

Remarks on medical reform, in a letter addressed to the Right Hon. Sir James Graham / By Sir James Clark.

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REMARKS

(P)

ON

MEDICAL REFORM,

IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HON. SIR JAMES GRAHAM, BART.,

ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES OF STATE, &c.

BY

SIR JAMES CLARK, BART., M.D., F.R.S.,

PHYSICIAN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN AND TO THE PRINCE ALBERT.

LONDON:

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MEDICAL REFORM.

SIR,

To you, as the Minister of the Crown upon whom devolves the administration of our domestic polity, I venture to address the following remarks on some of the more important points of Medical Reform. I am not presumptuous enough to think that I shall be able to point out a course by which the numerous difficulties which encompass the subject may be removed, but I would not have presumed to trespass upon your time, had I not believed that I might, in some degree, simplify the matter, and enable you to see more clearly the real state of the profession in this country, and the paramount objects to be aimed at in the Improvement of Medical Education, and the Reform of our Medical Institutions, or rather their adaptation to the present wants of the profession.

In submitting through you, Sir, my observations to the profession, I am also not entirely without the hope that they may lead some of my brethren who are contending for the special interests of

particular institutions, to take a more extended view of the whole subject of Medical Reform, and unite their efforts to enable you to bring into Parliament such a measure as shall prove at once satisfactory to the great body of medical practitioners and beneficial to the public,—and, I may add, as shall improve their own institutions by giving them the support of the whole profession. However this may be, you will find in the following pages the unbiassed opinion of one who has for many years directed his attention to the state of the Medical Profession, and the means of improving Medical Education in this country; and who has felt it to be in some degree his duty to make his views known to you at a moment when it is understood that the ground-work of a measure of Medical Reform, about to be introduced into Parliament, is in course of preparation.

From what has transpired of the plan of Medical Reform now under your consideration, it would appear that the members of the medical corporations are alone consulted on the subject, and that they, as might be expected, are strenuously exerting themselves to obtain all they can,—each for his own institution; while the claims and feelings of the great body of the profession seem likely to be lost sight of. Permit me, however, most respectfully to remark, that it is the General Practitioners whom a sound measure of

Medical Reform is calculated most to benefit ; let me remind you also that it is they who are principally calling for reform, and who, believing that they have little to expect at the hands of the present medical bodies, look to the Legislature, through you, to improve their position.

It must, I think, be evident to every one who gives the subject his unbiassed consideration, that no scheme of Medical Reform which does not include *all* legal practitioners of medicine can prove satisfactory to the profession and the public, or remove the source of the discontent and jealousy which have so long distracted the medical body, and tended to lower their character in the estimation of the public.

In the evidence of some of the most distinguished physicians and surgeons of this country, before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, it was stated, and, I think, with perfect truth, that no surgeon could practise surgery successfully who was not acquainted with practical medicine, and that no man could be a good physician who was ignorant of surgery.* With respect to surgery, it might have been further stated that much the greater part of the surgeon's practice is medical ; that, as our knowledge of the

* Report from the Select Committee on Medical Education, &c.

animal economy and of the nature of disease increases, the domain of what is strictly called surgery becomes more circumscribed; so that the purely surgical duties of the surgeon will at no distant period be limited, in a great measure, to the management of accidents, and the performance of the operations required for the very few diseases in which operations are really useful. Indeed, it is well known that no surgeon out of the Metropolis could live by his profession, were he to restrict his practice to surgery: even the practice of the most exclusive London surgeons is, I believe, more medical than surgical, in the strict acceptation of the terms. If, then, the practice of the surgeon is chiefly medical, and the physician requires to be acquainted with practical surgery, while the great body of the profession, the general practitioners, necessarily practise both medicine and surgery,—what good reason can be assigned for classing one small section of the profession under a College of Physicians and another under a College of Surgeons, while the great body of the profession is left without any bond of union, or any connexion with or interest in those Institutions?

