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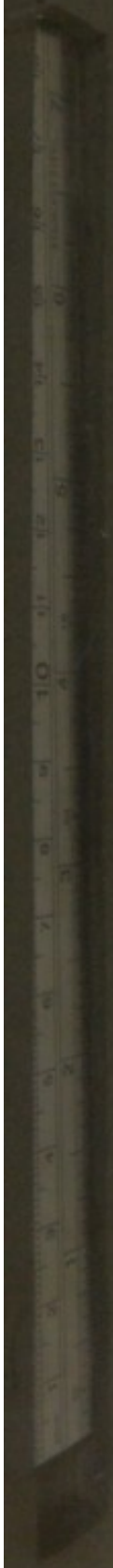
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JOHN ERIC ERICHSEN,

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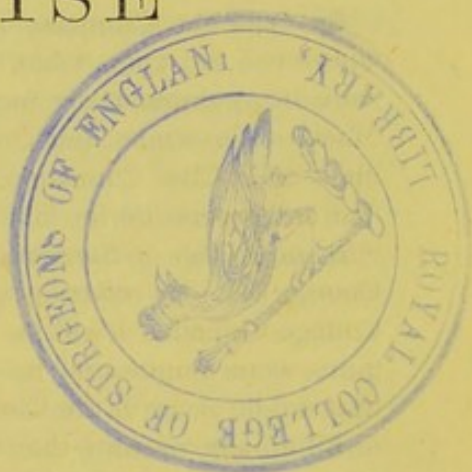
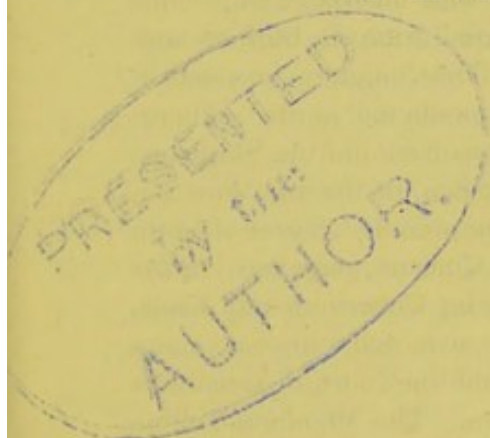
H. K. LEWIS, 195

THE MEMBER, THE FELLOW

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AND THE

FRANCHISE



BY

JOHN ERIC ERICHSEN, F.R.C.S., LL.D. (EDIN.), F.R.S., ETC.

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LONDON

H. K. LEWIS, 136 GOWER STREET, W.C.

1886

APPENDIX TO PAGE 8.

In 1540 the Company of Barber-Surgeons was incorporated. This continued till 1745, when the Surgeons separated from the Barbers and were incorporated in the Surgeons' Company. This Company consisted of Masters, Governors, and Commonalty and was conducted on the ordinary lines of a City Company. In 1796 it was dissolved and the Surgeons had no corporation for four years. In 1800 appears for the first time the "*Royal College of Surgeons in London*" incorporated by Charter of 40th George III. By referring to Clause 18 of this Charter, page xxiv. of the College Calendar it will be found that the Master, Governors and Assistants were empowered to fill up out of their own body any vacancies that might occur in the Court of Examiners; and the Court of Assistants to fill up any vacancy that might occur in theirs. The Members had no voice whatever in these elections. By the Charter of 3rd George IV. the title of Master was changed to that of President, the Governors became the Vice-Presidents, and the Court of Assistants the Council. The various holders of these offices were elected by the Council. This state of things continued till the Institution of the Fellowship by the Charter of 7th Victoria, 1843, when the title of the College was changed from that of "London" to that of "England" and the Electoral Franchise given to the Fellows. The Charter of Charles I. which has been adduced in support of the demands of the Members was given to the Company of Barber-Surgeons. In the 17th century there was no other Corporation of Surgeons.

THE MEMBER, THE FELLOW, AND THE FRANCHISE.

THE medical profession can boast of no greater institution of a purely educational and scientific character than the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Whether as regards the scientific value of its magnificent museum, the extent of its library, the importance of its endowed lectureships, the amount of its annual income, the vastness of its acquired wealth, or the yearly increasing number of the candidates for its diploma, it is beyond rivalry in this country, and it is without an equal in the world.

