Remarks on the extension of education at the University of Oxford : in a letter to the Rev. W. Jacobson, D.D. ... / by Henry Wentworth Acland.

REMARKS

ON

THE EXTENSION OF EDUCATION

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

IN A LETTER TO

THE REV. W. JACOBSON, D.D.,

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, AND CANON OF CH. CH., OXFORD.

BY

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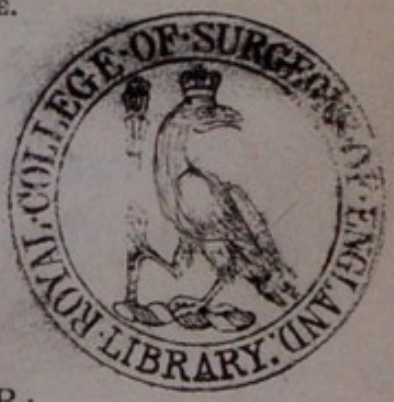

OXFORD,

JOHN HENRY PARKER;

AND 377, STRAND, LONDON.

M DCCC XLVIII.

OXFORD:
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This Letter does not contain any scheme of University Education, the framing of which is neither in my province, or my power. It is only intended by it to press on the serious attention of those who have to prepare, and to make into law, any alteration in our system, two subjects on which I have long and anxiously thought.

After repeated conversations on these two points with professional and non-professional friends, and with one especially, who has, with an affectionate kindness that I can never repay, assisted me on many occasions besides this, I have thought it my *duty* to offer my opinion respectfully to Members of Convocation.

But I must henceforward leave the matter wholly to those who have more leisure and in-

clination than myself for discussion on these and other points of University Reform.

I may add here, that I have intentionally avoided all reference to the plans for Medical Education pursued at our sister University, or to any other matters which do not bear immediately on our own duties.

Oxford,
Nov. 2, 1848.

My Dear Dr. Jacobson,

I am well aware that I owe to Members of Convocation, and especially to yourself, some apology for printing the following letter, on the subject of the proposed change in our course of studies. But I must plead as excuse, that my remarks will be wholly confined at present to two points, which I myself, as Teacher of Anatomy, may be presumed to have considered with some care, while I think that few Members of Convocation (comparatively speaking) have had the question forced upon them in the same way. Indeed so strongly do I feel this to be the case, that I even think I should be guilty of neglect of duty, did I not humbly submit my opinion on the particulars in question, to those who will have to decide the fate of our future studies, feeling sure that it will have all that I desire, a fair hearing. And I have asked permission to address my remarks to you, not only because of the high place which you fill here, but because I am bound to you by old ties of personal esteem and regard; to these I may add the relation in which I now stand to you as one of the

Trustees of the Readership of Anatomy, which I hold; and I am glad of this opportunity of acknowledging that not only am I grateful to the Trustees, the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, for constant acts of consideration and kindness towards myself, but their College and the University are equally indebted to them for the liberal manner in which they administer the affairs of the Anatomy School.

The two points which I desire to press on the earnest attention of all who have any influence in the matter, are:—

1st. The duty of introducing the Elements of certain branches of Natural Knowledge into the list of studies necessary for all persons taking the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

2nd. The necessity of a re-consideration of our responsibilities, and prospects, as a University having the privilege of granting degrees in Medicine, and giving licence to practise.

These subjects are, as seems to me, so intimately connected, that they cannot with any propriety be discussed separately; a circumstance very likely to be overlooked by such as are not conversant with the ordinary course of medical study. It is, however, one of considerable importance to the well-being and character of the University, because, whether it be or be not our duty to provide against our Graduates leaving the University in utter ignorance of the first principles of those great laws which are

imposed on the material world, it *is* a duty to make *some* reasonable use, in respect of education, of the foundations we have accepted and now possess for the furtherance of knowledge, in Anatomy, Botany, Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, Geology, &c.

This we can hardly be said to do at present, and perhaps the cause may be found in the erroneous, but prevalent opinion, that those Sciences, or at least some of them, belong solely to the department of Medicine. Then, since it is felt to be a fact, that we have not, and perhaps never shall have, any professional school of Medicine, it is thought to be no injury to the character of the University, that it gives no serious attention to the condition of these studies.

Now all who advisedly or carelessly reason thus, may be surprised to hear, that the real value of the Foundations, of which I speak, arises wholly from the service they perform for general liberal education, and not for detailed professional instruction. If their argument is carried out, it will appear, that should they not be maintained in an efficient and creditable manner for these purposes of general education, then they ought to be abolished altogether; a proposition which no one (I suppose) would be rash enough to entertain.

Now let us address ourselves fairly to the point before us. Many persons say that we ought to give more encouragement to the physical sciences

than we do. What do they mean? They mean two things; or rather, some mean one thing, some the other, and some both one and the other.

