

A letter to the King, on the subject of a new proposed institution in the medical department.

Contributors

Royal College of Surgeons of England

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A L E T T E R
T O
T H E K I N G,

ON THE SUBJECT OF
A NEW PROPOSED INSTITUTION

I N
THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. BECKET, *Adelphi*; and T. PAYNE, *Mews Gate*.

M DCC LXXXI.

A L E T E R

O T

T H E K I N G

O N T H E S U B J E C T O F

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I N

T H E M E D I C A L D E P A R T M E N T

L O N D O N

Printed for T. ENCKET, 48, Ave. de la Paix, and T. PAYNE, 10, Rue de la Paix.
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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

ANY Person who should have neither time nor inclination to peruse the whole of the following Letter, will find the substance of it in the Abstract annexed. Some Gentlemen may perhaps be of opinion that two or three pages would have been sufficient to recommend the necessity and importance of such an institution as is herein described; and should this Letter be deemed either too diffuse or too florid, the Author's only excuse is, that he wished in some measure, to enliven a Subject dry in itself and uninteresting to the generality of Readers. As to the scheme now offered, he hopes no apology is necessary, for what was dictated by humanity and a sincere regard for his fellow-

low-

low-creatures. It is indeed a serious and a weighty matter ; there is not a man in this country who *may* not have a vital interest in it ; but whatever be the issue, the Author will acquiesce in the determination of the higher powers with a respectful silence.

A Letter

A Letter to the K I N G.

SIRE,

IT is with singular pleasure and satisfaction, that at a period like the present, I can address YOUR MAJESTY on a subject, in which no party, no invidious distinction of sect, neither Whig nor Tory, neither Protestant nor Papist, is peculiarly interested; but a subject, on whose issue eventually depends the well-being of high and low, rich and poor, one with another, I come with no scheme of reconciliation with your Colonies; nor shall I depict the scenes displayed in the troubled Western World; I am contented in silence to pray for the peace of all YOUR MAJESTY'S dominions. My present province admits neither of wit nor ingenuity; the theme is serious, the language and allusions must be consonant to it; the graces and embellishments of diction, I willingly resign to abler writers:

Nos Veri dogma severum,
Triste sonant pulsæ nostrâ testudine chordæ. *

The subject on which I have undertaken to discourse, is of the very first importance to any Nation: the HEALTH of the inhabitants of a powerful and opulent country, ought always to

* Anti-Lucret: L. i.

occupy a large space in the thoughts of it's Governors ; which I am happy to say it has effectually done, particularly of late years, as well with respect to the metropolis of England, as cities and towns of inferior note. By the attention of men of abilities to physical knowledge and their useful inventions, the nature of that subtle element which we inhale every moment of our lives, has been more accurately investigated, the pernicious effects of it in a corrupted state displayed, and proper methods suggested to counteract those effects : but above all, the most salutary means have been discovered to preserve it's purity, and *prevent* the fatal calamities which have been so frequently experienced. We can now, without the terror of former times, behold the gates of our prisons unbarred, and their unfortunate tenants brought forth in the Courts of Justice ; we no longer tremble for the safety of the venerable guardians of our laws, who have often perished in the execution of their hallowed office, by the pestilence which walked abroad at noon-day.

I contemplate with a patriot's rapture, the improvements in Your Majesty's marine department, and the peculiar attention which has been paid to that useful and gallant race, who hazard their lives in the service of their country, or spread the sail of commerce in distant regions ; who vindicate with British thunder the honour of YOUR MAJESTY'S throne, or enrich YOUR dominions with the treasures of other climes. When I consider these blessed circumstances, when I see that fatal disorder, that hydra of navigation and opprobrium of medicine, *the scurvy*, quelled by preventive art, and not suf-
fered

ferred to rear it's livid crest in unopposed triumph amid the world of waters ; can I forbear to shed one tributary tear over the recent grave of that unrivalled MARINER, who dared with undaunted prow to stem the desolate abyfs of untried oceans, to withstand the fury of conflicting elements, and make discovery where he saw no sun. I can lament his melancholy catastrophe as a public calamity ; and I could strike the string of national sorrow in a more lengthened strain, if this were the proper place ; but I principally here deplore his loss in *a medical light*. HE was the man who first demonstrated the power of an unremitted attention to seemingly minute circumstances in sea affairs, to air, cleanliness, and choice of diet ; who for the space of three long years, occupied his laborious business in the extremities of heat and cold alternate, beneath inclement skies, and on inhospitable wilds, and persevered in effecting his bold designs to the glory of YOUR MAJESTY's reign, and of his native country, with the loss of only FOUR men ; an atchievement which almost surpasses the bounds of an eager credulity. The method pursued by this great man, has been summed up with fidelity and elegance by Sir John Pringle, in one of those consummate models * of philosophic eloquence, which he delivered to the Royal Society as their President, when that Society, with so much justice and honour to itself, adjudged the annual Medal to CAPTAIN COOK.

