the preceding statement of the indispensable conditions of the maintenance of a medical class, namely the supply of duly qualified practitioners, the means of forming such by suitable schools and efficient teachers, and the vigilance of legally constituted authorities in order to apply the requisite tests of competency, to give designation and authority to those who have stood the test of their examinations, and to protect the profession and the public from the intrusion and malpractices of unqualified persons. And I cannot but think that on reflection it will be evident that the present constitution of the medical profession, as far as it is dependent upon the existing laws, is lamentably deficient in the requisite conditions of its efficiency, and that amid the conflicting interests and views of the many-headed monster, which in its



heterogeneous authorities feebly regulates its ill-combined functions, the absence of any uniform standard of qualification, in consonance with the needs or requirements of some acknowledged measure or measures of professional competency, withdraws attention injuriously from the organization of medical schools and the institutions connected with them—removes the wholesome and efficient check which would prevent the licensing boards from consulting their own interests instead of those of the profession, and of the community—deprives the public of the *criteria* of competency and attainments which it is qualified to estimate where the diploma or designation has a definite meaning and determined value—and finally leaves the public and the profession without protection or safeguard from the ignorance or dishonest arts of uneducated and designing pretenders.

If then I am right in considering these as the main grounds of the grievances complained of by many members of the profession, and implying a serious drawback on the utility of the medical profession to the community at large, it cannot be doubted that for their rectification and removal, the most pressing need, offered for deliberation to the legislature, is that of forming an efficient *head* for the government of the whole profession, so constituted and vested with such powers as shall secure, under varying circumstances, the unity of the profession, in accordance with its final aim and intention. In considering this important condition, both of the stability of the pro-



fession, and of its efficiency, in connection with the national interests, various plans will suggest themselves, but probably the establishment of a STATE COUNCIL FOR MEDICAL AFFAIRS will be found to be most in harmony with our institutions, and congenial to our habits, and will be best calculated for providing an effective bond of union in regulating and protecting the interests of the different departments of the profession, as *one body*, having an essential community of interests and objects; this council emanating from, and responsible to, the Government of the country for the efficiency of the profession, and for the performance of its duties, private as well as *national*.

Besides the reasons which we have urged above, for the institution of a supreme authority, derived from the consideration that the regulation of the profession, the interests and objects of which are the same, is entrusted to various bodies—not only to those in the metropolis, but those of Scotland and Ireland—having different views and interests for the interference and collision of which no feasible means of assimilation, however desirable, at present exist;—besides these reasons, I say, it cannot but be deemed expedient that some authorised tribunal should exist, to which real or supposed professional grievances and legitimate complaints might be referred, and from which inquiry or redress might be sought, without the suspicion of fear or favour in the judges, especially if we consider the various symptoms of disunion in



the profession, the charges and accusations against the governing bodies who have not the means of defence or reply, and generally, the rancour and hostile feelings which vent themselves in pamphlets, newspapers, associations, and in meetings private and public. But perhaps beyond all these reasons for instituting a control over the medical corporate bodies, as at present constituted is their *irresponsibility*,—which indeed is alleged as one of the strongest grounds for a reform of these bodies, and as one of the evils most urgently requiring correction. For, whatever may be the validity of the charges of malversation upon which the allegation is founded, we cannot conceal from ourselves the truth that the responsibility claimed is no other, nor more, than that which may justly be required of corporate bodies who are the stewards of great public interests, which seriously affect not only the medical profession, but society at large and the state itself, and which imperatively demand honesty in the disposal of large funds, and ability and impartiality in all their functions, regulative and administrative. It is very true that the principle of responsibility is already recognised in respect of the necessity of the confirmation of bye-laws, and generally in respect of the amenability of chartered bodies to the Court of Queen's Bench;—for the sovereign being legally the founder of all corporations is, in the absence of any other expressly appointed, constituted by law the visitor of the same:—but it will scarcely be asserted that the



principle can be fully and fairly carried out without some more immediate supervision and control, than are exercised at present; and it can hardly be doubted that the proposed council or board might be made efficiently operative for the control of the various medical corporations, itself being under a known and ascertained responsibility to the government and legislature. Substitute for this the responsibility of the corporate authorities to a body of electors, and you wrest the great national interest, which is included in the well-being of the medical profession, from its rightful guardians, and leave it at the mercy of party spirit and of private interest.

