

Medical reform : an address read to the Harveian Society, at the opening of its seventeenth session, October 2, 1847 / by Thomas Hodgkin.

Contributors

Hodgkin, Thomas, 1798-1866.
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

London : Published for the Harveian Society, by John Churchill, 1847.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/m2qmqd9w>

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
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

MEDICAL REFORM.

AN ADDRESS

READ TO

THE HARVEIAN SOCIETY,

AT

THE OPENING OF ITS SEVENTEENTH SESSION,

OCTOBER 2, 1847.

BY

THOMAS HODGKIN, M.D., &c.

ONE OF ITS ANNUAL PRESIDENTS.

LONDON :

PUBLISHED FOR THE HARVEIAN SOCIETY,

BY JOHN CHURCHILL,

PRINCE'S STREET, SOHO.

1847.

ALBION AT REFORM

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM WATTS,
CROWN COURT, TEMPLE BAR.

MEDICAL REFORM.

IT has been a custom in the HARVEIAN SOCIETY, that one of the individuals who through the kindness of his fellow-members has been appointed one of its annual Presidents should, when closing his period of office by taking the Chair at the first Meeting of a new Session, offer a short Address on the advantages which recommend a Society like this, to the favour and active support of the members of our profession. As it now devolves upon me to present you with such an Address, it would ill become my feelings on the occasion, were I to shrink from a task which, to use the words of the late Dr. Thomas Young,—“*postulat et officium meum, et propensa voluntas.*”

The utility and gratification afforded by Meetings like ours are so conspicuous and perceptible, and have so often been made the theme of commendation, that it is not very easy to advance any thing which has not been said and re-said already, or which has not so strongly presented itself to the mind that, when verbally expressed, it has no novelty to recommend it.

Our Meetings afford the opportunity of bringing forward recent and interesting cases. If such cases are of a sporadic and rare character, they are not only placed on record, but their peculiarities become the subject of discussion; analogous cases are related and compared with them; and, if the treatment is uncertain or difficult, the patient, unconsciously to himself, has the advantage of a union of judgment and experience in deliberation upon it. This sort of consultation is of greater interest and importance when the cases brought forward are of a more epidemic character, and indicate the operation of some prevailing cause of disease, or of some wide-spread influence which has given a general susceptibility to disease from ordinary causes. As such epidemics often possess peculiar characters which greatly affect the applicability of depletion, and of the several modes of its employment, or which may either demand or forbid the use of stimulants, it is self-evident that our Meetings, which furnish the opportunity of comparing the results of practice, must be productive of public good, by the

assistance which they afford us in ascertaining and making known such peculiarities.

For the reasons already assigned I should inevitably become tedious, were I to dwell on the exposition of such palpable benefits. I will therefore proceed to a subject of a different character, in reference to which our Meetings may be regarded as having a direct influence upon ourselves, as members of a distinct body or class in society. By the nature of our studies as regards the science of our profession, and by the character of our pursuits as respects the exercise of it as a business of life, we are obviously distinguished from the members of other professions, and from those who exercise other arts. If we have peculiar pleasures derived from the nature of our occupations, we have also peculiar cares, difficulties, and sources of annoyance; and have special need for the maintenance of cordiality and charity amongst ourselves, as professional brethren. Meetings like these, conducted with the harmony which has ever existed among the members of the Harveian Society since I have had the privilege of joining it, tend materially to maintain and promote these amiable feelings, within the limited circle which they include.

But there are occasions on which the members of our profession are called to take a much wider range of view, and to contemplate those objects which interest us as a body, and affect individual members in their relations with each other, or with the community at large. At the very first glance which we take in a view of this kind, we may perceive something like a flaw in the beauty which we should desire to find in it; and the professional unity which we have assumed seems already to be dissolved. There is a stone, sometimes found by those who walk on the shores beneath our chalky cliffs, which presents a perfectly spherical figure. If curiosity tempt the finder to dash it on the ground to see the interior, it splits into fragments having more or less of a regular figure, depending on its radiated structure. This stone, which the vulgar call a thunder-bolt, but which we know to be only one of the various forms of sulphuret of iron, may, if the fragments be carefully collected and put together, resume its original spherical and perfect figure. Thus, the divisions in the medical profession have, as it were, split it into fragments, which in a Society like ours are collected and combined, so

that the whole resumes its natural rotundity and smoothness. Thus brought together, and thus devoid of asperity, let us lay aside metaphor, and reflect a little on the artificial divisions which have been made between us.

