

## **A letter to Lord John Russell, on the charter of the new London University.**

### **Contributors**

Dermott, G. D. 1802-1847.  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

### **Publication/Creation**

London : Printed by Simpkins, 1837.

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/wa9qmj2w>

### **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**

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



September 1946

IFAN KYRLE FLETCHER, 12 LANSDOWNE ROAD, WIMBLEDON, LONDON, S.W.20.

MEDICINE

269 [DERMOTT (G. D.)] A LETTER TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL ON THE CHARTER OF THE NEW LONDON UNIVERSITY. First edition. 8vo, unbound. For the author, 1837. 15s

Dermott was a lecturer on Anatomy, Physiology and Surgery, receiving pupils at 15, Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury. Not in Osler Catalogue.

*The substance of this letter lately appeared in the Constitutional Newspaper or Public Ledger, addressed to Lord Brougham in the form of a series of letters; since then I have heard from unquestionable authority, that LORD BROUGHAM'S name was attached to the Charter of "the University of London" without his knowledge, and, consequently, without his sanction; moreover that he withdrew his name when he first saw the Charter in December last. I have therefore in some slight degree re-moddled the letters, combined them into one, and in re-publishing them in this new form, have addressed my letter to LORD JOHN RUSSELL, he being the Secretary of the State for the Home Department, and, of course, officially, as a leading Agent implicated in the creation of the Charter.*

*G. D. D.*

# LETTER TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL

1845

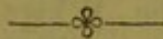
NEW YORK: PUBLISHED BY G. B. WHITTAKER, 1845.

The subject of the letter is the proposed reform of the House of Commons. The author, Lord John Russell, is a member of the House of Commons and a prominent Whig politician. The letter is addressed to the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, and discusses the need for reform in the House of Commons, particularly regarding the franchise and the representation of the people. The author argues that the House of Commons should be a more representative body, reflecting the interests of the people rather than being dominated by the aristocracy and the landed gentry. He proposes various reforms, including the extension of the franchise to a larger portion of the population and the introduction of a system of proportional representation. The letter is a classic example of the Whig reform movement of the mid-19th century.

# LETTER TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL,

RESPECTING THE

## NEW LONDON UNIVERSITY CHARTER.



MY LORD,

Apologies are unpleasant resources at most times, and the vast importance of the subject upon which I now address you—namely, the charter of the New London University, and your “relative position”, in reference to that charter, excuses me from making any apologetical preamble for obtruding this letter upon your attention. I also think that I am, as a matter of right, entitled to address you publicly or privately, or any other influential individual, who is, or who has been, associated with the production of the said charter, upon the strength of the position which I have held for so many years in the medical profession.

I shall therefore, my Lord, proceed without ceremony to the preamble of the charter. It commences with the following (shall I say hypocritical?) profession:—“Whereas we have deemed it to be the duty of our royal office, for the advancement of religion and morality, and the promotion of universal knowledge, to hold forth to all classes and denominations of our faithful subjects *without any distinction whatsoever*, an encouragement for pursuing a regular and liberal course of education; and considering that many persons do prosecute or complete their studies, both in the metropolis and in other parts of our United Kingdom, to whom it is expedient that there should be offered such facilities and on whom it is just that there should be conferred such distinction and rewards as may incline them to persevere in these their laudable pursuits,” &c. So far excellently good. But my Lord, I beseech you to observe how far this preamble, which does positively, in the strictest sense, espouse the principle that an individual ought to be rewarded according to his talent, and not according to his fortune, or the accidental position in which he chances to be placed by birth or adventitious causes in society,—observe, I say, how this agrees with the *detail* of the Charter. The Chancellor is, and is to be hereafter appointed by the *crown*—the Vice-Chancellor by the *crown*—the Fellows or Members of the Senate, are all appointed by the *crown*. It is also ordained by the said authority that the said officers “shall have full power, from time to time, to make, and also to alter any by-laws, and regulations—(by-laws, those curses, demoralizing

and perverting more or less all our English institutions)—touching the circumstances for degrees and the granting of the same, and touching the time and mode of convening the meetings of the chancellor, vice-chancellor, and fellows, and in general touching all other matters whatsoever regarding the said university;” moreover, that the fellows shall elect their successors.