The growth of the College during the last forty years in all these respects has been uninterrupted, and its development is undoubtedly due to the enlightened spirit that has animated its Councils, and to the wise administration of its affairs by its officials throughout that period.

An attempt is now being made to alter that Constitution under which it has advanced to so high a position of utility, and has attained such unparalleled prosperity. It is proposed to do this by the introduction of radical and fundamental changes in the mode of election of its Council, and by the extension of the franchise, from the Fellows to all Members of the College of more than ten years' standing. Were the affairs of the College in a confused and unsatisfactory state, were its influence as an Examining, Educational, or Scientific Body declining, or even stationary, it might be urged with some show of reason that its Constitution was not in harmony with the age, that the governing body had neglected its duties, and that the Council required to be invigorated and refreshed by the infusion of "new blood."

But the exact converse of all this has happened, the affairs of the College instead of declining are in a state of prosperity hitherto unknown, its influence as a controller of medical education is more efficient than it ever was before, and the value

attached to its diploma is evidently greater now than it has been at any previous period, as is shown by that best test of all, that the stiffer the examination the more candidates present themselves for it. The reason therefore for a radical change in the Constitution of the College is not apparent. The advocates of change do not, it is true, rest their case on the only ground that would be unassailable, namely, that the Council of the College has been negligent of or indifferent to the conduct of its affairs, and that its interests, material, educational and scientific, have consequently suffered in their hands. But the arguments used in support of the proposed change are of a more vague and less convincing character. They are briefly as follows: firstly that the members of the College have a "right" to the electoral franchise, and to direct representation on the Council, secondly that such representation would conduce to the welfare of the College, by promoting the interests of medical polity and education, and be beneficial in two respects, firstly in regard to the suppression of illegal practice, and secondly in the relation of the College to the State.

The question of the admission of the Members to the electoral franchise of the College, and to seats on the Council, is in no way a political one. It is misleading to attempt to connect it with general party politics, or to apply to its advocates or opponents, the ordinary epithets that distinguish political parties. It is a purely intra-collegiate and a strictly professional question.

Before proceeding to consider in detail the arguments adduced by the advocates of change, let me state in a very few words the relative position that Members and Fellows now occupy in the College and the Constitution of its Council.

The Member is a registered student, who having complied with the regulations of the College, and having attained the age of twenty-one years, passes the minimum qualifying examination in Anatomy, Physiology and Surgery. He receives his Diploma on having taken the Licentiatehip of the College of Physicians, or a registrable qualification in Medicine elsewhere, or in default of this, having passed a qualifying examination in Medicine and in Midwifery, conducted by special examiners appointed by the Council. The Membership of the College of Surgeons stands on exactly the same level as the Licentiatehip of the College of Physicians, with which it is now conjoined, under the new conjoint scheme.

The number of Members of the College of Surgeons is at the present time between 17,500 and 18,000. The number can never be exactly known to the officials of the College, as many are resident in the Colonies or are afloat, and their deaths are rarely reported to the College authorities. With the exception of a few who are engaged in the practice of surgical specialities, and those in the public service, the Members are all necessarily engaged in general practice.

The Fellowship may be obtained in three ways:—by Examination, by Election, and by “ad eundem.” The Fellow by Examination cannot obtain his Diploma until he has attained the age of twenty-five years, and has undergone a most searching examination in Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, and Surgery. The Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England is, with one exception, that of the M.S. of the University of London, the highest surgical degree in Great Britain. In the last five years (July, 1881, to July, 1886), 127 candidates have passed the necessary examinations and become Fellows. Besides entry by examination, a member may attain the Fellowship by election. This portal is now practically disused, except in so far as this, that the Council may under certain very stringent regulations admit to the Fellowship once in every year, two members of more than twenty years’ standing, who shall have so distinguished themselves in science or in surgery, as to render their admission to the Fellowship desirable in the interests of the College. During the last five years, four Members of the College of twenty years’ standing have thus been elected into the Fellowship, under the conditions of Clause 5 of the Charter of 15th Vic. During the same period, nine Members of the College have been elected to the Fellowship under Clause 1 of the Charter of 15th Vic., and Section XXI. of the Bye-Laws. It would, however, appear that during the first part of those five years, viz., in 1881-2, there were no less than 4,035 Members of the College whose diplomas dated prior to September, 1843, and who would therefore be eligible for election to the Fellowship, and thus to admission to the Franchise. The admission “ad eundem” is practically inoperative.