We may first notice those primary segments, which the principle of the division of labour has naturally tended to produce, in the multifarious operations of our comprehensive profession. Thus are formed the classes devoted to medicine, to surgery, to obstetric practice, and to that which can scarcely be called a distinct segment, since it seems rather to form a perfect sphere of itself, and comprehends the large and influential body of the General Practitioners. These segments are further subdivided. The Surgeons, for example, may be members of the London College, of the Edinburgh College, or of the Dublin College; or, whilst exercising the office of Surgeon, they may have no other diploma than that of the Apothecaries' Company. Custom and predilection have concurred to bring the majority of the English Surgeons into the subsegment of the London College; but the attraction of cohesion which holds them together has of late been somewhat disturbed, so that certain cracks seem to indicate the existence of further subdivisions. Some are Fellows according to the old mode of creation, some by the good-will and invitation of the Council, some by passing a second examination which they have voluntarily sought, and some by a more comprehensive extension of the privilege granted by the Council. As respects the public in general, and perhaps even a large proportion of the profession also, these distinctions are very little thought of, and very little understood. The wounds of the public are dressed, their fractures are set, their dislocations are reduced, with little if any reference to them. Yet the pages of our professional periodicals have of late years abundantly attested, that these distinctions produce unpleasant feelings in the minds of the individuals who bear them, and that they have rendered the policy of the Council of the College of Surgeons extensively unpopular.

If we turn from the Surgeons to those who are exclusively engaged in the practice of Medicine, we see that they also are a class split by several divisions. There are the old Fellows, who took their station in right of a certain period of connexion

with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the possession of a recognised acquaintance with the original writings of Hippocrates and Aretæus. With these Fellows *de jure* were associated a few, admitted by special favour, and as the mark of some individual merit or pretension. The large majority practising as Physicians in this country, provided they were not too near the dusky atmosphere of the metropolis, as well as those who were settled in the Colonies, were content with having studied their profession in some of the distinguished medical schools attached to other Universities, and with receiving the Doctor's degree granted by them to such as conformed to their regulations, and stood the test of their examinations. Those, however, who wished to practise within the metropolitan district, after applying to the Oxonian and Cantabrigian Fellows of the College of Physicians, and affording them the proofs that they were as competent to cope with obscurity, and knew as much of the *ars conjecturalis* as themselves, were distinguished by the subordinate denomination of *Permissi*, or Licentiates, and allowed to compete for the individual favours of the Londoners, and also for some of the public appointments. Such distinctions very naturally produced heart-burnings, similar to those which I have mentioned as having of late existed among the Surgeons.

It is not my object to give a narrative of these feuds, the more remarkable of which took place before our time, and, as matter of history, are much more amusing than instructive. I have never understood that they produced any important accessions to our scientific knowledge; although I have heard that the learned Fellows assembled in Warwick Lane once proved the sedative effects of cold water, by copious affusions from a fire-engine on the persons of the too-ardently petitioning Licentiates, and thus anticipated the discoveries and triumphs of our modern hydropathists. The remonstrances of the Licentiates, pressed in a quiet, but steady and persevering manner, together with the growing influence of liberal opinions on public affairs in general, contributed however to the introduction of reforms in this direction within the penetralia of the College of Physicians; which reforms were, I believe, proposed and successfully advocated by Dr. Kidd, Dr. Billing, Dr. Elliotson, Dr. Clendinning, and some other

Fellows, distinguished alike by the extent of their acquirements, and the liberality of their views. A considerable number of those who were neither Graduates of Oxford, nor of Cambridge, nor of Trinity College, Dublin, were admitted to the full title of Fellows; and a still more important step was taken in effecting a change in the laws of the College, by which the distinctions of Licentiates, Inceptor-Candidates, and Candidates, were abolished, so that all the Fellows are now selected from one comprehensive class of Licentiates; and the impartial and well-selected creations of Fellows which have since taken place evince that the change has been, not merely apparent, but real.

