

Observations on the projected bill for restricting the practice of surgery and midwifery to members of the Royal Colleges of London, Edinburgh, and Dublin; with some modifications proposed ... / By a general practitioner.

Contributors

General practitioner.

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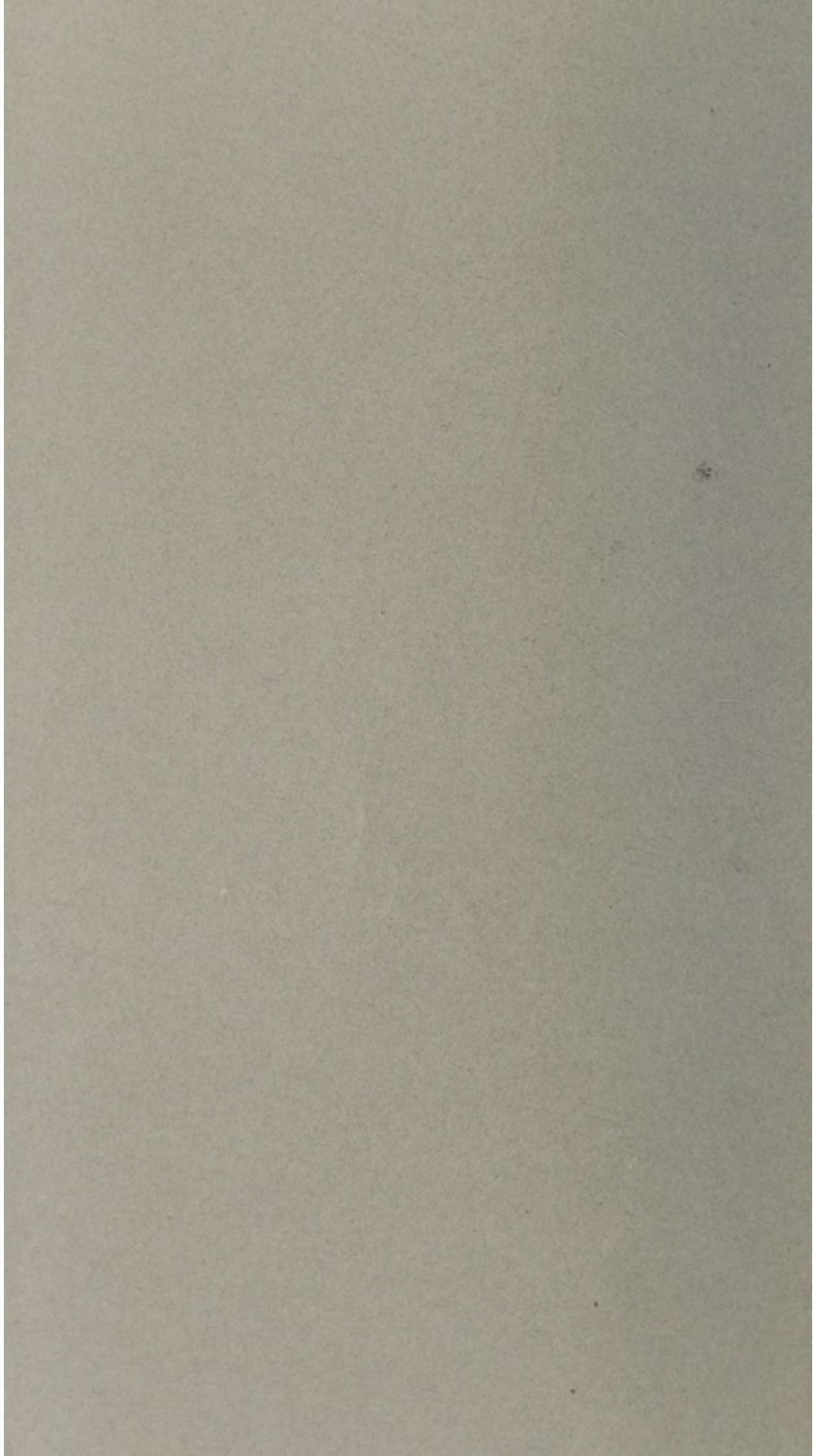
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OBSERVATIONS . . .

