

**A lecture, introductory to a course of lectures, on anatomy, physiology, and surgery / delivered at the School of Medicine and Surgery, Gerrard Street, Soho, by G.D. Dermott.**

**Contributors**

Dermott, G. D. 1802-1847.  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

**Publication/Creation**

London : Published by the author, 1833.

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/pvzf68uy>

**Provider**

Royal College of Surgeons

**License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The Royal College of Surgeons of England. The original may be consulted at The Royal College of Surgeons of England. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

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



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





*The Hon. Spring Rice M.C.*  
*the authors Respectful*  
*Compliments*

**A LECTURE,**

(3)

INTRODUCTORY TO

A COURSE OF LECTURES,

ON

Anatomy, Physiology,

AND

SURGERY,

Delivered at the School of Medicine and Surgery, Gerrard Street,  
Soho, by

G. D. DERMOTT,

Lecturer on Anatomy, Physiology and Surgery.

PART I.—(Physiology,) treats of the varieties of Structure—the properties of Vital Principle—the materiality of the Mind, and its compatibility with the Doctrine of the Christian Religion.

PART II.—(Medical Politics,) contains Observations on the real state of the Profession—Aldersgate Street Dispensary—cause of the evils, the three-fold despotism of Money, influence of hereditary Aristocracy, and private interest contaminating our National Institutions and Charities, and oppressing Talent and Industry—the Remedy, and the good effects which would be produced by it.—The Anatomy Bill—its deficiencies—its Abuse and the evils that have been produced thereby—the requisite Amendments.

London:

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR,

And Sold by him at his Private Residence, No. 8, Queen Square, Westminster,  
or at his Lecture Room, the Gerrard Street Dispensary; also  
by J. FELLOWES, 36, Tottenham Court Road,  
and all other Booksellers.

1833.

PRICE SIXPENCE.



## PREFACE.

---

The Author believes it probable that the doctrines, views, and opinions advanced in this Pamphlet, will be attacked by Reviewers; with open severity by some, and insidiously by others. He, however, only requests that such Reviewers will grant him what he considers an Author's right, namely, permit him to answer their objections against his opinions in their own pages; more especially as the topics brought under consideration are connected, in a vital degree, with the interest of Science, the Medical Profession, and the Community at large.

*Dec. 4th. 1833.*

## PREFACE.

---

The Author believes it probable that the doctrines, views, and opinions advanced in this Pamphlet, will be attacked by Reviewers; with open severity by some, and insidiously by others. He, however, only requests that such Reviewers will grant him what he considers an Author's right, namely, permit him to answer their objections against his opinions in their own pages; more especially as the topics brought under consideration are connected, in a vital degree, with the interest of Science, the Medical Profession, and the Community at large.

Dec. 4th. 1838.

## LECTURE, &c.

### PART I.

GENTLEMEN,

Before speaking of the Principle of Vitality, I shall make a few introductory observations upon Organization. Almost every part of the Body is *organised*, and by organization I mean the distribution of living vessels through any substance. This definition applies both to animal and vegetable matter. The vessels of this organization consist of *Arteries* and *Veins*:—*Arteries* carrying the red blood of all warm-blooded Animals from the Heart, and dividing so minutely that you cannot prick yourself without piercing many of them, so as to produce an escape of blood:—and *Veins*, commencing from the terminations of the *Arteries* in the form of continuous inflected canals (as frequently proved by the microscope,) and returning the blood to the Heart. When Lecturing on the *Distribution of the Arteries*, I use the nomenclature of my late Teacher Mr. BROOKES, which consists of the terms, *Arteries* as applied to the Trunks—*Rami*, the branches of these Trunks—and *Ramusculi*, the primary ramifications produced from these *Rami*; instead of calling all by the name of *Arteries*.

It must, however, be understood that I do not *force* this nomenclature upon the Pupils, although I invariably make a point of using it with the common mode of description; and they can adopt it, by this means, gradually, at their pleasure; having once done so, they will be delighted with the clear view which it gives them of the Artèrial System, inasmuch as it distinguishes, by one word, *Arteries* of the first, second, third and even fourth magnitude, and some idea may be formed from its name, whether the Artery spoken of, as bleeding, is so large as to require a Ligature or not.

You know that for the sake of distinction, the Artery and Veins passing to, and from, the Lungs, are termed the *Pulmonary Circulation*.

In organised structures there are also *Nerves*: these are narrowed and arborescent prolongations of the Medullary substance of the Brain and Spinal Marrow, with the exception of the *Sympatheticus Maximus*—Physiologically speaking, they are either processes of the volition of the Brain, passing to the voluntary muscles; processes of respiratory action, passing to the respiratory muscles; or continued lines of sensation, passing from remote parts to the Brain: and so minutely do these Nerves pervade the frame, that we feel pain wherever we make the slightest wound, in consequence of mechanically injuring numerous nervous filaments.

Another set of vessels exist in nearly all structures, commencing from every point of the superficies of the Body and absorbing moisture from the atmosphere, or from the interior of the Body, and taking up the secretions and depositions thrown out by the Arteries in, and on, various structures, thereby preventing the overgrowth of parts and undue accumulation of fluids; or commencing from the Intestines these vessels absorb Chyle, when they are termed, on account of their peculiar contents, *Lacteals*.

All the contents of the *Absorbent system* thus derived, are conveyed into the sanguiferous.

You know that there is a delicate white membranous and very extensible net work, called *Cellular Membrane*, which is the general medium of connexion between the various parts of our Body, connecting them together into one moveable whole. Having introduced the term Membranous, I must define *Membrane* to be a thin expanse of animal substance, the fibres of which are so closely intersected as not only to form a continued stratum, but a smooth surface, polished with the secretion which it produces.

