

Arguments in favour of a proposal for teaching the several branches of knowledge appertaining to physic and surgery, at the London Hospital : and particularly for erecting, at the Hospital, a theatre for this purpose.

Contributors

Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

[London] : [publisher not identified], [1783]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/m6qtprbw>

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 R G U M E N T S

Ln. B. 217

IN FAVOUR OF A

P R O P O S A L

FOR

TEACHING THE SEVERAL BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE

APPERTAINING TO

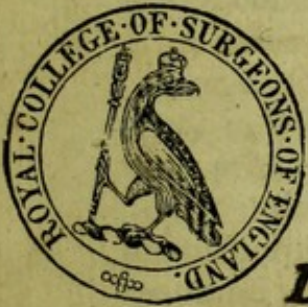
P H Y S I C and S U R G E R Y,

AT THE

L O N D O N H O S P I T A L;

AND PARTICULARLY

For Erecting, at the Hospital, a THEATRE for this Purpose;



A R G U M E N T S

1827

IN FAVOUR OF A

P R O P O S A L

Of the British and Foreign Association for Promoting the Teaching of the Several Branches of Knowledge by Means of Lectures &c.

TEACHING THE SEVERAL BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE

ATTENDING TO

P H Y S I C and S U R G E R Y

AT THE



L O N D O N H O S P I T A L

AND PARTICULARLY

For Teaching at the Hospital, a THEATRE for this Purpose.

(A)

A R G U M E N T S, &c.

SECTION I.

Of the Utility and Expediency of teaching **PHYSIC** and **SURGERY** by Means of **LECTURES**, at the *London Hospital*.

ALL those advantages which distinguish civilized from barbarous and savage nations, have first arisen from, and are preserved by their possession of the arts, and a knowledge of the sciences on which they are founded: And if among civilized nations there are some which excel others, this superiority is in proportion to the degree and extent to which they have carried the arts and sciences.

Amongst the various arts which contribute to the good of mankind in society, there is perhaps no one that holds a more distinguished rank than that of medicine, since, while it is capable of affording relief to some of the greatest distresses that afflict human nature, and presents the strongest proofs of the infinite wisdom and goodness of the Great Creator, it at the same time suggests the most powerful motives to the practice of every religious and social duty.

For reasons like these, the improvement of Physic and Surgery, has, in all ages, in every civilized country, been an object of attention and encouragement with princes, public bodies and great men.

But unless these arts be cultivated with assiduity, and proper methods of instruction are employed for such as are to practice them, the advantages which mankind actually derive from them may fall far short of what they are capable of affording. If they are not cultivated with assiduity by such as are in the practice of them, future discoveries and inventions for the benefit of mankind, must cease, and former ones be lost and forgotten. If proper and effectual methods are not adopted in the education of young persons in these arts, then, though some few may possess them in a high degree of perfection, they may nevertheless, in the hands of the generality of practitioners, be in a very imperfect state, and may even prove pernicious and destructive, instead of useful and salutary.

It were to be wished that experience had never afforded examples of the truth of this observation; but unhappily it is otherwise. In private practice, the difference between a skilful and unskilful practitioner can hardly ever, or very seldom be determined, since the persons who are witnesses of the proceedings, want either opportunities of making a proper comparison, or abilities to judge of the difference; but in the navy and army, judicious, attentive and humane officers, possessing these Qualifications, have been enabled to make a proper distinction.

In the beginning of the present war, many young gentlemen obtained Surgical appointments in the navy and army, who, to the great distress of mind of many of our brave officers, and greatly to the injury of our valuable sailors and soldiers, proved not to have been properly instructed in the principles, and thence to have been greatly deficient in the practice of their profession.

On this account the Examiners of the Surgeons' Company, prompted by their zeal for the preservation of the lives and health of such useful members of society, published the following Declaration.

“ SURGEONS' THEATRE, October 21, 1779.”

“ THE Court of Examiners having been under the very disagreeable necessity
 “ of refusing even the lowest qualification to some young GENTLEMEN, who
 “ lately came before them to be examined, on account of their total ignorance
 “ of Anatomy and Surgery, they think it therefore incumbent on them to give
 “ this Public Notice, That for the safety of his Majesty's subjects, both by sea
 “ and land, no Gentleman can be admitted at this theatre to any Qualification
 “ whatever in Surgery, unless he understands Anatomy, and is acquainted with
 “ the operative parts of Surgery.