If then the remedy for the evils above adverted to is to be sought in the projected Council of State for medical affairs, the consideration of its constitution and of the mode of its appointment cannot be wholly passed over; and perhaps the following hints may be available in the settlement of the grave questions which these subjects involve, and which must await their final adjustment by the consent of parties seriously affected and variously interested. 1st, As the functions of the Council will be *deliberative*, it should consist, as is indeed implied in the name council, of *various* members; though for the dispatch of business it is evidently desirable that they should be as few as the nature of the constitution of the council permits. 2dly, As representative of the different corporate bodies,—if the principle of representation be adopted in the constitution of the Council, though it is not



essential to the plan and involves some serious difficulties — as representative, I say, of the corporations, the proceedings of which are submitted to it for discussion and approval, and as reciprocally influential of the proceedings of the corporate bodies, which it regulates, the Council might consist of members from each of the medical corporations of the United Kingdom ; — whether from all the departments of the profession, whether one or more from each, and whether in like proportions from every one, we leave here undetermined. Thirdly, as the corporate bodies must be best acquainted with the capabilities of their own members and their relative fitness for the duty required, we anticipate no objection to their *nominating* and *recommending* their representative in the Council ; but, as the functions of the Council imply pre-eminently *duties* to the profession at large and to the country, we expect that the right of *appointment* will be claimed by the Crown. Fourthly, as the Council is to be the depositary of a trust for the benefit of the nation, and therefore a functionary of the Government we must anticipate the addition of *Lay Assessors* appointed by the Crown, though the reason assigned does not warrant us in expecting that they will form more than a small proportion of the members, or that they will be other than judicial authorities or legal advisers, and one of the members of Her Majesty's Government.

Thus might be formed an institute, in the service of



the state, giving unity and increased efficiency to the medical profession, to which various important functions would necessarily be assigned in behoof of its aim and intention. As invested with authority for assimilating and controlling the proceedings of the medical corporate bodies of the empire, all *bye-laws* and *ordinances*, emanating from these for the regulation of their own administration, or of the practical departments of the profession, over which they preside, would be submitted to the State Council for its *approval* as the *indispensable condition of their validity*. Though we have no design of recommending that the functions of the different corporate bodies, legislative and administrative, should be altered or impaired, seeing that they will severally be best informed in respect of the needs and interests of their respective departments, varied likewise as they must be by circumstances of *locality*, and desire only such powers to be granted to the State Council as may prevent abuses, assimilate as far as possible partial enactments, as may enable it to give that uniformity of qualification to practitioners in their respective departments, which shall remove all restraints imposed by particular privileges, — in short such powers as may qualify it to bring about a uniform code of legislation for the profession without the inconveniences and dangers of innovation, and in accordance with the wants, objects, and dignity of the profession, and with the interests of the country. We have likewise no intention of recom-



mending that the proposed Council shall have any power of disposing of, or controlling, the *funds* of the corporate bodies; though we see no objection to the account of receipt and expenditure being laid before it. Thus then, without interference with the specific functions of the existing corporations, without any turbulent innovation, the State Council for Medical Affairs would form a completing bond and uniting head of the profession, in providing for a conformity of the education and qualifications of practitioners in their several departments, and for a uniformity in the privileges of qualified practitioners in their respective departments, whilst it would constitute a body for deliberating on all matters relating to the profession at large throughout the kingdom and its dependencies.

But in considering further the functions, which might be advantageously entrusted to a supreme Council of the kind in question, it may well deserve consideration, whether the duty of taking *cognizance* of the *practices of unqualified* persons might not be properly committed to it;—and whether, with this view, and as far as this specific object is concerned, it ought not to form a tribunal invested with powers judicial and penal. It is self-evident that the interests of the profession and the public require protection of some kind from ignorant and dishonest pretenders, and though it may be impossible to prevent the multitude from having recourse to quacks, nostrum-mongers, and to the impudent tribe of vaunters



