Jabez Hogg
from the Author.

AN

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS,

7

DELIVERED AT

APOTHECARIES' HALL,

TO THE MEMBERS OF THAT SOCIETY,

ON WEDNESDAY THE 11th OF FEBRUARY,

1835:

BEING THE FIRST OF THEIR EVENING MEETINGS,
DESIGNED TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INTERCOURSE, AS WELL
AS PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT.

BY

HENRY FIELD.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY GILBERT & RIVINGTON, ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

1835.

AT A COURT OF ASSISTANTS OF THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES,

Held on Tuesday, the 17th day of March, 1835;

IT WAS RESOLVED—

THAT the cordial thanks of this Court be presented to Mr. Henry Field, for his Address delivered to the Members of this Society; at their Evening Meeting, on Wednesday, the 11th day of February last. That he be requested to permit the same to be printed, and that a copy of it be delivered to each Member.

ROBERT B. UPTON, Clerk.

AN

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

That the employment of various means for the alleviation and removal of those maladies, which befel the human race immediately after the fall of our first parents, must have taken place at a very early period of time, will scarcely admit of a doubt. A considerable space must certainly have elapsed, before the cure of diseases could put on the form of a regular system; and a description of persons under the name of physicians (or healers as the Hebrew word signifies), persons whose business it was to heal or restore the body from sickness, by the administration of proper medicines, could not have existed for many centuries afterwards, as the knowledge required for this purpose must have been gradual and progressive.

The first distinct mention of physicians is in the book of Genesis, more than 2300 years from the creation of the world. But the art of medicine, and the preparation of remedies must be presumed by that time to have acquired a considerable degree of perfection, for Joseph then commanded the Egyptian physicians to embalm his father, and we are told by the sacred writer, that the physicians embalmed Israel [1].

In the art of embalming the Egyptians are well known to have excelled all other nations in the world. Of this there can be no doubt, as the numerous specimens of their skill, handed down to us in the form of mummies, are a convincing

[1] From this passage of Genesis it would appear, that in those early times, embalming was performed by the same person, who practised the medical profession; though in the time of Herodotus, these formed two perfectly distinct classes. The septuagint translators, who were Egyptians, give a representation of the matter conformable to the usage of their own times—"Joseph commanded, not *τοῖς ἰατροῖς*, which is the proper translation of the Hebrew word, but *τοῖς ἐνταφιασταῖς ἐνταφιάσαι τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ*.

The "Apothecary" of the Bible does not appear to have had any thing to do with the healing art.—His business was to compound aromatic unguents, for other purposes than those of medicine.—LXX. *μυρεψός*. Vul. *unguentarius*. Although simple vegetables were doubtless the earliest remedies, yet as compositions were probably very soon employed in the cure of diseases, it is difficult to suppose that the same person was not made use of, for the purpose of preparing them.

proof. The writings of Herodotus, and Diodorus Siculus have sufficiently explained the various processes employed for this purpose. Copious extracts from these authors, upon the practice of embalming, are given by the learned Dr. Adam Clark, to whose commentary on the Bible I may refer those gentlemen, who are desirous of more minute knowledge on the subject, which to those who have leisure to investigate it, will be found to be one of great curiosity and interest. Suffice it here to observe, that the knowledge which then prevailed of the physical, as well as chemical properties of drugs and spices, must have been very considerable to have enabled the persons whose business it was to practise the art of embalming, (which, indeed, is a species of that well known process called Tanning) to execute it in so complete a manner, as it appears to have been done.

Although the word 'physician' is employed by Moses, in his account of Jacob's death, yet we cannot, for a moment, suppose that the physician's practice was of that confined nature and character, to which the same word is appropriated at the present day; on the contrary, he must have been a man, not only acquainted with the nature and cure of diseases and maladies, both external and internal, as well medical as chirurgical, but likewise with the preparation and application of re-

medies, so as to unite in his person the several branches of that profession. We find in the second book of Chronicles, about seven hundred and seventy years afterwards, upon the death of Asa, king of Judah, that Asa was laid in a bed, filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices, prepared by the apothecary's art. It is probable that this text does not refer to embalming the body, but that the bed spoken of was a funeral pyre, on which spices and other odoriferous articles had been placed, which were set fire to, and consumed, but whether with the body or without is not by commentators agreed. Perhaps the aromatics only were consumed in honour of the king, and not the corpse itself; but still it is evident that some medicinal compositions, or preparations were then employed.

