

Medical reform : being the subject of the first annual oration, instituted by the British Medical Association, and delivered at the second anniversary of that society / by A.B. Granville.

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Surgeons, from the Council of
MEDICAL REFORM;

the British Medical Association.
BEING

THE SUBJECT OF THE FIRST

Annual Oration,

INSTITUTED

BY THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION,

AND

DELIVERED AT THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY

OF THAT SOCIETY.

BY

A. B. GRANVILLE, M. D., F. R. S.

&c. &c. &c.

LONDON:

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AND TO BE HAD ALSO AT THE ROOMS OF THE ASSOCIATION

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IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

1838.

Price ONE Shilling.

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sitque salubrior studiis, quàm dulcior,—ID. LIB. III. CAP. I.

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EXETER HALL.

Council Meeting, Sept. 18, 1838.

Resolved unanimously, —

“That an Annual Oration be instituted, the first of which shall be delivered at the ensuing Anniversary of this Association.”

Resolved unanimously,—

“That the subject for this year be ‘MEDICAL REFORM,’ and that Dr. A. B. Granville be appointed to deliver it.”

BRIDGE-HOUSE HOTEL.

Anniversary Meeting, Sept. 28, 1838.

Resolved unanimously,—

“That the Oration just delivered be adopted by the Association, and that it be placed in the hands of the Council, with full power to determine on the best mode of making it public; and that a vote of thanks be given to Dr. Granville for the same.”

EXETER HALL.

Meeting of Council, Oct. 9, 1838.

Resolved unanimously,—

“That the Annual Oration delivered by Dr. Granville at the Anniversary Meeting be published at the expense of the Association, and that Dr. Granville superintend its progress through the press.”

[C. H. ROGERS HARRISON,

October 13, 1838.

Secretary.

AN ORATION
FOR
MEDICAL REFORM.

MR. PRESIDENT,

GENTLEMEN, Members of the British Medical Association ;—

It was a wise and a proper measure on the part of the Council of our Association, that of instituting an Annual Oration, to be delivered before its members assembled to celebrate the Anniversary of the Society. Nor will the Council, I conceive, be less commended (considering how and for what purpose we are at present constituted into a Society) for having chosen (as the Report has just stated) the consideration of MEDICAL REFORM in Great Britain, for the subject of the first annual oration.

But equal praise, I fear, will not be accorded to them, for their choice of the individual who is this day brought forward to address you on so momentous and all-important a subject. For, though old in professional life, I am but young in the Society ; and am but little known to you who are the founders of the Association, though I may not be altogether unknown to my medical brethren in general. Surely there were among us men whom, upon every ground,

it would have been more to the advantage of the great cause I have this day to plead, to have selected as your orator ;—men of science and great erudition ; of long standing in the profession, and skilled in the art of expounding intricate questions, and of doing them justice. This I feel most sincerely, and it is fitting I should say so ; but, at the same time, it would be an act of affectation on my part, were I to conceal, that, since the choice has fallen upon me, I have experienced pride and gratification at the honourable distinction which such a choice confers ; and I have applied myself, in consequence, to make an adequate return to my colleagues for their goodwill towards me, by exerting, to the utmost, the slender faculties I possess, in responding to their invitation.

Unfortunately the question is vast, while the time allowed for its discussion is short. I have had but a few days to prepare myself for my honourable task ; for which reason I beseech you, that where I fail in impressing you with the magnitude and just bearing of my subject, you impute the failure rather to my lack of talent and opportunity, than to any inherent weakness or unworthiness of the cause itself. Thus far I will be bold to say, that I shall perform my task without studied personalities, or vituperative allusions to the motives or actions of men ; as I deem such unbecoming the character of an orator, and not desired by his audience.

Gentlemen,

Perhaps one of the greatest political phenomena that has been witnessed in Europe in the last half

century, has been the rise of Great Britain to a degree of almost unparalleled power and influence as a nation, during the prevalence of many public abuses, and the not unfrequent violation of those rights which appertain to the citizens of a country by inclination, as well as constitution, free. Proclaimed by one of the parties in the state; denied, to a certain extent, by another; and defended, on the plea of expediency, by a third,—the reality of corrupt practices in the general, as well as in the municipal, government of the country, at the time in question, seems to be proved by the very conflicting testimonies which are adduced in respect to their existence.

But how much more singular, as contrasted with such a state of affairs, must not the supineness of the nation under it appear, during a period of many years! Was it mere passive endurance, required by the circumstances of the times, that sealed the people's lips during that period, on the subject of their wrongs? Or had the war against a powerful and threatening enemy, in which the nation had for more than twenty years been engaged, silenced all other feelings save that of wishing to repel foreign aggression? Perhaps, too, the triumph over that enemy abroad blinded the people to their false position at home! Perhaps the lavish distribution of public money, easily raised, prevented the murmurs of the discontented! Perhaps, too, the intense ignorance into which the larger masses of the people were plunged in those days, (as we learn from parliamentary documents,) served to conceal from the nation their own true interest in domestic matters, and precluded all chances of their seeking and obtaining redress.

Now, however, after more than twenty years of peace, the picture is reversed. The encouragement given to education, and, consequently, the facilities of obtaining it, having increased beyond calculation, (as the Journal of Education has taught us,) people's minds became more reflective. The middle and industrious classes, more enlightened than heretofore, as well as more numerous, began at length to show dissatisfaction at their actual position. They saw the abuses around them, and wished to redress them. They observed how gradually, yet how effectually, many of their privileges as freemen had been swept away, and they loudly called for REFORM. That cry once raised, could not be silenced by favours or prosecution—by places or dismissals: for while the public treasury, on the one hand, nearly exhausted, had lost its means of influence; the weight of public authority in the government, on the other, had, at the same time, greatly diminished. And thus all power to silence a murmuring people, either by bribes or threats, had passed away.

At this conjuncture, a few chosen men who had in vain, but with constancy and for a long period, aimed at what the people now wanted, taking advantage of the changed circumstances, urged forward, more effectually than they had been able to do at any previous time, the favourite object of their public life; and, with the mass of the people now with them, they successfully accomplished at last that great political act, Reform, which they had for so many years striven to obtain.

Gentlemen! We must follow their example; for mighty as that Act has been, it has left yet untouched

many haunts of corrupt practices, and many features of deformity, among which the medical bodies-politic in the three kingdoms of these realms appear conspicuously prominent.

Like the great charter of Political Reform—our own will come at last : but it must be sought for and obtained by the like means—the general voice of those who require and are to be benefited by its accomplishment. The whole, or the larger part, of our medical brethren must join in the demand.

Without this general support no such act will ever be obtained. Some few individuals there have always been, even among medical men, in this country, as was the case with the politicians, anxiously desiring, and struggling to obtain, the abolition of abuses, the rectification of errors, and the removal of corruption ; and those individuals belonged to the better-instructed classes of the profession. Within the last fifty years, physicians and surgeons, some single-handed, others combined, though in small numbers, have appeared, from time to time, in the pursuit of those cherished objects. But those single individuals, and those select few, had to cope with the influence of patronage and high offices, which silenced every expression of cordiality in the many. They had to cope with the power of bestowing places, and with leaders who made themselves strong in the support of influential and easily-deceived patients occupying the first charges in the state. They had to cope with the disinclination felt by the largest number of their order, against interfering with any existing arrangement ; as well as with the indifference of the thousands of their brethren whom a prolonged war had provided

with bread and pay in the army and navy. They had to contend, in fine, against the apathy of ignorance, which, until the last few years, prevailed among the masses of the lesser classes of medical men in this country. Is it wonderful, then, that, like the single-handed leaders of old, in the great political struggle for Reform, they also should have as often failed and been shipwrecked?