and venders of secret remedies, yet it can scarcely be deemed other than a duty of the Government to restrain, as far as possible, the practices of those who usurp the name and functions of regular practitioners. And though a prohibitory law might be evaded in some, or even in all instances, I cannot but think that there would be a propriety in giving the stamp of illegality to irregular practices, even if only with a view to the possible advantage of its moral influence in checking them; and I should not be without hope that a more effectual restraint might be imposed; if, on the one hand, each corporate body had its members duly registered,—if such designations were accredited, and appropriated to regular practitioners, as *Doctors of Medicine*, *Masters of Surgery*, and *Licentiates of Medicine and Surgery*, and of *Midwifery*,—if all prescriptions were required to have affixed to them the name and designation of the writer,—if the operations of surgery and midwifery could only be performed by legally qualified practitioners—if the preparation and sale of medicines were confined to licensed persons;—and then, on the other hand, if the tribunal, proposed above, were armed with powers of summary conviction and punishment, on proof that the offender had assumed the designation or exercised the functions of a legally qualified practitioner, and had practised *unlawfully for gain*.

But it may be likewise worthy of attention whether advantage would not be derived from extending still



further the jurisdiction of the proposed Council in relation to the practical departments of the profession,—namely, that not only none should practise medicine, surgery, or midwifery, without its sanction, their qualifications having been ascertained by their respective authorities, but that all *druggists* and *chemists* and *persons serving and compounding medicines*, all *keepers of houses* of reception for *lunatics*, all *dentists*, *cuppers*, and *the like*, should be obliged to have their qualifications examined, to have a *license* for their several callings, and to be amenable to the State Council for Medical Affairs.

I am of opinion also that those, who have the respectability of the profession at heart, would see great advantage in vesting the same tribunal with authority to expel from the profession all those, who by *dishonourable practices* had rendered themselves unworthy of the character of members of a liberal profession, whether by the use of secret remedies, by advertizing, by partnerships in trading concerns, by calumnious reports of their professional brethren, by breaches of professional confidence, or by whatever else may be considered derogatory to a professional character. It may be, perhaps, difficult to define in all cases with the precision requisite in the description of a punishable offence, what a nice sense of honor would require; but it can scarcely be doubted that some of these offences against the morals of the profession, as above stated, might be strictly particularized; and at all events in showing



that the profession was not indifferent to the character of its members, this provision for investigation would tend to maintain a healthy tone of professional conduct.

Again in relation to the *Public Health*, the State Council might form a body constituted in the service of the state, with whom the Government might consult, or which at least might be the recognized organ of communication between the Government and other medical bodies, and to which the country would look for advice and assistance in all matters appertaining to the health of the community, and to which all question relating to epidemics, laws of quarantine, the health of the army and navy, the building of hospitals and prisons, punishments, drainage, sewers, nuisances—in fine all questions of medical jurisprudence, state medicine, and medical police might be referred.

In furtherance of these objects there would be doubtless great advantage in establishing under the same authority and supervision, *District Boards*, throughout the kingdom, that is, by dividing the country round all the principal towns into districts, and by forming in each a Board consisting of the most distinguished practitioners of the neighbourhood. The duty of these Boards would be that of inquiring into the qualifications of practitioners, visiting the druggists' shops, inspecting the prisons and lunatic asylums, presenting nuisances injurious



to health, and assisting the local magistrates, juries, and coroner's inquests in all medical investigations. And these Boards should communicate with the State Council, be responsible to it, and act under its authority. It is likewise not unworthy of serious consideration that the institution of such District Boards, might be available in remedying the defects of the administration of justice in actions, civil and criminal, against medical men, and in providing for the defects of the present Poor Law, by contributing their aid to the arrangement of the medical attendance, with a view no less to the just claims of the poor, than to the satisfaction of the profession.

Lastly, in respect to the functions of a supreme Council, the subject of the instructions and discipline necessary to an adequate and complete education of persons who are designed for members of a liberal profession, having been already discussed, it will, I think, be further acknowledged that for the efficient regulation and supervision of the *Institutions for instruction*, requiring, as they evidently do, an harmonious adjustment of a multiplicity of means to a common aim and end—the deliberative wisdom, and executive power of a common head and authority, such as the proposed Council offers, will be little less than indispensable; and I cannot quit this part of my subject without repeating, as my long entertained and deep-felt conviction, that it is only in *Universities and Colleges*, that we can expect to find the conditions under



which an adequate medical education and a suitable professional training can be accomplished.