My classification of structures is as follows:

*First*, the most simple and general form of structure, *Cellular Membrane*, in its different degrees of density, in its loosest reticulated state as between Muscles—and in its denser states forming Fascia, Tendons, Ligaments and Membranous Strata.

*Second*, the peculiarity of Structure depending upon a *peculiar deposit* in the Cells, or Cellular Sheaths (Neuralema) of a part; as Bone, the Vitreous Humour of the Eye, the Medullary substance of the Nerves and Muscular Fibre.

*Third*, the peculiarity of structure may depend upon a *peculiar arrangement of Blood Vessels*, as the Spleen, Cortical part of the Kidney and the Choroid Coat of the Eye.

*Fourth*, upon a *peculiar arrangement of excretory Ducts*, as the Testicle, and the Tubulary portion of the Kidney.

As to the Bones, every tyro knows, that joined together by

wires or ligaments, they constitute a Skeleton for the general support of the softer parts, thereby determining the general form of the Body—the Bones of the Trunk forming cavities to protect the viscera, and those in the Limbs, levers to the voluntary Muscles.

Besides Vessels, Nerves, and Bones, there is another system of parts, namely, *Muscles*, and there is one thing that I wish to make an introductory observation or two upon, i.e., my classification of them. You must know I divide the Muscles belonging to each Joint into those which act *primarily*, upon the Joint, and those which act *secondarily*. First as to the Primary Actors. When a Muscle descends in front of the angle of Flexion of a Joint, it is a Flexor; when behind, an Extensor; when it passes over the upper side of a Joint, a Levator; beneath a Joint, a Depressor.

Secondly with regard to the Secondary Actors—a Muscle passing over two Joints will act primarily or most considerably upon the Joint nearest its insertion (its most moveable extremity) and in a less degree, or with less power upon the Joint nearest its origin—thus it is a Primary Actor upon the first Joint, and a Secondary Actor upon the second Joint.

The classification of *Primary* Actors is, with few alterations, the self same classification as that of MR. BROOKES; but you see how necessary it was for me to add to that a classification of *Secondary* Actors; for instance, the Biceps Flexor Cubiti is a Primary Flexor of the fore-arm, and also a strong Secondary Flexor of the Arm. The Rectus Femoris a Primary Extensor of the Leg, but a Secondary Flexor of the Thigh; and this Secondary Action shews us how necessary it is to bend the Thigh as well as to extend the Leg, in case of fracture of the Patella or rupture of the Ligamentum Patellæ.

I shall now proceed to speak more especially of *Vitality*, and shall, in connexion with that, refer to the circulation. *The Blood is the grand circulating Magazine of vitality* for the purpose of supplying all parts of the Body with Life—All the Phenomena of Life conspire to prove this:—increase the circulation (to the acme compatible with health) and you increase animal power—diminish it and you diminish animal power—abstract the whole of the Blood and you destroy Life.

The Vitality of parts is primarily and radically derived from the Blood; to deny that the circulation is the primary stream of Vitality would be to deny Scripture, for it there expressly declares that “the Blood is the Life,” and the Jews for that reason were expressly forbidden to partake of the Blood.

The most universal property of Arterial Blood is two fold—first to excite (as the effect of the Life which it contains) all structures into organic action through which it circulates—secondly to render these structures, through the medium of the Nerves, susceptible of being stimulated.

The proximate or more essential seat of Vitality seems to be the *coagulating lymph* or the fibrine of the Blood, and it must be remembered that this not only constitutes the *basis of the Blood*, but the radix of the Body at large—for thrown out of the Blood by the action of Arteries, it constitutes the element of fibrous structure.

The next question is—that as this principle of Vitality thus exists in the Blood in this primary degree, whence is it obtained? or how is it primarily generated in the system? I answer, I believe by respiration. It is true that the bulk of the Blood itself is made from Chyle, which Chyle is manufactured (if I may be licensed to use such a word) in the alimentary Canal. But the vital essence existing in the blood (and not seen in its bulk, as matter, but by its effects) is, I believe, created by the function of respiration in the Lungs as the effect of some organic action proximately connected with the function of respiration, the atmospheric air being merely the stimulus which excites that organic action. “God *breathed* into his nostrils the breath of Life”—in coincidence with assertion we have living arterial Blood circulating from the Lungs and bestowing Life to the parts through which it circulates; and comparatively dead venous Blood returning to the Lungs again to have its vitality renewed.

Although the circulation is the primary magazine of Vitality to the frame, still it does not positively follow that Vessels must exist in every living part, or where there is Vitality there is not always organization, if this were the case *vasa vasorum* would exist ad infinitum, which is too preposterous to conceive for one moment; therefore *the coats of the minutest* *vasa vasorum* must contain in themselves Vitality without their coats being organized; Vitality innately residing in their minutest visible atoms. I may mention also that there are some parts of the Human Body not as yet positively proved to be vascular in the healthy state, but still possessing, we may presume, some degree of Vitality, as the Cornea, the Vitreous Humour the Crystalline Lens, and the transparent Tunics of the transparent Humours in the adult Eye. May not also the Aqueous Humour and the fluid recrementitious secretions of the Body contain a degree of Vitality? Again we have a right to draw a strict analogy between the circulating vessels in Vegetables and the numerous class of the same in Animals; for, whether Animal or Vegetable, Life is Life, in both. *The vessels circulating the sap in Vegetables are not apparently supplied with vasa vasorum*; yet they are alive; to suppose that the sap circulates by mere capillary attraction would be in fact reducing the whole substance of the plant to mere dead matter: by capillary attraction you could not account for any of the phenomena connected with Vegetable life; but the

circulation of the sap ; the digestion or creation of the sap in the root ; the respiration of the leaves ; the various secretions of a plant, including the deposition or accretion of fresh substance from the sap producing growth, are all living actions of the Plant. To say that the vessels of a Plant have not a living agency (in addition to the slight assistance which may be afforded to the circulation by capillary attraction) is as inconsistent as to deny to any other living structure a living function ; Life is here the governing agent, capillary attraction the subsidiary. Yet these vessels are not known to have vasa vasorum. Nay, I will go still further, and say that I think the vessels of Plants must have some elementary nervous substance, something analogous to a Sympatheticus Maximus, which makes them sensible to their stimuli ; may not this be depending upon the presence of nervous substance (or granula) in its simplest state, without perception, and without any modification of a brain ?—nay, we may even go further still, and say, that if muscular fibre exists where action exists, and if action exists where muscular fibre exists, why then we must have a modification of muscular fibre existing, not only in Polypi, but even in the sensitive Plant.