Some mean that we ought to teach the rudiments of Natural Knowledge to those who come here to be educated. That is one opinion. Some mean, that being a famous University, we ought to press forward human knowledge in the direction of Objective Science, that we ought to be training up and keeping professed Botanists, Physiologists, and Chemists. That is another opinion. The more sanguine mean both of these.

On the present occasion I shall only seek to maintain the former opinion. I do not mean that I would not gladly maintain the latter also; but it seems better now to keep the duties of the University, as Educator, free from her duties, as the Promoter of Discovery in Science.

Agreeing then with those who are desirous that the rudiments of Natural Knowledge should be imparted to those who come here to be educated, I earnestly beg you and all well-wishers to Oxford, to lend your weight to bring about this object; and I beg this of you on the following simple, and (I imagine) admitted grounds.

In all sound schemes for education there are two distinct parts and objects: the Discipline of the mind, and the communication of Knowledge. These may be carried on in more or less intimate connection; for though they may be *different*, they are not *opposed*

in character; and any scheme which does not combine a fair proportion of each is a defective one. It is not many years since there arose in this country a great cry for what was called "Useful Knowledge;" because it was noticed that men who had spent ten or twelve years in the usual routine of the Schools and Universities emerged in entire ignorance of things, which have an immediate bearing on their daily life; and though they might be good scholars, or good logicians, (which all were not,) it was found that this advantage did not make up for their other deficiencies. So, honest and earnest men sought to infuse into the Education, which had mental Discipline for its object, a large portion of that Knowledge which in life is supposed to be *practically useful.* "Useful Knowledge" became a common expression; and unintentionally and unawares, a suspicion that Latin and Greek were "useless knowledge" was first whispered, and then with many broke out into plain speech. The sound discernment of our old Universities saw the error of this; and then, or at least certainly in Oxford, there arose a re-action against "Useful Knowledge," and the term became, with many, a word of reproach. This re-action was carried very far; and, with that genuine English characteristic for which the nation is now thanking God,—slowness to change,—we have not yet swung back to the middle and the true point. Yet I would fain hope that we are moving steadily towards it; and

trust that we may be able in due time to find it, and prudently keep it.

The fact is, we are apt not to admit the truth above stated, that mental training, and the acquisition of much useful knowledge are not only compatible, but that they mutually aid each other. I have no doubt but that in this, as in almost all human affairs, judgment and prudence alone can decide how much of any plan of education should have special reference to the training of the faculties, and how much to the imparting of actual knowledge, available for after life.

I fear that you, who have been successfully giving, for I will not say how many years, that education about which I am theorizing, will have become very weary of so long a profession of my creed on this point. But I thought it necessary to state it fully, by way of introduction to this other statement:—

That, in my judgment, those who are conscientiously refusing to admit into our necessary course of studies any, which they do not see or believe to be *directly* instrumental in training the mind by way of Discipline, *are unconsciously depriving themselves of an engine most powerful for their own object; and further, that of all such studies none is more powerful for such object than that of the chief laws of the natural world.* For it may be confidently asserted, that every one, who is acquainted with the present condition of physical science, will agree

that a general acquaintance with it, given and received in a proper spirit, *must* ennoble the learner and give him a more true knowledge of his condition and a more thankful appreciation of it.

Indeed so certainly does this appear to be the case, that it is for the effect upon the moral quite as much as on the intellectual character, that the cause of this kind of instruction should be advocated; and (I say it most respectfully) *any man really anxious for the full development of the mental powers of his pupils, is doing himself and them a serious disservice, nay (considering the station of many educated here) an injury to his country, who does not set himself to ascertain what is the most feasible method of adding to the study of Language, Logic, History, and Religion, the study of the general nature of the Planet in which he is placed, and of the Material Conditions under which his work of probation is to be performed.*

The University is indebted to Dr. Daubeny for the timely publication of a clear statement of the departments of Natural Knowledge, an elementary acquaintance with which "ought to be regarded as part of every complete system of education," namely:—

1st. "Those which comprehend the knowledge of the general laws common to all matter whatsoever," or *Natural Philosophy*.

2ndly. "The special properties and relations of those bodies, which are either most familiar to us,

most useful, or most generally diffused throughout nature," or *Chemistry*.

3rdly. "The general laws which govern life as it exists both in the animal and in the vegetable creation," or *General Physiology*.

On the fitness of this classification it is needless to dwell; but I would urge those who have not seen Dr. Daubeny's pamphlet to read it. There will they find that these sciences involve the fundamental and necessary knowledge for *all* natural sciences of a special and separate kind; so that *these, and no others*, should be required as *necessary* from all Passmen and from those who would obtain honours in any special science. And hence they will infer that the incorporation of them into our studies will be only enlarging our principle of educating men chiefly by the direct training of their faculties.

