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THE MEDICAL PROFESSION,  
AS IT WAS, AS IT IS, AS IT OUGHT TO BE;  
A LECTURE,  
INTRODUCTORY TO THE BUSINESS  
OF THE  
ORIGINAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE,  
PETER-STREET,

DELIVERED BY

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IN THE ORIGINAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, PETER-STREET, DUBLIN.

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"Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame;  
Still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame:  
Averse alike to flatter or offend;  
Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend."

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MDCCCXL.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

AS IT WAS AS IT IS AS IT OUGHT TO BE

# A LECTURE

INTRODUCTORY TO THE BUSINESS

OF THE

ORIGINAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

BY J. H. HARRIS

PRINTED BY JOHN PORTEOUS, 19, MOORE-STREET.





# A LECTURE,

&c. &c.

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GENTLEMEN,

I purpose on the present occasion, to direct your attention, to a brief sketch of the Medical profession ; or, to things as they were, as they are, and as they should be, in reference to the public and the healing art.

“Hic labor, hoc opus est,”

may be truly applied to such an undertaking, and although seas of ink have been shed, and reams of foolscap or pro-patria paper have been pressed into the service, upon this important subject ; I trust we shall be able to condense, what may appear of most practical importance, into the compass of an ordinary lecture.

It is but too common on such occasions as the present, to deprecate the criticism of the auditory, by an affectation of modesty, and to implore indulgence, by decrying the repast furnished for their intellectual refreshment : like the host, who has ransacked earth, air and water, to provide a sumptuous feast, and after all this, thinks it both right and becoming, to apologise



for the poor and homely fare, with which his guests must content themselves. No such thing. I have done my best to obtain information for you, on the present occasion : should I fail in the accomplishment of this desirable end, I shall still feel the consoling conviction, that I will obtain, for doing so, the consideration that is uniformly bestowed upon the strenuous and anxious effort, although it fail in producing the wished for effect.

It will be sufficiently retrospective for our present purpose, to commence with the period when the medical profession, was recognised in the three-fold division of physician, surgeon, and apothecary. The palmy days of physic, when no practitioner—to use the words of the catechism—“covetted or desired other men’s goods, but learned and laboured to get his own living, and to do his duty in that state of life, into which it had pleased God to call him.”

In other words ; the physician did not perform operations : the surgeon did not treat internal diseases, and the apothecary was content with his exclusive calling as a pharmacien or compounder of medicines.

The maxim which inculcates the “bliss of ignorance, the folly of wisdom,” was strictly acted up to in olden times, “when,” to use the graphic description of the editor of the *Lancet*, “half educated doctors strutted in black breeches, their dimpled chins in the air, powder in their wigs, canes beneath their noses, with very cautious tongues, (from very good reasons,) well satisfied with a guinea for a visit, worth sixpence, and wanting no medical reform which should carry customers to any college but their own. The exceptions to this pompous and ignorant character, took not from the general truth of the picture. The few were not, in their time, able to protect the mass of “*physicians*” from the common laughter of the public, who saw in them, at best, materials for caricatures of the faculty.”



“Then his clothes all so black, coat, vest, breeches, and stocking,  
 For aught white but his head, in a doctor is shocking;  
 And his plain-painted prim, puritanical coach,  
 Secure his retreat, and insure his approach.”

Those were the dark and degraded days of surgery, when “fair science frowned upon her humble birth,” and medicine, her elder sister, denied the legitimacy of her offspring: when surgery was compelled to perform the most menial offices with hireling hands, for one, whom an unnatural state of affairs, had made the mistress instead of the co-equal of the other.

But, when the “baseless fabric of theory vanished like a vision,” and the temple of science was reared upon the imperishable basis of induction, the services rendered by medicine became *now* somewhat problematical—the *vis consequentiæ*—the relation of cause and effect were not quite obvious; the cure of the patient might be an event occurring after, rather than consequent upon medical treatment. The *post hoc*, not the *propter hoc*. On the other hand, the services rendered by surgery were demonstrative—were ocular. The operation and the cure were in the obvious relation of cause and effect. The blind, the deaf, and the lame, were gifted with, or restored to sight, hearing and loco-motion, by the exercise of this god-like art.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the proof of the proposition that medicine and surgery are but Siamese sisters; that the profession as regards practice, is divisible into operative and non-operative medicine: but surgeon and physician are, after all, not strictly convertible terms, the balance is in favour of the former although the junior, for all surgeons,—well educated of course—should be physicians; but it does not follow, that all physicians should be able to perform operations. The law states that the physician may practice surgery, but, the surgeon is by no means to practice medicine. Well, the public thought otherwise; and as we generally argue by analogy, they supposed that the surgeon was equally skilful in the treatment of