Now I have stated that the Blood is the primary magazine of Vitality—but that 2ndly a part may be alive without possessing vessels. These two positions may appear paradoxical, but they are not so.

The *Vital principle I believe to be an invisible material substance* existing in the Blood, and by its peculiar stimulus, stimulating the Arteries into action, and thus Life as it were develops itself, which action of the Arteries may be a means of secreting it or throwing it out from the Blood, whereby it becomes developed by its effects or properties in different structures ; besides this principle being separated from the Blood by the living agency of the extremities of Arteries, I believe that this principle like heat, permeates through living structure, and is communicable from one living substance to another. This must be the case, or the coats of the minutest vasa vasorum could not possess Vitality ; but the substance to receive Vitality must be in a state of predisposition to do so, and must I think be in contact with the substance from which it is to receive it.

For instance coagulable lymph separated from the Blood and no longer in contact with the living surface which produces it, or with any other living surface, coagulates—and this coagulation is an action of life, but is the *dying* action of the lymph. On the contrary, keep this coagulable lymph in contact with the living surface, and it not only coagulates, but continuing to have communicated to it a supply of Vitality from the producing surface—vessels are created in the coagulum, by the act of Vitality within it—then this coagulum beginning to have a vehicle of vitality of

its own—such an affinity of Life is created between the two, as to produce an union of vascularity between the coagulum and the contiguous surface of the membrane: this affinity and communication of Life is well seen between two contiguous cut surfaces, producing an union of vascularity—for there must be a reciprocity, an unity of action, to produce an unity of substance.

It is this affinity of Life between two living parts which occasions the sympathy of contiguity described by JOHN HUNTER.

As the *Blood* or this vital principle circulates into the various structures, it is of course distinguished by other properties than the general one of exciting organic action throughout the frame, these properties are those living properties distinguishing these various structures, functionally, as living structures, for instance, the vital principle in muscular fibre is known by the *contractibility of muscular fibre*, in the Nerves it is displayed by the properties of *sensibility in some, volition in others*, and *respiratory action* in others, the vital principle circulating into the base of the Brain, is developed by the same properties of animal vitality, as in the Nerves; and this part is probably the seat of the various animal propensities excited into action by the various sensations created in parts, and with which it is continuous through the medium of the Nerves. But the vital principle ascending into the superior part of the Cerebrum, so abundant in Man, is there developed by the higher range of vital powers, namely, perception, (the action of the nervous sensibility of the Brain) thought, memory, and volition, by the just exercise of which Man reaches to God and Heaven, as well as attains all necessary earthly knowledge.

But mark you, if you are so degraded as to bring this intellectual part of the Brain into subserviency to the base, the part which receives those impressions which rouse the sensualities of Man, then you become in the very worst sense of the word a mere Beast; and it is this which makes the grand distinction between Man and Beast. It is not merely his walking erect as a Biped; because that refers not to his vital intellectual endowments, but to his mere external form.

The voluntary power of any part of a Nerve depends, I believe, not only upon its origin, but also upon the vessels in any portion of it in its course developing its living principle in that part—thus when the Femoral Artery is tied the inferior extremity is benumbed in consequence, the Nerves of that part not being supplied with their usual quantity of Blood and vital irritability,\* and their living properties not being in a due degree developed in consequence of that. But it must be remembered that although the de-

---

\* Irritability, I think, should not be confined to the vital capability of contraction in muscles, but extended also to the power which any part possesses to perform its vital function, including of course the susceptibility inherent in the Brain and Nerves of being stimulated by agents acting upon them.

velopement of the nervous power be depending upon the action of the Arteries in the Brain and Nerves—*still these Arteries could not act if they themselves had not their coats supplied with Nerves*, endowing them with a capability of action and a susceptibility of being stimulated by the Arterial Blood: thus there is an inseparable reciprocity of action between the vascular and nervous systems.

With regard to the living properties developed in the Brain, I believe that there is in the Brain an uninterrupted circle, or rather an ellipsis, of Cerebral fibre, between the fibres of the nerves carrying sensation to the Brain, and those nervous fibres conducting volition from it. And in this continuity of Cerebral fibre, resides what I term the circle of Cerebral (mental) action; the Cerebral actions constituting this circle regularly succeeding each other, and each having its residence probably in some particular part of this circle of fibre. In fact you have strong presumptive evidence of this, from the quickness with which the mental actions succeed each other, or I may say, are continued into each other, as well as in some measure, from what has already been made out regarding the course of the Cerebral fibres: for it is a well known fact in Physiology, that a continuity of substance begets a continuity of function, and a continuity of function between parts cannot exist without a continuity of substance: an *association* of function may it is true be established between organs by means of mere vascular and nervous connexions. We know that perception immediately succeeds sensation, and just as common sensibility is a quality peculiar to the Nerves, so I believe perception is the nervous sensation of the Brain. But before either common or peculiar sensation can be converted or modified into perception, I believe that those fibres which are the living proximate vehicle of those sensations must pass through some Cerebral Ganglion, in which Ganglia the Corporeal sensations excite into action or are continued into the Cerebral sense, perception. The Corpora Striata, Thalami, Corpora Quadrigemina, I believe, to be Cerebral Ganglia; the Pons Varolii is evidently a Ganglion of connexion between the Cerebrum and Cerebellum, that, as well as the Corpora Quadrigemina establishing between them a continuity of substance, and a continuity of function. Thus, I believe, that all the various sensations transmitted through the fibres of the Nerves, are committed to perception through the medium of some Cerebral Ganglion.