We must not, however, regard the College as entitled to unqualified praise; since the change just noticed has been followed by another, which cannot be viewed with indifference or complacency by the older class of Licentiates. The College, which is not a University, which has no power to confer degrees, and which, by its laws and long established custom, required that those who presented themselves for examination in order to obtain the licence should, amongst other qualifications, be furnished with the degree of Doctor of Medicine legitimately obtained in a recognised University, has departed from this practice, and admitted to the Licentiate, and, by courtesy, to the distinction of Doctor, those who have no academic degree, and whose education may have been received at one of the merely medical schools. Far be it from me to insinuate that, in the exercise of this innovation, the licence of the College has been granted to any unworthy person. The grievance is, that an injurious principle is adopted. Those who thus receive the licence may be qualified to receive the Doctor's degree with the greatest *éclat*; but the examination of the College is not a test of this. Such creation of Licentiates is not merely to some extent an act of injustice to those who received the licence prior to this innovation, but is not fair to the regularly-constituted Universities, and, perhaps, is not strictly honest to the public. That the Fellows of the College would not be insensible to such an innovation, were it to affect themselves, may be inferred from their late Memorial to the Government.

I have now to offer a few remarks on another very large and important segment, in which we have much to admire, and

from which we have much to learn; although I would submit that there are some points in its practices and views which might be advantageously altered. It will be at once understood that I allude to that body which constitutes the great majority of the medical men of this country, and who are engaged in every department of their profession. The Apothecaries' Company may be considered as the common bond of union by which they are legally connected together; seeing that it grants the only licence which every one of them, who has not been so many years in practice as to be almost obsolete, is bound by law to possess. A large proportion of General Practitioners have voluntarily, or by the operation of some local or partial regulations, become Members of the College of Surgeons also; and it is as members of that College that they have been subjected to the injuries and indignities to which I have already alluded, and which I really believe the Council of the College inflicted hastily or inadvertently. Whilst a large number of General Practitioners have thus been made to suffer from their connexion with the College of Surgeons, a connexion which on their part has been voluntary and honourable, they have had nothing to complain of from the heads of the other body which has been mentioned, that is to say, from the Fellows of the College of Physicians. But it remains to be seen what effect will ultimately be produced on the body of General Practitioners, in consequence of many of their number voluntarily seeking the distinction of Licentiates of the College of Physicians, which, with no little injustice to the original Licentiates, has been offered to them by that College.

Although I have noticed the influence of the two Colleges on the great body of General Practitioners, I have said nothing of the official head to which that body is legally united. The Apothecaries' Company, recognised by law, and empowered to grant the only diploma which it is compulsory on the General Practitioner to possess, has done much to entitle itself to the thanks both of the profession, and of the public at large. If I am not mistaken, it was the first mover in that great elevation of the standard of medical education, which has benefitted the most remote and obscure parts of the country, and stimulated all ranks of the profession. Not content

with making the first move, it has, I believe, performed its full part in the progressive advance. Its improved examinations have not only exacted a more general and competent knowledge of those sciences with which it is essential that medical men should be acquainted, but it has produced a greater attention to preliminary education, which exerts so important an influence on our position in society, both as citizens, and as gentlemen. I do not mean to assert that the regulations of the Apothecaries' Company have done all that was required to be done; but I wish to recognise the merit of the Company, in having made an early and important movement in the right direction.