I am far from wishing to imply by these remarks that the profession ought not to be separated into different departments. This must always be the case in a profession so extended as that of Medi-

cine, and in which men possessed of various talents and acquirements will distinguish themselves in those departments for which their genius and inclinations best suit them :—there will always be a certain proportion of physicians, who will be consulted in the more strictly medical cases, and of surgeons, who will be consulted in all cases requiring operation, and in accidents ; but by far the greater part of the profession will continue, as they are at present, to be occupied in the treatment of both medical and surgical diseases. Such an arrangement is advantageous to the profession and beneficial to the public.

Now, in any scheme of Medical Reform, and more especially in any Legislative measure, it is surely the General Practitioners, that is, the great body of Medical Practitioners, that require the chief consideration. By far the largest part of the population is under their care, including that portion who are least capable of judging of the merits of their medical attendants, and to whom it is the especial duty of the Legislature to extend its protection.

As it has been stated, in the evidence to which I have just referred, and which will not be disputed, that to practise any branch of medicine successfully requires a knowledge of the whole science, it necessarily follows that every medical practitioner should pass through the course of medical education deemed necessary for the gene-

ral practitioner; and that those who desire to confine themselves exclusively to medicine or surgery should first take the degree which qualifies for general practice, and then devote a certain period in acquiring that additional experience and practical knowledge, and that manual dexterity, which may qualify them for Consulting Physicians or Operating Surgeons. There will always be a sufficient number of the profession who will possess a more extended general education, and a greater amount of medical instruction and experience than could at present be required or expected of the whole body of medical practitioners, and who will consequently take the higher degree of Doctor of Medicine. From this class will naturally be selected Physicians and Surgeons to Hospitals, Lecturers in the Medical Schools, Examiners, &c.; in short, this class would alone be eligible to such honourable appointments as will prove a sufficient stimulus to ensure an abundant supply of highly educated men as successors to the Physicians and Surgeons of the present day. And not only this: the facilities for acquiring instruction in every branch of science are increasing so rapidly, that the proportion of medical men who will take the higher degree will no doubt augment from year to year; and, judging from the progress which has been made in our own day, it will not be considered a very extravagant prediction that in the course

of another half-century the smaller proportion only of medical graduates will stop at the lower degree.

The first and most essential step in Medical Reform is, unquestionably, the establishment of a good and uniform EDUCATION for the general practitioner; the second, that every practitioner in medicine, whatever may be the department for which he is destined, should qualify for the duties of the general practitioner—that is, should take the degree of *Bachelor of Medicine*, or whatever title he may be designated by,—as a preliminary step to the higher degree of *Doctor of Medicine*.

This I consider one of the cardinal points of Medical Reform, and one against which I have never heard a single sound argument advanced.

As by this regulation all would pass through the first degree, so all would be eligible for the second or higher degree, by devoting an additional period to acquiring a practical knowledge of their profession, and submitting to the prescribed tests. Such a regulation would, at once, do away with all just cause of jealousy between the two grades of the profession, while the knowledge that at any future period he might take the higher degree, would prove a powerful stimulus to the general practitioner to keep up his know-

ledge with the progress of medical science. This relation of the two grades of medical practitioners being established, there could be no good reason why men so closely connected by education, and so intimately associated in the exercise of their profession, should be ranged in different institutions. It is surely more natural, and would, I think, be infinitely more beneficial to the profession, that the whole should be included in one institution. Make two classes of members in the united body. Let those who take the higher degree constitute the Fellows, and be alone eligible as officers for conducting the affairs of the corporation; while the general practitioners, or Bachelors of Medicine, would constitute the great body of Members, and have, under such regulations as upon consideration might be deemed proper, a vote in the election of the officers. As this rule would apply to all, and the fellowship would be open to every member of the body who chose to qualify himself for it by taking the higher degree, no one could complain of being excluded from the fellowship.—(Note A.)

The whole profession would thus be united into one body, while the present distinction of physician, surgeon, and general practitioner, would be maintained. All just cause for the discontent at present existing in the profession would be removed. The “one faculty” and “representa-

tive" system would be realized, without, in the least degree, interfering with the present distinctions : such distinctions, on the contrary, would be established upon the only legitimate ground—that of more extended acquirements. So far from such an arrangement being calculated to lower the physician and surgeon to the level of the general practitioner, as has, I think, been most erroneously urged, both classes would be raised by it. The more the education of the general practitioner is raised, the higher, doubtless, will be that of the consulting physician and surgeon.