In other words, that it shall be a close self-electing political monopoly, backed in the most direct manner and to the veriest possible extent by crown patronage, distinguished in the greatest possible degree for those ugly features which have been so much railed at in all our corrupt, self-perpetuating corporations, even by you, my Lord, and all the Whigs. Look at the character you have hitherto assumed as a political liberal; at the fair preamble of this charter; at the vaunting professions of the Whigs, and their reforming in some degree the municipal corporations; and then on the other hand, at the detail of this charter of Whig monopoly, and your name being ex-officio connected with it as a leading and influential individual—I will ask, is consistency to be found amongst these facts?

We will, if you please, my Lord, say nothing at present about the two bishops placed over the said University; and placed of course as *bishops*, inasmuch, as I suppose, that this was intended to guarantee to the public, according to the *preamble*, that no “distinction” whatsoever of religious denomination is to be made. But compare, I beseech you, my Lord, this system of crown and ministerial patronage and privileges to be so soon developed in this embryo-monster of monopoly, to the system of sheer merit once so honestly and perfectly followed up in the university of France; *there*, not only was instruction thrown open to *all*, and not only did public rewards and honours await *all* deserving students without distinction, but the teachers in all the provincial universities were chosen by *concour* (or by such a competition of talent as I shall briefly explain hereafter,) and these said teachers underwent a regular system of promotion according to their merit, until they became members of the council of the university of France. All the professors were chosen by *concour*; the committee of the medical faculty were elected by ballot from amongst them; even as it regarded the minor offices of the medical department of education, those of the house-surgeons and dressers were filled by *concour*. But pray what do *you* say, by your charter, to the young aspirant *here*?—why literally this: If you desire promotion and celebrity, seek court, seek ministerial patronage—the path to preferment is through the corridors of the palace. This is the encouragement *you* hold out to the pupil with a capacity, who, under better and fairer circumstances, would not have his enterprize damped, but would steadily pursue the laborious path of science with a certainty of realising the honours which he had in view.

I would ask, then, is this charter just?—or is it not marked with dishonesty, and the deepest die of conservatism throughout? Have you, my Lord, or any minister, or man under the sun, a right to

presume upon determining *without trial*, the individual and comparative merits of promiscuous thousands in the different departments of scientific learning, as to who is most competent for this or that appointment? Will you say that his Majesty, Lord Melbourne, yourself, or any other Lord, mix sufficiently and so promiscuously with the busy world, and are so all-seeing and omniscient, as to be acquainted with the individual merits of all men? No man can do this, Lord or no Lord, nor has he a right to presume to, and his doing so is a violation of the common rights of merit, industry, and mankind. You can only form your estimate by mere "hearsay," which, at the best, is a most treacherous informant to depend upon, especially in a profession totally disorganised and pregnant with jealousies, party feeling, and jobbing.

But supposing that yourself, and the other members of the council were so clever as to see into the exact condition of every man's head, will you tell me, my Lord, and I must be plain, that the said council shall not be influenced by personal, party, or political feelings in their choice—that crown patronage as not been repeatedly and most horridly abused—and will you gurantee that it shall not be again? Will you assert that ministers, as to their decisions, and bestowing of places, have not been heretofore, and shall not be hereafter, influenced by political prejudices and motives? Look well to it, for you are taking upon your shoulders a most awful responsibility, and your *name* is associated with a charter which is worse than any that the strictest Tory would have ventured to have engendered; has "out heroded Herod;" and may wofully counteract any better views which you or others may entertain as to other parts of a plan of national education.

Tests to prove the competency of medical men to fill public appointments, and to ascertain what a man *really is*, are as necessary as chemical tests for the purpose of ascertaining the composition of matter.

But, my Lord, this new University is a dangerous monopoly on another account; for the crown and ministers, have such perfect control over its organization and the election of officers, that it can at any time be made *a most formidable political engine*, at the political turn of the wind, upon the change of any ministry, by the instrumentality of those curses by-laws, destroying unjustly the prospects of the many or the few, according to the predominating influence of the party at the time. In this view the new University may be mentioned in connexion with the new provincial or rural police, which can be made, in the hands of bad ministers, a most terrible instrument of evil. The managing men of your University will be *court flies* chosen by the crown, willing slaves to the beck and nod of those in power, such "as soak up the King's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the King best(?) service in the end; he keeps them in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed to be last swallowed—when he needs what they have gleaned, it is but squeezing, and, like a sponge, they shall be dry again." Your rural police will be a most extensive, but combined, military force,