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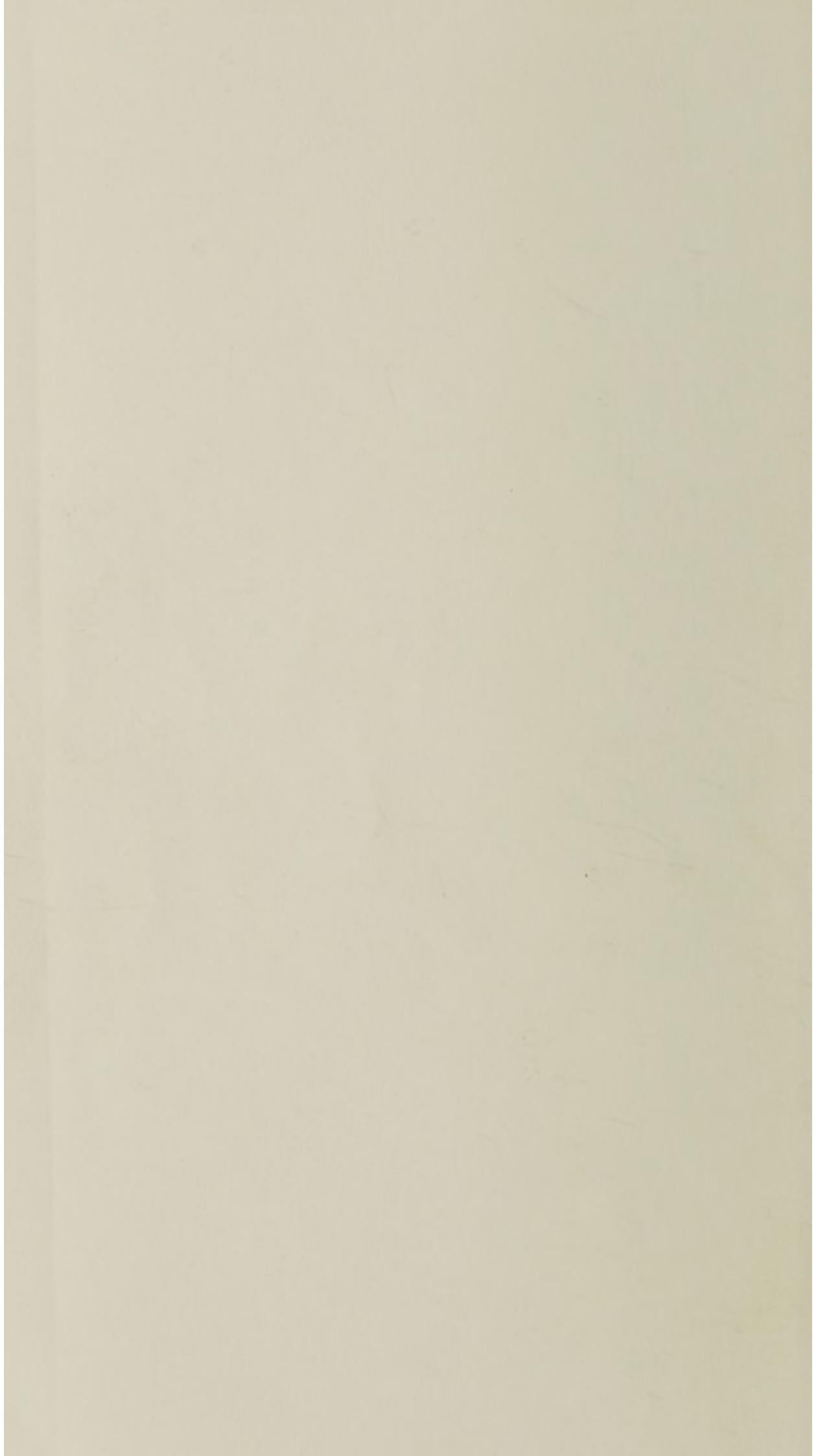