I have

* It is earnestly to be wished, that Sir John Pringle would publish these Discourses in an 8vo. Volume, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has done those which he delivered to the Royal Academy. They are both chef-d'œuvres in their different departments.

I have dwelt rather long on this matter, as what I have to lay before YOUR MAJESTY, principally or at least more immediately relates to Navigation, though it may also, or rather *must* redound to the benefit of YOUR dominions at large. I mean to take up as little of YOUR MAJESTY's time as possible; yet I hope what I shall deliver will be with unwavering precision; though concise in words, yet full and comprehensive in it's meaning. I have no peculiar purpose whatsoever to serve in my private capacity; I have not even the honour to belong to the profession whose utility I wish to diffuse; and nothing but an honest motive of common good to my fellow-countrymen and fellow-creatures, as partaking of the same common infirmities and exposed to the same common calamities, could have induced me to undertake this office. A mere accident threw the following paper in my way, which I beg leave to transcribe:

S U R G E O N S T H E A T R E.

October 21st, 1779.

“ The Court of Examiners having been under the disagreeable necessity of refusing even the lowest qualification to many 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, except he understands Anatomy, and is acquainted with the operative parts of Surgery. And the Court thinks it is 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 judgment

ment in the most important cases in Physic and Surgery; it is therefore hoped that no one will propose himself to the Court of Examiners, who is not qualified as above, as they will necessarily be refused any qualification. The Court of Examiners have made public the above resolutions, by sending copies thereof to the Admiralty, East-India House, Navy-office, Sick and Hurt-office, and to all the Professors of Anatomy in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, and likewise to all the Hospitals in London, desiring that they may be made public. They are likewise put up in SURGEONS THEATRE, where young Gentlemen come to pass their examination, hoping that this resolution will stimulate young Gentlemen to a closer attendance towards their improvement in the several branches of Surgery."

I now beg leave to propose to YOUR MAJESTY'S royal consideration, a Scheme to carry the real and full purpose of the *above Paper* into execution, in the most effectual manner. I will first sketch it out briefly, and then dilate on the several parts of it in more ample terms.

As Anatomy is the foundation of Surgery, I humbly conceive, that the most effectual method of providing the Navy and Army with expert and able Surgeons, would be, to have Anatomy and all the branches of Surgery *taught gratis in London*, as they are now at *Paris*, by which means *London* would become the Anatomical and Surgical Theatre of the World.

There is a noble *Hall and Theatre* already built by the Surgeons Company, at a very great expence; the whole of which

which, I have been informed, they have not as yet been able to discharge ; and should YOUR MAJESTY think proper to recommend to the Court of Assistants of the Surgeons Company (twenty one in number,) or the Majority of them, to choose *annually* an able and learned Professor out of their own body, *or elsewhere*, and endow him with a salary, and the management of the Lectures, Preparations, and every thing else thereunto belonging ; to be under the immediate direction of the Master and Wardens for the time being, who are chosen annually ; I am humbly of opinion, that *one Hundred Pounds* or thereabouts, would be sufficient to defray all the expences attending the four Courses, except the Professor : I propose moreover, that each course should begin the first of every Quarter, and continue for three months, and so to go on every quarter during the whole year, so that THE THEATRE may be always open ; and I humbly presume that *One Hundred Pounds* or thereabouts to the Professor *for each course*, would be very moderate, as his whole time must be spent in giving Lectures, and making Anatomical preparations ; so that in time these courses of Lectures might become as compleat as the Science can admit of ; and I humbly conceive, that such an institution would be the means of saving the lives and limbs of YOUR MAJESTY's subjects by sea and land ; first, during the War, and afterwards when they come to settle in different parts of the Kingdom, where all YOUR MAJESTY's subjects would be provided with able Chirurgical assistance upon all occasions ; and farther I presume it would be saving of great expences to Your Majesty's Navy, by having able Surgeons and well qualified mates to serve on board all YOUR Ships ; the men would be sooner fit
for

for duty, and fewer sent to the Hospitals, which Hospitals, I am informed, are now supported at a very great expence. I propose, that the qualification which should enable every Gentleman to attend these Lectures, should be, in the first place, that he have served a regular apprenticeship to a regular Surgeon; and secondly, that he understand the Latin Tongue. These Lectures, I propose likewise, should be free to all Physical Gentlemen of the Army and Navy.

It would be unnecessary to state the complaints of the different Commanders in Your Royal Service, particularly in the West-Indies, owing to the incapacity of many of the Surgeons Mates; the Lords of Your Majesty's Admiralty having the means of full information on that head.

YOUR MAJESTY here beholds a Plan, as I humbly conceive, perfect in all it's parts, formed upon no little views of sordid interest or narrow policy, but erected on the broad basis of general utility; worthy of a man of science to propose, and of a Patriot King to adopt. Let me be permitted to consider this matter in it's original.