and an army of spies withal, extending its ramifications, throughout the whole of the nation, and subservient to every purpose as long as paid by ministers. Should the Tories once again get into power, the Whigs, in creating these two political weapons, will find that they have mightily added to the ease, power, and security of the former; that they have been better friends to them than to themselves. How much better would it have been if they had espoused the system of merit, without the interference of private or hereditary patronage, and had thereby strengthened their own cause in the framing of the charter by identifying themselves with that "tower of strength," public opinion, and making it in every sense, and in all the bearings of the said charter a liberal institution; at once both an honour and universal good to the country, *and the radix of a future liberal system of national education*. But now this cannot be. The Whigs may call out against the future *perversion* of the charter, but the charter will be perverted, in consequence of its defects, many parts of it moreover having in themselves the most evil tendencies.

But, my lord, to proceed with the charter,—it merely states that the examiners appointed from amongst the senate, by the senate, shall examine candidates; not a word is said whether the examinations are to be public or private; judging however, from the spirit of the detail of the charter, we may presume that they will be in correspondence with those of the close corporate, scientific, and medical bodies; or if public at first, they can be made *instanter* by a new by-law, private—if private, why then the examiners will be open to all the aspersions that have been thrown, justly or unjustly, upon the medical examining bodies of the present time, for partiality in bestowing degrees; and this, with much greater, and a most substantial reason, inasmuch as already a decided predilection in favour of some persons, parties, and schools is expressed in the charter, the London University, formerly so called, and the King's College being specifically mentioned as approved schools in the said charter, to the detriment of the other schools, especially the private. This the students have already taken scent of, consternation prevails amongst them, and those who have attended a laborious private teacher for many years, stare at each other with astonishment. This, the vilest part of your charter runs thus:—"that such certificates as aforesaid may be granted from our college, called the University College, or from our college called King's College, or from such other institution as we, under our sign manuel, shall hereafter authorize to offer such certificates;"—"and for the purpose of granting degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Doctor of Medicine, and for the improvement of medical education in all its branches, as well in medicine as in surgery, midwifery, and in pharmacy, we do further hereby will and ordain, that the said chancellor, vice-chancellor, and fellows, shall from time to time report to one of our principal Secretaries of State what appear to *them* to be medical institutions and schools, whether corporate or unincorporated in this our metropolis, or in other parts of our united kingdom, from which either singly or conjointly with

other medical institutions and schools in the country or in foreign parts, it may be fit and expedient in the judgment of the said chancellor, vice-chancellor, and fellows, to admit candidates for medical degrees, and that the chancellor, vice-chancellor, and fellows, with the approval of the Secretary of State, shall have the power of disfranchising any of the institutions or schools, and of adding to their number."

There are only two good principles recognised in the whole of this clause or rather in the whole of the charter itself, viz. 1st. the unity of the profession, the unity of surgery and medicine, one faculty. 2nd. the admission of dissenters; but these could be destroyed by a by-law. In a ratio, as you have in this last quoted clause, expressed nominally a predilection for two schools, so do you benefit them, and so in the same degree do you injure unjustly others, more particularly the private schools. *The grand rivalship among teachers hitherto, and that to the great benefit of the pupils, the profession and the community, has existed for the most part between private and public teachers.* The private teachers have rested solely upon their own merits, and not upon external show and peculiar patronage. This you cannot disprove, and no man can gainsay. The predilection so unfairly expressed in the charter is already operating most sorely against the private teachers; for as harbingers to the grand currents of pupils being determined next year to these two specified institutions (more particularly to the North London,) the teachers in those institutions are already pricking up their combs, and loudly crowing about the large classes they are to realize next year, whilst the question is mooted amongst pupils in the private schools, "Shall we be eligible as candidates for the new degree upon the strength of our present certificates? if not, we shall have the whole of our time to go over again." Now this suspense on the part of both teacher and pupil is most painful, most unjustly incurred, and ruinous to the former; and I, for one, must claim an indemnification from the originators of the charter for the degree of injury sustained. All the schools which are to be recognized, should have been nominated in the charter, or none. The private teacher will be the principal loser who has contended against the public schools upon the strength of his own industry and merit. You my Lord, cannot be such an individual as to presume that the destruction of this rivalship, by causing the annihilation of the private schools, will have any other effect but to lull the public teachers into sense of their own security, and into a state of indifference and idleness, which will be subsequently reverberated upon the heads of the pupils.