To proceed with the Cerebral circle, perception, is succeeded in the same circular continuity of fibre, by thought, recollection or memory, judgment, and lastly by volition darting from the Brain through the voluntary Nerves with the rapidity of an electric shock. If the extremities of the fibres of perception and volition are not continuous, I cannot account for volition succeeding per-

ception.—That there is a continued circle of mental action cannot be doubted, and that there must be a circle of Cerebral substance conducting that circle of mental action, is, I think, also clear. Thought, I consider to be resident in some part of this Cerebral circle, and it is the faculty which the Brain possesses to work upon, or digest its contents. Just as the Stomach digests its contents, so does the Brain the impressions or sensations which it receives, and its own perception created in it by those sensations, having a power to re-act upon them by means of the faculty of thought.

Having stated thus much regarding the materiality of the mind, it is next my duty to shew that this doctrine *is quite compatible with Scripture*, and that many things mentioned in the Bible corroborate the Theory which I advocate. To suppose that a person favouring materiality, favours infidelity, is a notion begotten only by bigotry and ignorance. Surely the Objectonists against materiality could never have read their Bible—if so, let me ask them—is it not in the power of Omnipotence, to make materiality immateriality, to spiritualize the *materia Vitæ* or the material mind, or to so modify the latter as well as the material body itself, as to adapt both for an existence in another world. That such a change in our vital matter takes place, is beautifully exemplified in the person of Jesus Christ. For when Christ appeared to his Disciples subsequently to his Resurrection, the doors being shut, he must have been spiritualized, body, life and all, as the gross matter of a common human body could never have permeated the matter of the doors and walls—but when Thomas put his hand into his side, he was for the time miraculously materialized—and when he disappeared from the midst of them, and ascended to Heaven, he was like Elijah, miraculously spiritualized, as *we shall* be at the Resurrection by an Omnipotent power—for though Christ was the Divinity, still it is asserted that he was the first fruits of them that slept: this miraculous phenomenon is quite in correspondence with what St. Paul says in his 2nd Epistle to Corinthians, chap. 15, verse 44. “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is “natural,” (material) “and afterwards that which is spiritual”, or as the materialist might say there is a material mind, and there will be a spiritual mind. Again verse 51 and 52, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”—“For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” Is not this transmutation in the power of Omnipotence, let them answer this in the negative, and shew moreover, that their negative reply is proved by assertions, in the Bi-

ble, and then I will yield up my notions of materiality, and will believe that my finite reason may be mistaken as to the works of the Creator in this part of organized life; but until this is the case, I think that this apology for materiality by all religious persons, should be considered valid. The days of religious inquisitions are I hope past. The persecutions of the Materialists, and stamping them gratuitously (not very graciously) Infidels, resembles the persecutions against the illustrious, GALILEO and even our NEWTON, in reference to their material doctrines of the planetary system, and who were also stamped as Materialists and Infidels. I have mentioned these facts, to remove if possible the unnecessary strife now existing between Materialists and some religious Anti-materialists. The prejudice of many really well intentioned persons, in supposing that Materiality is incompatible with Christianity, and that, therefore, a Materialist must of necessity be an Infidel, has tended I believe more than any thing else to check the diffusion of the belief of Christianity, and happy shall I be, if under the dispensation of Providence, these observations shall tend in any degree to remove the barrier of separation between devout Religionists and many Men of science, and shall reduce materialism down to a mere scientific opinion, not at all affecting in any important manner Religion. I deem these observations also necessary, because the prejudice against materiality may hereafter, if not corrected, seriously cripple the progress of Physiological Science.

Recollect then that it is the Life of the Brain which causes the ideality of the Orator and Poet—it is Life which gives the vivid and fiery movements to the Eye—it is Life which gives expression to the Countenance, and Life which sustains and gives force to the strong arm of the Pugilist. I must give you one caution, as to the fashionable opinion that Galvanism or electricity is identical with the nervous influence—because it excites increased action, and irregular contractions of the muscles—why they may just as well say that a red hot poker, or any other stimulus, is nervous influence.—They have strained Physiological facts and misconstrued experiment, to establish that doctrine of identity, in spite of common sense staring them in their face, and denying their positions.

The Sympatheticus Maximus bestows sensation and involuntary action to the viscera—and here I must caution you against a cant expression that the Sympatheticus Maximus is formed by Cerebral Nerves—no such a thing—the filaments which have been deemed its origins are only filaments of connexion and sympathy; I must also caution you against Mr. LA GALLA's opinion, that it is formed by all the Spinal Nerves.

The fact is, as soon as a voluntary filament joins a Ganglion of the Sympathetic, volition stops, being overpowered by the stronger influence and modification of the nervous power, that of involuntary action in the Ganglion.

## PART II.

---

I shall now turn, Gentlemen, to another topic quite distinct from the preceding one. You have attended yesterday other introductory Lectures, and you have heard no doubt, a great many very fine things, said by very fine Persons, who perhaps wore a black rag upon their dorsal spine, in very fine places, with corridors, flights of steps, and so forth; who enter a Theatre, deliver their Lecture, make a very graceful bow, and then retire for the day.

You have been told what a HUNTER did, the immortal eminence which he attained, and that emolument and fame lie before you, ready for your grasp. But these are lies, base lies, and they who are the promulgators of them, are fully aware, that ere' long sad experience will prove to you that what I now tell you is too true. I do not want to discourage you, but we must know the malignant evils which corrupt Medical Society, in order to get rid of them.