internal as well as external diseases ; and although he was not dubbed a diplomatised doctor, they discovered that he was as successful, as the pure physician in the treatment of medical maladies. It is a very ungracious, nay, a very difficult task, to decline a duty, we feel adequate to perform, more especially, when the discharge of that duty, is accompanied with the pleasing prospect of pounds, shillings and pence. Again, wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores, are of rare occurrence, compared with the vast number of diseases called medical. If *chirurgeons* confined their services to cases strictly surgical, they could not obtain a livelihood from the portion of this practice that would fall to their lot. Besides, it may be justly argued, that unsuccessful treatment of medical diseases depends upon the virulence of the malady ; while the same condition of affairs, in external diseases, is generally set down to unskilful operation, or injudicious treatment. Under these circumstances, was it not too much to ask the surgeon to say "*non nostrum*," to medical diseases when such a broad, safe and easy way was opened to fame and fortune ? Another circumstance contributed much to increase the income of the Dublin surgeon, besides the fact of his practising the profession in a two-fold capacity : he obtained a number of apprentices with large fees, and, indeed, so numerous were such pupils then, that a gentleman of this city, might have well replied, in this respect, "my name, is legion."

The progress and rise of the Irish surgeon from the degraded state of being considered the menial of the physician, and of being designated by the *sobriquet* of a barber, to his present pre-eminent position, have all occurred within our own times ; and are simply the result of the paramount value of his services, and the energetic and successful effort made, to render him perfectly competent for the discharge of his wide-extended and important duties.

We shall next direct your attention to the apothecary of the olden times.



Before the passing of the apothecaries' act for Ireland, (1791,) the practice of pharmacy and the sale of drugs, were very commonly exercised by those who were utterly ignorant, and consequently unqualified for this important calling.

The pharmacopolist of those days took up the trade as an amateur, and in very many instances, dealt out from the same shop, groceries, provisions, hardware, drugs and medicines, under the appropriate *cognomen* of a "general shop-keeper," or "*one of all sorts.*"

Indeed, in very many instances, the *wives and widows* of those learned worthies, practised the art and mystery of not only apothecaries, but of physicians *too*, and this has occurred even in modern times. Such a state of things called loudly for legislative interference.

The act which I hold in my hand, was accordingly passed in the 31st year of the reign of George the 3rd.

It was obvious, that the safety of his Majesty's liege subjects required the foregoing enactment, but, the legislature it is plain, never contemplated that apothecaries were, in pursuance of *this act*, to become practitioners in *medicine or surgery*.

The sum of the qualifications required, being, 1st, the enrolment as apprentice; 2dly, the service of *seven years*!! to learn the art and mystery of an apothecary; and 3dly, an examination touching "his knowledge of the business, before he could obtain a certificate to open shop."

The apothecary was in the humble capacity of medical attendant in such cases as were deemed of a trivial character; or, amongst the humbler classes of society, who were not esteemed objects for assistance from hospital or dispensary.

It happened, most naturally, even in the higher grades of society, that in the majority of cases, the family apothecary was first called; because, the patient or his friends were not so skilled in diagnosis, as to determine at the outset, whether he



was seized with a cold or a fever ; consequently it was esteemed the better, and indeed the cheaper plan, to send in the first instance, for the apothecary, rather than for the physician or the surgeon.

It is obvious that in the majority of cases, the dictum of the apothecary determined the calling-in, or not, of regular advice. At first, he almost invariably sought for assistance, erring, if at all, on the safe side. The physician or surgeon usually met the apothecary in attendance, to hear from him the history of the case, and that the latter should take his directions and so-forth. The persevering and punctual pharmacien, contrived also to continue these meetings up to the termination of the case.