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From the Author

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PROJECTED BILL
FOR
RESTRICTING THE PRACTICE
OF
SURGERY AND MIDWIFERY
TO
MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL COLLEGES
OF
London, Edinburgh, and Dublin;
AND TO
ARMY OR NAVY SURGEONS;
WITH
SOME MODIFICATIONS PROPOSED,
BY WHICH
THE MEASURE WILL BE MORE COMPATIBLE WITH
THE TRUE INTERESTS OF
The Public;
AND
NOT OPPRESSIVE TO THE PRESENT RACE
OF
PUPILS FOR THE PROFESSION.

—Sunt certi denique fines,
Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum.” HORACE.

BY A
GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

LONDON:
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KINGDOM.

Wm Bent

31537

OBSEVATIONS

ON THE
PROJECTED BILL

RESTRICTING THE PRACTICE

SURGERY AND MIDWIFERY

MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL COLLEGE

LONDON, CHAMBERLAIN AND SON

PRINTED BY W. B. CHAMBERLAIN



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THE MEDICAL BOARD

GENERAL PRACTITIONER

Stroons, Printer,
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Leave having been obtained towards the close of the last Session of Parliament, for the introduction of a Bill “ To regulate the Practice of Surgery and Midwifery throughout the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,” the proposed measure becomes a fit subject for discussion—bringing it fully and fairly before the Public, if it has intrinsic merit, will be useful, and ensure it public support—and without intrinsic merit, and public support, a measure so important—involving so materially *Public Health* and *Individual Rights*, cannot be expected to receive the sanction of an enlightened Legislature, which assents only to wholesome Laws for the good of the Nation.

OBSERVATIONS

There having been obtained towards the close
the last Session of Parliament, for the intro-
duction of a Bill "To regulate the Practice of
Gory and Midwifery throughout the United
Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, &c. &c."
which measure becomes a fit subject for dis-
cussion, bringing it fully and fairly before the
House, it has become more with the object
of public support, and without the
least, and public support, a measure so im-
portant to the public health, and so
individual rights, cannot be expected to
be the subject of any ordinary legisla-
tion, which amounts only to a wholesale law for
good of the Nation.

ERRATA.

Page 9, l. 25, *for* "thirty-two guineas," *read* "thirty-two pounds ten shillings."

l. 27, *for* "twenty guineas," *read* "twenty-two pounds."

13, l. 24, 25, *for* "thirty-two or twenty guineas," *read* "thirty-two pounds ten shillings or twenty-two pounds."

OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

AS the Preamble of the Bill, with much truth, says, that “ *ignorant and incapable Persons are not restrained by Law from practising Surgery, whereby the health of great numbers of Persons is much injured, and the Lives of many destroyed,*” it seems necessary to consider particularly the description of those ignorant and incapable persons, from whose pretensions the public health so much suffers; because a clear insight into the evil is required, for a just conclusion as to the efficiency of the proposed remedy; and the Reader is referred to the following Reports, officially made a few years since, when Sir Joseph Banks, in the true spirit of philanthropy, so warmly interested himself on the subject of a *Medical Reform*:—since which time, the class of persons throughout the Kingdom, who assume, without any authority, the right of tri-

fling, for "lucre and gain," with the health and lives of his Majesty's Subjects, has certainly not improved as to education and competency.

In the District of Nottingham the statement given was

"Fifteen Surgeons and Apothecaries (educated).
Twenty-nine irregulars (uneducated).
Eleven Midwives (all uninstructed)."

In a District of Nottinghamshire :—

"Thirty-five Surgeon-Apothecaries, and Men Midwives.