The real state of the Profession may be illustrated by an occurrence that I will relate.—Two Medical Gentlemen sat down to dine, Mr. Family Influence, (who had married a Miss Money,) and Mr. Merit, (married to Miss Industry); now both these were *Gentlemen*, but Mr. Family Influence, grasping the pudding dish, and placing it before him, ravenously eat up the whole of the pudding, descanting upon the good state of society, and *how well things worked*, which permitted every man to fill his belly, who was industrious enough to eat; whilst poor starving Mr. Merit, without having money sufficient to buy implements for eating, sat with an anxious eye and craving stomach, went home to his garret and died. To prove that this is the actual state of the Profession, I will only ask you—How are Dresserships obtained? by money.—How, House Surgeonships? by money, (God save the poor Patients!)—By what means do persons obtain appointments as Physicians, Surgeons, and Apothecaries, to Public Institutions, as well as the lucrative Practices, connected with the same? why by money, and a shameful process of chicanery and intrigue, after the patronage of persons quite incompetent either to judge of, or appreciate the degree of Medical talent which Medical Officers or Candidates may possess.

Putting private interest out of the question, the Governors, so called, can only judge of the relative merits of Candidates by

common "hear say," (which deceives many,) and the "gift of the gab," which they may possess, and I need scarcely say that the persons best gifted with small talk, are often the least talented, and most deficient in medical matters. This is the shameful system whereby, science, in this Country is insulted by ignorance, and which must inevitably end in the disgrace of those who (whether professional proficient or not,) have been the practical upholders of it; and the fruits of it are now seen not merely in the Aldersgate Dispensary, but more or less in every Hospital and Dispensary throughout England. The single affair to which I have just alluded, will do more than any thing which has yet occurred, in opening the eyes of the Medical Profession and the sensible part of society at large, and in effecting a great moral revolution in all our Medical Establishments. We see our Institutions rent in twain, and their charitable objects perverted by the conflict of interest necessarily existing under the present system, between Medical Officers and Governors, and one Medical Man with another. They are arenas of warfare, not of charity.

Some of our Journalists are vociferating against the *effects* of this bad system, "working" so *badly* at the Aldersgate Street Establishment and other places; they cry shame against the Gentlemen Governors kicking out the Medical Gentlemen, in such an ungentlemanly like manner, whilst they do not consider the *cause*. And I cannot forbear saying that those Medical Officers have helped to plant and support the tree of corruption, and are now grumbling about its fruits. They have courted the votes and favours of illiterate people, and now they complain of being insulted by them. The system whereby they become Medical Officers, is disgraceful to science, and a disgraceful system must produce disgraceful fruits, and disgrace those who volunteer to work in the vineyard of corruption. All the before named facts, prove the badness of the present system, and that it is but ill adapted for the present views and necessities of the English: it has been asserted that the system of Medical Education in France although good, is not adapted for England, i.e. although good there, it would not be good here: that however has only been asserted again and again, it has never been proved; and if a Champion for the present medical rotten-borough-system rises up to prove such an assertion, I shall be happy to enter the list of controversy with him, and fight it out.

The only cure for this complaint is to attack the cause by a thorough Medical Reform in our Institutions, as to the mode of electing Candidates: this must constitute the *trunk* of the Medical Reform Tree, all other changes for the better, will be consequent to this and mere branches of it: then will the system of self-election and private patronage be radically destroyed, then a National School of Medicine will flourish in full splendour, but not till then.

Establish a fair and unalloyed competition of talent, and that will of itself destroy the competition for favouritism and that rivalry for party interest, at present so disgracefully dividing more or less the Officers and Governors of our Medical Charities, and distracting the internal regulations of these Establishments. The industrious Pupils, it may be added, after squandering their monies and time in "walking" these Establishments, return from London with empty pockets, heartless, and prospectless, or, having no solid reward in sight as a stimulus to study, many sink into idleness and dissipation, because *a golden bar of exclusion* intervened between them and the favoured, the monied few, in the Hospitals, Dispensaries, and Lecture Rooms of the Metropolis. This state of things I fear will continue; money will hold the sovereignty in the market—talent must be compromised to gold—until Medical Practitioners and Pupils come forward to vindicate properly the rights of talent and industry, by petitioning a Reforming Legislature as in an intellectual mass, for the recognition and patronage of talent, and more especially for the establishment of *Concours*. It has been asserted that *Concours* are not efficient, because they have been lately *corrupted* in France, by private interest, and Government influence, fine logic, this indeed—this very assertion proves the goodness of one system, and the badness of the other; the possibility or liability of a thing being abused is generally in a ratio to its goodness, and if corrupted *Concours* have been advanced as an argument against them; I can, with as much propriety, instance as an argument in favour of them, the last *Concours*, which gave universal satisfaction, as well as those in that system of pure talent which flourished so gloriously during the Napoleon dynasty.

It has also been even stated again and again, that an examination as to capability of talent or professional knowledge would be affording an indignity to medical Candidates: but who are those who say so? Those very Men who depend principally upon their private interest, not upon professional knowledge for their success.

The Medical Man I say would rise to professional preferment in a way most honourable and gratifying to himself; and instead of feeling that the scrutiny of his talent had insulted his merit, it would for ever surround him with a splendour of well earned fame, and bestow confidence in the public mind as to his treatment of Patients, and even those who had been unsuccessful, but exhibited attainments, would be viewed by the Public in no mean light; whereas a Man on the other hand who obtains Hospital appointment by the present ferreting system, only wreaths weeds for his brow instead of laurels. So much then for the indignity that would be cast upon the Profession, and Professional Men by *Concours*.