But times and circumstances have now changed for us, as they changed for them. The power of bribing has either been taken away or has lost its influence. The still prevailing spirit of exclusivism, and of dogged adherence to corporate abuses on the part of some heads and members of the medical corporations, no longer receives the support of government. Those heads have lost the countenance of patients exercising influence in the state; or if some of them retain it still, the mischievous effect of such an alliance of power and error is nullified by the good sense of the public at large. The disinclination to assist in the uprooting of abuses, on the part of the thousands who were formerly provided with comfortable places in the two public services, but who have since been treated with injustice and neglect, has given way to a desire totally different. Finally, the apathy of ignorance has almost wholly yielded to the advancement made in general knowledge among the lesser, and by far the most numerous sections of the profession; for it would be idle to deny that those sections have, of late years, been distinguished by a superior professional education, which makes them feel the galling, the anomalous, the degrading, the unbearable condition of thralldom in which they and

we *all* of the same profession are still kept ; when almost every other institution around us has broken its chains, and stands free and erect !

Such, Gentlemen, are the elements now rife for effectually working out the great problem of Medical Reform in this country ; and with such elements, success in our cause is as certain as it proved to be in regard to the still greater act of political reform, at which Great Britain is now rejoicing. Let but the elements be worked prudently, vigorously, and opportunely.

All that is required for the accomplishment of the great end is a picked body of men who will devote their time and energies to the proper use of the existing elements of medical reform. They must be—(as one of her Majesty's ministers observed to a deputation from amongst us)—they must be able and willing—unawed by opposition—and ready to be lashed to the mast, rather than yield during the stormy struggle that must follow, until they see the bark harboured in safety. Above all, they must lay aside personal differences, petty jealousies, and every childish adherence to frivolous distinctions. They must cast behind them the consideration of their own individual interest, and look stedfastly at the goal of their efforts, which should be the general good of all the profession, and, by a natural consequence, the good of the commonwealth. They should prepare all the classes of their brethren for the important act of reform in the education and government of the medical profession, by instructing them touching the true nature of their interests, and the respect which they

owe to themselves, and to which they are entitled from others. Lastly, they must *agitate* the question of medical reform in all its bearings, in all parts of the realm, and among all classes of people ; that the necessity, as well as the importance, of a general change in the present condition of the medical world in Great Britain, may be well comprehended and admitted by all.

This picked body of men, then ; and these principles which should guide them ; and these elements with which they will have to act—I behold in the British Medical Association.

The momentous task it has undertaken it will fulfil honourably and zealously :—as it stands pledged to do. And we may rest assured that success will crown our united and persevering efforts, if we but follow one uniform and systematic plan of operations, having the same object always in view.

That object is MEDICAL REFORM ;—by which is meant an Act that shall place the medical faculty of the three kingdoms on the firm and honourable basis of perfect equality of character, privileges, and prospects—founded upon an equality of knowledge, personal deserts, and moral worth.

It is the consideration of that Great Act, which, as I have already stated, forms the subject of the present Oration ; and in order to treat such a subject with that clearness which alone can convey truth to the mind, with the certainty of its being received and adopted,—it is essential that we should view the question in its three natural divisions, namely,

1. WHAT IS THERE TO REFORM ?
2. HOW FAR HAS REFORM HITHERTO PROCEEDED ?
3. WHAT YET REMAINS TO BE DONE FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A TOTAL REFORM ?

The time allotted for the delivery of my argument before this assembly being necessarily limited, it will be but lightly that I shall be able to comment on each of these three topics ; although I should have preferred to have availed myself of the opportunity afforded me by my honorary appointment of this day, to give to all of them a more complete examination. Still I will not shrink from the responsibility of testing existing institutions and regulations, and of proclaiming them either defective or otherwise, as I shall find them ; nor will I, on the other hand, slur over my subject so imperfectly as to appear unmindful of the many efforts made by others before me in the pleading for reform. Both these duties I shall endeavour to perform with strict impartiality, though I shall be much restricted in my remarks by the consideration of the convenience of my auditors.

1ST. WHAT IS THERE TO REFORM ?

Although, at the very first view of this question, many are the purely medical objects, which present themselves as standing in need of reform in this country, yet the medical incorporated or chartered bodies appear the most forward. There was a time when the examination of these by the reformers was a task of no inconsiderable difficulty, and one the invidious nature of which made people shrink from embarking in it. Facts there were plenty, either

observed or felt, to enable people to come to a right conclusion as to the necessity of reforming those chartered bodies. But as facts, unless proved, or admitted by those against whom they are alleged, could be only of feeble service in convicting the offending parties,—they were often disputed or denied. Gross obloquy, in the mean while, was thrown on those who had been bold enough to *divulge* the facts; and even persecution was threatened against them. We have, at present, no such fears or obstacles to deter us. The facts which are to form our judgment regarding those incorporated bodies, are on record where their reality cannot be disputed. They have been drawn from the mouth of the very parties to whom and to whose institutions they refer. They have been admitted; and now stand as parliamentary evidence of the character, worth, and efficiency of those institutions. When upon any previous occasion the defects and vices of those chartered bodies were publicly noticed by some spirited individual, or by that part of the medical press which honours itself by its independence,—it was made a subject of loud complaint against the accusers, that their charges were the mere phantoms of vile dissension, discontent, and mortified ambition—that the authors of such accusations, in fact, were worthless individuals, and deserved censure rather than attention. But now no such complaints can be raised, either to thwart or to blunt the keen edge of those very accusations against the same chartered bodies;—for we find them once more exhibited to the world, in the three ponderous volumes of parliamentary evidence now before us, not only as individual confessions drawn from the governors of those

bodies by a skilful and searching examination ; but also under the form of reciprocal recriminations of one chartered body against another. No volumes that have been written by medical reformers against the two Colleges, or the Company of Apothecaries, can offer a more humiliating picture of their real constitution, and, at the same time, of the degradation of all things connected with medical education and government as at present existing in this country, than is afforded by the three volumes in question—for the publication of which the medical reformers of England stand indebted to the parliamentary committee of 1834—an era that will be for ever after memorable in the history of British medicine.

Here then, in these very volumes*—without uttering a single syllable of personal disrespect against individuals in office—am I content to search for an answer to our first point of consideration, as to “What is there to reform in medical affairs?” Here, in these very volumes, which only await the analytical and logical hand of the chairman of the committee, to be at once and by all admitted as pointing where the plague-spot lies, that must be seared with the hot iron of reform—here am I satisfied to find wherewith to prove the necessity of that reform, as regards the following objects :

* Report from the Select Committee on MEDICAL EDUCATION, with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 13th August, 1834.

Part I. Royal College of Physicians, London, question 1 to 4702—and 25 pages of documents.

Part II. Royal College of Surgeons, London, question 4703 to 6988—and 87 pages of documents.

Part III. Society of Apothecaries, London, question 1 to 1081—and 4 pages of documents.

A. Medical Education.

B. Medical Government by Chartered Bodies.

C. The Management of Medical Charities.

A.

It would be an endless task, and not a pleasing one withal, were I to enter in this place into the enumeration of the incongruities, the irregularities, and the absurdities, which, at every page of these pregnant volumes, meet the eye of the most impartial reader, touching the past and present history of medical education in England. The most incredulous would startle, for instance, at the fact, that even in the definition of what medical education should be—what length of time it should occupy—of the qualifications it should impart—and of the rank or importance it should confer on individuals; none of the three officers at the head of their respective chartered bodies in 1834, examined by the committee, could agree.* And what a pitiable sight, indeed,

* Questions 350, 351, but especially 352, 353; also questions 466, 467, 468, 469, Part I.

Questions 4770, 4813, 4832, 4837, 4838, and many others, Part II.

Question 5728. "You observed in a previous answer that the two courses of study required by the College of Surgeons and the Company of Apothecaries worked ill together."—Answer. "Very ill indeed." (B. C. Brodie.) The president had already stated that they worked admirably together! 4943, Part II.