That such a scheme of Medical Reform would prove most beneficial to the profession generally cannot, I think, admit of doubt. It would secure a good and uniform education to every member of the profession ; it would knit the whole in one bond of union, and by opening to every member who chose to qualify himself the highest degree in the profession and the highest offices in the body corporate, it could not fail to raise the character of the whole. It would elevate the general practitioner in his own estimation, and in that of the public. The public would know that every member of this body must have had a good education ; while the practitioner himself would feel that he formed an integral part of the great body of his profession, the highest honours and offices of which he might attain by qualifying

himself for them, and by conducting himself as becomes the member of an honourable profession. He would have at once a direct stimulus to diligence in his profession and to upright conduct ; while the knowledge that misconduct might lead to expulsion from such a body would produce its effect upon those on whom the dread of disgrace operates more powerfully than the stimulus of honourable reward.

A college of medicine so constituted, representing, as it would, the whole profession, could not fail to exercise a powerful moral influence over its members. It would constitute a court of honour from which there would be no appeal. Such a court has long been wanted in the medical profession, and would tend powerfully to elevate its character. And this I look upon as one of the most important results of the union of the profession. Were any member, who conducted himself in a manner to bring disgrace upon himself and his profession, to have his name erased from the list of the general body, and be denied the legal privileges granted to medical men, under the sanction of the Secretary of State, his destruction as a medical practitioner would be inevitable. How different would be the effect of erasing the name of a member from the list of any of the present corporations !

The mere reform of the existing medical in-

stitutions would have small influence in tranquillizing the present agitated state of the profession, because such a partial measure of reform would do little for the great body of practitioners. On the contrary, I am inclined to believe that such a limited reform would produce an injurious effect upon the profession, by giving a temporary stability to institutions which are not and, as far as I can see, cannot be adapted to represent the profession as a body. Reform of the present medical corporations would even be of little permanent advantage to themselves; for it is quite certain that any reform of these bodies which has not for its aim and end the good of the whole profession, and the advantage of the public, cannot and ought not to endure. I would ask, Sir, the advocates of such a partial measure, what are the great objects to be aimed at in reforming the present anomalous state of the medical profession in this country? Is it not to improve and equalize the education of medical men throughout the country, in order that the public may be supplied with competent medical advisers? Is it not to raise the character of the general practitioner, and put an end to the discontent which has so long existed in the profession, on account of the unequal and generally imperfect education of its members, and the vexatious regulations respecting the privileges of men licensed

by different bodies ; and, finally, is it not to unite the whole profession into one corporate body ? Can these objects be attained by reforming institutions, the separate existence of which tends to keep up the very evils complained of, while they exercise little or no beneficial influence on the profession ? That the members of these bodies do not see the impolicy as well as injustice of attempting to limit the reform to a miserable extension of their own corporations, excluding the great body of general practitioners from any connexion with them, does appear to an unbiassed observer inconceivable. Such a union of the whole profession as is here advocated must come ; it is inevitable, because it is the only reform which is consistent with the natural order of things, that is founded on justice, or can place the medical profession, as a body, in the position which it ought to hold among the other liberal professions.

Seeing, therefore, that the profession must, if not upon the present occasion, at no distant period of time, be united into one body, would it not be wiser in the Colleges of Physicians and of Surgeons to acquiesce at once in effecting such a union, by putting their own united bodies at the head of it ? I know it is the opinion of many that a union of the profession may be effected, and a ' British Faculty of Medicine ' con-