Before I proceed further, I must just explain that the nominal distinction of public and private teacher is only fictitious; any person is admitted, as a visitor, to the lectures of a private teacher, even if he were a chimney-sweeper, provided his face and jacket were tolerably clean, and that as freely, and perhaps more so, than to the lectures of a so called public teacher. By a public medical school is meant nothing more than that school which happens to be attached to some hospital, or medical institution. But, my

Lord, the private teachers can proudly ask upon other grounds why this expressed preference in the charter. Have we not been more industrious—more anxious for the progress of the pupils—more conversant with their individual condition and necessities than the teachers in the public establishments? Have not our lectures been equally as elaborate? And I guess, my Lord, that if a public test of merit were to be called, for filling public appointments, and realizing professional emolument, that as many successful candidates would spring up from amongst the private teachers and their pupils, as from among the public teachers and theirs, although as to actual number we are certainly somewhat in the minority. What makes the fate of the private teacher still worse is, that after a life of slavery, and striving against the tide of present monopoly, patronage, and the influence of joint-stock university companies, gaining withal this, (unless lucky enough to be backed by one or more of these latter) just sufficient to put hand to mouth; he learns from your most excellent charter, that the realization of preferment as a public teacher, of professional note, and consequent emolument, are only to be obtained by court and ministerial patronage: and that he is therefore born to live and die in half-fed, starving professional slavery, with not a glimmering ray of hope to excite the lingering spirit of enterprise in his breast, unless he chances to have “a friend at court.” Oh, my Lord, is this *your* reform—a part of *your* system of national education—are your principles *these*?

Much, very much, has been said against the London College of Surgeons, on account of its being a monopoly, and much abuse has been lately lavished upon the council for expending their money in rebuilding a portion of the college—money, by-the-by, as regards the library and the splendid new museum-room for displaying John Hunter’s preparations, well spent. But the theatre is by no means sufficiently spacious for public examinations and concour which must take place ere long. I must, however, observe, that the members of the council are about to issue new regulations, to the effect that all candidates for becoming lecturers on anatomy and surgery, shall undergo by them an examination, and that all candidates for hospital surgeoncies shall submit to the same test. The principle of testing men for public appointments is hereby gained; this is a grand thing, but there is still a loop, a hinge to hang a doubt on, as to the exact manner in which those examinations are to be conducted, whether publicly or privately; whether if private, they are to be open to villanous favouritism, private intrigue, and court interest. I would advise the College of Surgeons to throw their doors open at these examinations to the medical public, at least. If the council were to do this, and to open the College to the medical public by abandoning the system of electing themselves, and establishing instead, an election by ballot, also the choice of examiners by public concour, they would then carry the sense of the public with them, and the New Metropolitan London University, could not be mentioned in the same day, the same week,

may, nor the same year, with the London College of Surgeons; the latter would completely overwhelm and supersede the former, because it would carry along with it the power of public opinion. By these means, and by these means alone, will the College of Surgeons destroy all their enemies and save themselves even at the eleventh hour. My Lord, what you should have expressed in the detail of the charter, to the development of which you have unfortunately given your aid, is, that the members of the council should be elected by ballot at a public meeting duly advertised and appointed for the purpose, by all the members of the University, after the first batch had been appointed by the Crown and ministers. It is necessary that the council should be composed of men of probity and "business," and, according to those principles which you have heretofore asserted to be your own, the members of all corporations should have the right of a vote; the members of no corporation are enfranchised unless they have a vote in the election of their own representatives, and they must be barbarians indeed, certainly not respectable scientific men, if they are not fit to exercise that vote. You should have said, moreover in your charter, that the examiners, for their object is purely scientific, shall be chosen by concour. These two different sets of officers, the council and the board of examiners, would be a salutary check against each other. The examiners, in fact, should be elected for the different departments of knowledge precisely in the same manner as all professors ought to be chosen to public institutions; and physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries to hospitals and dispensaries.