I am fearful of trespassing longer on your attention than is consistent with the object and custom of an Address like this; and yet I am solicitous, with your permission, to avail myself of so favourable an opportunity of laying before my fellow-members of the Harveian Society a few suggestions, in relation to changes which may ere long be effected, seeing that the present is a somewhat critical time, as regards the state of the medical profession in this country. Before I can proceed to the explanation of these suggestions, it seems necessary, however, that I should make some additional remarks respecting the Apothecaries' Company, as the authorised corporation of the majority of those who exercise the medical profession in England. Its origin, in connexion with an art and mystery rather than with a science and profession, and its actual, though limited operations as a trading company, may probably have contributed to prevent its becoming the ultimate object of ambition to the majority of Students and Practitioners. Conventionally, at least, its diploma does not indicate that high standing, either in Surgery or in Medicine, which is often attained by those who practice under its sanction. Hence the frequent voluntary addition of some other diploma. While such has been the estimate of the Apothecaries' diploma, a very important circumstance in relation to it appears to me to have generally escaped attention. The diploma of the Apothecaries' Company is virtually a licence to practice medicine; it also empowers its possessor to prepare and dispense the remedies which are employed; but I do not conceive that it compels him to do so in every, or even in any case. He

may write his prescription, and delegate the preparation to another, of whose qualifications he is supposed to be a judge. The legalized value of the Apothecaries' diploma has, therefore, partially abolished the Charter of the College of Physicians, and rendered its fellowship, or licence, rather a conventional step to a particular line of practice, than a matter of legal necessity. I advert to this fact without any hostile feeling to the College of Physicians, and merely to show that, should any future changes be thought necessary, a very important precedent has already been established.

So many draughts of medical reform have been sketched by the Government of the country, by various associations of medical men, and by individuals who have devoted attention to the subject, that it would be impossible for me to give even a mere outline of them on the present occasion. It is my own decided opinion, that the less we individually feel of legal exactions and restrictions, whether devised by the Government, or suggested by ourselves, the more will our comfort in the exercise of our profession be promoted. I do not mean by this to abolish that useful division of labour which custom has sanctioned; but merely that, the general possession of a sound and practical professional education being by law required from medical men of all ranks, the course thereafter to be pursued by each should be left, as much as possible, to his own choice. Hitherto we have had reason to rejoice that the efforts of the National Institute of General Practitioners, and of some other bodies, have succeeded in preventing the passing of laws for the regulation of the medical profession, by which it would have been rather injured than benefitted. But, whilst recognising the great value of these Associations as protective powers, I confess that I am not without serious apprehensions of the result, when any of them undertakes to propose new laws for our government, lest some unforeseen evil should attend their operation, and lest the individual liberty which we now virtually enjoy should be trenched upon.

The great body of General Practitioners, acting through the Council of the National Institute, has two principal objects in view: first, protection against indignities to which it is exposed from other professional bodies, or from the public;

as likewise, against the encroachments of irregular practice on the part of druggists and empirics ;—and, secondly, the elevation of the general character of the body, and the establishment of a principle of self-government ; for which purposes the General Practitioners desire to take into their own hands the education, the examination, and the licensing of the future members of their body ; and to place their government, legislative and administrative, on a representative and elective principle.

Whilst I cordially wish them success, as respects the promotion of science, and the increase of harmonious co-operation among the members of the medical profession of all classes, I entertain very serious doubts respecting the means by which these ends are sought to be attained. Will the circumstance of membership in the new body of General Practitioners have any effect, in preventing the unequal distribution of honours and favours on the part of the College of Surgeons ? Those who possess these distinctions will naturally magnify their importance, whilst the equal value and credit of the General Practitioner's diploma will be similarly applauded by those who have obtained it. The desire of connexion with the College of Surgeons, and the advantages accruing from it, will cease to exist for a large proportion of the profession ; yet conformity to established usage, or the bye-laws of Institutions to which they wish to become attached, may still compel many to seek it. The danger of schism will therefore be rather increased than diminished, since the new body will be more obviously a rival to the College than the old Company of Apothecaries has been. I do not think that there is at present any danger of a collision with the College of Physicians, owing to the fact, which I by no means intend to state offensively, that the functions of that body have virtually become a sinecure ; being, with the exception of acts affecting the Fellows themselves, almost confined to the exaction of fees. Were it however to become more active, by doing which I am far from thinking that it would increase either the prosperity or the comforts connected with it, it is very probable that it might come into collision with a body such as the General Practitioners propose to constitute.