On the other hand, when the master of the Company of Apothecaries is asked as to the advantage of uniting the two colleges with their society, for objects of general medical education, that officer replies thus:—"I do see many objections to such a course, which objections would be less if there was a better understanding between the three branches of the profession. At a board, these three bodies would be generally disputing and wrangling amongst themselves," &c. (*cum multis aliis*, which are better omitted.) Answers 212, 213. Part III.

must those officers have afforded to the assembled members of the parliamentary committee, with their selfish and narrow-minded views respecting questions which, as they regard the public more than individual interest, ought to have been treated with boundless liberality!—How pitiable a sight, I repeat, must it not have been to behold one officer after another, of those chartered bodies, clinging with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause, to the defence of abuses and irregularities, and even of the violation of prescriptive rights, (for of such the evidence of 1834 affords sundry examples,) after the existence of such abuses, irregularities, and violations had been established by the skilful agency of cross-examination! What impression upon the examining committee must that distinguished individual have made, during his examination, who, being at the head of one of the colleges, declared that a doctor of medicine, while practising surgery, or belonging to the College of Surgeons, was not a fit person to be admitted into his college*—that the powers granted by parliament to the Apothecaries' Company to examine candidates in physic were to be lamented†—and that an obstetrical practitioner ought not to enter the royal college as a fellow, though a doctor of medicine, because “midwifery was an act foreign to the habits of gentlemen of enlarged academical education;”‡—concluding at last by asserting that the principal use of his college

* Questions 236, 237, 238, 239, Part I., and 243 above all.

† Question 219, Part I.

‡ Extracted from a reply of the president of the College of Physicians to a note addressed by the Obstetric Society of London to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, previously to the parliamentary inquiry.

to the public was, that the latter looked at it as a tribunal by which persons properly educated are admitted into the profession !* As if the thousands in the profession who neither seek, nor care for such an admission, were to be considered as improperly or imperfectly educated ! As if he, the head of that college, had not known that many who had practised or now practise surgery, have been or are, by education and science, able to prescribe as physicians ! As if he had not been fully aware that, at the very moment of his delivering his evidence, and now, there were and are, in London and the principal cities in England, physicians exercising the branch of midwifery, who, by their acknowledged university and preliminary education,—their standing in society and the profession—and the estimation in which they are held both at home and abroad for their writings—were more likely to do honour to his college than to lower it in the opinion of the public !

But these are not the only strange things uttered by the head of the college alluded to, in his evidence. Being asked why certain privileges of his college were restricted (that is, before the enactment of some very recent regulations) to the graduates of the two English Universities,—he replied that those were persons who had undergone a moral and intellectual trial in the universities from whence they came, to which they are not subject in *foreign* universities !† If any of the members present at the committee had happened to have travelled in foreign parts, he must have smiled at the ignorance of a witness, who, untravelled himself, and wholly unacquainted with the constitu-

* Answer 207, Part I.

† Answer 54, Part I.

tion of foreign universities, ventured to compare those of Oxford and Cambridge to them, to the disparagement of the foreign institutions, whether in preliminary or medical instruction!

Without citing the University of France, and those of Berlin, Vienna, and Pavia, (themselves real models of what such institutions should be,) the mere example of the several petty states of Germany, in reference to university education, gainsays the ill-founded and (the distinguished witness must excuse me if I add) the imprudent assertion.

According to the most recent of the published statistical calculations, there are not fewer than 1050 professors attached to the present universities in Germany. They lecture to about 16,500 students, who cannot matriculate for medicine or surgery, without having taken either the degree of doctor of philosophy, or that of bachelor of letters, each of which involves preliminary studies of four years at least; after which the student is as many years more removed from the degrees of doctor of medicine and surgery. It is worthy of remark, that this large number of professors, dependent on the very necessity of a varied and long preliminary education in the universities of Germany, involves, according to the same statistical accounts, an annual expenditure of money of not less than £600,000 sterling, which circulates within the precincts of these universities—an expenditure which arises from the income paid to the professors, and the money expended by the pupils.* Is this an evidence of inferiority in preliminary intellectual knowledge on the part of foreign

* See Journal of Education, Vols. I. II. and III.

universities, as compared to those of Oxford and Cambridge?

Not to multiply examples, and taking them rather from the smaller than the larger universities in Germany, at which medicine is taught, we find that in five of them alone, namely, Heidelberg, Freiberg, Würtzburg, Herlangen, and Marburg, £37,950 sterling, which is equivalent in England to at least double that sum, is granted by their respective governments every year, for the purpose of instruction. In what corner of Great Britain are there five public schools granting degrees in arts and science, which receive from the government the quarter of that sum of money? or what proportion of money equivalent to the same sum (£75,000) is expended by the colleges of the two universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and from their own funds, purely for the preliminary and medical education of students? I will not waste the time of this Association in descanting on the sentiments of another officer of the same Royal College, as given in his evidence on the same subject. They are refuted by facts and by public opinion.*

If we now turn to the evidence of the head of the second Royal College, we find in it the same pretence to a superiority, or at least to an equality of medical education † in his own class, as was proclaimed by the first witness: although neither the discipline, the length of studies required, nor the examinations, are like those of the first college. Undoubtedly, says the

* Questions 512, 513, 514, Part I.

† Answer 4842, Part II., the meaning of which is this: "*We are the first surgeons in the world.*" And in the same answer, "*We have taken a minimum of qualification.*" (!)

head of the second college, in answer to questions to that effect — undoubtedly we prescribe in medical cases,*—we learn and examine in the practice of physic†—we are superior in anatomy and physiology—and we are essentially the best practitioners in surgery:—a surgeon, in fact, does everything.‡ We have, therefore, a right to exercise the medical art generally, barring the dispensing of medicines, which we leave to the Company of Apothecaries.§ “As to that society,” observed the president, || “it is in a false position under existing circumstances. The society never should have had the power of appointing examiners at all; and it was a gross error on the part of government to have given it to them.”—“Had I been president of the College of Surgeons at that time, they never should have had it.” (! !)

The apothecaries themselves, on the other hand, nothing loth to stand forward, proclaim through their master, ¶ that *they* “form, of all the branches of the medical profession, the most important.” An apothecary, observes the said master of the worshipful company, is a person competent to ascertain the nature of a disease, and to treat it.** He must therefore learn the art of medicine.†† He must also learn the art of pharmacy; and we examine our candidates in both,‡‡ adding by our recent regulations midwifery,

* Answer 5268, Part II.

† See the Curriculum in Appendix, Part II.; also, Answers 4964, 4965, 4973, Part II.

‡ Answer 5270, Part II.

§ Answer 4979, Part II.

|| In answer to question 5289, Part II.

¶ In his answer to question 210, Part III.

** Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, Part III.

†† Appendix, No. 24, Part III.

‡‡ Idem, Part III.

and other branches of natural science,* making them over, afterwards, to the College of Surgeons, to be tried in surgery, which they must consequently have learnt. An apothecary, therefore, is necessarily an accomplished medical man, and as such we license him to practise all over the kingdom. The only difference between him and the members of the two colleges consists in this, that he neither occupies, in the acquisition of his professional knowledge, the same length of time,—nor is he bound to take in the same quantity of each branch of instruction, as in the case of physicians and surgeons.

Admitting all this to be fairly represented by the apothecaries in their evidence, it would go to establish, on their own showing, the singular anomaly of a class of medical men,—forming “the most important branch of the medical profession, (as the worshipful master has described it in one of his early answers;) “the most important,” says he, “on account of the larger proportion of sick of the whole community, to which they are required to afford relief;”—being sent out on their important calling with an inferior education!

This is bad enough; but it will appear much worse if we try the qualified apothecary of the present day, as described in the worshipful master’s definition, by the tests laid down by the presidents of the two colleges. According to the standard of the first president, the test of capability “in ascertaining and treating disease,” consists not only in a variety of medical studies, but in a long preliminary education also: and, according to the standard

* Appendix, No. 24, Part III.

of the second president, a proper examination in surgery is necessary to complete the apothecary. Now, as the court of examiners at Apothecaries' Hall have not strictly the power to inquire exclusively into the classical or preliminary education of their candidates, nor can they make a bye-law to that effect, (although they do try a little their latinity,) it is evident that the licensed apothecary is an inferiorly qualified healer of disease, in the opinion of the president of the College of Physicians. And inasmuch as the said court of examiners at Apothecaries' Hall cannot inquire into the surgical knowledge of their candidates, but turn them over to be examined concerning it at the Royal College in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, (whither, it is admitted in evidence, a very large proportion of such candidates never proceed, from being aware that the said college can neither compel them to do so, nor can prevent them from exercising the art of surgery)*—it follows, that a great many of the licensed apothecaries must be imperfectly qualified, when they take upon themselves afterwards “to afford medical relief to by far the larger proportion of sick of the whole community,” in the character of persons “competent to ascertain the nature of a disease, and to treat it.” †

Now, Gentlemen, who shall pretend to see clear through such a chaos of deeds and opinions? Which standard shall we adopt of the three laid down by the heads of the departments as the most perfect and efficient for a medical man in this country to be tried by? What shall be deemed the best *curriculum* or mode of education for such a medical man;

* Answer 4898, Part II.