Concours are conducted in France in the following manner:—The dean of the faculty summonses a meeting of the professors, and a committee is selected from amongst them, at least it used to be, by lot; these, about a dozen individuals, sometimes less, perhaps as few as seven, act as the jury, and they are sworn to perform their duty with impartiality. Notice is duly given in the public prints, and even placarded in the streets, of the meeting of the forthcoming trial of intellectual strength, and the public are indiscriminately admitted to the great amphitheatre of the faculty of medicine, or to that of whatever other faculty it may happen to be; whilst the candidates are reserved in a private room, without books but with pen, ink, and paper. The concours opens by each member of the jury placing in an urn a slip of paper, with some topic named upon it, and which of course regards the department of science for which the concours is convened. Each candidate, the oldest first, draws his lot, and has to deliver a lecture, without referring to books, and with only a quarter of an hour's meditation, upon the subject thus drawn. They are next required to write theses, and as each on the appointed day reads his thesis, his assertions are disputed, and he is examined on all topics connected with the said thesis by his competitors, whose interest it is to expose every deficiency they can find in him. The jury finally declare who is the successful candidate. Should the candidates be aspiring to the

office of physicians or surgeons, then the trial bears, in addition to the above, a practical character. Patients are promptly produced to them; they have to comment upon the symptoms, and make their diagnosis publicly, and to prescribe for the said patients; and, if it should be for a surgical appointment, they have also publicly to perform operations upon the dead and living body.

Let me, my Lord, read you a lesson: When Louis XVIII., at his restoration, attempted for a short time to supersede *concour*, by assuming to himself the despotic power of appointing public medical men, it was the cause of nearly extinguishing all enterprize between students as well as between medical men, and of arresting the progress of medical science for a time in France. The schools were deserted until Louis found himself obliged (much against his inclination) to re-establish *concour*. But what did he do? He modified this honest Buonapartian plan of rewarding merit, by instituting a new order of professionals, "Agreges," or fellows; these, chosen by *concour*, were to act for the *professors* in case of illness, and professors were often arbitrarily selected from these by the Crown upon vacancies taking place. The object in instituting such a body is said to have been a political one—that of keeping the professors and the most influential and talented men, more immediately under the eye and surveillance of government.

When Charles X. began to exercise despotic power—he, in imitation of that overgrown fool, Louis XVIII., attempted to do away with *concour*; and, to give the Crown as much patronage as possible, professors were appointed to the faculty by the Crown; but the consequence was (the pupils not liking the lecturers) *the desertion of the class-rooms* although government employed the soldiery and every thing but the cannon-ball to enforce attendance. They were thus obliged in both instances to restore *concour*. So much for the spirit of the French youth. Even although it is at present enforced in France that a certain routine of lectures shall be attended at the faculty and no where else, be it remembered that notwithstanding this would seem at first view unjust, and to partake of the spirit of monopoly, it cannot at present have so baneful an influence in France as in England: for most medical appointments are there still gained by *concour*; and although it is true that the latter are at present often much corrupted by court and political influence, it is possible, even now, for an unknown aspirant, if he possess industry and merit, to become, by *concour*, in France, a public teacher or hospital surgeon, and a man of high public trust: but, on the other hand, in England no appointments are obtained upon that principle, but by the base dishonest, foolish and barbarous means of drawing-room coterie, private interest, and money-influence, exercised over the minds of interested medical men, already, perhaps, the senior officers of the institutions, and of non-medical incompetent judges, who are governors and electors in them. Personal solicitation, public begging or canvassing from door to door, public placards, and advertisements, are in every instance had recourse to. A system which de-

grades the medical man below the most paltry shopkeeper whose favour he solicits, is a blasphemy and insult to the very name of science, and reduces the whole of the profession to a mere trade, to a placarding, electioneering, and advertising body, of the lowest and most servile stamp.

If honesty, common sense, and those fundamental moral principles, which should govern society and bind it together; which hold sacred the rights of merit and industry, are regarded, then the plan of concour will not be confined to the examining bodies and professorships, but extended also to the election of medical officers in all medical charities.

The establishment in these elections, especially in the last mentioned, of a fair and an unalloyed competition of talent, in place of the present competition of favouritism and party interest, would be infinitely beneficial to the medical profession—to the institutions individually—to the sick and community at large.