If the regular attendant suspected that he was conferring a countenance by consultation, upon one, that might hereafter supplant himself, he also felt, that it would be dangerous to decline the attendance of the apothecary, for the following reasons : firstly—he was in possession of the family, and might, on a future occasion, either exert his influence—no small power—to have another called in ; or secondly, induce the family to dispense with a regular medical attendant altogether, unless in cases of difficulty and danger.

The apothecary was in the light of a jackal to the practitioner, and the latter felt the full force of his patronage, which was, of course, duly acknowledged on all fitting occasions, by prescribing the most expensive medicines in the most costly form. Those were the sunny days of good prices and of good fellowship. The physicians, surgeons and apothecaries were not too numerous for the wants of the public—the country flourished, and consequently all three departments, progressed smoothly, harmoniously, and respectably. This may be said to close the era of things as they were, or the days of the golden guinea.

We shall next trace briefly, the course of medical affairs to the present period. Up to the termination of the last war those



good times continued ; mother earth—the great source of wealth—gave a store to the farmer, which, then, brought a price far beyond its intrinsic value, owing to the high but temporary level that a prolonged and expensive warfare had inevitably produced. When peace was proclaimed, every link in the social chain, on the sudden change, felt the shock of such a serious downfall from a height, that had rendered all classes giddy, with an artificial, inebriating and short-lived elevation.

The medical profession had basked in the sunny pinnacle of this prosperity, as an integral part of society, it was compelled in its turn, to feel and participate in the changeful and cloudy aspect, that had overshadowed the whole mass of the community. The members of the healing art, increased now, in an inverse ratio to the means and wants of the country at large. A mass of medical officers of the army and navy, were thrown back upon Ireland, to seek from professional employment at home, a better subsistence, than that which could be afforded by half-pay : while the character which Irish surgery had attained, induced numbers to still flock to the profession, and this has been still more increased, since 1828, by the fact, of the Irish College having opened its doors for the admission of the non-apprenticed, as well as the apprenticed pupil, and on the same terms. It is plain that under the foregoing circumstances, the supply of medical men, greatly exceeded the demand.

In the working of the social machine, England had manifested that the mass of the public should have a general medical practitioner ; they did not recognise the arbitrary distinctions of the profession. If, in wealthy London, the “magazine of the world,” it were found advisable, that the medical attendant of the public at large, should act in the four-fold capacity of physician, surgeon, accoucheur, and dispenser of medicines, it ought to have proved more than equally so in this country, owing to the less prosperous state of society.



The successful innovations which the surgeon had made upon the territories of the physician, was a lesson not to be lost upon the Dublin apothecary ; he daily grew in favor with the public, and perceived that he was installed by them, in the position of general practitioner, because, neither the physician, or the surgeon could, according to the then received notions, take that place. Indeed, the whole affair was a game of cross purposes, well calculated to excite the mirth and ridicule of the public. Each body was exclusive. The surgeon should decline the practice of his art, if he became a physician of the King and Queen's College of Physicians. The apothecary, while such, could not attach himself to either of these learned bodies : and so much did the latter repudiate pharmacy, that neither College would then permit their members or licentiates, to discharge the functions of a pharmacien ; and finally, to become an apothecary you should have served seven years' apprenticeship, in learning the art and mystery of that calling !!!

Several of the apothecary profession of this city, obtained degrees in medicine or surgery, from the colleges of Great Britain, thereby endeavouring to confirm and secure the hold, they had got of the public.

In process of time, this class became the most formidable rivals, of both physicians and surgeons, for the medico-chirurgical apothecary not only supplied his own patients with medicines, but, was actually the compounder of the prescriptions of others, and even of those of his rivals ; besides, he kept open shop, which was found to be a most alluring trap for the public ; differing in this respect, from the general practitioner in England, who compounded for his own patients only, charging for both attendance and medicine : while the Irish apothecary, although also physician or surgeon, or both, charged but for the medicines supplied, and left, at the tail of the bill a modest blank, opposite attendance, thereby intimating, that this item was quite—  
*“ optional.”*



One would naturally suppose, that, in this position of affairs, the physician and the surgeon would adopt the only method left of repelling the innovators upon their just rights ; and since they could not compel the apothecary to keep to his shop, they would be disposed to use the means, that had proved so successful with the public, in the hands of their opponents, viz : the physician or surgeon might supply their own patients with medicine gratuitously, or otherwise. The precedent afforded by England, in this respect, we have already alluded to.