stituted, without interfering with the Colleges of Physicians and of Surgeons, the members of these bodies being also members of the Faculty ; but such an arrangement would only complicate the matter, and would not, I suspect, be ultimately beneficial to the colleges. If these bodies would profit by their past experience, and look back upon what took place in 1815, they would, I think, see that they were only consulting their own interests by uniting and receiving into their united body the whole profession. They have now an opportunity of preserving all that is worthy of preservation of their institutions, and at the same time performing an essential service to the profession. If they allow the present occasion to pass, they may not again be placed in so favourable a position. What they may now grant with a good grace, and which will be considered a boon by the profession, they may feel constrained to yield at no distant period : for unless a liberal and comprehensive measure of Medical Reform be obtained now, many years will not elapse before the subject will be again agitated, and the whole ground will have to be again gone over ; while, during the interval, the discontent and bickerings, which have too long existed in the profession, are not likely to be diminished by the feeling of bitter disappointment consequent upon the failure of the present measure. If the colleges see their own

real interest, they will reflect seriously before they oppose the just claims of the profession.—(Note B.)

Having stated the principles upon which, as it appears to me, a sound Medical Reform ought to be grounded, I proceed to state briefly how the arrangement of the profession which I have suggested may be accomplished.

The first and most important part of any legislative measure for the improvement of the medical profession should be directed to secure a good and uniform education for medical practitioners over the whole kingdom. I agree with Professor Kidd, and with, indeed, the generally-expressed desire of the profession, that there should be established in each of the capitals of the three divisions of the kingdom, *One Board*, and one only, for examining and licensing all medical practitioners, and, I would add, with the power also of granting degrees.* Such a board should, in my opinion, be composed of men of general science

* In referring to the opinion of the learned and estimable Professor of Medicine in the University of Oxford, I cannot resist the opportunity it affords me of expressing my sincere regard for and admiration of that gentleman's character. At a period of life and in a position where he might well be supposed indifferent, if not opposed, to any change in our Medical Institutions, Dr. Kidd has stepped forward to advocate the cause of rational Medical Reform in a manner which must secure him the esteem and gratitude of every liberal member of his profession.

and literature as well as medical men,—so as to be capable of judging of the scientific and literary acquirements as well as the medical attainments of candidates for degrees.

In London there exists an institution already in operation, which might supply such a board. I refer to the University of London. This institution I consider, in its present state, extremely defective. The number of Fellows, thirty-five, is too numerous for an executive body, and not sufficient to admit of the formation of an effective executive council. Accordingly, the working of the University has been very difficult, and its decisions often most unsatisfactory to a large proportion of its members; and this chiefly from the want of that deliberate consideration and calm discussion, which a more limited and responsible body necessarily exercises. To render this institution efficient, the Fellows should be increased to a number sufficiently large to admit of their electing from among themselves a council, consisting of fixed proportions of the different Faculties, for conducting the ordinary affairs of the University. Were the new Fellows chosen on account of their character and reputation in the different departments of Literature and Science, of Medicine and of Law, there would be no difficulty in selecting from the whole number such an executive council as would be satisfactory to the

profession, and a guarantee to the Government that the interests of the public were sufficiently attended to.

Were the University of London so constituted, I can see no valid objection to its being the body for testing the candidates and granting degrees in London. The regulations respecting the amount of preliminary education, the course of medical study, and the mode of conducting examinations, adopted by the University of London, may no doubt be improved ; but even as at present existing, these regulations are, I believe, equal, if not superior to those of any other institution for granting medical degrees in this or any other country. That the University of London has not entirely fulfilled the expectations of the public, is not owing to the regulations respecting education, but to the defective structure of the institution. Let this be remedied, and the University of London will prove a most useful institution. It has already done much to raise the education in the public seminaries throughout the kingdom, and may do much more, if well organized.*

* I have, however, no special preference for the University of London, farther than as an Institution already in operation. All I wish is, that such an Institution should be established in each of the three capitals, endowed with the power of granting degrees in Arts and in Medicine,—unconnected with the Educating bodies on the one hand, and with the Medical Corporations on the other.

Such a Board having power to examine and grant Degrees in Arts and Law, as well as in Medicine, I consider a great advantage. The education of medical men has hitherto been too exclusively medical ;—an error which the University of London has laboured to correct by making the preliminary education of the candidate for Degrees in Arts, in Law, and Medicine the same.