With respect to protection against quacks and irregular practitioners, I do not see how any new body can effect more

than the Apothecaries' Company, and the College of Physicians are by law qualified to undertake. The difficulty of performance arises not so much from any defect in the law, as from the predilection for quackery which pervades a large portion of the public of all classes. Hence, though the unintentional homicide in a case of extreme mal-practice may be vindictively prosecuted and punished, there is no such sympathy with the medical profession, as would render their protection against the numerous instances of quackery at all popular. The effectual suppression of quackery must, therefore, be brought about by the public mind being enlightened on the subject; and, when this is accomplished, the patient will be as unwilling to trust his life in the hands of an ignorant practitioner, as the sportsman would be to discharge an untried gun-barrel.

The proposal to establish a distinct Medical School, and a distinct system of examination for General Practitioners, appears to be of very questionable utility. The several branches of education are so essentially the same for all classes of the profession, that there does not seem to be any perceptible advantage in such a plan, to counterbalance the probable inconvenience which might arise from there being separate Schools of Anatomy, Physiology, and Chemistry, for the General Practitioner, the Surgeon, and the Physician; and the institution of a distinct Examining Board would confirm the evil, by carrying the peculiarities of Teachers into the class-books and preparations for examination.

There is still another difficulty which presents itself. In order to supply all classes of the public with the means of medical assistance, it is absolutely necessary that some persons, whose resources preclude them from the most expensive and protracted course of education, should devote themselves to the practice of our profession. These persons will necessarily belong to the class of General Practitioners; and the instruction and examination reasonably adapted to their standard must be at variance with that elevation which the Institute is so laudably seeking to promote. If there is to be a common course of instruction and examination, the more ambitious or affluent will go elsewhere for acquirements and distinctions; unless the General Practitioners themselves institute within their College a progressive scale of examinations,

with corresponding distinctive titles; but in either case the desired unity and equality will be lost.

Again, it is no uncommon thing for the General Practitioner, whose assiduity and acquirements have obtained their well-merited rewards in public estimation and an easy independence, to desire to limit his practice to consultation, or to the attendance of select cases. Nothing can be more reasonable than such a wish considered in itself; but it is commonly associated with the desire of obtaining the title of Doctor of Medicine, or some equivalent in connexion with surgery. The degree of Doctor of Medicine is essentially an academic distinction, denoting a protracted course of advanced study; and, although there are many instances in which the degree is not granted on such grounds, the exceptions are to be regarded as cases of forgery, or debased standard, which should not invalidate the principle. That devotion to active practice, which confers invaluable experience and tact, is so different from extended and long-continued academic study, that practitioners who have been solely engaged in it are, as is well known, generally unfitted for the arena of academic competition. To grant the academic title, which implies postponed emolument for the sake of protracted study and increased acquirements, to which study and leisure are essential, on those whom inclination or necessity has induced to choose more early emoluments, and the cares and engagements of practice, is a misnomer, as well as an injustice. I would appeal to the most fortunate and skilful General Practitioner in existence, if he happen to be a father, and have given his son the most liberal professional education which time and affluence could confer, in order that he might obtain his Doctor's degree, whether he would desire, or even consent, to receive the same degree himself, if he could not also stand the test of the like examination, even though he might greatly surpass the young graduate at the bed-side of a patient. The conferring of the academic title on those who have not undergone the examinations for its attainment, should therefore form extremely rare exceptions, and be limited to such individuals as, by their researches or study, have rendered important services to the science or literature of their profession; and in such cases the title would be neither an injustice, nor a misnomer.