Two reasons have been assigned for not adopting this preservative plan.—Firstly, the physicians and surgeons, (more especially the latter,) had attained such a position in public estimation,—I speak of the seniors—the elite—the favoured few, that these were induced to think that they (the aristocrats) would be demeaned by the fact of their junior or less favoured brethren, soiling their hands with pharmacy. Secondly although the apothecaries looked upon, and treated the latter class as their rivals, yet still they had not obtained so completely the confidence of the public, as to enable them as yet to decline consultations with the favoured few. The apothecaries, pure and medico-chirurgical, were still in the light of jackals for such eminent men ; these did not experience any decrease in income, for consultations were nearly as frequent as ever. Again, the seniors foresaw, that if the surgeons and physicians generally, were permitted to dispense, they would soon supplant the less informed race,—namely, the apothecaries ; and such eligible practitioners would be able to attend the public without requiring much, if any aid, from their former consultants.

These reasons will explain the *apparent* oversight that occurred in the second charter of the college of surgeons, granted so lately as 1828, into which an oath or declaration was introduced, preventing the surgeon from “ following the business, or profession of an apothecary, or druggist, or selling drugs or medicines,



within the city of Dublin or any place within ten miles thereof.\*"

It is plain then, that the restriction, preventing the surgeon from becoming the general practitioner, was caused in part, by the besetting sin of Ireland, gentility, "*Nitor ultra vires*;" and the interests of the favoured few, who saw a golden arc in the firmament embracing the public; the commencement of which was found with the apothecary the termination with themselves: while the junior and the middle men, were permitted to enjoy (?) only the teasing and tantalizing *view* of the intermediate part, which, a perverted position of things, had excluded them from.

The college of surgeons saw when too late, the fatal error they had fallen into respecting the restriction of dispensing and *selling* medicines to their own patients, as contained in the late charter. The most strenuous efforts have been since made by this body to obtain "a bill, to enable all persons legally authorized to practice medicine or surgery in Ireland, to dispense medicines to their own patients; and further, to prevent them or any other person who practises medicine or surgery, from compounding or dispensing the prescriptions of others." The open warfare, deep, and deadly that has been waged for the last three years, between the college of surgeons and apothecaries' hall, owing to the petition of the former to the House of Commons for the above bill, has been already fully before you and the public; to enter into detail would detain us too long, but I think it necessary to acquaint you with certain resolutions adopted by the college; and lest there should be any misunderstanding, I have obtained the "*ipsissima verba*" in an official communication from the College.

\* A free translation of this will run thus:—"we the *apothecaries* and the *seniors* will support the honor, reputation, and dignity of the profession for *only* a circle of ten miles, of which Dublin is the centre: but as the *favoured few* do not usually go on consultations beyond this, the poor fellows without it, may earn their bread in any way they choose, as they do not interfere with the locality of our "loaves and fishes."



"Royal College of Surgeons, in Ireland.  
3rd October, 1840.

SIR,

In conformity with the directions of the College, at a meeting held this day, I enclose copies of the Resolutions passed at a meeting, held the 4th December, 1838.

I have the honour to be Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

C. O'KEEFE, Registrar."

G. T. HAYDEN, Esq.  
Harcourt street.

Copies of Resolutions passed at a meeting of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, held on the 4th Dec., 1838.

RESOLVED :

*"That as it is the opinion of eminent counsel, that nothing in any existing act of parliament in Ireland, can be construed so as to prevent any regularly educated physician or surgeon from supplying his own patients with medicines ordered by himself and charging for the same, if he chooses, this college will defend the first of its members or licentiates, who may act on said opinion."*

RESOLVED :

*"That it is the opinion and understanding of this college, that nothing in the declaration made by its members and licentiates, as embodied in the charter does preclude, or was intended to preclude, any of them from gratuitously supplying their own patients with medicine should they so desire."*

GENTLEMEN,

It is obvious, that the general practitioner-system, like a good remedy, has held its place, because it meets the wants of the public.

Patients at all times like privacy, but in specific, female, and hereditary diseases more especially. The general practitioner has no third party between him and his patient to circulate reports of maladies, that are often indicated by the prescriptions. I think it unnecessary to advance more, (nor indeed will time permit,) to prove that the medical general practitioner is an indispensable man for the public.