First, it would be beneficial to the medical profession. If the bestowing of a few paltry medals, mere useless baubles and emblems of imposition, and the obtaining of a house surgeonship by concour at the North London Hospital—a *servile* imitation of that which should be in reference to every medical officer (for the house surgeon notwithstanding his being so elected, there pays £50. per annum for his board—it should be an affair of merit in *toto*—money should have nothing to do with it)—if these manœuvres have the effect of stimulating pupils—would not the establishment of a fair and unalloyed competition of talent for the obtaining of public appointments, well earned fame, and emolument for life, have the effect of arousing the minds of the pupils from a state of comparative lethargy and idleness, to that of unprecedented activity and industry and most laudable enterprise, and of saving many a talented youth from fatal dissipation? For it may be considered as a maxim, that the mind of every talented individual, youth and man, must be employed, *and the direction which the mind takes depends upon the strength of the inducing cause.* This system which I advocate would expose the ignorant and exhibit the well-informed in their true position, and in their true colours, Oh! if this had been established heretofore, how many families and widowed mothers who I have seen poverty-stricken by the profligate expenditure of their sons, would have been saved from ruin! But, my Lord, this expenditure, this profligacy, and this ruin, are only the effects of a bad cause, the cause is the wretched organization of the medical profession, which has hitherto held out no certain tangible rewards to industry.

A man, my Lord, when he is requested to perform such and such work, naturally asks the question—“What shall I be paid for its performance? because I must be remunerated for my trouble; and unless you to a certainty adequately do so, I cannot labour in that peculiar branch which you require, so as to render justice both to you and myself.” Apply then, this rule, my Lord, to the medical profession.

The system which I advocate would change the character of the medical profession infinitely for the better—it would morally reform it altogether. Would it not direct the medical practitioner through the laborious but honourable and up-hill path of medical science, instead of to the tea-tables, balls, card parties, and conversations—to the contemptible party squabbles of a board-room, or the electioneering pursuits of some would-be medical officer? generally supported, especially as far as it regards dispensaries, in many instances by some of the most ignorant and intriguing set of men, who can call themselves professionals. It is these dastardly board-room brawls and the circumstances connected with them, such as the intrigue of party and private interest, that form in a great measure the common root from whence spring the horrid jealousies, narrow minded feelings, and bad actions, which dishonour the medical profession, which hunt a man to the very death, and which slayed John Hunter himself.

Let me ask, my Lord, if the system which I recommend were established, should we have the pupil complaining of the inability of this or that teacher in any public school as we do at the present day? Should we have men of inferior abilities (save Cooper, Guthrie, Brodie, and a few other splendid exceptions, in whom fortune and talent chance to join hands,) introduced into the hospitals, and still more contemptible individuals into the dispensaries? Should we have colleagues insidiously worming themselves into their fellow-labourers' connection, when contracting with a stranger for its sale, and rending a class asunder to the discomfiture of the pupils? Should we have one man offering a private bribe to another to be admitted as officer to a public institution, and the other as criminally receiving it? For my part, I would make the buying and selling of public medical appointments, or even the intriguing after them to the detriment of merit, and consequently of public good, little less than a capital offence.

It may be truly said with regard to the medical profession, that "reputation is an idle and false imposition, oft got without merit, and lost without deserving." This is not the case at the bar, for there the public can judge. It is not the case in the pulpit, for there the public can estimate a man's real abilities also. On the other hand, the public are perfectly ignorant of the general principles of medical science, and cannot consequently form a real estimate of medical men's abilities, but the man who can humbug the best is the best off. As soon as a demand is made for real knowledge by the establishment of public competition and concour, uncontaminated with court, party, and private influence, then the public will be able to take cognizance of the general principles of medicine, and the state of medical men; the veil of mystery, humbug and chicanery will be raised—we shall no longer have degrees of M.D. purchased from universities, so called, the walls of which places the buyers of the said diplomas never beheld—we should no longer have the success of the medical practitioner dependent upon his having plenty of money to give good dinner-parties, his keeping his

carriage, and his competency to play a good game at whist—upon his tact in gulling ignorant old women, and fanciful young ones, and in concealing his ignorance under the garb of hollow politeness, by bowing and scraping to every one who has ability to give him a fee; but I say, “when the sunshine of public favor is directed in its meridian blaze towards genius and learning, block-heads of every description, from the titled ceremonious, and most polite doctor, down to the manufacturer of poisonous nostrums, must retire, and fall back from the foremost ranks of medical influence, and, abashed, skulk in the recesses of darkness and insignificance, and resign the avenues to the Æsculapian temple of fame and emolument, to be occupied by men of real merit and integrity.”