One hundred and twelve Irregular Practitioners (uneducated.)

One hundred and twenty-three Midwives (all uninstructed.)"

In a District of Northumberland :—

"Twelve Midwives practised who had received no instruction; and the proportion of *empirics* was stated as at least *five to one* educated practitioner."

In the District of Horncastle, Spilsby, Alford, and Tattershall :—

"Eleven Surgeon-Apothecaries and Men-Midwives.
Forty Irregulars, of both sexes.

Sixty-three Midwives, not one of whom had received any instruction."

In the District of Market Razon, Wragby, and Castor :—

"Seven Surgeon-Apothecaries and Men Midwives.

Seventeen Irregulars (all uneducated), besides Quacks, practising Chemists, &c. in all *sixty-five* persons practised *Surgery, Medicine, or Midwifery* in this District, not *one in nine* of whom had been previously educated for the Profession."

The Reports from most of the districts throughout the kingdom were to the same purport; while, therefore, in many places, only *one* practitioner in *nine*—on an average only *one* in *five* or *six*—(a great proportion of whom were in the departments of *Surgery* and *Midwifery*) had been at all educated for the important offices they assumed, it would appear, that from *self-created Surgeons, Empirics, and uninstructed Midwives* it *principally* arises, that “the health of great numbers of persons is much injured, and the lives of many destroyed.”

It is then material to examine if this Bill secures to the country in general (for the health and lives of individuals deserve no less protection in every district of the Kingdom, than in the metropolis and large towns) an adequate supply of competent aid in Surgery and Midwifery; or whether, while the indispensable necessity of an examination as a proof of qualification is apparent, the measure here proposed is so clogged with *unnecessarily* encreased expenses for the student, as must reduce, rather than augment, the numbers of educated Surgeons and Men-Midwives, who will be allowed to practise; and, consequently, support empiricism, ignorance and presumption.

The First Clause of the Bill purports, “That it be enacted by the King’s most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lord’s Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assem-

bled : and by the authority of the same, that from and after it shall not be lawful for any person to practise Surgery for lucre and profit, unless he shall have been personally examined as to his qualifications and fitness thereto, by the Royal College of Surgeons in London, or by the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, or by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland ; and unless he shall have received a Diploma or testimonial of his knowledge and ability to practise Surgery, under the Seal of the Royal College, before whom such examination shall have been made ; for which Diploma, or testimonial, the usual fee and no more shall be demanded or received."

While the practice of Surgery, Medicine, and Midwifery, are, for the most part, in large towns, by custom, combined in the same person ; it is well known, that in thinly inhabited districts, they are so by necessity ; and that even so combined, their emoluments are sometimes scarcely equal to the support of a practitioner of Education and respectability, where the presence of one is absolutely necessary, for the health, safety, and comfort of the inhabitants.*

In considering this clause, therefore, it must be on the broad basis of its affording a supply of competent aid in Surgery and Midwifery for the Kingdom in general ; and it is proposed to exa-

* A Gentleman, who lately retired to an estate in Devonshire, where there are several villages, found no professional advice within eighteen miles. A Practitioner has now settled there with the humble expectation only of a *bare subsistence* ; his obtaining which, even with *all the practice*, is considered very questionable. A Noble Lord has also lately lamented to the Author the distance of Professional aid even in Norfolk.

mine, as far as the Royal College, which brings forward the measure, is concerned.

First, The amount of what the Bill denominates "the usual fee" for the Diploma, which may be demanded and received; and the qualification required for an examination for such Diploma.

Secondly, Whether, while the public good requires that Students of *proved attainments* only be in future allowed to commence Practice in Surgery and Midwifery, the actual wants of the public will allow of such a diminution of *educated* professional aid, as may be expected to result from the exaction of the increased expenses and fees for obtaining the College Diploma.