As it was the evident intention of the Author of all things, that every Being should enjoy the full use of it's faculties according to the respective capabilities of their natures; he has placed them on this Earth, as on a wide extended Theatre, where to choose their place of rest. To some he hath given the power of an unerring instinct, to guide their paths through the scenes of various view; to the tribes of vegetative life he hath prescribed their own laws which they cannot pass; while he
seems

seems (at least as far as the narrow ken of mortal reason can pierce) to have distinguished Man by superior gifts ; to have impowered him to dart his thoughts beyond the limits of his perishing frame, and hath united in strange mysterious connexion and reciprocal dependence, his corporeal and mental parts. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that in all ages and in all nations, **BODILY HEALTH** has been a principal object to mankind, inasmuch as the organs of the Soul sympathize with the languishing members of the Body. It is not enough that a creature thus formed and thus fearfully complicated, should merely vegetate like the ignoble brute, or baser reptile ; no, he must drink the spirit of the golden day, and triumph in existence ; he must feel the united powers of his nature act in full concert with each other ; he must spring forward to his occupations with the bound of alacrity, and give energy to his works by the sanguine efforts of healthful unimpaired vigour. Such is at least the dream of youth and insolence, such the fire which blazes for a moment, undamped by sad experience of the vicissitudes of human life. But this charm is soon done away, and the pleasing illusion vanishes, when we begin with a serious cast to turn our eyes on the real state of Beings like ourselves, compassed round with infirmities, exposed to every skiey influence, and liable to innumerable dangers from within and from without, which no prudence can foresee, no caution can prevent ; we can scarce contemplate without horror the distressful picture, till at last, as Milton represents the Father of Mankind, *Compassion quells our best of man, and gives us up to tears.*

We are hence naturally led to inquire what may preserve our frame in a state of sanity, or restore it when the regularity of it's motions is disturbed from whatever cause. Nor are we to be surpris'd at the rudeness of the first attempts, till repeated experience and mutual communications have given a certain form to the arts of healing, stability to it's precepts, and a degree of certainty to the respective efficacies of it's diversified operations. Hence the comprehensive term of *Medicine* arises, in all it's branches, various as the subject with which it is conversant. Some of its Professors raise to themselves a reputation from the felicity of conjecture, when the cause of malady is from within ; while the art of the Surgeon is open to the inspection of every curious beholder, and proceeds on more certain principles.

I have always been struck with the following passage in the great Roman Satirist : *

Curentur dubii medicis majoribus ægri ;
Tu venam vel *discipulo* committe Philippi.

The explication I intend to give of it is the following ; it is indeed a sense of my own, and though different from the original meaning of it's author, yet as it illustrates my subject, I shall hazard it. We observe in the passage above, that a Patient whose safety is dubious, and whose life trembles on the precipice of dissolution, is consigned to the care of the most eminent Physicians of the country to which he belongs ; while we suffer our vein to be opened by the lowest of the faculty, perhaps by the ignorant apprentice of an ignorant practitioner.

* Juv. Sat : 13.

In the first case we act with prudence beyond dispute, and acquiesce in the event with silent resignation ; but men who can determine with such propriety here, seem wholly to lose sight of it in the second case, when with little hesitation, they commit an affair of perhaps still greater importance to a person little experienced in the art, and in which a slight error may have a fatal and irremediable consequence. I do not mean to confine this remark to the mere operation in question, but to the practice of Surgery at large ; which being of universal necessity and of the last moment, will doubtless have a numerous train of votaries, of pretended as well as of real Professors. Here then is an object worthy of the interference of the Supreme Magistrate, that ignorant or wicked men may not be suffered with impunity to make traffic * of our lives. I believe we shall accordingly find, that in *most* civilised countries in later times, this Profession has been subjected to regulation by the laws † of the land. To bring this home to our own Country, and the plan now proposed, let me be permitted to recite an ancient ordinance, which the wisdom of the British Parliament

* Animas nostras negotiari.

Plin : Nat. Hist. L. 29. in Proem.

† Pliny complains of the want of some public ordinance of this nature in *Rome* ; but it is well known in what contempt the Romans held the Professors of Medicine. His words are : “ In hac artium solâ evenit, ut cuicumque Medicum se professio credatur, cum sit periculum in nullo mendacio majus, non tamen illud intuemur. *Nulla Lex* est quæ puniat inscitiam capitale, nullum exemplum Vindictæ ; (he adds with great force of thought and language) discunt periculis nostris, et experimenta per mortes agunt. Plin. N. H. ut sup.

Parliament in a former age, thought proper to establish in regard to Surgery.