Let us next examine the question who should be the general practitioner? we shall accordingly take physician, surgeon and apothecary *seriatim*, and ascertain which is the most eligible for this important office, and for the public good.

The physician repudiates surgery, consequently, his education is defective; the dislocated or fractured limb—the bleeding artery—the strangulated hernia—the stone in the bladder, affections of every-day occurrence are quite beyond his reach, simply, because his attention has never been directed to these maladies, during his studies and practice; and, as the judicious treatment of them, requires a knowledge of anatomy and operative surgery with which he is quite unacquainted. Besides, he is too proud to dispense medicines even for his *own* patients; he would greatly prefer the patronage of the apothecary: the direction of *costly* draughts and *placebo* liniments is more after his taste. But, the lancet, the scalpel and the catheter, should be as familiar to the hand of the general practitioner as the pen with which he writes his prescription.

The *mere* physician will therefore not do.

Let us next turn to the apothecary. In consequence of the physician and surgeon declining to supply their patients with medicine the *mere* apothecary has been placed in this responsible position of general practitioner. An apothecary of this city, who has considerable practice, says, that he owes his present position to the limited circumstances of the citizens of Dublin: they are induced by a false idea of economy, to choose the cheapest attendant according to *their* notions, but who, ultimately proves, from want of knowledge, the dearest. Public safety demands that the general practitioner shall be a well educated man, prepared to act in the four-fold capacity of physician, surgeon, accoucheur and dispenser. The mere apothecary who has never been regularly educated, in the principles and practice of medicine, surgery, and midwifery, must necessarily



want that sound knowledge, so essential for the discrimination and successful (not empirical) treatment of disease. The English apothecary is a well educated man. The curriculum of the London hall, is much more extended than that enjoined by the Irish apothecaries' company : only think of but half-a-year's hospital attendance being all that is required by the latter, while 18 months' hospital attendance is indispensable for the former. Is the apothecary eligible ? he is not.

Let us next turn to the Surgeon.

I would maintain that the education required by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, renders its members and licentiates most eligible for the public, as *general practitioners*. It is the only college that requires a collegiate classical course, preparatory to undertaking professional pursuits it requires three courses of lectures on anatomy and surgery ; three courses of demonstrations and dissections and above all, it demands *three* years' hospital attendance.

The candidate for letters testimonial from the Dublin college must produce a certificate that he has been engaged in the study of his profession, in some hospital or school of medicine or surgery for five years during which he must bring documentary evidence of having passed the public examination by the court of examiners, in *chemistry, materia medica, and pharmacy* ; and also a certificate of his having passed the public examination in midwifery, and diseases of women and children ; lastly, at the end of five years, he undergoes, on two several days, a searching examination in the practice of medicine and surgery, for upwards of an hour each time. In short, the education preparatory to obtaining letters testimonial is medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and obstetric, thus embracing the four-fold qualification required for the general practitioner.

It may be said, that the surgeon is legally prevented from supplying his own patients with medicine, because he is not an apothecary ; that is one that was enrolled as an apprentice at



the apothecaries' hall—served seven years (!) in “learning the art and mystery of an apothecary :” and finally underwent an examination “touching his knowledge of the business, before he opened shop.” Secondly, that his oath or declaration should prevent him : and thirdly inefficiency, or ignorance.

With regard to the legality of the act I think I cannot adopt a better plan than to read for you the opinions of Sergeant Green, and of the late Attorney General, (now Chief Baron Brady) which, confirm this matter in the affirmative beyond all doubt.

#### SERGEANT GREEN'S OPINION.

“I have read and considered the statute 31st Geo. iii c. 34 ; (the apothecaries' act,) and am of opinion, that the apothecaries' company cannot recover the penalty thereby imposed for opening shop, and following the business of an apothecary without the required certificates from a surgeon or physician, who, in the course of his practice as such, may compound and sell medicines for his own patients, only.

It appears to me, that the object of the legislature was to prohibit ignorant and unskilful persons from taking upon them to mix or compound medicines prescribed by others, and not to prevent those, who by their education and knowledge, must be perfectly competent so to do, from preparing or administering the remedies which they consider adapted to the cases under their care. A regular physician or surgeon may be a person of such high professional character and extensive knowledge, that his patient may not only have peculiar confidence in his skill in the preparation of medicines, but may, in fact, derive from that skill a degree of benefit which he might not otherwise receive ; and I think it could not be held, in such a case, that because money was paid for medicines so supplied, the party who thus made up his own prescription had incurred the penalty given by the act.”