† Question 210, Part III.

looking at the diverse and jarring opinions of the three incorporated bodies?

B.

Thus far, then, those chartered bodies have of themselves, and by actual confessions, shown that medical education in this country is in the most anomalous state, to say the least; and that no remedy is to be expected from such corporations, for the evils which naturally flow from such a state of affairs. *They*, therefore,—the Chartered Bodies, and Medical Education,—must be considered as proper and fit objects for medical reform.*

Nor will that conclusion be weakened, when we take into account another view of the nature of those bodies, as suggested by the evidence produced by themselves in 1834;—for that evidence goes to prove that they are both *unnecessary* and *inefficient*. They are unnecessary, because, as they *teach* nothing themselves,† and only undertake to examine people: if a general board should be instituted in London to examine all candidates for medical practice—(and in that point the heads of the corporate bodies have all unwittingly agreed, when asked their opinion on that subject by the shrewd chairman of the committee)—their existence would become useless. They are inefficient, because, in protecting the public from pretenders, impostors, illegal or

* The President of the College of Surgeons, in Answer 902, says that great reform is necessary in the Society of Apothecaries. Another witness is for reforming the College of Physicians, as well as the Apothecaries' Company, but not his own College. (B. C. Brédie.) Answer 5673, 5676.

† "Our business is not to teach physic." Question 314, Part I.

dishonest practitioners, and quacks, the two colleges have admitted, through their respective presidents, that they possess no power :* while the Company of Apothecaries have confessed† that there are more cases of infraction of their own peculiar Act than the society has the means of prosecuting and punishing.

But the inefficiency of the Apothecaries' Company is proved much more strongly by another of their own admissions. Their charter and acts bind that body to visit the shops of general practitioners, to see that no bad drugs are kept, or spurious medicines sold.‡ When asked how often they exercised that duty, the master answers, "During one day, or more than one day, once in two years."§ To a former question the same gentleman had replied, that such visits generally began at one o'clock, and ended at about six; and that, upon an average, each visit lasted, perhaps, a quarter of an hour.|| How, on the face of this very admission, does the effective nature of the Apothecaries' Company's operations in this matter appear? Here is a body politic desired to watch over an important branch of public safety, who exercise it by limiting their vigilance to about twenty investigations on one, two, or three days, once in two years, among the one thousand general practitioners who, according to another answer of the worshipful

* Questions 215, 279, 282, Part I.; 4865, 4898, 4943, Part II. Also Question 4842, Part II. "The College of Surgeons is a body that has no power." The President's Answer. And again, Answer 4851, "The awkwardness of our situation is, that we have no authority, no power, to prevent an evil of this kind."

† Answer 94, and others, Part III. ‡ Answer 49, Part III.

§ Answer 55, Part III.

|| Answer 48, Part III.

master, are said to practise in London.* To which we must also add another piece of information, afforded us by the same witness; that although directed by act of parliament to make similar visitations all over England and Wales, they, the Company of Apothecaries, do not comply, and *never have complied*, with that injunction.† Supposing, then, the protecting efficiency of that chartered body to be necessary for the purpose for which it is required by the laws of the country,—is it not at present reduced to a mere nullity?

The chartered bodies, therefore, stand on the records of parliament as self-condemned, ineffective bodies. They also stand there as self-admitted *defective* bodies. The learned president of the first of the two colleges, for instance, (not to allude to several other matters,) admits that they have no power of doing their duty as the guardians of the public health in this country—their influence extends only to a few miles around the capital‡—and even in that narrow circle it is effectually cramped by the interference of the two other bodies. “We are,” says the president, “we are deterred (from doing our duty) by the powers which the Legislature has given to apothecaries and surgeons.”§ Is this not a glaring defect in the constitution of his college? In another place, reverting to the distinctions of two classes of members existing in his college under the appellations of Fellows and Licentiates, he contends that for every practical purpose they are one and the same grade,||

* Answer 13, Part III.

† Answer 57, Part III.

‡ Answer 329, Part I.

§ Answer 282, Part I.

|| Ans. 122, 131, 132, Part I.

and that no particular advantage appertains to the fellowship.* Then we might ask, why keep up such a glaring defect in the constitution of your body, as that of a distinction which, in your opinion, is merely nominal, but which, in that of many of the parties concerned, is considered as insulting and degrading,—especially since the introduction of a new and recently adopted mode, of nominating the members of the inferior class to a place among the alleged superiors? That mode consists in propounding a chosen list of names, prepared by a committee from the catalogue of the licentiates, to the whole college, who, in their turn, scratch in, or scratch out, (I know not which,) such of the names of the licentiates as the college desire to see created fellows. This method of selection, *by scratching*, places the College of Physicians on a level with an ordinary club; so that henceforth (whatever may have been the case hitherto) it will no more be an honourable distinction to belong to the College of Physicians, as a *fellow*, than it is to belong to the Reform or the Conservative Clubs as a member. More than this,—the example set to the licentiates by Doctor Arnott, illustrious for his science and as a physician, and by Doctor Clutterbuck and Sir James Clark, not less eminent for their writings and as medical practitioners, of the value they attach to the distinction of fellows of the Royal College, by declining it when offered to them—has made it an honour to belong to the class to which those distinguished members (with a consistency much to be commended) adhere; and has rendered it doubtful whether, in quitting that class for the sake of entering the other,* which such men

* Answer 120, Part I.

have repudiated, a licentiate does not surrender more than he can acquire.

As to the defective nature of the constitution of the second college,—the admission peeps out at every answer from the loyal and frank president of that body, who was examined in 1834. It is acknowledged to be defective in the mode of electing the council of rulers.* It is acknowledged to be defective in the selection and composition of the court of examiners.† It is acknowledged to be defective in its not being able to insist on all who pretend to practise surgery in England and Wales to appear before the college, and prove their proficiency in that art.‡ It is acknowledged to be defective, because its proceedings are secret.§ It is acknowledged to be defective, because the possibility of abuses taking place is also acknowledged.|| In fact, the whole structure of the college is defective, as part of the governing faculty of medicine in England.

Viewed in a similar manner, as one of the elements of the governing medical faculty of this country, the Company of Apothecaries appears, in the parliamentary evidence, equally defective with the other two corporate bodies. It is a defect that a trading company should be made to govern twelve thousand practitioners in medicine and pharmacy; particularly as the dealings are in drugs, and the governors may, at

* 4824, 4730, and *passim*, also 4750, besides Sir Benjamin's Brodie's answer, 5647.

† Answer 4816, 4818, Part II.; also 4824 and 5692.

‡ Answer 4842, 4851, 4898, 4900, Part II.

§ Answer, 4750 and 4892, Part II.

|| See, for a single example, Sir B. C. Brodie's answers, 5700, 5701, Part II.; and also answer 5347, 5348, 5349 and 5358, 5359.

some future period, have to sell those drugs to the very candidates whom they have examined and licensed to practise.* It is an enormous defect that the authority and power to inquire into the capabilities, intellectual and professional, of young men destined to exercise an art which requires both learning and science, should have been delegated by Parliament to a corporation standing on a level with the rest of the liveries in the city, the fishmongers and the curriers.† It is of very little use to say that practically, and in our time, we have had, as rulers of such a livery, estimable men, men of education, of character, and I firmly believe of irreproachable honour also. The stigma, the incongruity, the anomaly of the thing, is still there : for it exists in the system, and not in the men.