In the 3d. of Henry the 8th. Chap. 11. An act sets forth that, "FORASMUCH as the Science and Cunning of Physic and
 " Surgery (to the perfect knowledge whereof be requisite both
 " great learning and ripe experience,) is daily within this
 " realm exercised by *a great multitude of ignorant Persons,*
 " of whom the greater part have no manner of insight in the
 " same, nor in any other kind of learning; some also *can no*
 " *letters in the Book,* so far forth that common artificers, as
 " smiths, weavers, and women, boldly and *accustomably* take
 " upon them great cures, and things of great difficulty; in the
 " which they partly use forcery and witchcraft, partly apply
 " such medicines unto the disease as be very noious and
 " nothing meet therefore; to the high displeasure of God, great
 " infamy to the Faculty, and the grievous hurt, damage, and
 " destruction of the King's Leige People; most especially of
 " them that cannot discern the cunning from the uncunning:
 " be it therefore (to the surety and comfort of all manner of
 " people,) *by the authority of this present Parliament* enacted,
 " &c."—The Act then proceeds to ordain certain qualifications
 requisite for those who shall take upon them this profession, and
 denounces certain penalties on offenders, which it is needless to
 mention in this place. I do not mean to enter into any history
 of the arts of Medicine and Surgery, or of the illustrious men
 who have enlightened the world by their writings, and who
being dead, yet speak; or of those who by the delicate dexterity
 and curious felicity of their operations, have alleviated the
 miseries

miseries of their fellow-creatures; some of whom though they may have left no memorial behind them, that their praises might be reported; yet have they carried with them into a State, where there shall be no more pain, an unwritten record, the testimony of their own conscience, and *their works have followed them*. I mean neither to speak of Sydenham nor of Boerhaave, neither of Wiseman nor of Cheselden.

As to the present plan in contemplation, Your Majesty will evidently perceive, from the reasons above stated, that there is an almost indispensable necessity for some institution of the kind. From the date of the above Paper, hung up in Surgeons Theatre, October 21, 1779, above a whole year has now elapsed; and as I have not heard of any step having been taken towards the more effectual furtherance of so noble an intent; I have therefore taken up my pen, under a deep and serious impression of the *absolute necessity* of unfolding this seminal principle of public emolument into it's full and perfect maturity; *now* at this hour of general calamity, at this awful and tremendous period, when the judgments of THE ALMIGHTY are gone abroad into all the Earth, I think that every the slightest proposal for the preservation of the Lives and Limbs of the human race, is particularly worthy the attention of a Patriot King, who wishes to be the Friend and Father of his People.

It is evident that the utmost care should be taken of whatever belongs to Your Majesty's Marine Department; I mean to speak merely in a *Medical* light. That the bold and hardy Mariner who has resigned the domestic comforts of life, who
can

can forego each sweet connexion, each endearing tie, to brave the perils of winds and waves, and occupy his business in great waters, for the service of his Country, should be an object of the very first attention ; that the preservation of his life, health and limbs, should claim a most affectionate concern from any Government; is, I presume, the voice of Nature, the dictate of Justice, with her tender assessor Humanity. It has been the peculiar glory of Great Britain, that such has been her fostering care of these her sons of hardihood, that she has provided public assistance for them in their sickness and calamities ; and finally, beyond the example of other Countries, she hath fixed the seal of confirmation to it, by providing for them a glorious Receptacle, when *service in their old limbs lies lame*, where they may eat their well-earned bread in peace and privacy, may recount the gallant deeds of their manhood, and call down blessings on that Government which hath catered so providently for them, and secured an undisturbed asylum for their declining age. May we not cry out with the Athenian Orator, * “ This is
 “ the Country, for which so many valiant Heroes have poured
 “ forth their best blood in defence of it’s Government, Law,
 “ and Religion; nor can we doubt but that there will be a
 “ never-failing succession of men animated by the same princi-
 “ ple, and the same conviction, ready to stand forth as it’s
 “ Guardians in the hour of necessity.”

* Thucyd. L. 2. Orat. Periclis,

It appears that the Company of Surgeons have found of late years, that many Gentlemen who have applied for qualifications to be Surgeons mates on board YOUR MAJESTY'S Ships, have been so grossly ignorant of the rudiments of Anatomy, that they have been obliged to cause to be printed and hung up in their Hall an order which declares, (as above stated,) " That *for the safety* of YOUR MAJESTY'S Subjects " by sea and land, no Gentleman can be admitted at their " Theatre to any qualification whatever in Surgery, unless he " *understands Anatomy*, and is acquainted with the *operative* " *parts* of Surgery." This resolution of the Company's, which is founded in the truest wisdom and an enlarged humanity, has been represented by several as bearing hard upon young men who have no prospect of acquiring a maintenance, but by such an appointment * as they apply for : *they cannot dig ; to beg, they are ashamed.* I shall reply by the following anecdote in another important department of life. A young Gentleman applied to the Chaplain of a great Prelate now living, to be admitted to the holy order of Deacon in the Church of England : the Chaplain, according to his duty, examined the Candidate, and found