Secondly, would not the system which I advocate prove infinitely better for the hospitals individually? Would not, in this hospital, where we have supposed concours established, the influx of pupils be immense in consequence of the strong inducement held out to the industrious and enterprising, by the certainty of the most talented becoming dressers, house surgeons, and, in time, hospital physicians, surgeons or apothecaries; instead of returning from London prospectless? The governors of the new hospital of the London University have considerably *benefited themselves* by lowering the pupils' fees, and establishing a sort of concours for the house-surgeony, as *a bait to pupils*. Under the mask of liberality, they have, from first to last, acted upon the maxim of putting money into their pockets. The London University, now alas! *alias* University College, was certainly, in most respects, before the production of this new charter, as close a medical borough as any metropolitan hospital or english college; and being now an ostensible and principal feature in your abominable charter, it will show itself in its true colours as the most hideous monopoly extant, unless a very different, a more honest, and liberal mode is established for the election of the senior officers. This can be done without any alteration in the charter?

My Lord, I see the tack upon which perhaps yourself, with many influential individuals, have been sailing. They have only viewed one side of the question—that is cheap knowledge. Now, cheap knowledge is very good in itself; but as soon as you begin to furnish your cheap knowledge at the North London, and, at the same time, arbitrarily choose your professors and medical senate, by Crown patronage--your cheap knowledge will then be something like our present tallow candles and soap, with the excise duty taken off—(before a medical police is established to detect all adulterations in eatables and domestic articles, and to protect the public from fraud)—good for nothing. Your University College, under your Crown patronage, will fall, notwithstanding it is, and has been such a darling of your own and others, provided public information continues, to progress; for liberal plans *will* be established, if not in that institution, elsewhere. It will be said of its senate---

“ Each faculty in blandishment they lull,  
Aspiring to be venerably dull;



No learned *concour* molest their drowsy trance,  
 Or discompose their pompons ignorance:  
 But undisturbed they loiter life away,  
 So wither, green, and blossom in decay."

Suppose for a moment the existence of an hospital where medical officers should be chosen by *concour*, and the public admitted at the elections to witness the rivalship of talent in that hospital, would not the medical public, as well as the community at large, feel interested for the welfare of that institution, specifically, and more willingly subscribe (considering the present enlightened state of society) their pounds, shillings, and pence for its support, than for those conducted on the present close-borough system? If, with all this, those vile letters of recommendation were dispensed with, it would be in every sense of the word the *people's hospital*, and its funds would prove immense.

Thirdly, the plan which I recommend, would immensely benefit the sick, and tend to relieve the sufferings of mankind; it would guarantee to the public that the sick in the hospitals have the best possible medical attendance; and in reference to the junior officers, such as house-surgeons, and dressers, who have important duties to perform, and upon whose conduct depends in a great degree the mitigation or increase of the sufferings of the patients, these would be young men picked out of the multitude of pupils, as the most meritorious; whereas, now, their knowledge seldom exceeds the mechanical application of a bandage. Many a fellow has plenty of tact from mere habit with a bandage, and is apt with his common-place conversation, and in the ball room, but is the veriest fool in existence, when you take him upon a scientific subject, especially medical; and many have I seen of this sort altogether incapable of learning anatomy and surgery, or perhaps any science connected with medicine; still he is considered by the ladies a very pleasant, *ergo* clever fellow, and when he launches into practice gets plenty of it—especially if he has a smattering of music, by having devoted his time to the latter whilst in London, which should have been spent very differently: as the matter now stands, it is not anatomy, it is not surgery, but it is music and dancing, which are the essentials for a young medical man's success.

Lastly, my Lord, let me refer to the duties of the governors of charitable institutions. Both you and they, my Lord, will admit at least, I suppose so, that morality and justice in one clime are the same as in another—that if *concour* were conducive to the furtherance of science, to the encouragement of honest and laborious research, and to the suppression of imposition in France, they will prove equally so in England.

You will admit that intellectual power is the natural possession of man, and that the unshackled advantage of its due exercise is his natural right. You will, perhaps also admit that money, hereditary and family influence, and meritorious industry are seldom combined in the same individual. If so, the whole of the present system falls to the ground; you and they (the governors) are in the wrong, I am in the right.