Virgil, in his sixth Æneid, describes at length the ceremony, which took place at the funeral of Misenus; but in this case the body was certainly burned at the same time with the various odoriferous articles of which the pile was formed, for we read of the remains, or unconsumed parts, being placed in a brazen urn.

There are various other passages in Holy Writ, which sufficiently evince that the art of the apothecary is not only one of the most ancient, but also an art which may be fairly assumed to have been esteemed highly important, and to have

been proportionably valued in every age of the world.

These passages of scripture are too well known to render it necessary to particularize them on the present occasion.

But to descend to later times.

Avenzoar, an Arabian physician, whose period cannot be exactly ascertained, but who probably lived about the beginning of the 12th century of the Christian era, and whose father and grandfather were both of the medical profession, appears to have been highly qualified, not only by his skill as a physician, but from his knowledge in pharmacy and surgery. To use his own words, "He took great delight in studying how to make syrups and electuaries, and he had a strong desire to know the operation of medicines by experience; the way of extracting the virtues of them, and the manner of compounding the one with the other."

John of Gaddesden was an English physician, and an author of considerable celebrity in his time, who flourished in the early part of the 14th century. He was, as related by Dr. Friend, the first English physician who was employed at court. Before this time all the physicians to the Crown had been foreigners. The same custom prevailed with regard to apothecaries long after. In the wardrobe account of the Prince in the 32nd year of Edward III., Anno 1360, we find the apothecary

was Peter of Montpelier; and the first apothecary in England, who sold medicines, if we may believe Reyner, was J. Falcand de Luca, in 1357.

The materials which we possess for ascertaining the state of medical practice in this country, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, are very scanty, especially with respect to the state of pharmacy, and to the specific character of the apothecary, whether he was merely a compounder of medicines; or, in addition to that employment, was engaged in visiting and prescribing for the sick. The expressions contained in an appointment, made by King Henry the Eighth, of an apothecary to his daughter, Mary, most evidently imply the latter opinion, and may be almost considered as conclusive upon the subject, and demonstrative of the fact of the apothecary having the attending care of the patient.

There is contained in Rymer's Fœdera, A. D. 1537, a warrant for this appointment, of which the following is an extract:—

"Sciatis, quod de gratia nostra speciali, ac pro eo quod assignavimus, dilectum servientem nostrum, Joannem Soda, Pharmacopolam, attendere præclarissimæ filiæ nostræ Dominæ Mariæ, pro meliori curâ et conservatione sanitatis suæ; dedimus et concessimus, et per præsentes damus et concedimus eidem Joanni, quadraginta Marcas stirlingorum per annum."

In the same year Michael Gelascus, M. D., was appointed to attend his daughter, Mary. The king employing nearly the same expressions, namely, "Pro meliori cura et conservatione sanitatis suæ." Allowing him an annual stipend of a hundred marks, which is a much larger allowance than his apothecary enjoyed, and which, being equal to 66*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, was a valuable salary at that period.

A. D. 1551. John Hemingwaye was appointed apothecary to the King, in the room of Patrick Raynoulde, deceased; with all the profits and advantages attending the same, and also a salary —"pro exercitio et occupatione officii prædicti," —of forty marks of English money annually. The appointment of a salary to this office must certainly imply his personal attendance and service.

A. D. 1554. Queen Mary renewed the appointment of John Soda, above mentioned, to be her apothecary, with the same salary, by which she evidenced her satisfaction with his care and attention to her, when she was only princess.

There can be no question that the state of pharmacy in this country was at a very low ebb at the latter end of the sixteenth, and in the beginning of the seventeenth century, for we are expressly informed in the preamble to our charter, "that of late years many empiricks, and ignorant and unlearned men, inhabit and dwell in the city

of London, and suburbs thereof, who not being brought up in the art and mystery of an apothecary, but being unskilful and ignorant in the same, do make and compound very many unwholesome, hurtful, false, corrupt, and pernicious medicines, and do sell and daily transmit the same into most parts of the kingdom of England, not only to the reproach and scorn of the honourable science of physic and the learned physicians professing the same, and likewise of the apothecaries of the city of London, educated and expert in the said art, but also to the danger and daily peril, of the lives of his majesty's subjects."