* The lowest qualification granted by the Surgeons Company is, *Third mate of a third rate man of war.* Let mankind judge by the following state of a possible case. A Surgeon and three Mates are on board a ship bound, for instance, for the West-Indies ; it is known, that *abroad* if a Surgeon and all his mates but the lowest die, a very moderate examination is sufficient for *that* mate to be appointed *The Surgeon* of the ship ; consequently the whole onus is incumbent on this young Ignoramus. What is to be done on this occasion ? Silence and resignation to impending fate. Surely this will awaken and alarm a man's thoughts, who has the feelings of a man about him.

found him wanting ; he told him with great tenderness, that he was much concerned to find himself under the necessity of denying him what he requested, as in his conscience he did not think him qualified for the sacred office he wished to undertake. The young Candidate, as may be imagined, was very importunate with the Chaplain, intreated him to consider the disgrace which must ensue, all his prospects entirely done away, with other arguments which were of little weight with the Examiner : till at last, the young Gentleman, still more pressing, cried out, *For Christ's sake*, Sir, admit me ; Sir, replied the Chaplain, (in words which should be had in everlasting remembrance,) *If it were not for HIS sake*, I would. The application is evident ; I beg leave to proceed.

It is well known that Government gives such low encouragement to men who are to be employed as Surgeons Mates on ship-board, that we can hardly expect that Gentlemen of liberal education will ever offer themselves for this employment, so useful and so necessary. But as there must be some to undertake it, it must in generall fall to the lot of those who are scarce able to afford the means of acquiring even a tolerable knowledge of the subject : *Penury* represses the ardour of their pursuits, and freezes the current of their inquiries. It is to remove these obstacles, to break these icy bands, to bid the stream of knowledge flow forth in a perennial unrestrained channel throughout YOUR MAJESTY'S extensive realms ; that I humbly conceive (as stated above,) “ That the most effectual
 “ method of providing Your Majesty's Army and Navy with
 “ expert and able Surgeons, would be to have Anatomy and
 “ all

“ all the branches of Surgery *taught gratis in London*, as they
 “ are now at *Paris*, by which means *London* would become
 “ the Anatomical and Surgical *Theatre* of the World.” I do
 not mean to consider the state of the Surgeons Company, when
 united with a ludicrous profession, nor to shew that by being
 cut off from it, it literally became *secto corpore firmior* ; as the
 Science of Medicine in all it's branches never was on so re-
 spectable a footing in any country under Heaven, as it is at
 present in *Great Britain*.

But a little retrospect will demonstrate the amazing progress
 that *Surgery* has made in later times, and the increase of li-
 beral and ingenuous manners among it's Professors. In a Book
 entitled, “ The Operations of Surgery by Monsieur Le Dran,
 “ translated into English by the late Mr. Gataker, 3d. Ed.
 “ Doddsley 1747, p. 472.” I find the following very extraor-
 dinary passage. “ It must be confessed, that both Anatomy
 “ and Surgery flourished much later in *England* than in *France*,
 “ where all possible encouragements are given to both ; while
 “ in London, the Governors of the two Hospitals, being
 “ mostly Citizens, out of a false policy, entirely refused the
 “ education of pupils in one Hospital, and allowed of but
 “ nine in the other. And the Rulers of the Barber-Surgeons
 “ Company at the same time contrived by a bye-law to pre-
 “ vent the knowledge of Anatomy from spreading ; cunningly
 “ foreseeing that the younger Surgeons by that knowledge
 “ would advance too fast upon them. They made it a penalty
 “ of ten pounds to dissect a body out of the Hall, without their
 “ leave, which was scarce to be obtained ; and if any offended
 “ (as

“ (as they called it) *he was sure to be prosecuted.* The improvements in Anatomy and Surgery, since these restraints have been taken off, will convince the world of the *unfitness* of them.”—*Unfitness* truly!—that word may perhaps sound soft in a Gallic ear: *Unfitness* indeed? (Cogit excedere propositi formam operis erumpens animo & pectore indignatio) * I call it *Wickedness*, *damnable Wickedness*: each English Reader will applaud that word to the very echo that will applaud again. The liberal Professor of the Art who has never seen *this* passage, will find exercise for his faith to believe it; he that has, will exult in it's being exposed to the light of day, will rejoice in seeing *the blanket*, as it were, torn from this dark and solemn mystery of iniquity, and will bless the hour which called him into life in these happier days of free, ingenuous, and unrestrained research.

When we compare this account with what we *now* experience, we know and feel the privileges and happiness we enjoy; but we lose the sense of the blessings we possess, without such a retrospect and comparison of other times. What is now offered, is designed to give the finishing hand to whatever of excellence is at present experienced, but particularly in your Majesty's *Army and Navy*. YOUR MAJESTY will observe that I have stated above, “ That there is a *noble Hall and Theatre* already built for the purpose by the Surgeons Company, at a very great expence, the whole of which they have not, as

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yet,

* Vell. Paterc. L. 2, S. 66.