Dismissing now the consideration of a controlling authority for the whole medical profession throughout the British Empire, and not without the hope of having offered valid reasons for its adoption, we may again revert to the subject of the existing corporate bodies ; and in addressing myself to the investigation of the changes in their constitution, if such be needed, which may render them more efficient in accordance with the interests of the profession, and the public, it will be sufficient in order to elucidate the principles involved in the question of their reform, with the obvious advantages of simplifying the subject, if we confine our attention to those of England, and especially to those in its metropolis, which seem to be intended for the regulation of their respective departments of the profession.

And a question meets us at the very threshold of the inquiry, which implicates the safety and continued existence of the metropolitan medical corporations. The main design of these institutions appears to be that of applying to candidates the requisite tests of competency in order to their qualification as practitioners. But it will be said that this has been already done in the cases of Doctors of medicine at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge ; and it may be asked why the graduates of these Universities, with the proof of competency which their degree affords, should



be subjected to fresh tests in order to enable them to practise in London or within seven miles around it. And this question is again the parent of another; Why the degree conferred by a University should not be in every instance likewise a license to practise; provided always that its course of instruction be adequate and known, and that it be not suspected of venality in disposing of its degrees. Now this is the main question; for a University has been instituted in London with the main design of conferring medical degrees, and if the foregoing question be answered in the affirmative, it would be difficult to evade the conclusion, or avoid the practical results, that the London University would ultimately become, as has been proposed, the sole source of the licenses to practise, not only of doctors of medicine, but of surgeons, and of general practitioners;—at all events, no very solid reasons could be assigned for the maintenance of the medical corporations of London, if it be true that their functions are confined to ascertaining the qualifications to practise, and that the London University is equally competent to discharge these functions, and is required to perform them in its appointed vocation of conferring degrees. But, specious as this mode of reasoning renders the argument, the truth will be found, I venture to say, in the fact,—implying a very different reply to the question above proposed,—that a university is not competent to perform the duties of the medical corporate bodies. These, indeed, have all the means and appli-



ances of examining the qualifications for a license to practise in their respective departments; and it can scarcely be doubted that in an examination, of which the principal merit is practical, they will have all the advantages derived from the superior attainments of the examiners;—and if a University be better fitted to test the progress of education, preliminary, accessory, and professional, through its different stages, yet it offers no inducements to men of the greatest experience and eminence to contribute their aid in ascertaining its requisite practical sufficiency. It has been, I apprehend, a felicitous result of a London medical education, in connection with its medical corporations, that in giving it throughout a practical tone it has eminently contributed to the character of good sense, which distinguishes the English practice of medicine and surgery. But these corporate bodies, in their nature and design, have other most important functions, conducive to the well-being of the profession over which they preside. They are the *representatives* of the departments of which they are respectively the heads;—they are in their intention the *guardians of the interests* of the profession; and if they have been thought remiss in their duties, it may be fairly attributed rather to a deficiency of their powers than to any want of inclination or zeal;—they are the great organs for promoting the cultivation of the science of the profession, and fitted for collecting and distributing information, the bonds and links of the actual mem-



bers of the profession throughout England and its vast dependencies, for preserving the unity of the profession in the spirit of ever expanding science, and of professional honor. That their means of exercising these salutary functions might be enlarged cannot be doubted; but we shall in vain look for the same capabilities of maintaining a living inter-communion of the whole actual profession in any institutions, of which the sole purpose terminates in the completion of education.

But if the universities and the medical corporations have each their appropriate character and functions, must we necessarily forego the advantages of either, because their claims to the privileges of licensing may be conflicting? Is the word "Reform" always to awake the bitterness of party-spirit and the divisions of hostile feuds? Surely that true reform which works in the aim of progressive improvement, with the continual avoidance (as far as may be) of the evils of change and innovation, is the better spirit of peace and conciliation;—and it is, to say the least, difficult to understand, why the projectors and founders of the London University should have foregone the advantages offered by the established institutions of the metropolis, in which the facilities existed, and the requisites were already completed, of conducting the examinations, of which a license to practise is the reward. It is, however, surely not too late to retrieve an error, which may be fatal to the peace and welfare of the profession; and no one,



I think, will venture to say that a candid and unprejudiced inquiry is uncalled for, whether the good of the profession and of the community would not be best consulted by incorporating the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in London, as far as the functions require it, not only with the London University, but with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, in forming boards of examiners both for conferring degrees and granting licenses to practise.