There would be no difficulty in establishing such an institution as the University of London in Dublin and Edinburgh. The colleges of physicians and surgeons of those cities would supply the medical members ; and there is no dearth of literary and scientific men, nor of lawyers, from whom to choose the other members of such an institution. Nor is it necessary that the selection in Ireland and Scotland should be confined to the capitals. Men eminent in science and literature might be selected from all parts of the country. As Universities already exist in Edinburgh and Dublin, they might perhaps be so connected with the new body, as to grant the degrees without the necessity of creating a new university.

The regulations regarding education, the mode of testing candidates, &c., would, of course, require to be the same in all the institutions.

The profession, throughout the kingdom, would be subject to the same regulations, and all the mem-

bers would have to pass through one or other of the three Examining Boards, or Universities. The education and tests of proficiency being the same for all, all would of course enjoy the same privileges of practising in any part of the British dominions.

In addition to the three Examining Bodies, or Universities, a Central Board would probably be necessary for fixing and assimilating the course of education, preliminary and medical, and for making such changes in the subjects of study, and mode of examining, &c., as may become necessary in the progress of science. It is reported that the Government have the intention of establishing such a body ; to be composed partly of medical, and partly of non-medical men. Such a Board, if well organized, would, I believe, be of great utility in the country. It would constitute a Board of Reference to the Government in all matters relating to the public health, as well as a Board for regulating Medical Education.

I have thus given an outline of a scheme of Medical Reform, which I believe would be satisfactory to a great majority of the profession, and would effect all the good that can be expected from any rational measure of Reform. That the interest and privileges of the existing institutions would be trenched upon thereby is certain ; but no essential reform can be effected without this being

the case; and on all such occasions the public good, and the good of the greater body seeking and requiring reform, must be the first and paramount consideration. These institutions may have been suited to the state of the profession at the period of their formation; they have been useful in their day, and have doubtless done much good,—but if they are found to be no longer adapted to the improved condition of the profession, they ought surely to be so adapted.

In effecting the necessary changes, every endeavour should be made to disturb as little as possible the present arrangements and interests of these bodies; while, on the other hand, the members should recollect that those institutions were originally established for the good of the profession generally, and the benefit of the public; and that if they are no longer calculated to effect these objects, they ought to be remodelled to meet the great changes which have taken place in the condition and wants of the profession by the lapse of time.

With respect to the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, I believe, that, so far from being injured by a union, they would be benefited; and their financial resources would, I believe, be greatly improved. The whole profession being registered in the united body, there would be abundance of funds, even by a small registration-

fee, for maintaining, and even increasing the Museums and Libraries attached to those institutions, and also for remunerating lecturers of the first eminence for giving annual courses of lectures to the profession upon the higher departments of medical science, and the sciences more immediately connected with medicine. Whatever objections, therefore, may be made to the union of the Colleges on the plea of its proving injurious to them, I hold to be groundless: on the contrary, I believe the real interests of these institutions as scientific bodies, and their utility in the profession, would be materially promoted by their union.

With regard to individuals affected by the change, their interests would of course be respected; all persons holding official appointments for life would have the income arising from such appointments guaranteed, or a proportionate compensation granted to them.

That difficulties would present themselves in effecting the union of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in each division of the kingdom there can be no doubt; but there can, I think, be as little doubt that these difficulties would soon disappear, were the members of those Institutions disposed to make mutual concessions, and to consider the good of the profession as the great object to be attained. Were the Government to

decide that the whole medical profession shall be incorporated into one body, and that to this body only would be granted a charter of incorporation, I firmly believe all obstacles to the union of the Colleges would soon be removed ; and that in the course of a very few years we should see the united institutions exercising an influence on the character of the profession and on the progress of medical science, far beyond what the present corporations ever did, or ever could do, in their separate capacities.

As my intention was merely to give a general sketch of the kind and amount of Medical Reform required,—or rather to state the principles upon which it appears to me such reform should be based,—I shall refer only very briefly to a few points of minor importance.

In speaking of the Medical Corporations I have said nothing of the Apothecaries' Company, because by the union of the profession into one body it would naturally cease to exist as a separate institution, its members being incorporated in the united body.