Of the interest attaching to these subjects when studied in an intelligent though cursory manner, it might seem impertinent to speak, were it not that the education and circumstances of many persons have prevented them from forming correct conceptions of their nature. They have perhaps been led to think of the physical sciences as of a series of facts, which they are, but not isolated and unconnected: they are facts connected, illuminated, interpreted, so as to become the intelligible embodied expression to His creatures of the will of God. They have been wont too often to think of hard words and pedantry, and not of living

truths, which those words feebly represent, or that pedantry sadly disfigures; and they do not consider that if the teacher of Natural Knowledge fulfil his mission as he ought, he is striving to lift up the veil from the Works of the Creator, no less than the Christian preacher from His Word.

It is, as I said before, because a general insight into natural laws is ennobling, and not simply because it is "*useful*[a]" that we are thus urgent in pressing it as a part of education. For by the study of them, men add to their store ideas wholly different from those obtained in any other way. Consider what is really contained in any one of the three sciences which we propose to add to our system. In General Physiology for instance, (which I take partly because I am most familiar with it, and partly because it exhibits in a certain sense the application of the laws explained in the two other sciences, which therefore are necessarily implied in it;) what class of facts, what results of enquiry and thought does the learner here first become acquainted with? It is not of his own material frame only, its organs, and their functions, that he acquires notions; but he learns of the structure and form of man, that they are as it were the type, or the typical crown-piece, of a vast assemblage of organized beings, constructed on one law, modified into a thousand varieties; all however so intimately connected with

[a] Cf. Modern Painters, by a Graduate of Oxford, vol. ii. p. 3 et sqq.

each other, that neither he nor they can be understood alone; all obeying a determinate force, and following a definite plan. So he sees in his own special nature the visible expression of his spiritual condition; he learns what is essential to his frame for its existence, what common to other natures, what peculiar to his own; he catches hints and glimpses of the action of his senses, and of his will, enough to throw new life into the study of his mind's working. There steals over him a fresh but mysterious sense of the hand of the Creator in him and about him; he learns something of the mutual relationship of all living beings, that are appointed with him to have here their end and way, something of the conditions of life of the existing and the former world, something of the distribution and physical history of his own race; of such he learns enough to awaken his interest, to enlarge his sympathies, and to make a heart though ever so thankful, more thankful still.

Now I say nothing of the practical "use" of this general knowledge in after life. I am thinking of it only as a means of mental training. Could an intelligent and good man, ignorant of the outlines of these subjects, be otherwise than better for learning them? To speak plainly. Would the young lawyer, with such ideas flowing along and intermingling with those derived from his classical and mathematical studies, be more or less likely to find interest and improvement in his leisure hours, amid

the inestimable advantages afforded by the scientific collections and meetings of London? Would the country gentleman, supposing he had necessarily heard but one course of lectures on these three subjects (treated in the way described), and passed some reasonable examination in them, be otherwise than fitter for his position and so happier in it? Would our clergymen be the worse for a knowledge of some of the great glories of this material world, be less good pastors, because they had been obliged to learn just enough of Chemistry and Physiology, to enable them to appreciate the causes of disease, the means of health and comfort, and to give them some understanding of the amazing plan of organized beings, among whom in this planet man is the chief?

"That is very true," I hear it said; "but all men have not inclination or taste for these things." Have all men for Logic or Euclid? "But they have no time." Well; they spend three years here; and I propose three courses of lectures to be attended, no one exceeding twenty-four lectures. Could they not find twenty-four hours a year for this purpose, and some three hours for reading, or for the study of museums, after each lecture? If the elements of these objects help to enlarge their minds, to raise their thoughts, to train their faculties, cannot the length of a single day for demonstrative lectures, and some two or three for reading, be added yearly to the working hours they now have?

To these opinions two exceptions will be taken, I fear, by many persons, by some even whom I am happy to call my friends. The one, that no good end could be obtained by such *superficial* study as I propose; the other, that my plan could not be carried out, unless undergraduates be *compelled* to attend the professorial lectures. I anticipate these objections because I know from conversation that they are likely to be made. A cry against *superficiality* and *compulsion* will be raised, and no more said or thought about the matter.