Upon these grounds two eminent physicians of that day, Sir Theodore Mayerne and Dr. Henry Atkins, appear to have interested themselves with his majesty King James the First, to provide a remedy for this alarming evil.

Prior to this time the apothecaries of London formed one body corporate with the Company of Grocers of this city, in the same manner as the surgeons of London, at a much later period, remained united with the Company of Barbers.

The plan then adopted for improving the character and qualifications of the apothecary, was to separate him entirely from the grocer, who must, of course, have been a mere trader, and to form the regular apothecaries into a distinct Society, for which purpose King James granted them a

charter of incorporation: under the authority of this charter we now exist as a Society, being the only one we ever possessed, with the exception of the few years of the arbitrary reign of his grandson, James the Second, at which time a new charter was given to this, and to most other corporations; which, like many other acts of this arbitrary and misguided monarch, was set aside at the revolution under King William, and the original charter restored.

Our charter was granted originally to 114 persons, by name; who were probably nearly all the persons at that time acting as apothecaries in London, and within seven miles of the same, to which extent jurisdiction is given to us by that instrument.

As it is not my intention to enter minutely into the clauses and provisions of this charter, I shall only observe, that all persons are forbidden by it to exercise the art and mystery of an apothecary in mixing, compounding, preparing, applying, or administering any medicines whatsoever, unless he shall have been educated, for the space of seven years, under some apothecary exercising the same art, and free of the Society, and shall have appeared before the Master and Wardens, (the President of the College of Physicians or some physician appointed by him, being called to their assistance, if upon notice given such physician will

be present, and advisement with the same had,) and shall have been examined, proved and tried concerning his knowledge and choice of simples, and concerning the preparation, dispensation, use and composition of medicines before the said Physician, Master and Wardens, and shall have been approved by them. This charter was carried into effect on the 16th Dec. 1617, when the master, wardens, and 16 assistants were sworn into office, before the Attorney-General, in the presence of Sir Theodore Mayerne and Dr. Atkins.

It may naturally here be asked, what was the result of the clause requiring apprentices to be examined in the presence of the President of the College of Physicians, or some physician appointed by him. The only record that appears upon the subject implies, that in the year 1637, there must have been a requisition on the part of the College, that the apprentices should be brought to their College for such examination: to this our Society objected, as by the terms of their charter, they were only required to give notice to the President of such intended examination, who might attend by himself or deputy, or not, as he should think proper. It is probable there had been much altercation between the two Corporations respecting this point, for it was not until a year and a half afterwards, that this Society gave in their final determination not to accede to the proposition of the

College of Physicians of attending there, but to adhere to the words of the charter by sending notice only. The result was, that such joint examination most probably never took place.

The circumstance of a collision having taken place between the College of Physicians and our Society on a point of mere etiquette, will not excite much surprise, when it is known that an unpleasant feeling already existed between the two bodies, to which may be traced many other difficulties, by which our early history is perpetually disfigured. This arose from the alleged interference of the Apothecary with the Physician in attending and prescribing for the sick, which the latter considered as exclusively his province, and frequent complaints appear to have been made by the College to our Society of such intrusion [1].

In the then uncertain state of this question, the Society, as a body, thought it right generally to give way to the College; and instances occur, in their minutes, of their determination to desire their members to desist from such practice,—a recommendation which was probably never regarded by

[1] The Act of Parliament which exempted apothecaries from serving the office of constable, juryman, &c., assigns the following motives for such exemption; namely, "that they cannot otherwise perform the trusts reposed in them as they ought, nor attend the sick with such diligence as is required." (Act 6th, William III.)

those individuals, and which the state of society at large rendered scarcely possible to be carried into effect. However, we find that in the year 1701, the College of Physicians determined to try the right of the Apothecary to practise medicine, and accordingly brought their action against Mr. Rose, a member of the Society, for such practice, whom the Society undertook to defend. This was not brought to trial until about two years afterwards, when the verdict of the jury was in favour of the College, and therefore against Mr. Rose.

