

A reply to some of the statements put forth by Mr. Pettigrew in a pamphlet / by John Howship.

Contributors

Howship, John, 1781-1841.
Merriman, Samuel, 1771-1852
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

[London] : C. Richards, printer, [1836]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/sjbnhua6>

Provider

Royal College of Surgeons

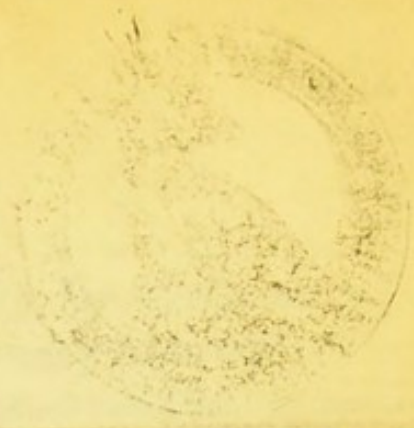
License and attribution

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

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



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



A REPLY
TO SOME OF THE STATEMENTS
PUT FORTH BY
MR. PETTIGREW IN A PAMPHLET.

By JOHN HOWSHIP.

in the following first remarks, to notice
the following first remarks, to notice
the following first remarks, to notice

A REPLY

TO THE

MEMORIAL

OF

THE

A PAMPHLET having lately appeared, by Mr. Pettigrew, containing some statements relating personally to myself, I have deemed it necessary, in the following brief remarks, to notice a few of the principal; but, in order to avoid being led aside by any angry feeling, I have purposely allowed a considerable time to pass before replying to them.

The first circumstance requiring particular notice, occurs at page 10, where the pamphlet states, in reference to my collection of preparations, that, in speaking of it, I foolishly eulogized it, as exceeding in value that of St. George's Hospital. This, however, is not exactly what I said; I stated that I had seen the collection at St. George's, and that I considered my own to be, although less extensive, more valuable than many others in this respect, that I had the complete history of every preparation in it, which was not the case in most other collections that I had seen.

With regard to the alleged expression of the delight which I should feel in being connected with Mr. P. at the Charing Cross Hospital, I beg to say, that I do not recollect having used that word on the occasion, and that, as it is not precisely in keeping with my usual style of expression, I should much doubt it having been so applied by me.

The next matter on record, is the pecuniary transaction connected with my appointment (page 11). This proposition arose, as Mr. P. has stated, with himself. The first and most important point, in my mind, in this transaction, certainly was, the becoming one of the Surgeons to the Hospital; but I was not unmindful that, in time, the fees to be derived from the attendance of pupils, might, in all probability, prove remunerative. The proposition included, as stated in the pam-

phlet, that the fees should be equally divided; and so they since have been. Such prospect, it may be said, might have been considered to be rather remote than otherwise; however, to me, as far as this was concerned, it was sufficiently satisfactory.

The pamphlet then states, in proof that I did not consider the transaction as at all unjustifiable, that I requested of Mr. P. to promise me his influence in favor of Mr. Turner, at some future election. I recollect speaking once with Mr. P. on the subject; but, on that occasion, mention was also made of other individuals, who, being pupils of the Hospital, had prior claims; but where the conversation is supposed to have gone beyond this, it proceeds a little too far, and I am under the necessity of stating it to be incorrect; for I am quite sure I never expressed any desire to render the appointment either of Mr. Turner, or any one else, to the Hospital, a source of pecuniary advantage to myself. It is, indeed, not very probable that I should have expressed any anxiety to favor a purpose, which, it could be easily proved, I had never entertained; although it is, nevertheless, perfectly true that it was the wish of Mr. Turner's friends, that he should have been connected with me in the practice of the profession.

The writer next proceeds (in a sudden burst of honest warmth) to express his surprise that I should now presume to state, that I am not prepared to maintain as a general principle, such a transaction to be justifiable; and that he, therefore, leaves the Governors and Subscribers to form an estimate of my veracity. This will at least excuse me for going a little further into the question than I had otherwise wished to have done, in order in some measure to reconcile points, which, to a mind so acutely sensitive as Mr. P.'s, appear to have presented themselves in such revolting opposition.

The proposal for a pecuniary consideration was suggested for my adoption, with the alleged sanction, and the entire approbation, as Mr. P. stated, of the other medical officers,—

a circumstance which might in itself be considered a sort of warrant; especially, as it was at first stated, and has since been repeated in the pamphlet, (page 13) that it would be "a personal convenience" to that gentleman. I say, then, that these circumstances were calculated to induce any person to regard this particular case as an exception to a rule, so far as regards the appointment to the Hospital, although I again repeat, that I do not approve such course, as a general principle.