We will draw aside the veil of futurity and suppose for a moment

an Hospital where Medical Officers should be chosen by Concours, and the Public admitted at the Election to witness the rivalry of talent in that Hospital—would not the Medical Public, as well as the community at large feel interested for the welfare of that Institution specifically and more willingly subscribe (considering the present enlightened state of Society) their Pounds, Shillings, and Pence for its support, than for those conducted upon the present Close-Borough System? If an alteration from the present plan would cause a few narrow minded interested Governors to withdraw (who subscribe merely to shew off their petty personal influence, or to farm their Domestics upon the Establishment) they would be no loss to it, for where one worthless fellow of that description would retire, ten Liberals would be coming forwards to enrol their names.—A Man is supposed to subscribe for the sake of Charity; he professes to do so, and the only question with an honest man, is, how his money can be best employed for Public good and the relief of his fellow Creatures. I would have all Governors to tax themselves by thinking of these things, if they are honest Men they will, they must, think of them, and the Governors of the New Hospital of the London University will do well to take a hint; an Institution which is certainly as yet (notwithstanding the manner in which it has been lauded by some) as close a Medical Borough as any Metropolitan Hospital or English College—the curse is stamped upon all our Institutions in the name of Aristocratic patronage.

Intellectual merit is the natural possession of Man, the unshackled advantages of the due exercise of that merit are his natural right: but the system of money and family influence cannot be contemporarily developed with a system of talent and industry, because the former and the latter are seldom combined in the same individual.

Would not, in this Hospital, where we have supposed Concours established, the *influx of Pupils be immense* in consequence of the strong inducement held out to the industrious and enterprising, by the certainty of the most talented becoming Dressers, House-Surgeons, and in time Hospital Physicians, Surgeons, or Apothecaries, instead of returning from London with thread-bare coats, and woe-be-gone? Would not this state of things excite industry, consequently genius and talent into operation which might otherwise have remained inactive and in obscurity? Would it not alter the character of the Medical Profession altogether for the better? Would it not be the means of encouraging and advancing science? Would it not consequently immensely benefit society and relieve the sufferings of mankind? And how many HUNTERS may be brought from a state of embryo talent and inaction into a state of developement? For it is a well known fact that the more talented the individual, often the stronger the exciting cause required to stimulate him into activity. How

many, very many Men are there in the various departments of Science who turning their backs with contempt against the present state of things, rather prefer obscurity in a garret than adopt means humiliating to men of Science for preferment; but who, in better regulated Institutions would hide the light of Heaven from some who (barely able to perform their daily routine of Duty as the effect of long continued habit and purchased opportunities) now glitter in the Sun, and would throw these latter Individuals into the shade of comparative obscurity, for which they are naturally adapted. God speed the day when we shall see Piety reigning in the Church to the exclusion of vice; bravery properly encouraged and rewarded in the Army and Navy; honesty and merit in the Law; and talent and industry in the Medical Profession. Such a state of things cannot be established *so long as there is such an Aristocratic type of influence existing throughout all the departments of society, as at present.* But such a state of things must be established before knowledge can "cover the surface of the earth as the waters cover the face of the great deep."

Another invaluable and peculiar advantage necessary in the constitution of the Hospital would be, *not* to require "letters of recommendation." This, instead of draining the infant funds of the Institution as may appear, would as I shall just now show, rapidly render them, compared with the funds of other Institutions, almost boundless. These "letters of recommendation" are an immense evil; they are a part of that system of partiality, which regulates at present, the elections of Medical Men to those Institutions. For a person to obtain all necessary relief it should be quite sufficient that he pleads, poverty, and sickness; whereas those letters of recommendation are bestowed as favours; and I believe the poor sick person after campaigning through wet and mud for days, may at last be unsuccessful, or, if successful, his complaint, as the effect of this letter-of-recommendation-hunting, may be so aggravated as to terminate fatally. But provided this nuisance were removed, which perverts the objects of all really charitable Subscribers, as much as any other portion of that system of corruption, which now reigns in our Institutions, the public would be doubly zealous in supporting a Medical Establishment, adapted so well to the enlightened and liberal spirit of the times, and founded on so truly charitable a basis.

In a national point of view, the good derived would be important and extensive, inasmuch as it would materially diminish the number of inmates in the workhouses, and, consequently, to a very considerable degree, the poor rates. For many persons now driven to the workhouse by sickness and poverty would prefer applying for relief and admission to such a charity, in order to come out hale, strong, and capable of work—the public would at once highly appreciate the plan, in consequence of the general benefit it would confer upon

the whole of the district, or town in which such an Institution was situated, and as they felt, or even anticipated benefit, so would they give it their voluntary support; it would be in the strictest sense *the People's Hospital*; while all the other Hospitals and Dispensaries would be obliged, for the sake of equality of success, to adopt the same plan.

Before I conclude this Lecture, I cannot avoid making a comparison between the position of my Class at the commencement of this Winter, and this time last year, when we were labouring under all the possible bad effects of a most deficient Law. The Monopolist Lecturers deserve much, and the Parochial Authorities still more of the blame, in having been the immediate agents in causing for a time a partial, and most unjust distribution of Subjects.

The Parochial Authorities, as a cause of this, were too much spared by the Press. The law as it now stands leaves it optional with the Directors of the Poor, whether the bodies under their controul be lent for Dissection or not, previously to interment; and these Parish Authorities were almost the only legal, available sources, whence they could be obtained.

But these wise-headed self-elected Conservators of corruption, forgetting, or perhaps never knowing, that all good Governments and Laws respect *all* equally—that the present Anatomical Law acknowledges *all* Lecturers, and places them all by *license* on the same footing—that what is necessary for one School and Teacher is for another, or for one Pupil's welfare is for another's; or for one poor Man under disease, is for another, (namely the attendance of a Medical Practitioner well acquainted with the nature and mechanism of the Human Body); these Persons, I say, forgetting all this, in defiance of the liberal intentions of Government and the spirit of the Law, supplied some Schools abundantly on account of Parochial interest and *friendly* feeling, whilst they totally withheld a supply from others, notwithstanding our repeated applications; and I need scarcely say, that amongst these so favoured, were the most powerful, the Aristocratic, Medical bubbles of the day. Thus it was that by corruptly exercising the Law—which was intended as public good to the *whole* of the community, they turned it into a filthy prop for supporting their old conservative but now falling system, and made it subservient to their own private feelings—and thus it is, that wheel within wheel, one piece of a system of corruption is made to support another, and for this purpose they did not forget even the bodies of the unclaimed poor.