Returning now to the consideration of the constitution of the medical corporations of the metropolis, I shall, for obvious reasons, address my remarks foremost, and especially to the *College of Surgeons*. Its principal design is that of ascertaining the qualifications of those, who intend to practise surgery; but in any inquiry into the character of this College, and into its claims to public confidence and professional utility, it should never be forgotten that it has devoted large sums of money to the promotion of scientific objects, in the proper custody and exhibition of a Museum invaluable to science, in continual additions to its treasures at great cost, in the establishment of lectures for its illustration, and in the formation of an extensive and growing library,—and therefore, that it cannot be a matter of indifference whether such advantages are to be foregone, or lightly hazarded, where a substitute for the College could scarcely be found. The funds from which the means for this munificent outlay have been provided, are derived mainly from the admission of members;



and as the diploma, which is the proof of surgical competency, is honorary, and its possession, except for qualification to appointments to the army, the navy, and to jails, at the option of the candidate, the fees for admission supplying the funds of the college are in fact almost wholly *voluntary*. Unless, therefore, it should appear that the profession and the public would be benefited by such changes as would render the possession of the College diploma obligatory on all practitioners of surgery, in order to insure the competency of all, or as would hold out inducements to superior attainments by instituting honorary distinctions, there would seem to be no cogent reason for re-modelling the College constitution in these respects, as it is self-evident that professional candidates would not seek the College diploma, unless the terms, upon which it is obtained, insured to them an adequate return in profit and honor; and that the public have no grounds of complaint against the College, as trustees for the management of funds, designed to promote the interests of science. If, however, as we are not unwilling to admit, the profession and the community would derive advantage from a prohibitory law, which should restrict any one from practising surgery without having previously submitted his qualifications to scrutiny, and which should make the right of any one to *call himself* or to *act as a surgeon*, dependent upon his having obtained a license or diploma from the College—then it might be fairly argued, that the College of Surgeons, exercising an important



public trust with a penal jurisdiction over the surgical practitioners of England, ought in justice to be amenable to the country, considered as a State. And this responsibility of the College we have provided for, in recommending the institution of a Council of State for medical affairs, or under whatever other name a supreme controlling authority, acting in behalf of the nation, may supply the requisite check, or court of appeal.

Notwithstanding, however, the strong grounds for believing that such an institution would provide ample security for the due administration of this and of all other corporate bodies, we cannot but anticipate the probability of its not satisfying those who are desirous of obtaining a share in the management of our College, and whose especial aim it is to give to the mode of election into the Council a more popular character. It would be idle to attempt to convince those, who have been imposed upon by the unmeaning term *self-election*, which is only a false designation for the mode prescribed by the charter for supplying vacancies in the Council by *selection*, that popular and open elections, besides being fraught with all the evils of intrigue and faction, would not be compatible with the permanent interests of a College, an institution for the promotion of science, or of the profession.\* But it may be perfectly true that members of the same class as those eligible into the Council may now, from changes in the profession

\* See "Distinction without Separation," By J. H. Green, p. 16, London, 1831.



and improvements in education, have become a body, whose attainments and qualifications it would be unwise to overlook or neglect, in any probable change of the constitution of the profession; and I hold it to be a legitimate object of inquiry whether there are any means of producing (consistently with the design of our institution and the welfare of the profession) a greater confidence in the College, a closer union of its members, and thereby a probable extension of its influence and benefits.

And though there may be no valid reasons for expecting that the functions of the College of Surgeons would be exercised with more advantage to the public or the profession, yet for the purpose of promoting a cordial sympathy and communion of men engaged in common professional objects and having common interests at stake, I would not withhold my assent in any revision of the charter to a modification of the mode of electing members of Council, and to the concession of an *elective privilege*, the conditions of the extension of which beyond the Council I proceed to discuss. And in entering upon the question of these conditions, we dare not for a moment lose sight of the principle, which is to guide us throughout, that the College is essentially a College of Surgeons and unalterably and eminently an institution for the promotion of the *Science of Surgery*. It follows, therefore, undeniably that the first condition of qualification for enjoying the elective franchise is that of *practising Surgery exclusively*; and, negatively, that the elector neither practises pharmacy nor midwifery, nor belongs to



any other college or body incorporated for the promotion of physic, pharmacy or midwifery. That this is not an invidious distinction will be at once apparent, if we consider that the members of the College, who are *Surgeon-apothecaries* form an overwhelming majority, and that making Surgery a subsidiary qualification of their calling, they cannot be supposed to have that interest in the objects, for which the College of Surgeons is instituted, and which the elective trust imperatively requires.