You will admit, too, my Lord, that the object of the governors

(save those who subscribe hypocritically, to show off their petty personal influence, or to farm their domestics upon the establishment) is charity; and the only question with an honest man is how his money can be employed for public good, and for the relief of his fellow creatures.

Every honest governor will task himself by thinking of these things; and I will distinctly tell both your lordship, and the governors too, that the present mode of electing officers to all our British charities (so called), and institutions, is neither compatible with charity, honesty, good morals, the rights of talent and industry, nor with Christian principles; every thing in England is sacrificed, at the shrine of monied, family and party influence. Digest well, my Lord, these facts in your mind, and neither you, nor the governors of charitable institutions, can be consistently the contributors to the destruction of monopoly and boroughmongering in society at large, whilst you are promoters of it in the medical profession.

I cannot refrain from observing, before I conclude this letter that the greatest anomaly in the charter is Mr Warburton's name being attached to it, a charter altogether incompatible with the principles which were to be espoused in his *long-promised* act of Parliament, a principal feature in which was to be the due acknowledgment of the rights of merit, by the establishment of *concour*. He cannot serve God and Mammon—he cannot be consistently two characters, or, in other words, he cannot surely uphold the principles, of the charter as at present produced, which is incompatible with such an act of Parliament as the medical profession have so long and patiently waited for from his hands. He is, I think in a dilemma. Will he compromise his act of Parliament, in any degree for the sake of contributing, on account of his shares in the institution, to build up and perfect the monopoly of that joint stock company, the North London University, *alias* University College?

I fear my Lord, that the production of this Charter is a piece of political trickery, that it shews a disposition on the part of government to succumb to the bishops, tories, and their Kings' College, whilst they would still gull the radicals and the dissenters about cheap knowledge and reform, and this to the destruction of the most deserving teachers and Pupils of private schools. I must be sincere with you my noble Lord, and tell you distinctly, that the production of your new fangled charter, and your Poor-law Amendment Bill, (not at all applicable, by-the-bye, to the present state of society, distinguished as the latter is, for monopoly of wealth, hereditary laws, and unmerited starvation, but which might suit the state of the community 50 or 100 years hence,) are the two black spots in the present political character of yourself and other whigs.

You would lean towards the aristocracy, whilst you have a lurking desire to gain and retain popularity with the million; but, my Lord let me beg you to recollect a vulgar adage, but a true one, "between two stools you ———"; and that but a very few acts of a Patriot and a law-giver have too often ever lastingly dimmed the

lustre of his character. I ardently hope this will not prove your case, and that I shall not find it necessary to address you again, about that which forms the subject of this Letter; but, should it prove so, I can unhesitatingly tell you, my Lord, that I shall not flinch from my task, and if your unjust charter should happen to destroy me as a private teacher, you will find that I shall at all events "die game."

My lord, sincerely hoping that at your latest breath the public may entertain, in consequence of many good actions yet to be performed by you as a public man, nothing but the sincerest respect and gratitude for your memory.

I am, your obedient servant,

G. D. DERMOTT,

*Lecturer on Anatomy, Physiology and Surgery.*

5, Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury.  
March 30th. 1837

TO BE PUBLISHED IN A FEW DAYS.

*Mr. DERMOTT's LARGE PLATE, OF THE BLOOD VESSELS OF THE THORAX AND ABDOMEN—the size of nature with copious reference —being the continuation of a series.*

*Parts already published—HEAD AND NECK, 4s.—AXILLA (2 parts,) 2s. 6d. each.—SUPERIOR EXTREMITY 7s.—THIGH 6s. and LEG 3s. 6d.*

Sold by G. D. DERMOTT,

No. 15, CHARLOTTE STREET, BLOOMSBURY.

HOUSE PUPILS RECEIVED,

*Who have the benefit of Dissections, and Private Instructions, and are thoroughly qualified in Practical Anatomy and Surgery, and for passing the Royal College of Surgeons.*

PUBLIC SURGICAL LECTURES (*recognized by the College of Surgeons*) during the whole of the year.

PUBLIC ANATOMICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL LECTURES AND DEMONSTRATIONS, *duly recognized by all the Medical Boards, during the Winter Session—Perpetual to all 10 guineas.*