And as effects, of this gross abuse, were, the rejection of some at the College, and perhaps the death of some persons in the community at large. Such a defective Law, so exercised, is better suited to the age of gothic night than the views of the present enlightened state of Society.

Some of the alterations most required in the Anatomical Act are—that proper and distinct sources shall be legally nominated for the supply of Dissection—that it shall be *legally* imperative upon the Inspector, as one of his principal Duties, to distribute equitably according to the number of Pupils in each School the disposable Bodies—That the books shall be open at certain stated times of the day, for the inspection of any person, upon leaving his card or address,—and that it shall be criminal to sell or purchase dead human flesh.

I would also have it so managed, if possible, that the Anatomical Bill should affect the rich equally with the poor, and no feasible plan suggests itself to me but this, which will be a means of benefiting the poor Relatives of those who have been dissected, namely, *that each Person possessing property shall pay a sum, or the Relatives of the said Person, to redeem his or her body from dissection; the amount of the premium being in a ratio to the actual amount of property possessed by the Deceased during life, but that this sum of redemption, for a Person dying without property, shall not be more than sufficient to pay the expences of burial; and the fund thus produced, shall be employed for the purpose of meeting the necessities and alleviating the miseries of the indigent Relatives and Families of those who have been dissected.*

It is true this would be a tax, and that people have no great relish for taxes; but then it would be of the best sort, namely, a property tax.

The best opportunities to see morbid specimens, occur of course in the Hospitals, and in the practice connected with the Dispensaries, when Lectures should always be delivered upon them in the recent state, and the symptoms connected with the appearances; good plates are also much better than dried preparations, where the parts no longer retain their natural form, appearance, or position; but a great inconvenience is that the Pupils are no longer supplied with bones, excepting those prepared in France, imported here, and sold at a price certainly too high; a complete set should be in the possession of every Student, in order that he might keep himself familiar with fractures and dislocations.

It was proposed by a *liberal* Teacher, that if an equitable distribution of Subjects were established, the private Lecturers should raise their fees to an equality with those at the Public Schools—Now these low fees are a great eye-sore to the Monopolists, because they see it is the practical commencement of knocking down *the golden bar of exclusion*, and they begin to fear that they do not stand on such a firm footing, upon their purchased ground as heretofore; it has been said by them, that I wish to bring tinkers, and chimney-sweepers into the profession; that those who enter to

me, do so because they could not afford to enter to others ; but the fact of a great portion of my class being composed of those who previously attended others, contradicts that assertion. Moreover, with regard to the gentlemanly conduct, the intelligence and proficiency of my Pupils, I can compare notes with any Lecturer. And when we recollect that a HUNTER, was a Carpenter, a NEWTON and a COBBETT, Plough-boys, and that the Students least possessed with money are generally those most gifted with industry and talent, I am at once justified in lowering as much as is in my feeble power the golden bar, which checks the progress of that knowledge so intimately connected with the salvation of the lives of the people.

At present this bad Anatomical Law is exercised under the direction of our present Reforming Administration as beneficently as a bad Law can be exercised, and for this we are indebted, not to the Journalist who said to the wronged and oppressed Students, *peace, peace* for the Monopolists say it “works well” for them, and to those who opposed the Monopolists “knaves” “knaves,” and, who, upon the strength of that monopoly being destroyed, rose up and assuming to himself the spirit of prophesy, observed, aye, “*I said it would work well*”—not to him who formerly despised Reform, and blessed our corrupt Institutions, but who now changing with the times, obsequiously follows in the train as a half-and-half Reformer, hating, whilst he piteously imitates the leaders\*—but to our strenuous exertions last Winter in defeating the plans and attempts of the monopolising Lecturers combined with the conservative Parochial Authorities—perhaps more especially to the just and Philanthropic manner in which LORD MELBOURNE assisted us, and has since superintended the exercise of the Bill. I am glad Ministers did open their eyes to justice, and did lend us a helping hand, as it prevented me going to greater extremes which I should consider myself bound to have had recourse to, and that promptly, for the purpose of ensuring to my Pupils as much Dissection as at other Schools ; and which extremes I should have been justified in having resorted to, in defending the rights of my Pupils connected with Dissection, even if it had proved the means of temporarily suspending Dissection in London. With the exception of the repetition of a little foul play last Summer, the distribution has since been conducted in a just manner, and I hope will continue to be : and set down this as certain that, as others are supplied, so will we be—if they have much, we will have much—if they have

---

\* There are two Classes of Anti-Reformers.—First, those Men who get their all by their Aristocratic connexions, and yet try to gull the Public by pretending to be Reformers ; this is the age for the political cant of these hypocrites.—Second, those who openly oppose all Reform. The Public should be equally on their guard against both.

little, we will be content with little in proportion—if we have none (I am in duty bound to my Pupils to say) *they shall have none*. As an Englishman I am entitled to share my rights with the would-be-Monopolists, and receive the benefit of the Laws, and will do it. There were even some of my Radical Brethren, active Men in the Unions, ready to take up my cause in the Press, as the cause of a Radical, more vigorously than I did myself; and to conclude this topic I will finally observe, should a puny Monopolist directly or indirectly attempt again to interfere with my supply of Subjects, I will unmask a battery against him that shall drive him back into that insignificance and shame for which he is best adapted.