That the Apothecaries' Company has well performed the duties imposed upon it is generally admitted. It has more than accomplished all that was expected of it : but the progress of medical science since that Company was instituted

renders it unfitted for the present time, and its longer continuance is not only unnecessary, but would, I believe, prove a positive injury to the profession.

The separation of Pharmacy from Medicine is a point strongly insisted on by some, while by others it is considered impracticable in the present state of the profession. Such a separation exists in almost every other country, and ought, and I have no doubt will do so in England at no distant period. The separation has indeed already commenced; and if the general practitioner is placed in that position in the professional body which he has a right to expect, it will soon be complete.* Negative legislation would probably effect the separation without much disturbance to the present state of things.

Were the druggists and chemists to restrict themselves to what is their proper business, that of preparing and dispensing medicines, the separation of pharmacy from medicine would be greatly facilitated. Regulations respecting the preliminary education of the druggists, and their being submitted to a practical examination regarding their knowledge of drugs and pharmaceutical chemistry, before they are permitted to dispense

* In Edinburgh I understand there are not above *three or four* practitioners who supply medicines to their patients; all prescriptions are sent to Druggists.

medicines, are absolutely requisite for the safety of the public.

There is a class of practitioners of greater importance to the well-being of society than is generally believed, who are much in need of reform, and who I trust will not be overlooked on the present occasion. I refer to Midwives, who in this country are in a deplorable state of ignorance.

The suppression of Quackery is a point insisted on by some writers on medical reform. With respect to quack medicines, the Government, I think, ought to refuse all patents for such nostrums. If a valuable medicine or remedy is discovered, let it be investigated by some authorized body, or persons ; and if found really to deserve this, let the inventor or discoverer be rewarded according to its value. For the suppression of individual quackery, I doubt much the propriety of adopting any direct legislative measures. Deny the rights and privileges of professional men to all but regularly qualified and licensed practitioners, and quackery may be left to its fate.

In conclusion, I beg to make a very few remarks upon the importance of Medical Reform as a measure of state polity.

Those who do not understand the subject are disposed to regard Medical Reform as a matter which concerns the medical profession only, and therefore consider it deserving of little considera-

tion. So far is this from being the case, that the public is really more interested in it than the profession ; as upon the character and knowledge of medical practitioners depends in a great degree the health of the community. Were the public better informed respecting the causes and progress of diseases, they would know that one half of the diseases with which mankind are afflicted might be prevented by common prudence, and that when diseases make their attack they might generally be deprived of half their violence by a knowledge of, and attention to, their premonitory signs and first symptoms. This is the only kind of medical knowledge useful to the public. Teach them how they may preserve their health ; make them acquainted with the causes of diseases, and the best means of preventing them, and teach them to know the first symptoms of disease, in order that they may apply for medical advice when it is of most avail,—and they will possess all the medical knowledge which they can make good use of. I notice this subject here, because I believe that a sound reform of medical education would tend powerfully to bring about so desirable a state of things. All sound medical knowledge must proceed from the profession in the first instance, and until medical men are instructed in that hitherto most neglected part of medical education, HYGIENE, the public can have no correct

views of the means of preserving health, and preventing disease.

Viewing, therefore, the subject of Medical Reform in all its bearings,—the beneficial influence which it is calculated to exercise on the public health, on the character and utility of the medical profession, and on the progress of sound medical knowledge,—I cannot but regard it as an important part of our domestic polity, and well deserving the attentive consideration of the Legislature; and I venture to assure you, Sir, that if you succeed in establishing a measure of Medical Reform based upon sound principles, you will confer a lasting benefit upon your country,—a benefit which will continue to be felt when many of the measures which are at this moment exciting so much interest, and attracting so large a share of public attention, shall cease to be remembered.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your very obedient humble servant,

JAMES CLARK.

BROOK STREET, *June* 13, 1842.

NOTE A. p. 10.