The judge having declared that the law was against the defendant, he felt himself obliged to give judgment accordingly; but, at the same time, gave his opinion that the prosecution was extravagant, and the inconveniences likely to arise from it would be such, that he thought the statute required explanation. The Society, influenced, no doubt, by this opinion of the judge, followed up the matter of their dispute with the College, and very properly required the opinion of the Attorney-General upon the subject, who advised them to bring a writ of error into the House of Lords, which advice having been acted upon, the judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench was reversed by the Lords, and the question thus set completely at rest, in a manner, without doubt, very satisfactory to our Society.

As it would be impossible, without an unrea-

sonable trespass upon your time, to enter fully into the early history of this Society, I purpose to confine myself to a few of their most important and leading transactions. My principal view, in this address, being to establish the character of our worthy and beneficent predecessors, as men whose leading principle was to carry into effect the design of those exclusive privileges with which they were invested, which object they very properly considered should be the advancement of medical science, as connected with the welfare and benefit of the public. Had the power of the Crown been of equal authority with an act of the legislature, nothing would have been wanting to the accomplishment of that design.

I begin, therefore, with the early and assiduous attempts made to promote the knowledge of practical botany among our members. I am well aware that, during the greater part of the last century, the study of botany formed but an inferior part of a medical education. This may have been, in some measure, owing to the decided alteration which then took place in the practice of medicine, when the great and powerful effects of mineral and metallic substances, and the variety of chemical preparations arising from those sources, had rendered vegetable preparations less important, and the study of them less attended to: but such was not the case two centuries ago, when these latter

were much more employed in the cure of diseases than metallic remedies, and indeed almost solely relied upon for that purpose. The knowledge of plants, and of their medicinal virtues, must, at that time, have been of supreme importance, and quite indispensable.

To this point, the very early attention of the Society was directed. The first institution of herbarizing excursions was in the year 1633, at which time only one was appointed to take place in each year. They appear to have been designed for the benefit of the younger members of the Society, and of the apprentices to members in general. Since the first establishment, the number of them has been increased to six annually. Many of us, now present, can recollect the pleasure and advantage that these botanical excursions used to afford us in our early years.

But our liberal-minded ancestors were not satisfied with this useful design only; but soon projected and carried into effect the expensive and more difficult establishment of a Botanic Garden. To enlarge upon this part of our subject will not be requisite, as every gentleman present is in possession of an historical memoir of this garden, which I had the honour to submit to the Court of Assistants nearly fifteen years ago, and which was directed by them to be printed and distributed for the information of their members.

It will be sufficient for our present purpose, to recite a few short extracts from that history, in order to call to your recollection the highly laudable liberality which influenced our members at that time; a liberality which would be considered as magnificent at the present day; still more so at a period of time when the value of money was so much greater than it is at present. May I be permitted here to express a hope, that a calm reflection upon this subject may influence the minds of our opulent brethren, who may have it in their power to promote, by their donations and example, the many useful purposes, both of science and benevolence, which still remain unaccomplished among us, and which, I am convinced, the Managers of this Society would be most ready to undertake, were their pecuniary resources correspondent to their most ardent wishes.

I am satisfied no apology is requisite for this digression. To return to the above-mentioned history—[1] "Were not the fact indisputable, it would scarcely be credited by posterity, that this expensive design of a Botanic Garden, was commenced at a time, when the Society could not with propriety be said to have emerged from a state of infancy—when it was totally destitute of any disposable funds which could be employed for

[1] Mems. p. 1, 2.

that purpose—and at that period when their Hall had been recently destroyed by the memorable Fire of London. The early re-edification of their Hall, so necessary for the conduct of their general affairs, was indispensable, and must have been a primary object with the members. Their private pecuniary resources would have been, according to every rational conjecture, too much exhausted by this necessary work, to enable them to enter upon a new undertaking, whose principal design was honourable reputation, without any prospect of worldly advantage."