In the same page, another circumstance appears in error, which I now deem it proper to set right. It is stated, that upon my having expressed a wish to reduce the amount of the sum to be paid, the suggestion was declined, and that this was the cause of the negociation being broken off. But the facts were not exactly in accordance with that representation; yet it may be worthy of remark, and will probably be in the recollection of some gentlemen then at the table, that I carefully avoided stating to the Special Committee the ground on which the negociation was broken off, solely from a regard to the feelings of the writer of the pamphlet; I said it was in consequence of a note I received, but did not state its contents. Having, however, experienced so little reserve in the unqualified attacks made upon me, I see no reason for longer maintaining delicacy in avowing the fact, that this breaking off was the consequence of a request made to me in writing, to pay the money, long previous to my becoming connected with the Hospital; a request with which, consistently with that characteristic keenness in making bargains, which the writer has been pleased to pronounce to be one of my special attributes, it was of course impossible for me to comply.

I now proceed to the next point (page 14), in which the writer complains of my not having acquiesced in his desire, or demand, to have my collection placed entirely at his disposal. The circumstances already mentioned, will, in some degree, plead my excuse for a determination, which, at the first glance,

might appear, as it is stated to be, of a selfish character. But the truth is, the extent of trouble and labour required for keeping correct and complete notes of one single case in surgery, is often great beyond what can be easily supposed; and those only, who really devote themselves to the study and improvement of the profession, can estimate the importance of preserving, with the greatest possible care, the only unquestionable, though still perishable Voucher, of the true value and character of the case.

Mr. Pettigrew having announced, with a praiseworthy diffidence, his own liberality in supporting the school, (as he says) far beyond all his colleagues, by his collection of preparations, without which, he assures his readers, it could not have gone on, he proceeds to complain of my selfish appropriation, in the following terms:—

“When the preparations were to be arranged in the Museum, I found that Mr. H. had ordered particular locks to be put upon the cases in which his were to be contained. I had, in common with my colleagues, conceived that the whole were to be arranged in an order calculated to give instruction to the pupils, and that they would be used in common by all the teachers of the school. I objected to Mr. H.’s preparations being placed in the Museum, unless agreeably to this feeling, and he, determining on a selfish appropriation, declined to do so, or to permit any body to use them but himself, or at his special loan,—a condition that no gentleman could submit to—notwithstanding I had admitted him to half the surgical course.” Now, even this is only a partial statement, for it does not display the full extent of the writer’s liberality towards me; for he might with truth have added, that, during the last session, he admitted me to the *whole* of the Surgical Course; for I delivered every lecture of that course, while my fellow-labourer in the vineyard only participated in the division of the fees.

The pamphlet then goes on to state, that I complained to

Dr. Golding. This is true. In point of fact, I now saw myself placed in what I considered a most unjust, and extremely unpleasant position. I found that my colleagues had been incorrectly led to believe that my morbid anatomical collection had been the principal inducement to my selection, as an officer; and that I was warmly commented upon for my ingratitude in withholding the arrangement of my collection from one who had so *disinterestedly* extended to me an equality of rank and emolument through no other consideration, on his part, than his anxiety for the interests of the Hospital. In warmly reasoning the point, I naturally looked back to the true bearings of the question; and, in so doing, incidentally mentioned such points as it appeared necessary to call to remembrance, and among them the pecuniary point, in my own justification; and I have seldom felt greater vexation, or more distress, than I did on perceiving at once that Dr. Golding was unacquainted with it; for, had I not been assured by Mr. P. that both Dr. Golding and his colleagues had approved of the transaction, I never should have entered into it. In this matter I entirely disclaim having had any, even the least, intention of annoying or exposing Mr. Pettigrew, by divulging any thing that was before unknown; but as, in his letter, he stated that his colleagues were acquainted with, and sanctioned the transaction, I would ask, how could I be fairly liable to any charge for breach of confidence in adverting, in serious argument, to circumstances which he had himself set out with assuring me had the full knowledge and sanction of his colleagues?

Mr. P. says that his letter was marked "private," and this may be very true for what I know to the contrary, as I am unable to refer to that letter which he demanded back and said he had destroyed; but as I clearly recollect that in the letter he explicitly declared that his colleagues not only knew but approved the contents, provided I was still to suppose myself connected with one whose conduct was regulated by proper feelings, I

do not yet see how I could suspect for an instant that the letter was unknown to those gentlemen.

It is but justice to myself to add, that subsequent to this period, I earnestly entreated that what I had incidentally and inadvertently made known, might not be made a subject of discussion; and that this statement is in perfect unison with what, it will be recollected, I said before the Special Committee.

In conclusion, I cannot help remarking on a curious circumstance; it is, that the writer of the pamphlet does not himself appear able to determine with precision whether the transaction alluded to, was public, or private; known or unknown; for although in one part (page 15) he adverts to its being mentioned as a base breach of confidence, it will be found that in several of the preceding pages of his essay he has asserted, and laboured to shew, that it was perfectly well known to all his colleagues.

Thus have I endeavoured to fulfil my purpose, of traversing, though briefly, this most unwelcome, and painful path. I have noticed and replied to such circumstances, in passing, as appeared to relate more immediately to myself, and those alone; and that as concisely as possible; and in so doing, I trust I have been swayed only by a just sense of what was due to the vindication of my own character, as a gentleman; without having been betrayed into any unbecoming warmth or intemperance, in the expression of my feelings.

SAVILLE Row,

Oct. 19th, 1836.