“ yet, been able to discharge.” It appears from hence, that they absolutely want sufficient means to put such a plan into execution; it appears also, that as mankind in their collective capacity are eventually to receive the benefit, by having Anatomy and Surgery *taught gratis in London*, that such a plan is reasonable in itself, and from the designed mode of it's execution scarce liable to any abuse whatever. For I propose, that the Court of Assistants of the Surgeons Company, (which are twenty one in number, and who *decide* on all proposals made to the Company) or the majority of them, should be recommended by YOUR MAJESTY to choose annually out of their own body, *or elsewhere*, an able and learned *Professor*, and that this Professor should be endowed with a Salary, &c. and that he should be under the immediate direction of the Master and Wardens for the time being, who are chosen annually; that *One Hundred Pounds* or thereabouts would be sufficient to defray all the expences attending the *Four Courses*, excepting the Professor; and I presume that *One Hundred Pounds* or thereabouts to the Professor for *each Course* would be very moderate, as his whole time must be spent in preparing subjects, giving lectures, &c. So that the *whole* expence would amount to *Five Hundred Pounds* per annum, or thereabouts; provided moreover, that YOUR MAJESTY shall think fit in Your Royal Wisdom, to appoint that the Bodies of such Felons as shall hereafter be convicted of *Burglary* be, after execution, delivered to the Surgeons Company, in the same manner as the Bodies of *Murderers* now are.

YOUR

YOUR MAJESTY perceives that I have no local, no national, no partial prejudices, but propose that this Professor should be elected out of the Surgeon's own body, or *elsewhere*; so that it is left open to the pretensions of merit and genius, which are of no country. I am too well acquainted with the nature of Professorships in general, not to foresee many objections which may be made to the founding of any *new* ones whatever. In answer to which I shall lay before your Majesty more minutely, what are the peculiar, distinctive, characteristic features of the present now in contemplation.

In most Professorships of this nature, when the Professor was once actually elected, the salary has been generally continued, whether he did his *full duty* or not; the evident consequence of which has been, that they have by degrees degenerated into *Sinecures*. As to Professorships in the Universities of this land, their more immediate and original use has been superseded by the institution of Tutors in the several Colleges, who, it must be confessed with satisfaction, in general execute their important office with exemplary diligence and ability. But I have always been of opinion, that Anatomy and Surgery are of still more importance than * *any other single branch* of Science in the world.

* It is to be observed that the *Ιατρος* in ancient times implied principally an Operator or *Surgeon*: *Medicina clara erat Trojanis temporibus, quibus fama certior, Vulnerum tamen duntaxat remediis.* Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 29. in Proem. It.

world. Now the stipend which I propose should be given to this Professor, is not simply a yearly salary; I propose that he should give *three Lectures every week*, each to consist of *two hours* at the least; and that in the space of *three months* he should go through a complete course of Anatomy, together with all the surgical operations and bandages, and that likewise he make two Anatomical preparations every quarter to belong to the Surgeons Company as their property, till such time as an Anatomical Museum shall be formed as compleat as the Science will admit of, and that the Professor for the time being, constantly take care that such Preparations be well preserved. Another condition will appear at first more rigid than any I remember in any Institution of this or any other kind; but when it is considered that this is of the most public nature possible, the justice of it will appear fully, together with the indispensable necessity of such severity. For I propose that even in case of the *Professor's sickness, or absence from whatever cause*, he shall either *name a Substitute in his place*, to be approved by the Master and Wardens; or *the Master and Wardens shall appoint one in his place themselves*, which Substitute shall receive for each Lecture the specific sum* apportioned to the Professor, to be

It is also worth remarking, that the *first Physician* who settled in Rome was styled a *Surgeon*: Cassius Hemina ex antiquis auctor est, *primum e Medicis venisse Romam e Peloponeso, Archagathum Lyfaniæ filium, A. U. DXXXV.--Vulnerarium eum tradunt fuisse vocatum.* Plin. ut sup.

* The whole Salary proposed to be given to the Professor is £400, or thereabouts; 156 Lectures are to be read in the year, consequently the sum apportioned for each Lecture amounts to something above £2 11 0.

be deducted from his annual stipend, for the respective days or weeks he may chance to be employed. I do not propose that a new Professor should be elected every year, *the same may be re-elected*; but it is to be remembered that the conditions are like the laws of the Medes and Persians, *which alter not.* To prevent a promiscuous turbulent crowd of attendants on these Lectures, which might perhaps defeat their utility, I propose two Conditions for every Gentleman who wishes to attend them; first, that he have served a regular apprenticeship to a regular Surgeon; and secondly, that he understand the Latin Tongue. These conditions are simple and recommended by their propriety. I propose likewise, that these Lectures shall be free to all Physical Gentlemen of the *Army and Navy*; and I conceive such a limitation to be proper, when it is considered what is their immediate and peculiar scope. Here will these Gentlemen constantly find a place, where they may refresh their knowledge, or quaff still larger draughts at the fountain-head of genuine unadulterated Science.