[1] "Though collections of exotic plants in the vicinity of London, both belonging to private gentlemen, and to scientific nurserymen, are numerous and extensive; yet this Society may still claim the distinguished honour of possessing the only depository of plants, exotic, and indigenous, in the vicinity of this great metropolis, belonging to a public body."

That the Society was in possession of a Botanic Garden, prior to their present establishment at Chelsea, is beyond dispute; but the circumstances attending it, cannot, at this late period, be clearly ascertained. The ground at Chelsea was first occupied by them in the year 1673, but it was not until the year 1722 that it was settled upon

[1] p. 4.

the Society in perpetuity, by that excellent botanist, and liberal patron of science, Sir Hans Sloane, Bart., who, upon more occasions than one, was subsequently a generous benefactor and promoter of its success.

[1] "The year 1732 was a period of great importance in the history of Chelsea Garden; what was the state of the buildings belonging to it at this time, whether as it regards the cultivation of plants, and their preservation, or as it respects the comfort and accommodation of the gardener, we are totally ignorant. But the Society at this time, very highly to its credit, formed a design, and began to carry into effect a plan for erecting a fabric, calculated to subserve both these purposes, upon a scale of extent and elegance, which would, at the same time, reflect honour upon its members, and embrace the most approved methods then known, of raising and bringing to maturity the more delicate productions of foreign countries, by imitating as nearly as possible the various temperatures of their native climates."

This building was commenced, and the first stone laid by Sir Hans Sloane, in August 1732, in the presence of the Master and Wardens, and completed within two years, at an expense of nearly 1900*l.*, which being a much larger sum

[1] p. 39.

than the Society's private funds could afford, a subscription among the members was resorted to, which amounted to nearly 550*l.*, the Corporation disbursing from their own property the additional sum of 500*l.*

Very considerable sums have been, from time time, expended upon the various buildings and stoves connected with the Garden, which have either been defrayed out of the Society's private income, or met by extraordinary efforts of our members in the way of personal subscription, of which there have been two very liberal instances subsequently to that already mentioned, namely, in the year 1786, amounting to 540*l.*, and also in the year 1815, the produce of which was 494*l.* An honourable and exemplary precedent which ought never to be forgotten by their successors.

Another subject which will distinctly discover the very commendable conduct of our predecessors in this Society, as well as their desire to promote the public good, is the establishment of laboratories for the preparation of genuine medicines.

The want of legislative authority rendered the wise and judicious intentions of our Royal Founder nugatory, as respects all such apothecaries who were not members of our Society, so that the prevalence of false, hurtful, and pernicious medicines, continued without abatement or diminution. Early

and repeated applications were therefore made to Parliament to confirm and establish the powers contained in the charter, but, for various causes, such sanction could not then be obtained.

It was reserved for a subsequent and distant era to accomplish that object, in which a less enlightened age could not succeed; and although it must be admitted, that the drugs and compositions of the present day, as they are frequently to be met with in the shops and laboratories of persons unconnected with this Society, are of much better quality than those of former times, yet it is to be feared, that they are yet, in many instances, far short of perfection.

From the records of the Society, it appears that its members soon discovered a laudable anxiety to relieve themselves from the necessity of depending for a supply of medicines on the artificial and spurious compositions of the chemists and druggists of that time, and accordingly in the year 1623, they formed a plan for supporting a dispensary of their own, for compounding of the more elaborate confections, which, containing a great number of ingredients, were particularly liable to adulteration. The utility of this plan being probably confined to a few articles only, must have been of very limited extent; and it was not until the year 1671, that a chemical laboratory was first formed at Apothecaries' Hall, by subscription among the members of the Society.

The purpose for which the Laboratory was originally intended, was to furnish the different subscribers, and them only, with such chemical preparations as they might have occasion for in their practice as apothecaries. It originated from the difficulty, and great expense they must have incurred in preparing their own chemicals, and the impracticability of procuring them otherwise in a pure and genuine form. A more commendable motive, or a more judicious determination, cannot be conceived.

How long the consumption of these chemicals was confined to subscribers alone, cannot now be known, but the increasing reputation of this Laboratory must have been the cause of applications for purchasing them from persons who were neither subscribers, nor members of the Society; for, in 1682, or very soon after, the managers of the Laboratory consented to comply with these applications, and enlarged their establishment accordingly.