Finally, Gentlemen, let me observe, be as sedulous and persevering in the cause of Science as you were last Winter, and you will be as gloriously successful—industry will not ensure to you honours and emolument in the present state of society, oppressed as it is by the weight of Money and hereditary Aristocratic influence—but it will do more, it will give to you a happy conscience, a sense of proud independence within your breast, connected with a conviction of your having deserved better. But on the other hand recollect that if you are idle, and should you even obtain your Diploma, the Seal of Confirmation upon it will be a *Seal of Blood*, and you will go forth not as a blessing to society, but as Murderers. Let us strenuously persevere then, knowing that no greater thing can be said of a man than this—“He served his God and his generation, and he died,” and hoping at the same time that we may yet live to see the day when monopoly and self election and private influence in all our National Institutions will be abolished—when talent shall reign triumphant, when that tyrant, ignorance, shall retire for ever into his dark abode of oblivion, and when all the Medical Profession, possessing equal rights and privileges, shall be as one great army fighting in the cause of Science under the meridian sun of Truth and Liberty.

Published and Sold by Mr. DERMOTT,  
No. 8, Queen Square, Westminster, and at the Westminster Dispensary, Gerrard Street, Soho.

**THREE PLATES**, highly coloured and the size of nature, representing the Anatomy of the Muscles, Vessels and Nerves of the Thigh combined, with Anatomical and Surgical reference, price 8s.; uncoloured 5s. Also the Second Edition of the Surgical Anatomy of the Arteries of the Head and Neck, on the same scale and in the same style, price 4s.; uncoloured 3s.

*The above Plates are a continuation of Mr. DERMOTT'S Work, entitled "Illustrations of the Surgical Anatomy of the Arteries of the Human Body," and correspond with those of the Axilla, Superior Extremity, and Abdominal Muscles with Hernia, already published.*

Also a concise "Description of the Distribution and Physiology of the Nerves of the Human Body." Price 2s. 6d.

N.B. To obtain these Books at the Westminster Dispensary, enquire for Messrs. THURNAM or TOYNBEE, who have obligingly consented to deliver them.

---

## LECTURES, DEMONSTRATIONS,

And Private Catechetical Instruction, on Anatomy, Physiology and Surgery,

By Mr. DERMOTT,

At his Lecture and Dissecting Rooms, Westminster Dispensary,  
No. 9, Gerrard Street Soho.

*Three courses of Surgical Lectures are delivered annually, without extra Fee. The Certificates both of the Anatomical and Surgical Lectures, also of the Demonstrations and the Dissections, are recognised by the Royal College of Surgeons.*

Three Courses of Anatomical Lectures are delivered during the Year.—The WINTER COURSE commences October 2nd.; SPRING COURSE January 21st ;—SUMMER COURSE May 21st.

In the Courses of Catechetical Instruction Gentlemen are familiarized practically with Anatomy by dissection ; also with the prevailing Technicalities as well with the leading Theories of the day ; have inculcated thoroughly the Rationale of Anatomy, Surgery, and Physiological Science ; and are of course qualified to pass their Examinations with credit, and in most instances eclat. Hours adapted to the convenience of the Pupils. A strong antiseptic is invariably used in dissections.

*Perpetual to the Anatomical and Surgical, Lectures Demonstrations and Dissections.....7 Guineas.*

**Being considerably less than one half of the Fee charged by other Anatomical Lecturers.**

*Private Catechetical Instruction till qualified for passing 5 Guineas. Gentlemen who have previously attended other Anatomical Lectures*

*are admitted to the Catechetical Instruction and perpetual attendance on the Lectures, (both Anatomical and Surgical), Demonstrations, and the Dissections with Certificates of the same for . . . 5 Guineas.*

Surgeons in the Army and Navy, will meet with uncommon advantages in renewing their Anatomical knowledge. Established Practitioners, also, will be enabled privately to improve their knowledge of Anatomy and Operative Surgery.

Candidates for the Army and Navy Medical Boards will find many facilities in quickly acquiring adequate and suitable information.

Hours of Lecture from half-past three to half-past four. Demonstrations from half-past ten till half-past eleven. Dissections during the whole of the day.

Surgical Lectures are continued during the whole of the Summer.

Gentlemen in actual practice may attend all the Lectures gratuitously.

The Introductory Lecture will be delivered October 2nd. at half-past three o'clock, p. m.

A few Gentlemen who wish to be prepared for passing the College expeditiously,

#### RECEIVED AS HOUSE PUPILS.

For further particulars apply to Mr. DERMOTT, 8, Queen Square, St. James's Park, Westminster.

The PETITION, praying Parliament to establish CONCOURS, or a competition of Talent, in place of the present degrading system of intrigue, whereby appointments to professional offices are obtained, lays for Signature, daily, at Mr. DERMOTT's Theatre of Anatomy, Westminster Dispensary, Gerrard Street, Soho, during his hours of Lecture, viz. from half past Ten to Twelve a.m., and from half-past Three to Five p.m.

**PRIZE CERTIFICATES.**---The Gentlemen of Mr. DERMOTT's Class are informed, that **THREE PRIZE CERTIFICATES** will be awarded to his Pupils in March next. *One* to be contended for by those Gentlemen who were his Pupils last winter; *another* by those Gentlemen who are Mr. Dermott's Pupils this winter, but who have been previously attending other Anatomical Lecturers; and a *third* by those Gentlemen who are decidedly juniors, and who have commenced their studies the present winter. The Certificates to be worded to the following effect:—"This Certificate was awarded to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ as a testimony of the proficiency which he evinced in Anatomy, Physiology, and Surgery, and the professional abilities he displayed during a Public Examination, which was open to the whole of the profession and the community at large." The Examination to be conducted by Two Gentlemen of established professional reputation,

N. B. These Certificates are not intended to supersede any ordinary Certificate or Diploma.