When we consider the mixed character of the members of the College, it is impossible not to see that a broad distinction must ever exist between those who are *Surgeons by profession*, and those who make *Surgery a subsidiary qualification*: and in the changes here contemplated we cannot, therefore, doubt the propriety of dividing the two classes, and of distinguishing them by the respective designations of *Fellows* and *Licentiates*. In connexion however with this division, we propose to make it the means and occasion of raising *the standard of surgical education* by requiring of the proposed *Fellows* such attainments as shall eminently fit them, not only to be electors but eligible to all places of honor and trust in an institution the object of which, I repeat, is that of promoting the *science* of surgery:—and in order to prevent any misconception it may be here stated that with exceptions, hereafter adverted to, the qualification for the elective franchise is intended to be twofold, namely, 1st. The practising surgery exclusively,—2nd The degree and title of *Fellow*.



That this proposal of raising the standard of surgical education merits favourable attention can scarcely be doubted, when we consider that the examinations hitherto instituted at the College can hardly be said to have any higher view, than that of ascertaining the *minimum* of qualification and attainment, at which a practitioner may be supposed to be fitted to undertake the duties of a surgeon ; and, perhaps, few would even be bold enough to say that the diploma of the College is a reliable voucher of the skill and knowledge required, in the ordinary emergencies of the profession. But it is quite plain that the education now required, as the preparation for the examination at the College, includes no provision for preliminary education, for early discipline, for the training of gentlemen, no provision in short for a *comprehensive professional education* ;—and that it holds out no encouragements or distinctions calculated to incite to such attainments as are little less than indispensable to those who are to fill the posts of honor in our profession, who are to maintain a professional equality with physicians educated at our Universities, who are to maintain the character of gentlemen in society, and who are to be in communion with men of science of almost every denomination ;—for what branch of knowledge can we safely exclude from the scientific cultivation of surgery, which is based upon philosophic physiology ? In short it should never be forgotten in any re-organization of the profession, medical and surgical, that in establishing a standard of qualification, which shall pro-



vide an adequate number of competent practitioners to supply the needs of the community, the final aim should be that of providing the requisite encouragements for evolving the highest attainments and greatest excellence.

It is in this spirit, then, that we draw attention to the necessity of establishing a standard of education, which in every sense of the word may be deemed *liberal*, and without entering here into details which would be out of place, we propose that the *candidate for the Fellowship of the College*, 1st. Should have attained at least twenty four years of age, though the great and undeniable advantage of a lengthened education are such that the age of twenty six years would be doubtless a preferable qualification :—2nd. Should have graduated *in Arts* at one of the British Universities, or should show by an examination for that purpose a due proficiency in those branches of study, which that graduation implies, though the Metropolitan Colleges now offer all the requisite facilities for providing the qualification proposed :—3rd. Should be provided with sufficient testimonials of his *moral character and conduct* :—4th. Should be subjected to *examinations* for ascertaining his professional qualifications, which might consist, 1st. Of his acquaintance with the writings of those authors, who mark the great epochs of the *history of medicine* ; 2. In *Anatomy* and in *Physiology*, human and comparative ; — 3. *Pathology* ; — 4. *Therapeutics*, especially surgical, or what is commonly called the prac-



tice of surgery. Moreover he should be required to have occupied six years in his professional education, during a considerable portion of which period he should have attended a hospital, and have treated a certain number of surgical cases ;—and he should be required to furnish a series of *Clinical reports*. Then, having given these proofs of his competency, and satisfactorily accomplished his examination, he should receive the title and privileges of *Fellow of the College of Surgeons*.