In the early part of the reign of Queen Anne, the difficulty of supplying the Royal Navy with suitable medicines and drugs was such, that a requisition was made by government to our Society, to undertake that service; which requisition being acceded to, large additions were made in their buildings and apparatus, to enable them to carry that design into effect.

Such was the origin of the Laboratory and Navy

Stocks, which remained above a century as separate establishments, but have, within these few years, been formed into one joint stock association, under the title of the United Stock of the Society of Apothecaries.

This concern has been at all times conducted with that integrity and general accuracy, which has acquired for the medicines prepared here the highest character, not only throughout Great Britain, but also in every part of the globe. It must, therefore, be esteemed an institution of great national benefit, not only while it continued, as it did for a considerable period, to be almost the only repository of genuine and legitimate medicines and drugs; but also from the disposition which it has created in the community at large, to give greater attention to the quality of the medicines which they employ; thus rendering it requisite, that the chemist and druggist in general should be more careful in the quality of his preparations, as the possession of very inferior articles, in the present day, would inevitably prove ruinous to his reputation and business;—at least among the more respectable, and better informed classes of the public.

A competent knowledge of the *materia medica*, and of pharmaceutical chemistry, is so obviously not only advantageous, but, indeed, essentially necessary to the well-qualified apothecary, that it is

not at all surprising that it should have, at a very early period, interested the managers of this Society. Accordingly, we find from our records, that attempts were repeatedly made to carry into effect a plan for giving instruction, upon those subjects, within these walls. These attempts, however, were, for a considerable time, totally unavailing. At length, a very old and valuable member, Mr. Wm. Prowting, who died about the year 1794, bequeathed by his will the sum of £100 for the purpose of establishing lectures for affording instruction in *materia medica*. This bequest, although in itself but of small amount, yet he very justly considered, might have the effect of giving an impulse, and of exciting increased attention to the proposed design. In this, he was not mistaken. Within the space of ten years after his death, under the authority of the Court of Assistants, in conjunction with my most respectable friend, Mr. Jos. Hurlock, I undertook to deliver gratuitous lectures, upon the subjects of *materia medica* and pharmaceutical compositions, which were continued by us for several years; and, upon our relinquishment of them, the same subjects were resumed by another member, the late Dr. Joseph Adams, whose medical publications, particularly his work upon "Morbid Poisons," entitle him to very honourable mention.

These voluntary efforts paved the way to a re-

gular system of lectures upon *materia medica* and pharmaceutical chemistry, which were undertaken, and are still carried on by Professor Brande, under whose conduct they cannot but be attended with invaluable advantage to our apprentices, while they are, at the same time, highly honourable to the character of our Society, as patrons of medical science.

It is impossible here to avoid making the observation, how many advantageous opportunities of acquiring professional knowledge, and that of the most serviceable kind, the youth of the present day enjoy, of which we, of a former age, were destitute. We would earnestly hope, and may confidently expect, that these advantages will be duly appreciated and improved by the rising generation, as they may rest assured, that their future success, as well as their professional estimation in life, will greatly depend upon the stores of useful knowledge, which they shall have accumulated in their early days.

But the most interesting subject of congratulation, which has occurred in the progress of this Society, is the importance which has been attached to it, and the confidence which has been placed in its character and integrity, by the supreme authority of the realm, in committing to our management the regulation and superintendence of the most useful and valuable, because the most

universally diffused branch of the medical profession, the apothecaries throughout England and Wales.

It is curious to observe from what small, and in themselves insignificant causes, very unexpected events frequently originate. Such was the case in the present instance. Had not his majesty's government, by way of increasing the revenue, proposed to lay an additional duty on glass, which if carried into execution might be very prejudicial to the apothecary in conducting his business, this plan for improving the character and qualification of the general practitioner would certainly not, at that juncture, have been thought of, and without some such accidental occasion would possibly not even to the present time have been contemplated.