When I consider what may be performed with so trifling a sum as *Five Hundred Pounds* a year, or thereabouts, I confess that I stand astonished; and sincerely wish that some person had before this time conceived such a plan as the above, and that an abler pen than mine had recommended it to that attention which I think it deserves; but Truth requires no ornament; simplicity is it's proper vest. If an Institution like this should take place, it is absolutely undeniable, "That it would be the
" means of saving the lives and limbs of many of Your

“ MAJESTY’S Subjects by sea and land ; first during the war,
 “ and afterwards when they come to settle in different parts of
 “ the kingdom, where all Your Majesty’s Subjects would be
 “ provided with able Chirurgical assistance upon all occasions ;
 “ and farther it is presumed it would be saving of great ex-
 “ pences to Your Majesty’s navy, by having able Surgeons, and
 “ well-qualified mates on board all the Ships ; the men would
 “ be sooner fit for duty, and fewer sent to the Navy Hospitals,
 “ which Hospitals, I am informed, are now supported at a
 “ very great expence.” Moreover I am of opinion, that the
 complaints of the different Commanders in Your Majesty’s
 service, particularly in the West-Indies, owing to the *incapacity*
 of many of the Surgeons * Mates, call aloud in no ambiguous
 accents for some Institution, (if this should be disapproved,)
 which may tend to remove so severe an evil, by striking at the
 primary root whence it has sprung.

Let any man contemplate the wonders which may be per-
 formed by a well-directed munificence, like the stream wel-
 ling forth from the living rock ;

Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
 Or in proud falls magnificently lost,
 But clear and artless pouring thro’ the plain
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.

Let

* How just is the observation above in the Resolutions of the Surgeons
 Company : “ 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 judgment* in the most important cases of Physic and
 Surgery.”

Let him, I say, contemplate what the *Man of Ross* effected with *five hundred pounds a year*, and while his breast beats with the generous pulse of humanity, let him pray for the consummation of such an Institution as has been proposed, or of *any other* which may be deemed more eligible and founded on the same principle : it is a consummation devoutly to be wished ! especially at *this* hour of need, when any Plan whatever, which tends to the preservation of the lives and limbs of YOUR MAJESTY's subjects by sea and land, is not to be rejected without some examination.

Such is the nature of this proposed Institution which I thought proper to lay before YOUR MAJESTY, as the Sovereign and Father of a free and opulent People ; it is now left to your Royal Wisdom : and if I have spoken suitably to the dignity of my subject, I have spoken according to my desire ; but if unworthily, according to my ability. YOUR MAJESTY's reign has been peculiarly distinguished by the patronage of every art and science which can ennoble or embellish life : the vales of Arno and the Tuscan flood have been visited by the feet of pilgrim curiosity, and the remains of mutilated domes and mouldering urns have been traced with classic reverence ; each grace of Athens and of Rome has started forth in renovated splendor ; and we no longer behold their ancient glories with the eye of envy, since the genius of a Reynolds has

has created a Vatican of our own, and the plastic hand of the British Lyfippus † imaged the monarchical form of Thames. YOUR MAJESTY has also shewn a singular attachment to the healing art; you have *honoured the Physician with the honour due unto him*, and have lifted up the head of him, who for the welfare of individuals has resigned the more conspicuous scene of public affairs; who (in the language of the Poet)

Scire potestates herbarum, usumque medendi
Maluit, et mutas agitare *inglorius* artes.

I could not therefore, even in this light, have addressed a plan like the above, with more propriety to any man in England, than to it's SOVEREIGN, whose disposition and interest alike concur to favour and support it. I wish to behold every thing encouraged which may give stability and increase to the internal power of YOUR MAJESTY's dominions. I wish to behold under YOUR auspices a rising Fabric, which being fitly framed together, may grow into a Royal Temple; that the golden architrave and fretted roof may be supported by the massy column and the marble base. I know that the Professor in YOUR Royal Academy already reads lectures on the subject of Anatomy to the Students; but no man who reflects, can think
that

† Bacon. R. A.—I have heard that it was once in contemplation to have this wonderful model cast in brass, and erected on the center arch of Westminster Bridge.

that a partial performance of that nature, though executed in the consummate style of a Hunter, can ever supersede the necessity of what has been described. I already anticipate the blessed effects of a well-conducted Institution of this kind, the spirit of which, in the revolution of time, will and must pervade with salutary influence, every part of YOUR Empire, even down to the minutest member. I do not mean that it should be a work of ostentation, but founded upon ruling and master-principles; not as an exercise calculated to display the talents of a Professor, when elegance is the object; but being erected on the broad basis of general Good, I trust that increase of years will give it increase of strength, till it shall become what the great Historian calls, *An Everlasting Possession*.