Now, as to the first, I refer chiefly to what was said above, that the value of this elementary knowledge is more for its influence in forming the character, than for the mass of facts which it imparts. I need not recapitulate what was then said. But I must add that I feel quite confident that much sound and valuable knowledge may be imparted in the number of lectures which I have named, and that in my judgment courses of lectures on natural subjects, as given in other places, are frequently far too long. The most important part of a professor's duty as a teacher of students, is to make comprehensive summaries, to suggest, point out sources of information, enter into particular details on important matters little known, keep his pupils in view of the real position, and relative bearings of his subject, and to state real difficulties and the way to overcome them, so as to raise curiosity in them and enable them to work for themselves in an ad-

vantageous way. He wastes his own time and theirs, if he endeavours by detail to save the pupils personal labour. All teachers of Anatomy and Chemistry for instance, (I believe I may say simply *all teachers*, not *crammers*,) know this. And further, I may add, that just as the most detailed instruction is not necessarily philosophical, so *elementary* teaching need not be *superficial*, but indicative of the deepest truths. Some men are always superficial and some never; and some laws, which in the advance and progress of human knowledge were not reached for some thousands of years, may be made to reveal themselves in a short and simple way, and to leave an impress never to be effaced from any mind capable of receiving it. I can do no more on this head than sum up my conviction, that *elementary* (not *superficial*) knowledge, on these fundamental subjects, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and as it is called General Physiology, is a valuable instrument of general training of a *kind* which no other teaching can supply; that this benefit may be obtained without much expenditure of time; that in the lectures it should not be attempted to impart the details of the subjects; and that though brief they need not have the many evils of "superficial and popular instruction."

The second objection to which I alluded is, that it is implied by me that men should be compelled or required to attend the professor's lectures, and that all such compulsion or requisition is bad.

I disclaim all intention of entering into any discussion on this point. I have not however the horror of the "compulsory attendance," *either on tutors or professors*, which many have, and it would seem that under this arrangement, some advantages and some dangers exist, which do not occur under the more free system. I am in favour of it, as a present arrangement, for it is a simple mode of engrafting the proposed addition. It is adopted here in Oxford with all College lectures, and on the whole works well with professional lectures in Scotland. At all events I am quite convinced of this, that if beginners, with average abilities, are to learn anything of these subjects easily and well, they must attend some lectures; that if the lectures are to be good, there must be collections, instruments, drawings, and good teachers; that to secure these, the teachers must have no desire to quit the place, and must be able to maintain themselves and their families by their work, and that *in some way* the University must provide for them, if she wish to have them; that it is no new or grievous thing that pupils should pay their teachers—say, £2. 2s. per annum, and that any plan which tends to make gentlemen feel they have undertaken a responsible duty in a public place which it would be disgraceful to slight, is better than one which makes them dependant on popularity for their subsistence.

Sooner or later, in some form or other, the change which is here advocated will be made. I

trust that the sound educational foundations which the University has hitherto had, and which alone make the proposed superstructure safe, may not be injured. For this, the best chance is to add at once, what it is evident must be added at last. And I am not a little sanguine that the many distinguished persons of all stations resident here, who are earnestly bent on bringing about such improvements as they think right, may see cause to add to the requirements for a B.A. degree the matters now advocated. And this among other reasons may weigh with them, that not seldom they must have heard persons as they advance in life, express either the greatest regret that they did not, or the greatest gratification that they did, avail themselves at the University of the teaching on these very subjects; for most men find out that in after life no such opportunities occur again.

It may be simply done. The heads of Colleges or the tutors, who desired it, might require their men to attend lectures, according to the regulations by which the Christ Church men now attend the lectures on Natural Philosophy. This would at least be a beginning, until a more satisfactory arrangement could be made by the University. And if it be urged that the attendance of the Christ Church men is not productive of good effects, I reply,—*Require them to produce what is taught them at an examination, and it will be productive.*

Lectures on Natural Philosophy should be first

attended, then on Chemistry, then on Physiology; not more than one course in one term; and, at the end of it, an Examination, which for pass-men must be slight. This need not be at the time of either of the General Examinations; but a testamur from the appointed Examiner, on each subject, should be presented at the admission to the B.A. degree. Thus men would suit their own tastes and convenience to a great extent; only they could not cram these three subjects into one term. The educational value of the addition will be lost, unless it is spread over a certain space of time, so as to be made collateral with other studies. I mean, that if the three subjects were crammed into one term, men would not derive the same benefit that they might by attending one course a term or one a year, while their classical and philosophical and religious education is in progress.

I will add no more about elementary studies. But something may be suggested about the consequences which may flow from them. These it is almost certain will not be few. Not only will a mass of intelligent interest be raised in subjects cognate with these fundamental sciences, not only will many country gentlemen be led on to a more complete study of Chemistry, &c., which will make them better agriculturists and better landlords, more aware of the laws of life, and health, and disease; but they who have a taste for such pursuits, or talents for them, will find their vocation

and fill it. If honours are to be obtained for proficiency in such knowledge, there is no fear but that many will seek and obtain them ; men distinguished for such knowledge will soon find fellowships open to them ; the teacher will not so much complain of necessary idleness ; and at least *some* men (I am not Utopian enough to say *all,* or even *most*) will leave the place with an awakened curiosity and general habits of industry, who under the present confined system learn nothing with interest, remember little of what they have learnt, and then in later life abuse us for not doing our duty. I am not weak enough to think that any such alteration as is here advocated will prove a remedy for all the shortcomings we may feel conscious of in our institutions. But that is not the question. The question is, will the change be a good one? Now I say, it *must* be good to *some* extent. It *must*, and *will* bear *some* fruit ; what its *full* fruit may be, we may hope, but need not now enquire. But surely it will be no small thing, if, by our enlarged and increased interest in the results of intellectual labour, the young of our upper classes are able to receive and bestow more sympathy among the scientific workers whose influence is daily more and more felt. It will be no small thing, if such sympathy should in time become general and hearty; and if we are able to throw into our public institutions that calm and unprejudiced temper which can be more easily preserved in those

who are not hurried on by the toil, ambition, and necessities of professional or scientific life.