“ And the Court think, That it is the more necessary that a sea Surgeon
 “ should be very intelligent in his profession, as his situation deprives him of
 “ the advantage of Consultation, and obliges him to depend on his own judg-
 “ ment in the most important cases, both in Physic and Surgery. It is there-
 “ fore hoped that no person will propose himself to the Court of Examiners
 “ who is not qualified as above, as they will necessarily be refused any Qualifi-
 “ cation.”

That students of Physic or Surgery may be rendered properly qualified for the practice of their profession, an attendance upon an hospital is indispensibly necessary; for though by other means they may be taught the principles, without this they can never become expert in the practice of it. So great is the utility of hospitals in this respect, that it may reasonably admit of a question,
 whether

whether more immediately, from the relief they afford to the poor afflicted with diseases, or more remotely, from the general good they produce to the world, by improving the knowledge and skill of the Medical Gentlemen employed in them, and properly qualifying students for the practice of their profession, they more deserve the countenance of humanity, religion, and sound policy.

But an attendance upon an hospital, however necessary, is by no means, alone sufficient to qualify students in Medicine for the practice of their profession: it is further required that they be properly instructed in the principles on which only a sound practice can be founded.

As it is necessary that students of medicine who attend hospitals, should be instructed in the principles of their profession; and as these relate to several different branches of knowledge which it is proper they should study, so the experience of learned men for ages past has evinced, that the most effectual method of conveying this knowledge is by means of lectures. Hence this method has been adopted in every part of Europe, and in America. In Great Britain, in particular, it is employed in the Universities, at the College of Physicians, at the Surgeons' Theatre, and by divers persons who teach the different branches of Physic and Surgery in London. Hence it follows, that students who attend an hospital for the study of medicine, should be taught the different branches of knowledge relating to it, by means of lectures.

But further, the Lectures should be read in the hospital which they attend. By this mean the instruction conveyed will be more efficacious, as the teacher will have continual opportunities of exemplifying and confirming by practice the principles he teaches; it will also be much more convenient, and save a great deal of valuable time to the students; besides, if they are under the necessity of going to a distant place for necessary instruction, their due attention to their business at the hospital must be diminished, and the patients under their care be more or less neglected.

Moreover, much of the executive part of the business of hospitals, necessarily rests on the pupils: to fit them therefore for the proper performance of their duties, as early as possible after their admission, must be very desirable. But this end can no other way be so effectually accomplished as by the means under consideration.

Accordingly we may observe that of the hospitals of London, those of the greatest celebrity have actually adopted the plan which is now recommended.

From what has been already observed, the importance and expediency of instituting Lectures on the different branches of knowledge appertaining to Physic and Surgery, at the LONDON HOSPITAL, must be very obvious.

But we may add that the situation and circumstances of this hospital are such as render it peculiarly adapted for this purpose; for besides the advantages it possesses in common with any other hospital, it is remote from places of dissipation, which might draw off the attention of students from what ought to be their

their proper objects. And, were the different branches of knowledge belonging to medicine properly taught in the hospital, it would be a mean of raising its credit and reputation, as on the contrary the want of this, and the necessity the students are now under of going daily to other places for that instruction which is required, are well known to have had an opposite effect, that is, to lessen it in the estimation of many.

Lastly, The London Hospital has at all periods of its existence, experienced the bad consequences arising from the pupils attending Lectures in different parts of the town. The rules of the hospital require that certain of the pupils should reside constantly in the house, that in the absence of the Surgeons they may be ready to administer relief in case of accidents happening either to patients in the hospital, or to such as may be occasionally brought thither. Yet these rules have been often and unavoidably infringed, and patients in most dangerous situations, situations requiring immediate assistance, have, in consequence of the resident pupils being at a distance, attending lectures, been perhaps for hours without the necessary means of relief.

This evil has been long complained of, and frequent attempts have been made to remedy it; but no regulation has yet been found sufficient; nor can it admit of a remedy, 'till the necessary instruction which the students require becomes obtainable within the hospital, and thereby the necessity they are under of seeking it in distant places removed.

SECTION II.

Of the Utility and Expediency of erecting a THEATRE at the LONDON HOSPITAL, for the Purpose of teaching PHYSIC and SURGERY by Means of Lectures.

BUT whilst the teaching of the several branches of knowledge appertaining to Medicine, at the London Hospital, is of such unquestionable importance and expediency, the proper conveniences for this purpose are wanted; and the sanction of the Governors to a measure for supplying this defect is the present request of the Medical Gentlemen of the Hospital.