Again, as we do not see reason to limit the right of admission to the higher examination, it must be remembered that the applicant may have no intention of confining his practice to surgery exclusively, and that the successful candidate may combine subsequently the practice of surgery with that of pharmacy and midwifery. If, however, we are right in adopting as an irrefragable principle, that the *cultivation of surgery as a science, absolutely requires a distinct body or faculty* ; and if, as we believe, the persons who devote themselves peculiarly to this department of the profession will be always comparatively few, it will be necessary, in order to prevent the influence of a probable majority of general practitioners, who will consider surgery only as a subsidiary qualification, without the opportunity and inducements to pursue it with that zeal and study, which its preservation and growth as *a science* requires,—it will be necessary, I say, to limit the elective franchise by the rule already laid down, which excludes from its privilege the practitioners of



pharmacy and midwifery. At all events, if any exception were made, it would seem scarcely safe to extend the privilege beyond the *surgeons of county hospitals*. It may be added, however, that general practitioners, who had passed the higher examinations, would form a class of *Honorary Fellows*, who at any time might claim the privilege of their Fellowship, on showing that they were no longer under the conditions of disqualification.

Lastly, in respect of the College of Surgeons, it will be seen that, if any projected legislative enactment should require the immediate formation of a constituency for the election of members of Council, the principle above vindicated would enable us to comply with the demand, by conceding the privilege of voting to those of our members who neither practise pharmacy nor midwifery, nor owe allegiance to any other corporate body of the medical profession.

In addressing myself finally to the other departments of the profession, in especial reference to London and England, I have first to observe, that with respect to the *College of Physicians*, (as far as the subject requires examination in connection with the re-organization of the whole profession here proposed, and without presuming to offer any opinion on its constitution), it would be for the advantage of the public and of the profession, if its jurisdiction over the practitioners of physic embraced England and its dependencies, in licensing those duly qualified, and in protecting the community from the intrusion of



uneducated and dishonest pretenders to medical skill and knowledge. The Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons would then respectively regulate, each its practical department of the profession. They would, in boards instituted for that purpose, *examine* into the qualifications of all candidates; the license of the doctor in medicine would be grounded on the examinations of the medical faculty; that of the fellow or master in surgery, on examinations by the surgical faculty; and the general practitioner or licentiate in physic and surgery, would submit his claims to *both* faculties; and the admission for all would be granted under the authority of the governing Council of the profession.

It will be recollected, however, that a third board or faculty will be required, that of *midwifery*, in the practice of which competent skill and conduct are not less imperatively required than even in medicine and surgery, and for the regulation of which at present, unfortunately, no provision exists. No difficulty can be however anticipated in selecting persons of ability and eminence, who might constitute a board for determining the qualifications of those desirous of obtaining a license to practise obstetric medicine, or of those who require it as an additional qualification, and intend to become *Licentiates* in medicine, surgery, and midwifery.

We have thus provided in our plan, for three departments or faculties, each with its special office, and adequately constructed for determining the qualifications of those requiring admission to membership



of the medical profession. But perhaps the omission of any distinct board of *General Practitioners*, corresponding to the Society of Apothecaries, cannot be wholly passed over without some notice. It is, however, evident that any board for examinations, would be wholly unnecessary, as those described above include the requisite means for determining by those best qualified by their education and attainments, the qualifications of candidates;—and we repeat that any separate board would be unnecessary, notwithstanding that we cheerfully admit that the amelioration and improvement of the education of students in London has been mainly owing to the regulations of the Society of Apothecaries. But we see likewise a great evil in the establishment of any separate corporation or governing body for this professional class; and we cannot but think that the general practitioner himself must on reflection see the injurious tendency of any institution, which would be likely to alienate him from those bodies, the character of which tend to give him rank and estimation, and the constitution of which ought to provide inducements and facilities, as is the case in the projected class of Honorary Fellows of the College of Surgeons, for the continual ascension of the general practitioner into the higher grades of the profession, wherever his talents and attainments qualify him for it. It must be likewise remembered that if any such board were established, it must consist of those General Practitioners who live in London. Now in respect of the higher