A man may be called a dreamer who advocates such a change in our education, and who says he expects to see it; and some may even be found who shall call him selfish. But the question ought not, and will not be settled upon the decision of these points,—whether he be a dreamer, or whether he be selfish. The real points to decide are whether his proposals are good or no; whether in after times it will be thought that we have conferred more benefit on our country, and more honour on our University, by offering to the minds of those entrusted to us, or by withholding from them, some means of understanding those material laws which it has been vouchsafed to the labour of centuries to attain.

The Second Subject which it seemed to me right to press upon your notice is, (as was said,) "The necessity of a reconsideration of our responsibilities and prospects as a University which has the privilege of granting degrees in Medicine, and of giving the Licence to Practise."

It has been stated in evidence before the House of Commons, by some of the most distinguished physicians and surgeons in the kingdom, by Sir B. Brodie, Mr. Green, Mr. Lawrence, Dr. G. Burrows, Dr. Hawkins, Dr. Holland, and Dr. Paris, that (to use the words of one of them) "it is of immense importance not only to the order of physicians, but to the profession generally, that members of the English Universities should be induced, if possible, to enter the Medical Profession[b]." And again, Sir B. Brodie speaking of *surgeons* says[c], "that their being educated at the Universities is, in my opinion, very desirable;" meaning "that it is desirable that they should get a good education."

Now this being so, what is the fact? I believe that, though the most eminent physicians and surgeons say they earnestly wish their students to have an University education, there are not thirty-five persons on the books of all the different Colleges and Halls in Oxford, with the degree of M.D., nor fifteen with that of M.B.

It must be admitted that the discussion of this subject is less adapted for the pages of a pamphlet than that of the former. It is not a simple question to be determined by the University alone, and for herself; it can hardly be examined without some reference to the College which licenses the phy-

[b] Minutes of Evidence, taken before the Select Committee on Medical Registration, 1047, 1070.

[c] Ibid., 2091, 2093.

sicians of England ; and I would willingly have left a matter so delicate untouched, were it not that I feel strongly how necessary it is for the University to do *her* duty in this matter.

I cannot pretend here to give you a complete view of this important subject. All I wish at present is to put you, and through you all members of Convocation, in possession of certain information which it seems right they should have. For they must bear in mind that however alien the regulations of medical affairs may appear to most of our Resident Graduates, yet they are responsible not only for the positive acts of the University, but for any neglect or omission on her part in any matter in which she has duties and privileges.

It is known probably to most members of Convocation, that more than one bill has been in preparation within the last few years for the purpose of regulating the mode of granting licences to practise in Medicine. This will make it evident that our interests are *in some way* concerned.

Indeed it is well known that evidence is already before a Committee of the House of Commons, for the purpose of determining the merits of the various bodies licensing to practise in Medicine; which evidence I conclude will hereafter be made public. It will not be amiss then to give a brief statement of the position in which the University stands at present with respect to her Licence to practise in Medicine.

Now some persons may join issue here, and say, "We really do not care anything about the matter. For the last twenty years Oxford has not granted (on the average) more than two degrees of M.D. a year. It cannot be of any consequence what her privileges and duties in respect of Medicine are; nor can it matter whether she keep them or lose them."

I must beg these persons (if there be such) to read with patience what follows; whence I hope it will appear, that notwithstanding the melancholy truth which they allege, yet Oxford has a great, a very great interest in the question; nay, not only Oxford, but still more (as I believe) the country at large.

I will begin by reminding you of what is well known to most persons, that there has been much agitation in the Medical Profession on the subject of Medical reform; that the Legislature has contemplated certain alterations in the internal regulation of the Profession; that certain "principles[d]" have been agreed upon, after much discussion among the influential persons of the Profession; and that a bill was about to be prepared and presented to Parliament last session. Happily for us there was not time to complete the necessary enquiries, before finally framing and bringing it in; and we have once more (which was not to be expected) an opportunity to reconsider the matter.

[d] These "Principles" may be obtained through any bookseller, in the Medical Gazette of the 17th of March, 1848.

The present privileges in respect of Medicine possessed by the University are these.

She has, 1st the power of granting degrees, and 2ndly of licensing to practise in Medicine: (for a person may obtain a degree in Medicine without having the licence to practise, for which he pays a special fee.)