Next comes the opinion of the late Right Honourable the Attorney General, (now Chief Baron) he says :

“I concur in the opinion given by Sergeant Green on the case laid before him : and I think that the 20th section of the act on which this question is raised, (31 Geo. iii c. 34,) is altogether confined to the cases of *apothecaries acting as such*, and has no reference to the practice of physicians or surgeons so long as the latter confine themselves to the duties of their offices, as the medical officers of public institutions, or, to the supply of medicines (single or compound) to their private patients. Indeed, the very words of the



section referred to, in themselves, exclude the possibility of applying it to such cases, for they are: "If any APOTHECARY shall *open shop*," &c. &c.: and in the preamble of the act, it is mentioned, as one of the reasons for its being passed: "that the want of such regulations as are provided by it had led to the disappointment of the PHYSICIAN." I am, therefore, very clearly of opinion, that in none of the cases put forward in these queries, could the act relating to apothecaries be made use of to invalidate an election or affect the individual who may act in the manner described, if he is a duly qualified physician or surgeon, and confines his practice as to the supply of medicines, to the public institution to which he is attached, or to his private patients." (Signed,)

January 4th, 1840.

MAZIER BRADY.

The foregoing opinions are copied from the Dublin medical press, of the 1st and 15th of January, 1840. A journal which has fully proved itself to be the unflinching and uncompromising advocate of genuine medical reform.

Secondly: the oath or declaration required by the last charter of the Irish College of Surgeons, *appeared* to aim at preserving the dignity and respectability of the profession, by preventing the surgeon from keeping an apothecary's or druggist's SHOP, OPEN to any one of the public for the sale of an ounce of salts, or, a penny-worth of jalap, venice turpentine, or lamp-black; for what is the business of an apothecary or druggist, According to our great lexicographer, Johnson, and public acceptance? An apothecary and druggist are thus defined, the former, "a man who keeps medicines for sale," the latter, one who "sells physical drugs."—(Johnson.)

Now, the strongest evidence of apothecaries' hall and their legal advisers, having concluded that the compounding of the prescriptions of *others* for *payment* was what constituted the following the business of an apothecary—that in all cases of conviction, they deemed it *necessary* to have some one to prove that he, (the witness) had *purchased* from the defendant medicines compounded by the latter, according to the prescription of some physician or surgeon.



Let us take a glance at the several grades.

First :—The druggist and apothecary that keep *open* shop, for the sale of drugs, or the compounding of prescriptions.

Second :—The pure apothecary, or the apothecary that super-adds to his calling, a degree in medicine or surgery, or a diploma in midwifery, or all three : he is still an apothecary, for, he keeps open shop, compounds the prescriptions of *others*, and also furnishes simple medicines, both, for cash, that is, for sale.

Third :—The general practitioner, properly so called—not keeping open shop, or open door—who may be viewed in two varieties, viz : the one who furnishes his own patients *only* with medicines, and charges for the same, being paid for advice and attendance or not, as the case may be ; which a London surgeon may do : the other, who in like manner supplies his own patients *exclusively* with medicines and so forth, but does not charge for them, being paid for his professional advice and attendance ; that which he and his patients esteem of most value. This is what the Irish surgeon may do, and which his College sanctions and is prepared to defend, as appear from the resolutions already cited.

It is plain that the latter is the higher grade of general practitioner : he furnishes the medicines as the appliances, just as he would supply bandages, splints, a seton-strap, or skein of silk, for an issue, and nobody is so absurd as to suppose, when he receives his fee, that he thereby follows the calling of a calico-man, a timber merchant, a disciple of Mackintosh, or a trimming shop-keeper, because he has furnished the above articles for his patient. The only difference between these appliances, or remedies, and those supplied or *sold* usually by the apothecary is, that the former are external applications, the latter generally—by no means always—internal applications or remedies, employed, in both cases, with the same intention, viz ; that of curing the patient.