Besides these individual defects peculiar to each medical chartered body, as at present constituted, there is one, the enormity of which is admitted on all hands, and of which the three chartered bodies partake in common. The members here assembled no doubt anticipate that I am about to allude to the total want of power or inclination, on the part of those public bodies, to interfere with one of the most glaring and crying evils connected with medical practice—namely, that of the sale of drugs, or the compounding and dispensing, or even the prescribing of medicines, by the ordinary chemists and druggists.

Is it not monstrous that these people should not only never have been examined as to their fitness for the

* See charter of Apothecaries' Company, Appendix, Part III.

† The present Society of Apothecaries is descended from the "Freemen of the mystery of Grocers," and by charter are constituted into a body corporate and politic, "after the manner of other companies and fellowships." See charter, Appendix, Part III.

office they take upon themselves to perform ; or have been licensed to do so after examination ; or, in fact, controlled in any way ; but that, on the contrary, they should be permitted to sell any drug, insignificant or the reverse, and to deal out poison to any extent, to facilitate the dark and foul deeds of the murderer, or the insane wanderings of the suicide,—without being checked by any regulation of the three chartered bodies, who ought to be the protectors of the public health ?

Is it not passing strange that the College of Physicians and the Company of Apothecaries should be invested with the power of examining, from time to time, the drugs themselves, but not the dealers and the compounders of them under any circumstances ?

The candidate who solicits admission into the College of Physicians, either as a fellow or a licentiate—another candidate who presents himself for a diploma before the College of Surgeons—neither of whom may ever require, in the course of their practice, to see a single drug, but may rest satisfied with knowing its pharmaceutical powers only—each of these is to be examined, according to existing regulations, as to his technical acquaintance with the natural characters and physiognomy of drugs, and is to name and describe each drug presented to him by the examiners ; while the man who is to select the good from the bad drugs in the market, who is to use them for compounding medicines, who is to prepare and retail them to the public, or to the patients of physicians and surgeons—that man's capability of doing all these things is *never* investigated ! What other parallel example of an absurdity so gross can be found in the history of civilised societies ? In what other country than Great Britain is such an example to be met with ?

If we turn now to the consideration of matters of a pecuniary nature, connected with the chartered medical bodies, we find abundant admissions in the parliamentary records, to show the absolute necessity of revision and reform in the constitution of two at least of those bodies.

In money matters, as in other matters, the College of Physicians stands so low, that were it not for the private subventions of members, (according to the statement of their president, and the appendix to his evidence,*) the corporation could not proceed; neither could the respectable appearance of the college be maintained. It is due to them to state, that whatever service, their officers consider it to be the duty of their station to afford, in behoof of the general corporation,—some of them perform it gratuitously, while others take the very smallest rate of remuneration.† There are, indeed, one or two snug appointments, said to be lucrative, to which the members of that corporation have hitherto held themselves exclusively entitled; such, for example, as a commissionership of lunatics: but such pecuniary features in the College of Physicians are really too trifling to detain us.

Not so with regard to the corporation of surgeons, or that of apothecaries. Their transactions in money are much more serious, and, being thoroughly investigated in our parliamentary volumes, present ample grounds for radical amendments. Thus, with reference to the last-mentioned corporation, it appears from their evidence, that in the three years preceding the 31st of July, 1834, the Company of Apothecaries had touched the sum of £6,847. 16s. 11*d.* from per-

* Questions 271, 272, 273, Part I. † Question 276, Part I.

sons licensed by them to act as general practitioners,* of which sum about the half, or £3,340. 0s. 9d., had found its way into the pockets of twelve examiners!

On the other hand, the College of Surgeons admit of an incidental income of £10,230. 10s. from examinations in the year 1833,† (taking a single example for our purpose from their evidence,) all drawn out of the pockets of the candidates examined by them, whether admitted or rejected. Of this large sum, over which the general contributors have not the smallest control, how much does the Association imagine was devoted to the conducting of the mere machinery of the college for that same year, including the *douceurs* in cash, and dinners to the counsellors and examiners? Their own evidence‡ answers that question, and states that more than the half of that sum, namely, £5,127. 13s. 3d., was devoted to the machinery of the college, out of which amount, not less than £3,050. 5s. found its way into the satchels of *ten* examiners, and £425. 5s. into those of *twenty-one* counsellors!

Surely, after such an authentic exposition, the very able president who made the admissions, and did his best to justify them, cannot well wonder that the constituency of his college should look with a jealous eye at, and desire to reform, their well-paid and well-fed would-be representatives.

Nor will the whole of the medical incorporated bodies of London, taken collectively, appear to require

* Appendix 10. Part III.

† Extract of Receipts and Expenditure of the Royal College of Surgeons for 1833-1834. Part II. Appendix, p. 5, 8.

‡ Appendix, p. 6, Part II.

that great political measure less ; if we look at the apathy which they evinced on a recent occasion, when,—instead of coming to the rescue of the several members of the profession, ground down by that systematic degradation and injustice with which they have been lately visited, through the application of the poor-laws to them,—those incorporated bodies stood aloof, and extended neither help nor sympathy to the oppressed.

C.

Here ends what concerns medical education and the chartered bodies, with reference to reform.—But in order to complete the consideration of the first topic of my present oration, namely, “What is there to reform?” I ought properly, now, to pass to the examination of the medical charities and foundations in the metropolis, as well as in the provincial towns, and inquire into their management. I ought likewise to ascertain whether the London and large provincial hospitals, the infirmaries and dispensaries, are in reality productive of all the benefits to the community which their founders or benevolent supporters anticipated or desired. But the field is too vast for me to enter upon, until an equally solemn investigation has taken place with regard to those charities, before that same tribunal which has made known to the world the real state of medical education, and of the medical corporations in England. Such an investigation is due to the public, and will be undertaken. Some information on so important a subject has indeed been already collected, but no part of it has yet acquired publicity. To make any remarks, therefore, or to pass

comments on the structure, efficiency, and administration of medical charities in England, in the absence of all printed evidence and documents, would ill become the office of your appointed orator,—who, in entering upon his present task, prescribed to himself the duty of adhering to truth above all motives, and of preferring to be defeated and to have a verdict recorded against him in his pleadings, rather than to swerve from that truth, even to serve the cause of medical reform.

The question, therefore, of the management of medical charities in England must stand adjourned to another year, when my successor in the honourable office I now hold will probably, with the help of some future proceedings in parliament, make it the subject of his oration, which might properly form a second part to the one I have now the honour of delivering.

It has been asserted, that hospitals and dispensaries, being in their nature private institutions, no one who is an alien to them has a right to scrutinise them. This is a manifest error. Has not parliament, with a zeal and assiduity that do it honour, and during a succession of years, directed a commission to dive into the innermost recesses of all other charities in England, endowed by private individuals for a particular public object? And have not the published results of that inquiry led to the useful reformation of more than one of those much-abused institutions? Are not hospitals and dispensaries charities of the like nature, endowed and supported by *private* benevolence, for a particular *public* benefit; the recovery from disease of those afflicted with it among the community? Then why should their management

escape the searching eye of parliament, if, even in mere appearance, that management should seem to lack revision and alteration?

We now come to the consideration of our second topic :

2. HOW FAR HAS MEDICAL REFORM HITHERTO PROCEEDED?

The first hearty and efficient blow aimed at medical abuses by the axe of reform, was struck by one whom we are proud to number among the members of our Council ; one who, in the cause of medical reform, has not only the merit of being the first and most successful pleader, but also the most untiring and the most faithful. By talents of acknowledged superiority ; by tact and keenness of observation which fall to the lot of few ; by an unsubdued love of independence and the liberty of the subject ; and by the fearless expression of his sentiments, this declared reformer gained a seat in the House of Commons, where habits of industry, and consistency of conduct, have secured to him a degree of influence which he has often successfully turned to the advantage of our profession. He it was, who many years since, by the institution of a journal of deep and searching sagacity, well known throughout Great Britain, first exposed not only the most obvious, but likewise, and not long after, many of the more hidden, gross, and outrageous monopolies and deeds of corruption in medical matters. Through the unceasing efforts of that writer, many important changes were soon effected in medical schools and hospitals, and the work of practical medical reform was thus fairly begun. The benefits which have resulted from his endea-

vours, have long been felt and acknowledged on all hands, and are indeed visible in the metropolis, as they are in every corner of the realm where there exists a medical institution.