The Fellows now number about 1140. Their numbers have of late years decreased in consequence of the deaths of a large number of the Fellows who were originally elected in 1843, at the time of the institution of the Fellowship.

The Fellows as will hereafter be more fully stated are like the Members mostly engaged in general practice, although the great majority of the hospital surgeons of this country are necessarily to be found in their ranks.

The Council is elected from and by the Fellows, there is no bar to the admission of any Fellow to the Council, so far as the nature of his private practice is concerned. He may be a General Practitioner or a Specialist, a Surgeon or a Gynæcologist, and Fellows engaged in all these various departments of practice have seats on the Council at the present time. There is only one prohibitive clause, he must not sell or supply drugs or medicines.

Let us now consider briefly what is the custom as regards the Franchise in other and somewhat kindred medical institutions. I would take for the purpose of comparison the practice in the Royal College of Physicians of London, the Apothecaries' Society, the University of London, and the University of Edinburgh, as being the largest and most typical of the Scottish schools of medicine.

The Royal College of Physicians of London contains three orders of Associates, namely, Licentiates, Members, and Fellows. The Licentiates have undergone the minimum qualifying examination, and stand in that College in exactly the same position that the Members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England do in theirs. The Licentiates of the College of Physicians not only possess no franchise, but have absolutely no voice or any influence whatever in the government of that Institution, which is entirely vested in the Body of Fellows. The Licentiates have not even the right of holding meetings within the walls of their College. The Fellows, who are the real governing body, are selected from amongst the Members, and admitted to the Fellowship without examination. The Members of the College of Physicians stand in relation to medicine as the Fellows of the College of Surgeons do in relation to surgery. The L.R.C.P. can never in his wildest dreams of professional ambition have looked forward to the possibility of his becoming one of the Governing Body of the College of Physicians, and far less of occupying a seat on its Councils, side by side with its Fellows. But yet the position of the L.R.C.P. is exactly the same in the College of Physicians as that of the M.R.C.S. in College of Surgeons. The aspirations of the one would not seem to be more unreasonable than are those of the other.

The Apothecaries' Society is composed of two orders, licentiates and members, the government of that institution is entirely in the hands of the members, the licentiates having no voice whatever in it.

It is difficult to compare a University with a College, the constitution of the two Institutions being so entirely dissimilar; and it is still more difficult to compare a Graduate in medicine in the University of London with a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, the qualifying examination in the first case being so infinitely higher than that in the second, so that the M.B. Lond. and the M.R.C.S. stand on totally different rounds of the professional ladder. There is not a single M.B. on the Senate. As regards the franchise possessed by the M.B. Lond., it is of a very imperfect character. The graduates in medicine of the London University sit in Convocation with the graduates of the three other Faculties. The powers of Convocation in reference to the Senate, which is the governing body, extend to this, that Convocation can nominate under certain restrictions and at certain times three persons, one of whom is selected by the Crown to fill every fourth vacancy in the Senate, and he thus enters the Senate, not by the votes of the graduates, but by a process of direct election by the Crown. After the number so elected reaches nine, Convocation ceases to nominate. The power of Convocation extends therefore to nomination, but stops short of election of Members of the Senate.

In the government of the University of Edinburgh the graduates have absolutely no share—they possess no franchise except the political one.

Thus then so far as custom in other and somewhat kindred institutions is of any significance, there is no instance that I am acquainted with of persons possessing only the minimum qualification in a College or even in a University being able to elect the governing body of the institution to which they belong, and still less of aspiring to a seat on its Council if it be a College.

The Members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England claim the franchise and seats on the Council as a right. Now, "a right," must be based on one of two conditions, either for the restitution of a privilege which has been wrongfully withdrawn, or in order to obtain possession of a privilege which is being unjustly withheld. Let us examine these two conditions separately, as they bear upon the question at issue.