The only remaining object of the National Institute which I think it desirable at present to discuss, is the establishment of an elective representative body for the government of the class of General Practitioners. In the high value which I attach to individual liberty, I do not yield to any one; but I am very apprehensive that, in a profession like ours, the most perfect theoretical democracy would practically become a very mischievous oligarchy. Except on occasions of very peculiar interest, the majority of medical men engaged in practice, and especially those who are the most closely and profitably occupied, would either not care to exercise their elective power, or might even have various reasons for not doing so. But the active-minded and imaginative man with very little professional occupation, and a large class of the unsuccessful and disappointed, would always be ready, when elections were to take place, not only to vote, but to canvass. There would be a risk of their becoming very troublesome to their medical brethren, and they would require to be rigidly watched, in order to prevent the carrying of measures which might be either inconvenient or pernicious. I unite with the National Institute in advocating the principle of self-government, and in objecting to any plan which might place authority in the hands of a self-elected board; but I believe that the freedom and interest of any very numerous and widely-scattered class of individuals, such as the medical men of this country, would have its affairs most usefully and most liberally managed by a Council, undergoing periodical changes, and of which a large majority should consist of individuals appointed according to a principle which precludes the possibility of packing, and at the same time ensures a respectability of character, and a long standing in the profession, whilst an efficient minority should be selected by the Council at large, on the ground of superior qualification for office. (See Note I.)

I some time since attempted to sketch a plan of medical reform, which I conceived might attain the principal objects desired by its advocates, and confer an essential benefit on the public, without any violent change in the present constitution of the profession, or in the bodies at present established for the regulation of its affairs. This may be regarded as a concession to conservatism, which it is of practical importance to make. I produced this sketch in the

form of a Letter to my friend Sir James Clark, who had already written on the same subject, and who shared in most of the views which I had taken; and I am gratified to find that the scheme has been approved by many whose judgment I esteem. (See Note II.)

The most important innovation which I have proposed consists in the suggestion of a general State, or Government-Examination, the passing of which should confer the sole legal qualification for practice, and empower the individual to act in any or every department of his profession, either singly or in consultation. Such State-Examination should necessarily be preceded by the passing of some academic test; but the academic distinctions, which should be conferred in Surgery as well as in Medicine, should not be compulsory, and had better follow than precede the passing of the State-Examination. Under the proposed arrangements, the functions of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons would be easily defined, with very little alteration of their present state; and the appointment of suitable persons to conduct the State-Examination would be readily effected. (See Note III.)

The great difficulty for which in that scheme I made no provision, was the formation of a College to be composed of General Practitioners. The formation of such a body seems essentially to imply a defection from the two other bodies, since the scientific attainments required must, in kind, be the same as those required from Physicians and Surgeons; and formally to recognise inferiority in degree would be fatal to the honourable distinction to which that body justly aspires. Careful reflection on this subject has led me to the persuasion, that the difficulty may be much more easily overcome than I at first imagined. None of the Colleges would be required to institute examinations of their own, seeing that each would have performed its part in the nomination of the Examiners appointed by the State; and the examination by these functionaries, being subsequent to an academic test, would have settled the question of acquirements, which should then form no subject of jealousy between the three Colleges. To the third College, which I will not at present designate by name, might be assigned the nomination of the Examiners in Chemistry, Botany, Pharmacy, and half of those in Materia Medica, and Midwifery. The principal share in

the compilation of the Pharmacopœia, and in the visitation of druggists' shops and warehouses, and of Dispensaries both public and private, should be confided to the same College, which, for various reasons, ought, I am convinced, to comprise, not only General Practitioners, but also Practitioners in Pharmacy only. The latter, although not required to pass the State-Examination for a licence to practice, should be required to submit to so much of the examination as relates to Chemistry, Botany, Materia Medica, and Pharmacy, before becoming duly qualified Chemists and Druggists. The accomplished Pharmacians and practical Chemists, many of whom would be an ornament to any body to which they might be attached, would thus receive a distinction which has long been due to them; whilst the very important business of preparing and dispensing medicines, which, with great risk to the lives and health of the public, has hitherto been left wholly uncontrolled, would be placed under the superintendence of the body best qualified to undertake it. That most difficult practical question,—how the business of the Druggist and that of the Apothecary are to be mutually adjusted, so that they may not interfere with each other,—would be decided by the parties themselves, united in the same Council. The occasional production of a new Pharmacopœia, and the introduction of new formulæ, would also be placed in the hands of those most competent to perform the task.