The glorious work of medical reform was also advanced some steps, from time to time, by the single-handed efforts of a few independent members of the profession, through published essays, orations, and addresses; among which this Association will never forget the eloquent one pronounced by our excellent president, at the foundation of this Society.

It has likewise been forwarded, to a certain degree, by the joint endeavours of a select number of physicians, through their several petitions to the Legislature, detailing grievances and asking for redress, although upon narrow and confined views of the general question. But over the history of some of those transactions I would rather, from the respect due to the medical character, draw a veil; since that history exhibits instances of subsequent tergiversation, and of succumbing to the seduction of honorary distinctions, which are alike disgraceful to those who have been guilty of such acts, and humiliating to us all, who labour in the same vineyard.

Medical reform has been also partially promoted by one or two medical journalists; and among these the Association cannot refuse a meed of praise to that senior quarterly medical journal, which, in exposing corporate abuses, and in desiring their reformation, has ever been consistent. This, and two or three other journals in the two sister countries, or in the provincial towns, have been and will be more than sufficient to break up the paltry influence attempted to be established by certain periodical writers, some

of whom, in their weekly lucubrations, affect to uphold a system of medical toryism, in hopes to secure the snuggeries of the actual Medical Government to their patrons: while others, through their quarterly rhapsodies, flippant and smacking of ignorance both of British and Foreign Medicine, strive to pull down the hard-earned reputation of their betters, whom they never can hope to emulate.

Another and a mighty step in the paths of medical reform was made when that all-important parliamentary investigation of 1834, to which I have largely alluded in the early part of this oration, was undertaken. The evidence then collected, and afterwards widely circulated and eagerly read, has left an impression on the mind of medical men, and of laymen even, in the provinces, which cannot fail to prepare them for reform. The developement of the complicated machinery of English medical corporations, which that investigation brought about; and the unwilling disclosures extracted from the mouths of some of the advocates of all that is faulty in those corporate bodies;—again, the futility on the one hand, and the injustice as well as mischievous tendency on the other, of the bye-laws which regulate those corporate bodies, exhibited according to their own witnesses;—lastly, the insufficiency of the present system of medical education, the confusion of ranks in the profession, the anomalies of privileges, and the want of uniformity in the medical constitution of the kingdom;—all these things, being shown and proved to exist in this country, their subsequent proclamation through the records of parliament has been a giant step towards reform.

Next we have, as a promoter of medical reform,

that solemn and momentous inquiry, likewise and very recently carried on before parliament, in which this Association took so prominent a part, and which will form, truly, one of the *Fasti* of our body, in the history of the present year. That investigation (and I allude of course to the evidence taken before the select committee on the poor laws amendment act) has led to conclusions and results, the excellent prospective bearing of which on medical reform it is hardly possible at this moment sufficiently to estimate. And here, again, we see the same master-hand at work, which first applied the axe to the tree of medical abuses, tracking the line of inquiry through that new labyrinth of a shamefully perverted legislation.*

Surely such a parliamentary exposition as the one alluded to, must and will rouse the most indolent and apathetic in our profession to co-operate with us in the cause of reform, when it has shown that, left to their own paltry power, placemen, under the poor laws amendment act, will put their heels on the neck of medical men, and press them down to the level of shopkeepers dealing by *tenders* and *contracts*; while (as I have remarked in a former part of my oration) not one of the corporate bodies, which declare that they exist but for the honour and protection of the medical profession, will be found ready to throw itself between the insulting authority and the numerous prostrated fellow-labourers in the field of practice.

* Mr. Power's evidence and Mr. Wakley's cross-examination as to Poor Laws Medical Clubs. Report (14) Select Committee, House of Commons, March 1838. Also Reports 44, 45, 46, from Select Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act. (Medical Inquiry.) Ordered, June 1838.

Lastly comes, as a stirring agent of reform, whose efforts in the cause we may, without overstepping modesty, suppose to have produced a movement forward, our British Medical Association. Young, yet vigorous; slender of dimensions, yet ambitious; scoffed at by the corruptionists, yet inspiring dread in their hearts; determined, united, unflinching: our Society, which may be viewed as one of those meteors that are said to precede great and vital changes, is likely to be the mainspring in the final accomplishment of that great and glorious consummation, Medical Reform.

In the drawing up of this rapid sketch of what has hitherto been effected towards obtaining the end we have in view, accuracy requires that I should, for a moment, silence those feelings of reserve, which are at all times so praiseworthy when *self* is in question, and that I should declare in this place, (since I see the subject fully investigated in the parliamentary volumes,) that I consider the proceedings of the Obstetric Society of London, which I had the honour first to establish, as likely to have assisted in promoting the cause of medical reform. When those proceedings, which lasted five years, first began, two of the medical corporations spurned the society,* and refused a seat among their members to those of their professional brethren (even though physicians and surgeons legally qualified and acknowledged) who practised a highly responsible, often difficult, and generally complicated branch of

* Question 224. "What reason did the College of Physicians assign for not paying attention to the representation of the Society of Accoucheurs?" Answer. "I have not the reasons by me. I remember they were well considered, and were thought satisfactory." Part I.—This is a mistake of the worthy president. The reasons were *not* deemed satisfactory, and the sequel has shown it.

medical art—*obstetricy*—in addition to other branches of the profession. The distinguished president of one of those corporations, forgetful of what was due to a body of men equally enlightened with himself, and among whom he was pleased to acknowledge some personal friends—unmindful, too, that those men were pursuing a legitimate object in their correspondence with the Secretary of State for the Home Department—permitted himself to use expressions (in answer to an official note I had been directed by the Society to write to that minister) which I have quoted elsewhere, and which that distinguished president must have regretted ever after having uttered; since he never repeated them throughout his subsequent hostile evidence before parliament, while objecting to the introduction of obstetricians into his college.*

The not less eminent individual also, who presided over the second of the two medical corporations alluded to—not a whit more friendly to the introduction of practitioners in midwifery into the councils of his college—alleged his reasons for his opinion, at great length, before the committee of 1834; † which committee, be it remembered, framed all its questions touching the anomalous state in which the practice of midwifery was then and is still placed in this country, from the book of minutes of, and the important documents supplied by, the Obstetric Society.

* The hostile evidence of the distinguished president alluded to is to be found at full length in Questions and Answers 231 and 232, in the latter of which occur these words, in reference to midwifery: "I think it would rather disparage the highest grade of the profession to let them engage in that particular practice." Part I.

† Answer 4801, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c. Part II.

We persevered in our measures, nevertheless, and the result has been the abolition of the degrading and unjust bye-laws of exclusion complained of by us.* First, a celebrated obstetrician, president of the Obstetric Society, being raised to the dignity of doctor of medicine, was made licentiate, afterwards a fellow, and as such admitted into the sanctuary of the elect. Next, a second accoucheur came, and a third and a fourth, “on to the crack of doom:” and thus, the very president of the Royal College, who, with all his amiable and social qualities, had so far forgotten his own dignity as to designate those who exercised the art of midwifery, as being scarcely gentlemen by profession, was compelled,—through the persevering acts of the Obstetric Society, and the public opinion awakened by that society, to sit by their side — at the same board—in the same council chamber!

Little as I am disposed to value such a conquest, achieved by a body of able men whom I had been first instrumental in bringing together; yet, as an example of what, even in an insulated branch of reform, can be effected by perseverance in a good cause, on the part of a few determined individuals,—this assembly will perhaps agree with me in viewing the successful accomplishment of the object of the Obstetric Society of London as worthy to be mentioned in this part of my present oration.

But with all this already accomplished—with all

* Question 225, Part I. “Does the statute of the college still exist, that none engaged in the practice of midwifery shall be admitted as fellows?” Answer. “Certainly.” Question 231. “Would it not be desirable to repeal such a by-law?” Answer. “No, I do not think it expedient.” (1834!) But in two years more it was done!

the efforts of societies and individuals already enumerated, particularly those of the last fifteen years, in the cause of medical reform—there remains yet much more to be accomplished, in order to reach our end: and this brings me to the consideration of the third and last point of my present argument.