But persons licensed by Oxford cannot practise in London, or within seven miles of it, and do not become members of the College of Physicians, except by undergoing a fresh examination.

Now the first question which arises is this; whether (supposing the matter to be left to our option) this latter power is worth retaining, the power (I mean) of licensing to practise out of the metropolis.

I, for my part, think it not worth retaining. I think so, 1st. Because it seems to me better for the country at large, and for the Medical Profession (indeed for Oxford also), that the power of licensing the Physicians of England, should reside in some one board acting on fixed and known principles; 2ndly, Because this privilege is now of little value, as is proved by the few persons who avail themselves of it; 3rdly, Because it cannot be supposed, that to so small a Medical School as ours, (indeed we have none [e],) any further privilege will be granted; and if

[e] It may interest some persons to know that for a complete Medical School we should require Courses of Lectures, on the following subjects, at least—(it being customary to give fifty Lectures

retained in its present form it will cast a slur on our Graduates, rather than otherwise, marking them as the Physicians who may not practise in the metropolis; 4thly, Because it is probable, that by a voluntary surrender of this privilege, we may obtain an equivalent which may be of some service to the country, and of great advantage to the University, not only directly in respect of Medical education but also indirectly in furthering that general education in Natural Knowledge to which I have already called your attention. What this equivalent is, will be mentioned presently.

But in order to obtain the good will of the College of Physicians, and the consent of the Government, to the change I am about to advocate, *we must ourselves make some advance and not appear indifferent to the whole matter.* I trust that the University will make this advance at once, if it can be shewn that the change I speak of is honourable and advantageous to all parties; and that it is our bounden duty to further it (in some shape or other) as offering the only feasible mode of giving reality and substance to our Medical degrees.

on some, and about a hundred on others of them.) Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry, Botany, "Natural Philosophy," Clinical Medicine, the Theory and Practice of Medicine, Materia Medica, Surgery, Clinical Surgery, Midwifery, and the diseases of Women and Children, Medical Jurisprudence, and Comparative Anatomy. There would be also a School of Practical Human Anatomy, of Practical Chemistry, and Practical Pharmacy, not to say the basis of all good Medical Instruction, a large Hospital, with a population to fill it. We have courses of Lectures on only the six first of these subjects.

First then, I would recommend the surrender of the power to license for practice, on the understanding that we receive instead certain privileges, which I will state presently. Indeed it is too probable, that unless we make this proposition, we shall lose this power without any equivalent. 2ndly, I would propose that our Medical Degrees should be made to represent a reality which now they do not. They do not prove that their possessors have had a Medical education here, for we have no Medical School; nor do they guarantee that their holder has received a general Oxford education, inasmuch as a Dublin man may obtain one. They only prove that the graduate in Medicine has passed a Medical examination here[f]. He *may* have had his non-professional, and *must* have had his professional education elsewhere. He need not have spent a week in the place.

Now to remedy these anomalies, two plans may be proposed. Either we must make our education equivalent to the nominal value of our degree, or we must reduce the value of our degree to the standard of some known plan of education.

[f] You ought to know that this does not in the opinion of many persons in the Profession prove much. A Reviewer in one of the most important Medical Periodicals in the Kingdom says lately, "The Medical Examinations at Oxford and Cambridge are well known to be utterly inefficient." I mention this because it is right that you should be aware that persons, entitled to a hearing, often speak so, and of course are often believed. I think myself that both with respect to Oxford and Cambridge, the writer of the article in question has been misinformed.

For the first plan we should have to create here an efficient Medical school. In this case an Oxford M.D. degree would represent both the non-professional education in Arts, (as it is called,) and the professional education in Medicine, as given in this place.

The other plan is, to let the degree of M.B. stand (as it should) for the education in Arts, or as it might be called the complete University education, and for a *partial* professional education. In this case, the *completion* of the professional education must be sought (as it is now) in London, Edinburgh, &c. ; after which the M.D. degree might be granted (if desired), and so it would represent the *complete* as the M.B. would the *partial,* professional education. All persons applying for the M.D. degree would already have obtained the licence to practise as a Physician in London ; the College of Physicians being supposed the only body in England empowered to grant such licence.

Now I object to the first of these two plans, that of establishing a Medical school here, for two reasons.

1st. Because there are already a sufficient number of Medical schools in the empire ; another is not wanted.