The history of this transaction is too recent, and must be too familiar to every gentleman present, to render it necessary to occupy your attention largely upon the subject. Suffice it to observe, that a meeting being called of the apothecaries of this metropolis, on the question of the duty on glass, a simultaneous feeling arose in the minds of the persons assembled, of the utter insignificance of the object proposed to be attained in comparison with other questions affecting the vital interests, and whole existing state of the medical profession. In particular they were in-

duced to turn their attention to the state of medical education, in that important branch of the profession, known by the description of general practitioners, with a special view to the prevalence of empiricism and quackery so notorious at that time in every part of the kingdom.

The sensation excited in the metropolis by this and other meetings of a similar kind, rapidly spread throughout the kingdom; and similar meetings were held, and associations formed in almost every county and district. The necessity of an improved medical education was universally admitted, but various and very conflicting opinions existed as to the best mode of accomplishing that object; until at length, after much opposition, and, it may be truly added,

"Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum."

The legislature, convinced of the necessity of the proposed remedial measure, and of the existence of some controlling power for the purpose of carrying it into effect, solemnly committed this important charge to our Society.

I have great pleasure in stating, that the conduct of the Court of Assistants in the election of Examiners in pursuance of the Act of Parliament, as also of the Court of Examiners in the discharge of the very important and arduous duties intrusted

to them, has been highly exemplary and praiseworthy. It is well known that their management in this difficult service has been lately under minute investigation by a committee of the House of Commons; and it is very satisfactory to add, that it is universally admitted, that a very considerable amelioration has already taken place in the qualifications of the apothecary and general practitioner, in consequence of the improved state of medical education, called into action by the judicious regulations of this court.

The legitimate consequence of these improved qualifications must not only redound to the benefit of the community at large, but must especially, and most essentially contribute to the health of the middle and lower classes of the people; who, as they are by far the largest portion of the nation, may well be esteemed, in a national view, the most valuable and important.

In connexion with this Act of Parliament, and in a grateful sense of the distinguished honour thus conferred upon the Society by the legislature, the Court of Assistants have considered it incumbent upon them to adopt every method in their power to promote the cause of science, and to assist in the advancement of such branches of a medical education, as are more immediately within their province. Their Botanic Garden, which, until lately, was confined to the members and their ap-

prentices, was a few years ago thrown open, under necessary restrictions, to the medical students of the metropolis at large: and our botanical demonstrator directed to enlarge his sphere of instruction in conformity with this extended design. It has been highly satisfactory to observe the avidity with which this privilege has been embraced. To give an encouragement and honourable impulse to the student in this useful branch of knowledge, two medals, one of gold and the other of silver, have been annually awarded to the two best proficients in Botany, who shall have given an adequate degree of attendance at the garden for the purpose of acquiring that knowledge. It has been highly gratifying, during their examinations prior to the delivery of those medals, to witness the zeal and emulation which have been excited in the breasts of the candidates; as well as the display of ability, equally honourable to the tutor and to the pupil, which those occasions have called forth.

It gives me much satisfaction to add, that our court have lately determined to carry into effect a considerable extension of this plan of instruction, and to make such alteration in the arrangement of their garden, as will be best adapted to promote so desirable a purpose. This extended design is expected to be commenced

during the ensuing summer, but probably cannot be carried into complete effect until the following year.

Whether the approaching session of a new parliament will take up the subject of general medical education, which the last House of Commons contemplated, it is impossible at present to ascertain, or even to conjecture: but, I trust, we may confidently expect that the ample and correct manner in which we have fulfilled the intention of the legislature in the trust already committed to us, will ensure to our Society, in the event of any new system to promote medical improvement being resolved upon, a fair portion of that confidence, to which, by a conscientious discharge of our duty hitherto, we feel ourselves justly entitled.

To conclude:—I cannot avoid expressing my most anxious wish, that this Society, with which I have been connected, either personally or by ancestry, considerably above a century, and in whose service I have been for many years, I trust, usefully engaged, may continue to flourish, and that these social meetings, so auspiciously commenced, may be persevered in with increased energy. I am well convinced that their continuance will have a powerful tendency to promote that harmony and good feeling, which should always exist among

professional brethren; and that they must necessarily be accompanied with such an advantageous improvement in every branch of medical knowledge, as will redound to the honour of the Society collectively, as well as to the respectability of its members individually.

THE END.

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, Printers, St. John's Square, London.