The apothecary formerly, was the deputy of the physician and surgeon when they became too grand or too lazy to do



their own work, or superintend the compounding of their own prescriptions ; which the interest of both their patients and themselves naturally demanded : while he, (the apothecary,) acted as a trusty compounder of medicine, as such a useful and responsible public servant, he should be paid, and well paid, for his services ; but, when the surgeon finds that he has become his rival, and that he leaves his SHOP “to do the doctor ;” that his prescriptions are no longer dispensed by the apothecary *himself*, but by “that gentleman’s gentleman,” who is not unfrequently an ignorant, blundering beardless boy, it becomes the bounden duty, of the surgeon,—consulting, as he should, the interests of his patient, of himself, and of the public at large,—to do that, gratuitously, or otherwise for his own patients, which his deputy—displaced—has failed to perform himself, *secundum artem*, for payment.

Thirdly : It is said by the apothecary, that the surgeon is ignorant of pharmacy ! It is plain that he knows the theory of it, and this fact is admitted by all practical men, that the every-day working tools in *actual use*, do not exceed two dozen ! It cannot require much argument to prove, that a very little attention would enable the surgeon to compete with the apprentice-boys of the apothecary, in manipulating the necessary medicines, nay, and even to surpass them, in cooking up *placebo*-draughts.

The surgeon prescribes and directs the apothecary what to do, consequently, when not too lazy, he could do the work himself :—he is “the bird that can sing,” and he ought to be “made to sing,” according to the proverb. Under these circumstances, the surgeon cannot be a “dangerous” pharmacien ; and you, no doubt, recollect that surgeons of the army and navy and of most of the dispensaries compound for their own patients.

But is not public health and public safety endangered, when a candidate apothecary is told by one of the court of examiners, that he is to secure a brachial artery, and not to send for a surgeon, although, this apothecary had never dissected a subject



or perhaps had never seen the vessel he is told to tie by his intuitive knowledge !!

It is obvious from all I have stated, that we are not likely to go back to the olden or golden days, when the public and the profession, recognized in practice, the distinction between physician, surgeon, and apothecary.

The commercial marts of Dublin, have provided stores of all sorts to meet the public taste. The silk mercer—the haberdasher, and clothier are here concentrated into one ; the hitherto distinct traders of this city, are now, fully convinced that if they are to hope for a share of public favour, they must merge their pride in the general *mêlée*, and contend against their formidable commercial-mart opponents with their own weapons.

I would say the analogy holds between the heroes of the commercial mart and of apothecaries' hall on the one side, and the junior and middle men, that are physicians or surgeons on the other. If the latter are to live by their professions, they must become general practitioners, they must and should *depend upon themselves* ; and break down a system that has obtained, by which the junior and middle practitioners are excluded from practice ; it is between the senior man and the apothecary ; the latter, in nine cases out of ten, is first consulted ; should other advice be required, the apothecary will exclude the young man, for he (the apothecary) could not tolerate so "*inexperienced*" a person ; if he consults with any one, it must be some senior, well skilled in the system of ordering *placebo* draughts every *second* hour, and thus understands the rule of *quid pro quo*.\* I was told by a senior friend at the profession, that it was not good policy to show up the apothecaries : he added, " they could be good friends, and they might be dangerous enemies."

\* "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*"

A late apothecary of facetious memory, held the following rule as *absolute* ; " no doctor in consultation that does not put a leg of mutton in the pot."



They have already done their worst—I have thriven on their enmity and, I can now smile in calm security, at their un-availing attempts to depreciate and to crush me.

But I should in all justice tell you, if you put your hand to the plough you must not look back; for though I have found among the apothecaries, men as high minded, and honorable as any that exist; yet among them are *many*, on whose hatred and vindictive persecution you must reckon. I need not enter into the details of the arts they will employ to mar your professional advancement; but, be assured that a steady pursuit in the course pointed out, will enable you to triumph over this formidable difficulty; and that the public will, in the long run, duly appreciate both your efforts and their motives.

Gentlemen, in following out my plan and developing a system that has been, or will be, injurious to most of you, I have been almost unavoidably constrained, to say so much of myself; may I still beg your indulgence for some further egotism, and that you will have the goodness to “hear me for my cause.”

The head and front of my apothecary-offending brings me to speak of the Anglesey Lying-in Hospital, of which I have been the medical founder, and concerning which I made the following statement in an introductory lecture, (1832) viz :

“The *Medical Establishment* attached and *auxiliary* to the institution for the sale of medicines and the compounding of prescriptions, has been undertaken by order of the Managing Committee owing to the disallowance of the usual grant from the grand jury, and the consequent inadequacy of the funds for the support of the charity.