Has any electoral privilege once possessed ever been withdrawn from the members of the Royal College of Surgeons? I say unhesitatingly, none (see Appendix and clause 18, Charter of 1800). The Members have never possessed the franchise, and therefore cannot advance a claim for the restitution of a right which they have never held. Before the institution of the Fellowship the Council was self-elected, and its elections were controlled by the Court of Examiners. The Order of Fellows was instituted in 1843, mainly through the influence of that great Surgeon and wise administrator, Sir Benjamin Brodie, in order to correct this obviously corrupt state of things. The election into the Council has continued in the hands of the Fellows, under the Charters of 1843 and 1852, since that period.

But every member can if he choose obtain the franchise by becoming a Fellow. The Fellowship is not a close body, is not like a club limited in the number of its members, but is open to all who seek admission into it, and who possess the ability and power of work to acquire a qualifying knowledge in Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology and Surgery. If, therefore, a member desires the franchise and does not choose to take the Fellowship by examination in order to obtain it, he tacitly admits his inability to pass the portal that leads to that privilege. But a large section of the Members are eligible to the Fellowship by election. If the franchise is really so much desired by the general body of the Members, how comes it that only 9 out of some 4000 so eligible have during the last five years taken the trouble to acquire it?

The right to the franchise is claimed by the Members on another ground. It is urged that as the fees paid by the Member on obtaining his diploma constitute the main source of income of the College, he has a right by contributing to its funds, to the control of its affairs. Were the fee a tax this would doubtless be an unanswerable argument, in accordance with the political maxim that taxation involves representation. But the fee is in no respect whatever of the nature of a tax.

Let us briefly analyse its details:—In the year 1885 the College received from the Fees paid by Members on receiving their diplomas, the sum of £20,219 13s. 3d. The direct expenses of the examinations in payments to the Board and Court of Examiners, including diploma stamps, amounted to £8,868 3s., thus leaving a balance of £11,351 10s. 3d. But out of this balance must be deducted the sums paid for the maintenance of the

Museum and Library, amounting to £2,954 8s. 9d., and at least two-thirds of the "working expenses" of the College, the great cost of which is mainly due to the requirements of the examinations, and which amount to no less a sum than £3,524 2s. 1d. If we deduct then the Museum and Library expenses and two-thirds of the working expenses, we shall have a nett balance of about £6,000, out of which pensions and various other collegiate expenses have to be paid.

The largest item in the expenditure of the College is the sum that is consumed in the direct payment of the nineteen members who constitute the Board and Court of Examiners. This sum so expended appears large, and one charge frequently brought against the Council is that the Examiners, many of whom are elected from the Councillors, are overpaid. But it is only those acquainted with the onerous and exacting duties imposed upon the Examiners, who can be aware that the payment of the Examiners as contrasted with professional remuneration for other services given by men in their position is barely adequate to the work done. So much so is this the case that many of the leading surgeons in London decline to become members of the Court of Examiners on account of the serious inconvenience and loss that would thereby be entailed in respect to their private and other public engagements. But the payment of the Examiners does not constitute by any means the whole expense of the examinations. The business of the Office of the College is almost entirely connected with the conduct of the examinations, and were the College to cease to be an examining body, a single clerk would be able to do the work of an Institution which now demands the continued attention of a highly trained and necessarily well paid staff of officials. Out of each diploma fee then of twenty guineas, not more than six or seven guineas goes to the coffers of the College, and what does the member receive in return for that? Why it is in reality a life-composition on the lowest scale for admission to the Museum, the Library, the Lectures, and all public meetings held within the walls of the College; and in addition, under Section 15 of the Bye-laws, the College engages to protect and to defend a Member if he is disturbed "in the exercise and enjoyment of the Rights, Privileges, Exemptions, and Immunities acquired by him as a Member thereof."