2nd. Because if an additional school were wanted I do not think Oxford the best place for such school. Oxford is a county town of no large size, so that the hospital cases are far more limited in number than

in the metropolis of this or other countries; a large field for clinical observation is absolutely necessary for a good Medical school. A small hospital will teach any man much; a large one will teach him more. To most Medical students every day in the wards is precious: and the more they can see in the days of their pupilage, the better for them in the years of their practice. I do not mean to say that a large Medical school *cannot* be created by a great man, on the basis of a small hospital, either here or elsewhere, just as a Chemical school has been created at Giessen by Liebig; or as a Law school might have been created by Blackstone here in Oxford. But whatever success attended such a school, it would probably die with its founder. The want of extensive hospital practice, as well as of other advantages attendant on early reputation in London, and other large towns, will sooner or later make a school in a town of this size (found it who may) inferior to the schools of London, or Edinburgh, or Paris, or Dublin.

What is necessary to the Country in this matter is that there should be large practical schools to make good practitioners: where they are matters not. It is no duty of this or any other University to teach what it cannot teach well, and what is already, and always will be, well taught elsewhere.

However, though a complete school of Medicine is not likely to be established, nor indeed is to be desired here, yet no one can doubt but that a school

for the branches of knowledge introductory to the study of Practical Medicine can be carried on here with the best possible results, and (as I think) with great success.

At the outset of his studies in the great hospitals, the Medical student has his mind distracted and his time taken up by the multiplicity of subjects which must be studied at once. Often he has to attend four or five lectures in a day, on various subjects, besides his hospital practice; by the time these are over he is perhaps so worn out, that he has no time or energy to arrange and order what he has heard, still less to enquire further, and examine books illustrative or explanatory of the lectures. Now if these subjects were divided into *partially professional* and *wholly professional*, and the former could be disposed of while in residence at Oxford, how great would be the gain to the student! For these studies he would have the quiet of this place instead of the hurry and bustle of the hospital; his mind would be fixed on comparatively few subjects, which he would have time to master thoroughly, and he would find leisure and opportunity (in our noble libraries) to extend and improve his knowledge to the uttermost.

It is much better not to enter now into all the details of a scheme which it would be well to adopt in Oxford; far more minutiæ would have to be discussed than could be introduced here, but the following elements should be kept in view.

1st. All persons having a degree in Medicine must have passed the usual examination in Arts, improved, as we hope it may be, before long.

2ndly. It would probably be advisable, as has been proposed by other persons, to fix the B.A. degree earlier than it now is, and then let the B.M. degree follow at such a time as should be determined. And a Board must be constituted to select the subjects of examination for that degree, and to regulate all things pertaining to the Medical Faculty. It is not for me to dictate the constitution of the Board; but of course the Regius Professor of Medicine would be its President, and I think that *at least* one half should consist of professional persons.

3rdly. For the M.B. degree, no person should be examined in the practice of Medicine, but in the sciences preliminary to it, as Anatomy, Physiology, Comparative Anatomy, Chemistry theoretical and practical, Botany, perhaps in the Principles of Pathology, and 'Hygiene.'

4thly. The Board would determine whether and how far these subjects should be studied here; only the University should negotiate with the College of Physicians, that our testamur *might* be accepted by them as evidence of proficiency in these preliminary sciences. The success of this negotiation would of course depend partly on the character of the lectures established here, partly on that of the examination on which the testamur was granted. I have reason to think that influential members of

the College of Physicians would be found ready to encourage this proposal. This would be some equivalent for the surrender of the licence to practise, though I have yet to suggest *the* equivalent.

Now, upon this arrangement, the Oxford degree of M.B. would guarantee, 1st. That the graduate had received our general education in Arts. 2ndly. That as he had passed such examination in the general fundamental sciences of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and Physiology, as will (I trust) be required from all graduates, so also that he has shewn further proficiency in them, and the other secondary Natural Sciences, as well as in Logic, Medical Ethics, and the History and Philosophy of the Natural Sciences, in so far as the Board determines these to be a proper preparation for the study of Practical Medicine.

The number of men who pass through Oxford to the Professions of Medicine and Surgery may by such means be made to increase. Let vigilant care, and forethought be taken, that in any plan which is pursued with respect to them there is no tendency to collect them into a separate body of men. A Scholarship or Fellowship in every College for Students in Medicine to be retained for ten years, would be an easy, and invaluable gift to a hard-worked Profession. But to found twenty Scholarships in one College would be mistaken munificence. The necessary result would be the loss of one great use of an University education in-

tercourse between mind and mind, unfettered by narrow views, and professional bias. Let no clamour or argument induce the University to require less of classical and religious education of those who proceed in Medicine than of those who only proceed in Arts. The whole value of our Medical degrees (whatever that be) is lost, if there is in this place any *substitution* of professional knowledge for general education. We only wish to *engraft* a semi-professional upon our general education, and to send out the Medical Student better prepared to enter upon the perplexing and difficult studies which await him at the great hospitals, able to avail himself more fully of the teaching and experience of those hospitals, as also to use aright the other means of instruction, the Museums and Societies which the metropolis alone can afford.