I anticipate that some General Practitioners may say,—“This plan does not meet our wishes; it does not augment our professional reputation; but connects us more closely with art and commerce.”—To this it may be replied, that the State-Examination and licence would place them on a par with Physicians and Surgeons; that they would have an equal share in conducting and directing this examination; and that their connexion with art and manufacture depends on the inseparable connexion between the particular business in question, and professional and scientific knowledge. The General Practitioners, who are understood to exercise both the art and the profession, constitute the legitimate link, and are the parties on whom, for the good of the public, as well as of medical men themselves, the duties and honours assigned to them may best devolve. Individual distinctions, which, by academic titles and various proofs of proficiency, intimate protracted study or superior

knowledge, would be open to every one, in each division of the profession; but mere enrolment in any very large body could not possibly confer the same amount of honour. Provision should, moreover, be made for those who have passed the State-Examination, to be transferred from any one of the three Colleges to another, when the line of practice in which they are engaged may render it expedient. Some preliminary forms would be necessary, but no additional professional examination should be required.

Gentlemen, I must again crave your excuse, not only for the length of time during which I have trespassed on your attention, but also for having apparently deviated from the legitimate object of such an Address, which is, I understand, to set forth the advantages of an Association like ours; yet I submit that the digression is only apparent, and that the fact of my having brought forward a subject so comprehensive, really tends to show the advantage of these Societies, which both proclaim and preserve the unity and brotherhood of our profession, notwithstanding the distinctions and partitions which, for practical purposes, it has been thought expedient to establish between us. In the scheme which I have ventured to propose I may at least lay claim to impartiality. I commenced my professional studies among the Chemists and Pharmacians; in labours and researches, I have been associated with the Surgeons; and, in the exercise of our art, I have been scrupulously restricted to the practice of medicine; but have nevertheless been entirely unconnected with the councils and politics of any of the three bodies. I have, therefore, but one unbiassed wish for the general prosperity and honourable advancement of the Medical Men of my country, desiring that the words of Homer, from the lips of Helen, may be truly applicable to them:

“Nor dwells on earth a race that may pretend
In healing arts equality with them,
For they are genuine sons of Pæon all.”

NOTES.

NOTE I.

"I would recommend that two-thirds of the Council should consist of such ordinary Members, or Fellows, as would come on by rotation in the order of their standing, without reference to residence, professional distinction, party, or any other less worthy title. They should remain on the Council for a certain period, say four or five years, and come on again in the regular order of rotation. Any Fellow might, however, waive his right to be on the Council after it had come to him in due course. The remaining third should be elected by the Council, after having been proposed and duly announced to its Members individually during a certain period prior to their election. The third part so elected should be chosen from the ordinary Members generally, on grounds of which the Council alone should be the judges. This third would necessarily constitute the working part of the Council, and the mode of their nomination would enable the body to avail itself of the choicest talents of the profession for every important and worthy object. The mode of determining the other two-thirds would, at the same time, secure the existence of a majority of such a character as, if the occasion required, would have it in their power to check any party movement, so as to obviate all jealousy on the part of the body at large, much more effectually than could be done by any elective process, which the scattered Members of the College, widely differing as to their energies, leisure, and interest in the subject, could permanently and generally adopt. These two-thirds would be the honoured guardians of the privileges of their body. They would be regarded as such by their brethren; in return for which honour they could scarcely esteem it a hardship to hold themselves in readiness for any emergency which might occur during their limited period of office."—*Letter from Dr. Hodgkin to Sir James Clark, Bart.*

NOTE II.

"I would propose, in the first place, that there should be a common Examination for the licence to practise, to be submitted to by all, whether their object be to apply themselves more exclusively to Medicine or Surgery, or to combine the two; and that, for the convenience of students, examining boards for granting this licence should sit in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, giving diplomas on the same terms, and, as far as may be, equalising the severity of their tests. This Examination should be considered as a State, or Legal-Examination, whilst other Examinations are to be regarded as academic.