On that eventful night when a candidate, having successfully

passed his examination for the membership, is introduced to the Court of Examiners on receiving his diploma, the President of the Court addresses a few words to him, which probably in the excitement of the moment pass "in at one ear and out at the other," without leaving much impress on the memory. I would therefore venture to remind the Members that the President informs them of the rights and privileges they enjoy, and of the exemptions and immunities they possess, and in defence of which they may claim the protection of their College. The rights and privileges consist of admission to the public service and to office under the Poor-Law, and the free use of the Library and Museum of the College and admission to all Lectures delivered within its walls; the immunities they possess are exemption from compulsory service in the militia or on juries; but not a word is said on this occasion directly or by implication of any right to the franchise of the College or of any right to a share in its government, and still less of a seat on its Council. Those rights and privileges then are not inherent in the Membership, but are expressly confined by Charter to the Fellows.

The Direct Representation of the Profession in the Medical Council has been appealed to as corresponding in some respects to the direct representation of the Members of the College of Surgeons upon its Council. The cases are in reality totally dissimilar. In the direct representation to the Medical Council every registered member of the medical profession, Physician or Surgeon, Graduates of the Universities, Licentiate, Member or Fellow of the Colleges has an equal vote and an equal right to become a candidate. The direct representation to the Medical Council is therefore not confined to the General Practitioner or to any one body in the Profession. On referring to the list of gentlemen who are at present candidates, I find that they are fourteen in number; of these, seven are Physicians, Graduates of various Universities, the remaining seven are Surgeons, of these seven, five are Fellows of Colleges, four of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and one of that of Ireland. Two only out of the fourteen are designated as M.R.C.S.

If the franchise of the College is extended to the M.R.C.S., how can it be refused to the Licentiate in Dental Surgery? His claims are based on exactly the same grounds as those of the Member and the arguments that have been adduced in support of the one are equally applicable to those of the other.

If the franchise cannot be demanded by the Members as a right may it not be conceded to them as an act of grace, tending thereby to restore harmony to the College, and to confer additional strength and influence upon its Council. Here we have solely to consider what would be advantageous to the College, not what would be pleasing or flattering to the Members.

So far as the restoration of harmony is concerned I am disposed to think that the turmoil of the annual election in a constituency of the 13,000 or 14,000 Members who would possess the franchise, would do little to promote it, and would most certainly have a disturbing and consequently a disadvantageous influence upon the even tenor of professional life.

So far as any advantage to the College itself would be concerned by the admission of six of its Members into the Council grave doubts may be entertained. In considering this question we must take into account what is the business of the College, and what are the functions of the Council.

Let me say first of all what the business of the College is not. It is not political—that is left to the British Medical Association; it is not ethical—that is left to the Medical Council; it is not commercial—that is left to any other Corporation that chooses to take it up. But the business of the College is twofold, it is Educational and it is Scientific. It is Educational in this sense, not that the College educates directly the student himself, but through the medium of its examinations it controls the education that he receives in the various medical schools of the country, and only recognises an Institution as a medical school if it comes up to a certain standard of educational efficiency. It is probable that I am within the mark when I say that at least two-thirds of the business of the College is thus Educational. If such business of the College cannot be properly conducted by 1100 of the most capable Surgeons in England, many of whom have had a training that specially fits them for it, surely matters will not be mended by giving a share in its Management to 13,000 others who have not had that special advantage.

The supervision of Surgical Education and the conduct of those examinations by which it is controlled can only be efficiently done by men who are thoroughly trained to that sort of work. Those men are the Teachers in Anatomy, Physiology and Surgery, the only three branches directly under the control of the College, in the various medical schools in the Metropolis and

the Provinces. These Teachers are almost exclusively Fellows of the College. I know of only one teacher of anatomy of any distinction who is not a Fellow and he not being a practising surgeon does not deem it necessary to take the Fellowship. In Physiology many of the teachers are Physicians rather than Surgeons, but in Surgery there is no teacher of any known eminence outside the Fellowship. The same may be said of most of the Examiners in those three departments with which the College of Surgeons alone concerns itself. So far as the control of surgical education, therefore, is concerned the Fellow and not the Member is most certainly the proper person, for it is the Fellows who conduct it.