3. WHAT YET REMAINS TO BE DONE TO ACCOMPLISH A TOTAL REFORM?

On this concluding part of my oration, time will only allow me the utterance of a very few words. But, though brief, I shall endeavour to be explicit, that we may be neither misunderstood nor misrepresented by the enemies of medical reform.

To accomplish this great, this all-important act, England, as one of the great national families of Europe, has only to place itself on an equality with the most enlightened among those nations. At present she stands alone, in the chaotic condition of her medical institutions. In no other part of Europe is the life of a fellow creature, when invaded by disease, committed to the charge of three differently educated and differently qualified medical practitioners. Let him be poor, or let him be wealthy—lowly of condition, or sitting on high—the victim of disease, in all parts of the Continent, is sure to have by his bedside an attendant to whom an uniform system of education has imparted the utmost knowledge in his profession which a wise government could provide for him. And as for any distinction of rank among such attendants, the laws having prescribed the same education for,

and granted the same qualifications to all—leave it to public opinion to establish it. In order to obtain readily results like these, the continental governments have provided one central medical faculty for the whole kingdom ; with one or two branches where the territory is too vast, as in France for example. That faculty is directed to apply the same and the maximum test of examination to all who desire to practise the healing art. It is, moreover, invested with the power to recognise all persons who have proved themselves able to practise, and to grant to all such the same privileges, to be enjoyed by them in every part of the kingdom, unmolested by any secondary or delegated power. That such a measure of equality and protection on the part of the regent faculty may be justified,—the nature and length of education, preliminary as well as medical, of *all* the candidates to be examined in the healing art, have been defined by special laws, which are not made subject to perpetual and capricious variations on the part of subordinate authorities. On the other hand, education itself is made accessible to the most moderate fortunes ; and the final examination or inquiry into the proficiency of the students and candidates for degrees takes place in open courts, and not in a private conclave. The examiners do not elect and perpetuate themselves in secret ; neither are they remunerated by the fees of candidates. Hence two sources of abuse or corruption are avoided. There may be corruption where there is secrecy, self-perpetuation, and irresponsibility on the part of the examiners. There may be corruption when, by secret proceedings, large sums of money are obtained from the many for distribution among

the few. But, according to the continental system, such species of corruption cannot obtain.

After these preliminary observations, I proceed to offer to the members of the British Medical Association the opinion of their fellow-member who has had the honour of addressing them on the present important occasion, regarding the best mode of effecting their wishes ; but I do not call upon them for a pledge of their adhesion to it. That opinion goes to declare that the great Act of medical reform in England will never be thoroughly accomplished, until the following great points shall have been conceded to the profession, and their execution secured by parliamentary statutes.

1st. A maximum degree of education, theoretical as well as practical, both preliminary and professional, obtained either at the existing colleges, or through authorised private teachers, for all medical students.

2ndly. The same, uniform, and the highest possible test of qualification, for all who intend to practise the healing art, no matter in what branch : the said test to consist of practical as well as theoretical demonstrations of the candidates' abilities, exhibited at one or more public examinations, to be carried on in writing as well as verbally.

3rdly. One and the same rank and title in the profession bestowed on all who have proved themselves capable to exercise the healing art by the highest possible test of qualification : whether the candidate chose afterwards to practise as physician, or as surgeon, or both, or as one and the other comprising obstetricy, and any other subdivision of the art

and science of medicine:—according as his own taste or inclination, or the strength of circumstances, and the situation he may be placed in, or the opinion of the public, may induce him to act:—thus affording to the poor, and the moderately affluent, as well as to the rich, (the lives of all of whom are of equal value in the eyes of humanity and the laws) the same means, and those of the highest character, for resisting the fatal inroads of disease.

4thly. An equal enjoyment of all the privileges and benefits appertaining to the highest degree of education and qualification as certified in a diploma, by every one possessing such a testimonial, in whichever part of Her Majesty's dominions he may choose to settle as a practitioner.

5thly. The establishment of One Faculty in the capital of each of the three realms—to be governed by the same laws—to be similarly constituted—and to be endowed with similar powers of qualifying candidates to practise in every part of the empire. As each of the capitals has its university for instructing and examining and granting degrees to students in every branch of educational knowledge, their privileges and rights should be left undisturbed in every respect, except as to the right of examining and conferring degrees in the medical art,—which must be surrendered to the medical faculty.

6thly. The medical faculty in each capital should consist of a certain number of eminent practitioners and public teachers, no matter to what particular branch of the profession they may have deemed it convenient or useful to confine themselves. By this provision, candidates would be certain to be examined

in all the branches of medical art and science, by persons known to be thoroughly conversant with those branches. The members should be remunerated by a fixed salary, and not by fees dependent on the number of examinations ; and to the post of member of the faculty all medical practitioners should be deemed eligible, either by open election or by competition.

7thly. The medical government should be centralised in the three faculties, so as to form but One Body, acting together in the framing and promulgation of the laws which are to regulate the profession—in defending the rights and interests of the latter—in superintending the medical police of the country—and in protecting the public from the ignorant and the pretender. The faculties should also have the power to establish, with the concurrence of the respective committees of governors, new and uniform regulations for the management of hospitals and the attendance of the medical officers and students, as well as for the appointment of the former, which should in future be open to competition on a public trial of skill.

8thly. The establishment of a Board is likewise absolutely necessary, to consist of members of the faculty most conversant in chemistry, botany, and natural history, for the purpose of examining and licensing the venders of drugs, and compounders or dispensers of medicines. The same board should be empowered to fix, and from time to time to alter, the regulations by which the operations of the vending chemists and druggists ought to be governed.

9thly. A general registry of all who have been admitted to practise the healing art, as well as to sell

and compound drugs, should be strictly kept at the faculty's offices, open to public inspection: so that in case of impostors or unqualified persons, (whose names of course would not appear in the said registry,) being found engaged in practising medicine in any of its branches, or in administering or compounding medicines, or in vending drugs, whether simple or compounded, with any reference whatever to health or disease—a *common informer* may be able to prove the fact by a mere reference to the registry, and convict the transgressor before a magistrate, who shall be empowered and bound to treat the case summarily, and by such pecuniary or other punishment as is awarded in cases of misdemeanor.

10thly. A law should also be enacted by parliament to prevent the sale of poisonous substances, and of all potent medicines by the licensed chemists and druggists, except on the prescription of a well-known medical practitioner.

11thly and lastly. Those parts of the acts or charters under which the present medical corporated bodies or colleges claim the right to examine candidates, before the latter can be authorised to practise either physic, surgery, or pharmacy; and all such other acts in existence as interfere with the carrying out of the principles of legislation laid down in the present scheme of medical reform,—should be annulled. But in no other respect should the said medical corporate bodies be disturbed, nor any of their vested rights encroached upon. Their interference with the medical education, qualifications, degrees, and right to practise, of individuals, being once put an end to, the colleges should be permitted to continue the

career for which they were originally intended,—that of promoting medical science, through and with the assistance of their halls, their libraries, and their museums. And inasmuch as the said colleges, whether in London, Edinburgh, or Dublin, or elsewhere, were founded for public and not for private benefit; and some of them are even now, or have been, supported by grants of public money; their respective establishments for the promotion of science should be thrown open to the public.

The best and wisest measure which the three corporate bodies in London can adopt under such circumstances, is to form themselves into a Royal Academy of Medicine, divided into three great classes, of medicine, surgery, and pure pharmacy. No doubt but that their example would be followed by the chartered medical bodies of the other capitals and cities. Each class should be limited in its numbers, and have a simple form of government; and all the members of the profession should be deemed eligible to a place in the academy, by election. This academy might become the medical consulting Board of the Government in matters of medical science.