"Although *bonâ fide* degrees in Medicine and Surgery should be attainable only from the recognised Universities of the kingdom, or from such foreign Universities as might by courtesy be allowed to entitle their Gra-

duates to proceed *ad eundem gradum*, the examiners for the licence might, I think, be allowed to receive testimonials of proficiency, tested by examination, from other qualified bodies specially permitted to grant them. I make this proposal merely to avoid the apparent severity of driving all students to some University for academic examination, though I hold it to be very desirable, and even expedient, that they should voluntarily adopt that course."—*Letter from Dr. Hodgkin to Sir James Clark, Bart.*

NOTE III.

The duties of the College of Physicians would consist ;

1. In receiving candidates for admission into their body, and ascertaining whether they possess the requisite qualifications of having passed the State-Examination, of being furnished with satisfactory testimonials respecting private character, and equally satisfactory certificates from any other body of which they may have been Members, and from which they may be seeking to be transferred.

2. In taking cognizance of charges against Members, of a nature to affect the reputation of the body.

3. In electing their quota of Examiners for the State-Examination, and taking such part as may belong to the College in the direction and supervision of that Examination.

4. In electing various officers, such as President, Reader of the Harveyian Oration, Lecturers, and Registrar.

5. In suggesting suitable individuals for appointments requiring practical or theoretical knowledge, of a nature strictly medical, when such appointments are to be made by the Government ; such, for example, as relate to vaccination, insanity, epidemics, and quarantines.

6. In promoting the advancement of medical science, by such means as may legitimately devolve upon a body officially representing an important branch of the medical profession in this country.

7. In taking care of the property, and administering the funds constituting the income of the College, from whatever sources they may be derived.

These various functions would devolve on the Council constituted in the manner pointed out in Note I.

The duties of the College of Surgeons would be similar to those of the College of Physicians, as respects the reception and superintendence of its Members.

1. It would elect its officers ; amongst whom would be the Readers of the Hunterian Oration, Lecturers, Curators, and Illustrators of the Hunterian Collection.

2. It would also elect its quota of Examiners for the State-Examination, and superintend the performance of their duties.

3. It would aid the Government in all appointments, and other measures, in which Surgical and Physiological knowledge were more particularly concerned.

4. It should be required to encourage the progress of Surgical and Physiological knowledge, by proposing and awarding prizes, and by stimu-

lating, directing, and rewarding the zeal and industry of intelligent observers, experimenters, and collectors.

5. It would have property and funds placed under its care; the administration of which, in common with the other functions of the College, would devolve on a Council, composed on the same principle as that of the College of Physicians.

The third body, comprising the associated General Practitioners, and the Licentiates in Pharmacy, ought, for the sake of uniformity, to be called a College rather than an Institute.

Its official duties would be strictly analogous to those of the other two Colleges.

1st, As respects the admission and superintendence of its Members.

2dly, In taking part in the State-Examinations. The branches of science, in respect of which it should in this way co-operate, have already been suggested in the course of the Address.

3dly, Botanical lectures and gardens, as likewise pharmaceutical processes, and collections, should be confided to the care of this College.

4thly, In its relations with the Government, it would be the legitimate adviser in whatever relates to the supply of medical and surgical relief to the poor, as well as in all questions in which the chemical and medicinal properties of particular articles may exert an influence on the public health, and demand the consideration and the care of the Government.

5thly, It should have prizes, and other incentives and rewards for merit at its disposal. Thus, in the importance and extent of its duties, this College would be on a par with the other two. Amongst its members would be men of high scientific attainments, more than a few of whom would probably be Graduates in Medicine, Surgery, or Philosophy, or such as have obtained other marks of distinction for their proficiency in some particular branch of science. This would be the case with the Pharmacutists no less than with the General Practitioners; and on this point it will be sufficient to mention the late excellent President of the Pharmaceutical Society, William Allen, who was a worthy colleague of Sir Humphrey Davy, to prove that in England Pharmacutists might join and do honour to a Faculty of Medicine, as well as in Belgium; where, when I visited Brussels, Van den Corput, an enlightened Pharmaceutist, was Dean of that Faculty.

Like the other two Colleges, the third would have its funds and its Council, similarly constituted.