But it may be said that as the Members of the College of Surgeons are, with very few exceptions, General Practitioners, it would be well to have upon the Council some members of that body who would be more especially fitted to control and direct education in respect to the duties of the General Practitioner. This I fully admit, but it must be remembered that ever since provincial surgeons have had seats upon the Council, the College of Surgeons has not been deprived of this advantage. The great majority of the Fellows on the roll of the College of Surgeons are General Practitioners. If we exclude those gentlemen who are practising solely as surgical specialists, such as oculists, aurists, orthopædists, dentists, etc., there are certainly not a hundred, probably not half that number of so-called "pure surgeons" amongst the 1140 Fellows. The "pure surgeon" can barely subsist out of London or one of the great industrial centres in the provinces. Probably at least 1000 of the whole body of Fellows are therefore General Practitioners.

Provincial surgeons have sat at the Council table for something like a quarter of a century, and most of these either have been or actually still are General Practitioners of the very highest character. At the last Election of Council a Metropolitan General Practitioner of the very first position in the profession was elected by the Fellows, and there is no reason why such an excellent example should not be again followed.

So far then as the interests both professional and educational of the General Practitioner are concerned, the Council during the present generation has not been wanting in representatives of that body in all respects as competent as any Member of the College to advise in regard to them.

But it is argued that by the direct representation of such a large body of medical men as is constituted by the Members of the College, the Council would be greatly strengthened in its relations to the state. Now by the "state" I presume is meant the Home Secretary, the President of the Local Government Board, or the Lord President of the Council. So far as the Local Government Board is concerned it possesses a large staff of medical men of the highest professional ability and of the greatest administrative capacity, and its President would probably require little guidance from any medical corporation. So far as the other high state officials are concerned I venture to think that they would rather look to the quality than to the quantity of their advisers, and that should they need direction in any matter concerning the medical profession or the public health, they would seek the advice of the Presidents of the two Colleges and of the Medical Council or of such men in the profession as are recognised both by it and by the public as its leaders.

Another assumed advantage of the election of a certain number of the Members on to the Council is that the College would be able through their knowledge and guidance to exercise a more stringent influence in the repression of illegal practice than it does at present. But let me remind those gentlemen who lay stress on this argument that the College has no jurisdiction over any except its own Members; that the suppression of illegal practice is part of the business of the Medical Council, and that in all cases it is a matter that is not quite so easy as those who have no experience in the management of public professional affairs may imagine.

That evils arise from the establishment of so-called "Provident Dispensaries" or of sham "special hospitals" there can be no doubt, but the offence is a moral one and not an infraction of the law, and in such cases as these neither the College nor the Medical Council can legally interfere. Even in the case of notorious illegal practice by unqualified practitioners the difficulty is very great. The College cannot go beyond its legal limits. Those limits are very restricted. The persons engaged in illegal practice know well how to keep to windward of the law. The public at large has a sort of natural affection for the illegal practitioner as it had for the smuggler in former days, and whether these are faith-curiers or cancer-curiers, masseurs or

bone-setters, the public would look with great distrust upon the interference of any medical corporation with them. It would reject its paternal counsels and would resent any attempt at high-handed action on its part. The College in these matters can but go the length that the law allows, and in this it is closely tethered. From a long experience of the action of the Council of the College in these matters, I can say this, that every case that is brought before it after being carefully investigated, is submitted to the legal advisers of the College who report to the President and Vice-Presidents upon the course of action that can be pursued, and on that advice the Council must of necessity act. Its action on a purely legal question could in no way be strengthened by the presence of half a dozen Members. Were the Council to adopt so unwise a course as to strike a Member off the rolls of the College without the fullest legal right to do so, it would undoubtedly find itself placed in the very humiliating position of having an action of *mandamus* brought against it in the Court of Queen's Bench for the restoration of that Member to his rights and privileges in the College.