Such are the fundamental outlines of a scheme for a total reform in the medical affairs of this country, which, after an experience of two-and-twenty years' practice in the metropolis—after watching what has been passing around me in the medical world during that period—after reflecting long and deeply on so important a question—after having examined and seen at work the system of medical instruction and

medical government in most of the foreign states,—and lastly, after perusing the voluminous evidence of the parliamentary committee of 1834*—I can conscientiously offer to the consideration of my fellow-members of the British Medical Association. I lay the scheme before them, without in the least wishing to pledge any one of the members, either to the whole or to any part of it, as being the best or most complete that could be devised for the purpose. Deputed by the Council to maintain and defend before this Association the argument in favour of medical reform, my task would have been deemed incomplete, had I not propounded at the same time my own notions respecting the most eligible mode of accomplishing so desirable an end. Hence my present scheme; and right glad shall I be, if it prove a source of practical hints, or an useful groundwork for some other and superior plan of operations.

In the scheme here propounded, it will have been noticed that the existence of all the medical corpora-

* I acknowledge with pleasure that I found some of the suggestions thrown out by two or three of the witnesses before Parliament to be coincident with some that are contained in this scheme. I must especially single out the just and liberal remarks of Sir B. C. Brodie, Sir Charles Bell, and Sir Astley Cooper; (See answer 5764 with regard to three faculties, and an uniform protection; also 5732, 5754, 5757, and 5904, 5916.) Nor must I forget the particular observations of the master of the Company of Apothecaries, in reference to summary conviction and the punishment of unqualified practitioners, as well as to a general register of those qualified to practise. This coincidence shows the conviction of the said witnesses as to the necessity of reforming medical affairs, and goes some way to prove that the medical reformers of England are neither fantastical nor utopian.

tions as scientific bodies, with the possession of all their present belongings, is maintained, provided that their resources be applied to the public good under wise regulations. The members of this Association are taunted with being *destructives*. We are not so: but neither are we *conservatives*. The title we aim at is that of RE-CONSTRUCTIVES; since we desire nothing more sincerely than to see re-constructed, on better and more solid foundations, and with architectural characters more suited to the genius of the age, the whole edifice of the medical profession in England. The only vested right of which we seek to deprive those chartered bodies, is that of interfering with the examination and the licensing of candidates for medical practice. We cannot respect any longer that right which the chartered bodies have declared themselves incapable of exercising with full effect, and which is daily and reciprocally encroached upon by their own acts and deeds. The defence of such a vested right, set up by the members of those chartered bodies, some of them high and liberal-minded individuals, cannot maintain its ground against the effect of an impartial investigation into it, and ought not, therefore, to stand in the way of our determination.

If it be contended that each of the chartered bodies is to maintain intact its privilege of examining and licensing candidates, then each of them should strictly confine the exercise of that privilege to an examination of the candidates into the particular branch of medical practice which the title of their individual charters implies, and no more. The College of Physicians should alone examine in physic—the College of Surgeons in surgery—and the Com-

pany of Apothecaries in the art of knowing, compounding, and dispensing medicinal substances on the prescription of a physician or surgeon, and in nothing else. Their respective train of examination should not, in fact, encroach on the province of the other two ; for such an encroachment would be looked upon as an act of injustice by one against the rest. Yet such is the state of the case at present ; and the men who actually respect least and infringe most the vested rights of medical chartered bodies, are, in good truth, the medical chartered bodies themselves ;—as the volumes of parliamentary evidence have abundantly shown. We therefore, the medical reformers of England, are not the *destructives* ; but the *self-conservatives* are so.

Take, again, another view of this pretended vested right of the chartered bodies : for we will not dismiss cavalierly the defence of it set up by their friends. Let us suppose that right to be respected as sacred by each of them ; and each of them to possess it as strictly defined as I have shown that, on every principle of justice, it ought to be, according to their own individual pretensions :—what benefit to the candidate would the preservation of such a vested right at the present time produce ? A single example will suffice to answer that question.

The Crown has recently thought proper to institute in the metropolis a general board or senate, which, among other important duties, will perform that of examining candidates in all the branches of medical knowledge, and authorise all such of them as shall be found competent, to practise under the seal of a diploma. If the vested right of examination in all the

three incorporated bodies, strictly exercised and without any reciprocal encroachment, is to be maintained—and the candidate who has been qualified to practise by the London senate be desirous of settling himself as a general practitioner, (according to the present meaning of that denomination found in the parliamentary volumes,)—the ordeal which that candidate would have to go through, ere he could legitimately carry his intention of settling into effect, would be not a little harassing. First he would have to obtain, after an appropriate examination, the diploma from the metropolitan senate, as before stated. He next would be, summoned to undergo three distinct examinations, in three consecutive months before the College of Physicians, in order to exhibit his knowledge of medicine;—the president having declared in his evidence that neither of the other two medical boards ought to meddle in such matters. Again, he would have to appear on a particular Friday at the college in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, to give proofs of his skill in surgery. And lastly, the Company of Apothecaries would insist on his showing how far he was competent to purchase, know, compound, and dispense all medical substances. Then, and not till then, would the labours of the exhausted candidate, and his empty exchequer, be rewarded with a license for administering medicine to the sick, practising surgery on the lame, and preparing medicines for either physicians or surgeons. Is it likely, we demand—is it just—is it in accordance with the common honesty of public legislation, that so absurd, expensive, dilatory, inconvenient, and, for some of the parties implicated, perhaps ruinous arrangement, should be tolerated?

But we may be told in reply, that no candidate for medical practice, who chooses to exercise the art of surgery and pharmacy with that of medicine, need appear before the London senate. What ! was it only for the making of physicians, or, in other words, for qualifying medical men to exercise their art after having been tried by the highest possible test of examination, that the London senate has been chartered ? If so, then the other three chartered medical bodies ought not to step in afterwards, and presume to test further the qualifications of such medical practitioners. As examining bodies, therefore, the corporations would be extinguished ; and thus we come again to the same conclusions for which we contended in framing our scheme of medical reformation.

But that reformation—observe some over-nice and scrupulous members of the profession on the part of the chartered bodies,—should come from themselves. Their own conviction of the false position in which they stand, and not the pressure from without, nor the hostile and confederated acts of any set of medical men, should induce those bodies to adopt reform. Let us hear what the author of the History of Scotland—(a work which displays more knowledge of mankind, and more sublime yet unaffected eloquence, than is to be met with in any equally modern historian)—let us hear what that author says on the subject of self-reform. Methinks we shall not be tempted to trust to *such* an act for the accomplishment of our wishes, after perusing the following beautiful passage.

“ To abandon usurped power,” observes Dr. Robertson, “ to renounce lucrative errors, are sacrifices

The British Medical Association

WAS FOUNDED IN 1836-7,

ARE :—

To obtain a national system of medical government; to procure wholesome changes in the constitution of the medical corporations or colleges; to press for the adoption of a higher and uniform standard of medical education; to insist upon an equal enjoyment of professional rights and privileges, and an equal protection from the laws; to remove and oppose all professional grievances, and all abuses in medical affairs; to uphold the dignity and respectability of the medical profession; to form a *Benevolent* Fund for distressed brethren, their widows and orphans; AND to promote union and good fellowship among all professional brethren, by inculcating kind, friendly, and honourable feelings towards each other.

BRANCH PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Have been formed, and are in progress, to aid in the above praiseworthy objects.

The principal By-laws of the Association are these :—

1. All legally qualified practitioners in the medical art are eligible to be members, and are entitled to be elected on proving to the Secretary, by letter or otherwise, that they have a legal claim to the title they assume.
2. The election takes place at all the meetings of the Council and of the Association; and the names of the elected are immediately registered.
3. A member pays ONE GUINEA on his admission, and every year after, as long as he continues a member; or he may compound at once by the payment of TEN guineas.
4. A third part of all subscriptions is set apart to form a Benevolent Fund.
5. The Association meets, generally, twice a year; and the Council on each Tuesday of the second and fourth week in every month, at seven P.M. The meeting of the second Tuesday is open to all the members at nine o'clock, to bring forward any business they may have to propose.
6. The second general meeting of the Association in the year is the anniversary of the Society, at which the Council are bound to report their proceedings to the body at large, and an Annual Oration is delivered. This meeting takes place on the 30th of September.
7. All meetings of the Association and Council, except the anniversary meeting, are held at Exeter Hall, where communications to the Society may be addressed to

C. H. ROGERS HARRISON,

Joint Honorary Secretary.