Young men so prepared could not fail to take a high place among the students, and to confer by their superior general education some advantages on their Medical schools; and they would be able to carry on more advanced scientific enquiries in Anatomy, Pathology, or Chemistry, simultaneously with their Clinical studies, in a manner which none could without such preparation[g].

[g] I have heard it suggested, though it is not for me to offer any opinion on the matter, that (mutatis mutandis) there might be here a similar semi-professional education for Law students, before they leave the University for the practitioners' chambers.

Such a change would confer a service on the Medical Profession, and through them, on the Country at large. But not only so. It would be of great and manifest advantage to the University herself. For in consequence of this change, the Professors of the Natural Sciences would be called into active operation, instead of lying idle, as they are now obliged against their will to do: and thus would be removed one of the many scandals or anomalies, which our enemies are fond of casting in our teeth. Moreover the introduction of such semi-professional education, would be of great use in furthering that general study of the Natural Sciences, of which I have spoken above, and which, I hope, you will agree with me in thinking necessary for all who would aspire to the name of gentleman and scholar. I cannot imagine anything more likely to extend our views, and widen the range of our pursuits, than the presence of a set of intelligent young men, actively engaged in the pursuit of Natural Knowledge, as a truth and a reality. If it is desirable to make the change which I have advocated in the first part of the letter, then (if it were only to make that change more effectual) it would be desirable to make this other also.

These are some of the advantages which might be expected.

Further, I think that by an understanding with the College of Physicians, and in virtue of our surrender of the licence to practise, it might be

granted, that the Regius Professor of Medicine should form one of the regular Board of Examination, in the London College. If this end be obtained, we should be connected with the Profession in a much more honourable way, than by our present power of granting a limited licence to practise, which (if retained at all) will become after the proposed reforms, rather a slur, than otherwise, upon our graduates. It is not for me to say more than that I think the College of Physicians would not suffer loss by the exchange. And this is the equivalent of which I have already spoken more than once.

I may here add, that the College of Surgeons is so sensible of the value of a University education, that by a bye-law of the College, it is enacted that every one with a degree of Bachelor of Arts from an English University shall be required to spend five years instead of six in Professional education. Is this high and liberal view to be met, or to be disregarded? Are we to do nothing? But unless we stir, ay and before next session of Parliament, we are like to lose not only what we might have, but even what we have.

By the charter of the College of Physicians, the College will require in future, that a degree in Medicine be taken at *some* University, British or Foreign, before admission to the College. Can we not offer any inducement to more of them to come here? Will not the College of Sydenham, with

her lay Fellowships for Medical Men, continue to hold out her hand to his disciples, as I acknowledge with thankfulness, that she has done? Would no other College, nor the Radcliffe Trustees help us? I will not undertake to calculate the number of students we might expect, if we took up this matter in earnest, and put it in right train. But I am sure the number would be great. And to omit all mention of duty, would not this be a great and manifest advantage? Here as elsewhere, Duty and Policy will be found to go hand in hand.

On this matter, I have nothing further to say, than to commit the question to the care of those who are looking forward to the future, and who are deeply anxious for the perfecting and welfare of national education in England. They cannot, I feel sure, do otherwise than see in what is urged in this second part, on the one hand a means of retaining and extending for the use of the Country, and the advancement of the Faculty and Profession of Medicine, the benefits whatever they be, of a University Education, and on the other, of drawing out, in the most healthy and rational manner, whatever real resources Oxford has for professional education, or the advancement of Natural Knowledge.

Personally, I have great comfort in this, that what I urge as emphatically our interest and our duty will not injure the interests of any other institutions. For our old Universities have a work

peculiarly their own. There are not in the world, and probably never will be again, at least in this hemisphere, places of education, as capable of doing service to religion, morals, and good citizenship. I wish more of all classes and all occupations could share our blessings. If men used these old foundations well, they would use the intellectual advantages of our time better. A man who has felt deeply the value of a religious and classical education in a calm and quiet place, as opposed to a purely intellectual training in an excited and ambitious one, ought to appreciate more than other men, because more truly, not the danger only, but the glory also of intellectual achievements. For if I may not admire and honour the clear work of reason, I may altogether doubt the value of faculties which made it possible for "the invisible things of Him" to be "clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."

If it appear to some, that the changes that I advocate in the second part of this letter for our Medical degrees are trifling and unimportant, they will not prove so, in their effects, if adopted and carried out. And if this opportunity is let slip, I will almost undertake to say, that while Oxford lasts, she will never again have one in which she can render so great service to Medical Education in England, or one in which her own interests in respect of one of her Faculties can be so effectually furthered.

With respect to the proposal in the former part of the letter, to add some study of the fundamental arrangements of the Natural world to the general education of the place, I fear that if we do not *add* it, we may live to see, what would be a great national evil, such knowledge *substituted* for our present system.

I remain

Your obliged and faithful friend,

HENRY W. ACLAND.

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