But the business of the Council is Scientific as well as Educational, and this business, it is much to be hoped, will shortly be largely increased by the establishment of Physiological and Pathological Laboratories on the largest and most approved scale in connection with the College. Now I would ask, who but men of science can control and direct efficiently a scientific department, and where are to be found the men of science connected with the College of Surgeons? are they amongst its Fellows or in the ranks of its Members? The Fellowship of the Royal Society may be fairly taken as indicative of its possessor occupying a certain scientific status in the estimation of the most scientific body in this country. Now where, I would ask, are the Fellows of the Royal Society to be found, amongst the Fellows, or amongst the Members of the College? Many of the Fellows possess the coveted distinction of the F.R.S. How many, if any, of the Members, who have not sunk the Membership of our College in some higher University Degree, I know not. But of this there can be no doubt, that the interests of science so far as they can be cultivated and advanced in the College of Surgeons, cannot suffer in a Council that has amongst its members such distinguished scientific men as Sir James Paget, Sir Joseph Lister, Mr. John Marshall, Mr. Savory, Mr. John Wood, Mr. Hulke and Mr. Hutchinson, all Fellows of the Royal Society.

There is yet an aspect of this question that requires the serious attention of the Fellows. It is this, that the admission of six Members to the Council if to the exclusion of six Fellows (one-fourth of the Council) would be an act of the grossest injustice to the great body of the Fellows; and if it be thought necessary to increase the Council, which is perhaps already too large, by the addition of six members, there is no reason why those additional six members should not be taken from amongst the Fellows. Now I have endeavoured to show that the Member has no right inherent in his membership, real or implied, to the franchise. The Fellow on the other hand has a right to the franchise which is inherent in, and an integral and much valued privilege attached to, his fellowship. The Fellowship is not a mere empty title, is not a mere honorary distinction such as a D.C.L. or a LL.D. degree conferred *honoris causâ* by a University. The Fellowship was instituted in order to create an electoral body, and the Fellows constitute the true governing body of the College, who elect from amongst themselves the Council by which the details of the government are carried out. A man devotes years of labour to acquire the knowledge that will enable him to pass an examination for the Fellowship, not in order that he may have an empty title but that he may possess not only the electoral rights conferred upon him by the Fellowship, but also that he himself may in his turn be eligible to take his share in the government of the College, and to occupy the highest official positions in it. If the Council is kept at its present number and one-fourth of it is to be composed of Members of the College, the seats available to the Fellows will be reduced to eighteen, and by this infusion of twenty-five per cent of Members into the Council the chance of any individual Fellow attaining a seat at its board will *pro tanto* be diminished.

Not only will this injustice be done, but another and more direct wrong will be inflicted upon the Fellow by admitting to equal privileges with him within the College the Member who is incapable of taking the Fellowship. We should thus actually place on the same level as equally eligible to the Council with the Fellow who has passed one of the most stringent examinations that he can undergo in surgery and the allied sciences in this country; that Member who having attempted, but unsuccessfully to pass the fellowship examination has been rejected and thrown back again into the ranks of the membership! These two men, the

one who has shewn that he possesses those qualities that should be demanded of one who aspires to be on the governing body of a great Educational and Scientific Institution, and the other who has proved himself to be incompetent to pass beyond its minimum qualifying examinations, would have exactly the same position within the College, as regards its electoral franchise, and eligibility to its highest offices. The inevitable result of such a state of things as this would be that men would cease to go to the expense and labour of qualifying themselves for the Fellowship, that its numbers would gradually diminish and that it would ultimately die out. This would be deplorable.

No institution has done so much for the advance and diffusion of scientific surgery in this country during the last 40 years—as the Fellowship; and any course of action on the part of the College that would tend to lessen the value of its Diploma would be a heavy blow—a grievous discouragement to surgical science. That such would be the result of the weakening of the influence of the Fellows as the governing body of the college does not admit of doubt.

In conclusion let me say this—that my official connection with the college has now ceased, never to be resumed. For sixteen years I was a Member of its Council, and I have had the honour of serving the offices of Junior and Senior Vice-President and of being President of the College. I may, therefore, fairly claim an intimate knowledge of the details of the work done by the Council. And this I can with truth say, that I have never in any other Institution with which I have been connected, met with a body of men more punctual in their attendance, more zealous in their work, more ready to sacrifice private professional advantage to the public good, or more devoted to the interests of the College than have been and are its Councillors. In these respects, whatever they may be considered worth, no change in the constitution of the College could work an improvement—for none is admissible where the excellence is so great.