departments of the profession, it is abundantly clear that those of the greatest attainments will be found in the great metropolitan mart of fame and fortune ; but for that very reason, the pre-occupation of the posts of honor, namely, it is most likely, as indeed is the fact, that in the class of general practitioners those most eminent in practice, and the most sedulous cultivators of their profession as a science will be found elsewhere than in the metropolis. How little too any hope of founding such an institution in London, in accordance with the requirements of a liberal profession, can be entertained,—will be found in the fact that no feasible means have been, or can perhaps be, devised of separating it from the city guild and *trading company of Apothecaries*. If indeed the medical examinations of general practitioners were conducted by the College of Physicians, and some of the most eminent of the class of general practitioners were selected as *assessors*, it might be with the especial duty of conducting the *pharmaceutical* part of the examination, and the change might be hailed as conferring a legitimate distinction on the individuals, and calculated to exert a beneficial influence prospectively on this indispensable class of the profession. We would wish that a rank and character should be secured to the general practitioner, as a member of a liberal profession, which will be cheerfully conceded to many individuals no less eminent in practice than honourably known as sedulous cultivators of science, but which cannot be granted to them as a body, except under the conditions of an enlarged education, and



of the entire separation of their pursuits from any admixture with *Trade*.

I should be, however, most grievously, and to myself, most painfully misunderstood, if it could be for one moment supposed, that, in any remark which I have made, here or elsewhere, it was my intention to affix a stigma on any, even the least fortunately circumstanced, of my professional brethren. Nay, let me disclaim, once for all, the design of any sinister imputation on those engaged in trading or mercantile pursuits, if, indeed, I am unhappily suspected of forgetting the Medici, the Fuggers, and the princely merchants of the middle ages, or of being base enough to deny the unbounded philanthropy, the noble public spirit, the munificent patronage of science, of the arts, and of letters which evince the liberal spirit of the "Shop-keepers" of the English nation. I speak not then of persons, but of the tendency and influence of the calling and of the circumstances engendered by it; and—not doubting, what it would be absurd to deny, that the character of the man will ever depend upon his own moral individuality, even under adverse circumstantial relations—I trust that, in recommending the removal of all temptation to lower the professional character by separating it from any equivocal combination with the interests of a trade, the general practitioner will give me credit for the sincere desire, which I have ever felt, of elevating to its proper rank and estimation the department of the profession to which he belongs, and of promoting and cementing its union with the other departments



of the profession, of which the needs of society will ever constitute it an integral part.

The existence of grades will virtually, if not nominally, continue, so long as the ministrations of the profession to the needs of society imply distinctions of ability and differences of remuneration; but it should not be forgotten that, in establishing the lowest standard of qualification, which shall insure an adequate number of competent practitioners, the final aim should be that of providing the requisite encouragement for evolving the highest attainments and greatest excellence. And if the great object of medical reform be the scientific cultivation of the profession and the moral and gentleman-like demeanor of the practitioners, it will not be doubted that in any comprehensive scheme of improvement, the great desiderata will be—The abolition of medical apprenticeships; preliminary education, early discipline, and the training of gentlemen; a comprehensive professional education; such encouragements and distinctions as may incite to the highest attainments; sufficient *criteria* of knowledge and skill in the practitioners, such as the public shall be qualified to estimate; the separation of even the lowest departments of the profession from trade. And the benefit would be complete, and the professional man for ever separated from the trader, if the general practitioner were authorized to charge for his time, care, and attendance, without being degraded, or even permitted to degrade his profession, by a tradesman's bill in detail for his particular medi-



cines ;—and lastly, if checks were established upon unprofessional conduct, and a watchful jealousy created of professional honor. And surely no more favorable opportunity, no more urgent occasion, of improving the condition of the medical profession can offer itself than the present, when the ranks of the profession are becoming yearly augmented, and are in danger of being so overcrowded, that not only individual skill must be held in low estimation, in proportion to the numbers, but that a temptation, which too many will interpret as a justifying necessity, is offered for laying traps for the public favor by those low arts and disgraceful tricks of rivalry, which, if unchecked, must inevitably, sooner or later, bring the profession itself into disesteem and disgrace.

And now, Sir, I have only in conclusion to express my hope and trust that, in leaving the honor of my profession in the hands of the Legislature, the goodness of the cause will procure for it a majority of defenders, who, like yourself, are the champions and guardians of those national interests, which form the moral links that, binding the present with the past, and connecting it with the future, reconcile the hope of progression with the conditions of permanency.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Yours most respectfully,

JOSEPH HENRY GREEN.