The following are the grounds upon which the Committee rest their claims for support:—

1st. The profits of the establishment will be *exclusively* devoted to the funds of the Hospital which has relieved 16,285 of the sick-poor during the past three years, ending in 1832.

2d. The medicines dispensed are of the best kind.

3d. The compounding department presents the great and *rare* advantage, of being *exclusively* conducted by a licentiate apothecary of considerable experience.

4h. The prices are more moderate than any other house in Dublin.



The foregoing measures, in aid of the funds of the Hospital, were adopted at the suggestion of one of the members of the committee, to whom, for his indefatigable and valuable exertions, the institution owes a deep and lasting debt of gratitude. I understand that *some* apothecaries have complained of the injury that this establishment was calculated to do them. As regards this matter, I am not aware that the apothecarys' shop is liable to objections which do not equally apply to any apothecary, who may set up business in a situation contiguous to the complainants' establishments. In either case, competition exerts its salutary influence; and the public must acknowledge that rivalry in this department, with the magic wand of opposition, has converted the formerly loathsome and disgusting shops, in which every assailable sense was outraged, into medicinal halls, or rather medical palaces, teeming with the fragrance of the East, and dazzling with the gilded splendour of a fairy land. But I must descend to realities. If the committee are to be blamed for endeavouring to support, by an ordinary and legitimate opposition, a charitable institution, they have at least a right to say, that here 'the end sanctifies the means.'

And now I am anxious to guard myself against the supposition, that I blame in the apothecaries, the laudable ambition of serving the public, in the character, of general practitioners. On the contrary, I highly commend the efforts they have made to render themselves, so far as they are able, capable of filling the office to which the circumstances of the times, had in some degree, called them. But, I do blame them for this: *that while they were eager to invade the lawful domain of the physician and the surgeon, they could not, for one moment, endure the thought that the physician and the surgeon should exercise a reciprocal liberty, and enter upon their less fenced and humbler walk.*

My determination is, at all events, fixed,—nay acted upon—for as the apothecaries, neither take or give quarter, I can assure them, I will not trouble their beardless boys to compound for my patients. I have converted the room that was my study into a surgery, where our registrar, a licentiate apothecary is constantly found to compound my prescriptions, and all the medicines furnished, are dispensed *gratuitously* for my patients; thus exempting them from the nauseating infliction of a long and expensive apothecary's bill; and lest there should be any misun-



derstanding as to my terms, I beg to state, that I shall expect to be paid for my advice and attendance, in the ratio that is suitable to the circumstances of the highest, the middle, and the humbler classes of society.

You will perceive that in this respect, I am but following the excellent advice given by our learned and respected friend, Mr. TAGERT, in his lecture introductory to the business of this school, at the opening of the last session. He says :

“You have still another great obstacle to contend against, I allude to the apothecary absorbing business ; the public require an attendant who will give them advice and medicine ; economy is the order of the day ; the apothecary suits the public want in this respect, he is the ordinary attendant in the great majority of cases ; the physician or surgeon being only called in emergency. The junior members of our profession are necessarily unemployed and though educated and fit to practice, they are left without the means of support after acquiring a profession that cost them great labour. How is this to be met ? Dismiss from your minds the idea of ever being able to compel the apothecary to stay behind his counter ; such an effort is hopeless in the present day ; why you cannot even put down quacks, then gentlemen, if you expect to be employed, you must give drugs as well as advice to your patients ; and, if along with this a minimum scale of fee were established by the legislature, you could, I think, fairly take the field against the apothecary, because you have superior professional information.”

Now, in conclusion : of the school—of ourselves, we will say but a word. Remembering that “of their own merits modest men are dumb ;” by the uplifting, chivalrous support of our pupils—by their continued and uniform patronage we have been impressed with the cheering conviction, that the school has been hitherto well worked.

On the part of my colleagues and of myself, I have to state that it is our determination to exert our best energies that the school shall prove deserving of your continued favour and support. But, remember my young friends, that without co-operation on your part we labour in vain. It has been amply proved by observation and experience, that the nearest approach



to happiness in this life, will be found in the daily occupations of a successful struggler guided by judgment, perseverance and industry—requisites much more essential for professional success than great talents and towering genius.

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