To the proposal that the profession in future should consist of two divisions only, Bachelors of Medicine and Doctors of Medicine, it may be objected, that a sufficient supply of candidates would not be found possessing the amount of preliminary and medical education required of the Bachelor, and that men with such an education will not practise in thinly-populated districts. To the first objection I would oppose all past experience,—that raising the qualification has not had the effect of diminishing the number of candidates. Look, for instance, at the University of London: notwithstanding the amount of preliminary education required, and the much more extended and more searching nature of the medical examinations, the result is greatly in favour of a higher rate of qualification. Had the Government granted to this body the power of licensing their graduates in medicine, I firmly believe that in less than five years the College of Surgeons and the Apothecaries' Hall might have shut their doors, although the examinations of the University are more extensive and more searching than those of both these bodies put together. From what does this proceed, but from the fact, that the higher, within reasonable limits, that an honorary reward is pitched, the greater is the desire to possess it? There may be a question whether the *preliminary* education required by the University of London is not a little too high for a few years to come; but no one is fit to enter on the practice of his profession with less medical information than that required of a Bachelor of that institution; and I trust that strong proofs will be required of the necessity of having a lower grade and a less instructed class of medical practitioners in this country than in the other countries of Europe, before such a proposition is acceded to. Should, however, such a class be decided on, then I would only ask that it may be left optional to the student to choose between that course of education which makes him merely an

untitled LICENTiate, with the bare permission to practise, and that which leads to the title of BACHELOR of MEDICINE, and constitutes him a member of the corporate body of his profession, and I have no fear of the result. With respect to the second objection, that men so highly educated will not be found to settle in the poorer or thinly-populated districts, I reply, that it will be time enough to legislate for the case when it occurs. It would be far better that the people were left without any medical attendant than a half-educated one. Patients whose diseases were left to nature would have a better chance of recovery than in the hands of an ignorant practitioner, the activity and boldness of whose practice is generally in proportion to his ignorance.

NOTE B. p. 16.

In urging a union of the whole profession into one corporate body, I wish to guard myself from being understood to recommend the doors of the united Colleges to be thrown open at once to the whole body of general practitioners. My observations have reference more strictly to the condition of the *future* members of the profession, who, I trust, will consist of two classes only,—the Bachelors and Doctors of Medicine (and of Surgery, if desired), *all* being required to pass through the first degree. When the profession is so arranged, there will be no difficulty: in regard to the existing practitioners, I readily admit that the matter will not be so easily settled. It may be considered right to divide them into two classes, admitting as *members* those only who abstain from the practice of pharmacy, the remainder being *licentiates*. But time may be well allowed for making all such arrangements. Let the corporate bodies only admit the *principle* of the union of the profession as the *basis* of reform, and the general practitioners are, I trust, too reasonable not to see that so extensive a change must be attended with great difficulties, even with the

best intentions of the Colleges, and must require a corresponding amount of time, and the exercise of much judgment and patience in accomplishing it. But whether the whole profession be united, as is proposed, I feel assured, from some acquaintance with the opinions and feelings of the general practitioners throughout England, that nothing short of their union, in some way, into a corporate body will satisfy them, or allay the excitement which exists in the profession. And, if not in the way proposed, how is their union to be effected? They must either form a separate body, or unite with some of the existing bodies. Now with which body can they properly unite? Will the College of Physicians receive them? They repudiate the Apothecaries' Company, and they cannot with consistency join the College of Surgeons. That body pride themselves upon being the representatives of pure Surgery; while we have seen that *nine-tenths* of the practice of the general practitioner is *medicine*, the remaining *tenth part* only being *surgery*. In their avocations, the general practitioners have a much closer affinity with the College of Physicians, and might therefore much more consistently claim a union with the body which represents Medicine, than with that representing Surgery. I have anxiously endeavoured to discover a mode of uniting the profession consistently with the existence of the present Colleges as two separate and independent bodies, but I can see none that is likely to be beneficial to the profession and these bodies also. There is in truth no means of overcoming the difficulty but the union of the whole profession into one body: this is the only natural union: the present divisions are forced and artificial, and must therefore sooner or later give place to that which is consistent with the established laws of nature.