The plan which the Physicians and Surgeons respectfully propose to the Governors, is the erection of a Theatre, with all the necessary conveniences for the different kinds of Lectures required. Relying on their good sense, candour and benevolence, they trust that, induced by the various reasons set forth, provided no disadvantage is likely to accrue from it to the charity, which may over-balance the good it may produce, they will comply with the request.

In this they will follow the examples of the most distinguished hospitals in the kingdom; the Governors of which, well convinced of the advantages that would arise from it, have built theatres for the several kinds of medical lectures, which are, many of them, not only convenient but magnificent.

That

That the charity may be preserved from every kind of expence, the Physicians and Surgeons, animated by the zeal and activity of many of the firmest friends of the charity, respectfully propose to the Governors, that they be permitted to collect subscriptions among their friends, for defraying the expences of the Theatre proposed to be erected, requesting only that such persons as shall subscribe 30 Guineas, or upwards, may become Governors for life.

In case this Proposal should be adopted, the Lecturers bind themselves that the charity shall incur no expence either in erecting or repairing the building, or in carrying on the lectures.

It may possibly be alledged, as objections to the Proposal, that the persons whose subscriptions are expected, might happen sooner or later to subscribe their money to the hospital independently of the intended application; and that if subscribing for the purpose proposed, they thence become Governors, the charity may experience an expence on account of patients they may send to the hospital.

To the first of these objections it may be answered, that the Gentlemen who will probably become subscribers will be induced to it from a desire of promoting that kind of knowledge which is proposed to be taught at the hospital, or from personal friendship to the applicants; and that most of them are so circumstanced, that it is not likely they should ever subscribe independently of the present occasion.

As to the other objection which relates to the expences which the charity may incur on account of patients the new subscribers may send to the hospital; it is to be considered, that in regard of in-patients, the hospital is generally full, so that let the number of governors be what it may, that of in-patients will not be thereby affected. If therefore, any supposed additional expence respecting in-patients were to be admitted as an argument against the present proposal, it might operate as a reason against the receiving many new governors of any kind.

Indeed the presentation of a few additional patients in a year can hardly be regarded otherwise, than as affording opportunities of exercising the principles of the institution, in the selection of more urgent or dangerous cases.

It is to be further considered, that many of the gentlemen who are expected to become Subscribers, reside abroad, or at least, at considerable distances from the hospital, or are otherwise so circumstanced, that they are not likely to send many patients to it; and further, that the number of these Gentlemen will be so inconsiderable as to afford very little of reasonable foundation for the objection under consideration.

But not only will the adoption of the proposed Plan be unattended with any expence to the charity, it will, on the contrary, in all human probability, prove very beneficial to it. The Gentlemen who are expected to subscribe

are

are men of honour, fortune, and liberality, who will feel themselves bound to support the credit and interest of a public charity of which they are become members. There is every reason to expect they will render the hospital more generally known, and will prove of immediate benefit to it, by increasing the numbers at the anniversary meetings, and promoting subscriptions in various parts of the world. This last remark has been lately very agreeably exemplified. A Gentleman who has already subscribed towards erecting the proposed Theatre, has made a voluntary offer to the hospital, of instituting a subscription in India; which offer has been accepted with thanks by the governors; and considering this gentleman's extensive acquaintance in that part of the world, his character and his respectable coadjutors in this laudable undertaking, there is no doubt but a considerable donation will be obtained.

But further, the great number of Gentlemen, who in consequence of the adoption of this Plan, will probably receive their education at the hospital, will thence form an attachment to it, and become some of its most zealous friends. And as they will reside in various parts of the world, the charity may derive advantages from them, similar to those mentioned respecting the new subscribers.

Experience has evinced the justness of this remark, since many of the present governors, were formerly pupils at the hospital, and from that circumstance had formed an attachment to it, and an ardent desire to promote its interest. A pleasing instance of this kind has indeed occurred in the case of the gentleman above mentioned, whose regard for the hospital originated from his having once been a pupil in it.

The question whether the proposed erection shall take place or not, having been referred to the determination of a general court, it has been thought proper to state the propriety of adopting the measure. It is in the breasts of the governors to determine whether they will permit a building to be added to the premises of the hospital, which will contribute to the promotion of medical knowledge, and to the welfare of the patients of the hospital, the service of the navy and army, and of the public in general; which will be attended with hardly any expence; but on the contrary, will conduce to the honour, benefit, and emolument of the charity.

But whether the proposition should be agreed to or not, the proposers will enjoy the satisfaction of having acquitted themselves as true friends to the London Hospital, and to Medical Science, and of having evinced a due regard to their duty and reputation, as officers of the institution.

London-Hospital,
January 24th, 1783.