I speak as if I could myself take a part in this glorious scheme; but mine is an inferior office; I have only endeavoured to recommend it to more general notice, and to Your Majesty's patronage in particular; being moreover well assured, that every generous, learned, and disinterested Professor of this noble, this important Science, will unite in whatever can give it either ornament or stability; as the spirit and intent of an

H

Institution

Institution of so universal and comprehensive a nature, can meet with no opposition but from such, as (in the emphatic words of the ancient Act of * Parliament) *can no letters in the book.*

I have the honour to be

with the greatest humility,

YOUR MAJESTY'S

most devoted

Subject and Servant,

* 3d. Hen. 8. C. 11.

A B S T R A C T O F T H E A B O V E.

A Plan for putting into execution the spirit and intent of the late Resolutions of the Surgeons Company, now hung up in their Hall.

S U R G E O N S T H E A T R E.

October 21st, 1779.

“ The Court of Examiners having been under the disagreeable necessity of refusing even the lowest qualification to many 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, except he understands Anatomy, and is acquainted with the operative parts of Surgery. And the Court thinks it is 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 judgment in the most important cases in Physic and Surgery; it is therefore hoped that no one will propose himself to the Court of Examiners, who is not qualified as above, as they will necessarily be refused any qualification. The Court of Examiners have made public the above resolutions, by sending copies thereof to the Admiralty, East-India House, Navy-office, Sick and Hurt-office, and to all the Professors of Anatomy in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, and likewise to all the Hospitals in London, desiring that they may be made public. They are likewise put up in SURGEONS THEATRE, where young Gentlemen come to pass their examination, hoping that this resolution will stimulate young Gentlemen to a closer attendance towards their improvement in the several branches of Surgery.”

IT is conceived that the most effectual method of providing the Navy and Army with expert and able Surgeons, would be to have Anatomy and all the other branches of Surgery taught *gratis* in *London*, as they now are at *Paris*; by which means London would become the Anatomical and Surgical THEATRE of the World.

It is proposed, that an able and learned Professor should be chosen annually out of the Surgeons Company, or *elsewhere*, and endowed with a salary; to have the management of the Lectures, Preparations, and every thing else thereunto belonging, to be under the immediate direction of the Master, and Wardens of the Surgeons Company. The Professor to be elected by the Court of Assistants of the Surgeons Company, or the majority of them; the Lectures to be read in the Hall and Theatre belonging to the Company.

It is conceived, that *One Hundred Pounds* or thereabouts would be sufficient to defray all the Expences attending the four Courses, except the Professor: it is also conceived that *One Hundred Pounds*, or thereabouts, should be given to the Professor for each Course, which would be very moderate, as his whole time must be spent in giving lectures, and making Anatomical preparations; so that the whole expence amounts but to *Five Hundred Pounds per annum*, or thereabouts; provided that HIS MAJESTY, in his Royal Wisdom, should think proper to appoint that the Bodies of such Felons, as shall hereafter be convicted of *Burglary*, be after execution, delivered to the Surgeons Company, in the same manner as the Bodies of *Murderers* now are.

It is proposed, that the Professor should read three Lectures every Week, each to consist of *two hours* at the least; and that in the space of three months, he should go through a compleat course of Anatomy, together with all the chirurgical operations and bandages, and that likewise he make two Anatomical Preparations to belong to the Surgeons Company as their Property, till a Museum shall be formed as compleat as the Science will admit; and that the Professor, for the time being, should constantly take care that such preparations be well preserved.

It is also proposed, that in case of the Professor's sickness or absence from whatever cause, he shall either name a substitute in his place to be approved by the Master and Wardens; or the Master and Wardens shall appoint one themselves; which Substitute shall receive for each lecture, the specific sum apportioned to the Professor, to be deducted from his annual stipend, for the respective days or weeks he may chance to be employed. The same Professor may be re-elected at the expiration of his office, but the Conditions are unalterable.

It is proposed, that each course should begin the first of every quarter, and continue for three months, and to go on during the whole year, so that the Theatre may be always open.

Two Conditions are proposed for every Gentleman who wishes to attend these Lectures.

1st. That he have served a regular Apprenticeship to a regular Surgeon.

2d. That he understand the Latin Tongue. It is proposed also, that these Lectures shall be free to all Physical Gentlemen of the *Army and Navy*.

It is conceived, that an Institution like the above, would be the means of saving the Lives and Limbs of many of HIS MAJESTY's subjects both by sea and land; first, during the war, and afterwards when they come to settle in different parts of the kingdom, where all HIS MAJESTY's subjects would be provided with able Surgical assistance upon all occasions; it is further conceived, that it would be saving of great expences to the Navy, by having able Surgeons and well-qualified mates on board all HIS MAJESTY's Ships: that the men would be sooner fit for duty, and fewer sent to the Hospitals, which Hospitals are supported at no inconsiderable an expence.

It is conceived, that it would be unnecessary to state the complaints of the different Commanders in the Royal Service, particularly in the West Indies, owing to the incapacity of many of the Surgeon's Mates; the Lords of the Admiralty having the means of full information on this head.

F I N I S.