Thirdly, Whether it is just that the present race of students who have studied according to the late regulations of the Royal College, and who are equal to the test of a rigid examination, but whose pecuniary means are not equal to the increased Hospital attendance and expenses, shall be excluded from two branches of a profession for which they have been regularly educated.

As to the *first* question, "the usual fee" for a diploma from the Royal College of Surgeons in London, is now *thirty-two guineas* for a practitioner in or within seven miles of London, and *twenty guineas* for one beyond that distance;—to which amount, it was increased the year before last; when it was also regulated, that every candidate for examination should have attended an hospital for *one year*, instead of *six months* as formerly.

In respect to the *second* question, it may be observed, that while the diploma of the Royal College remains, as at present, an honorary appendage only to the professional character (for

it is not only unnecessary for country practice, but even in London a profession of *Surgery* adorns the showy fronts of the retail apothecaries' and chemists' shops uncontrouled by the College) no objection can be made to whatever may be the preliminary expense for obtaining it;—but when the petitioners for this Bill are seriously asking Parliament to enact, that the Diplomatist of a Royal College, and an army or a navy Surgeon only shall, even in the most remote parts of the Kingdom, or under any circumstances, afford surgical relief in bodily accidents, where the rapid strides of inflammation, if not arrested, may be fatal—or give scientific assistance in difficult emergencies in midwifery, which only may be able to save life, the expenses of such Diploma become of the first importance, and call for investigation. In many districts it seems that no regularly educated professional man is now resident, within ten, twelve, eighteen, or even sometimes twenty miles; and yet accidents occasionally occur—a scull is fractured—a limb is dislocated—an artery is wounded—and there may be the most urgent occasion for competent professional aid.

To the public, then, the proposed measure must be injurious, if it *unnecessarily* augments the expenses, and consequently *limits* the supply of men of education and competence, as it must encrease the cost of professional aid when obtain-

ed ; according to the expense of qualification must be the remuneration ;—according to the distance of the practitioner, must be the charge for his journies and attendance.

To the public it must also be a *calamity*, if it unnecessarily interferes with *early* and *competent* relief, under the casualties which flesh is heir to. But is there any real necessity for encreased attendance previously to examination, and for encreased fees for the Diploma when obtained ?—ninety-nine out of an hundred of the present Diplomatsists of the Royal College, were only required to attend six months, and yet the Court of Examiners, under their hands and college seal, certify, that such members “ have been deliberately examined, and found fit and capable to exercise the art and science of Surgery ;” and they are authorized to practise the said art accordingly. Let it then be asked, are the three thousand one hundred and ninety * members of the Royal College now practising the Art and Science of Surgery in London, or various parts of the world, under the authority of the said College, competent or not competent to what they undertake ? If they are competent, can there be even a shadow of justice, or of reason, for making the expense of

* The numbers of the Diplomatsists of the Royal College, according to the list officially circulated from Lincoln's-Inn Fields during the present year.

a Diploma (when it is to be no longer optional, but a *sine-qua-non* for practice) nearly double?—unless, indeed, the Royal College means to say to Parliament that the Human intellect has become so deteriorated;—that the capability of acquiring knowledge has so lessened, that double the attendance is now requisite for former acquirements, and to make a qualified practitioner.

After every consideration of the subject, then, it does appear that the Royal College must have authorised their present Diplomats to practise, when their studies had been insufficient, and they were *not* “fit and capable;”—that *energy* and *talent* with hospital students are no more;—or, that they have doubled the attendance for an examination for their Diploma without any sort of necessity, while such encreased attendance and expenses must be burthensome to most pupils—*ruinous* to some—and detrimental to the best interests of the public; whose actual wants require, that the facility by which they may be supplied with educated and competent aid, should be rather encreased than diminished.

The circumstance, also, of excluding from the Practice of Surgery and Midwifery all those students, whose pecuniary means may be unequal to the recent arrangement for obtaining the College Diploma,—and the check it must

give to parents, who will fear to bring up their sons to a profession made so expensive and uncertain, must be deserving the consideration of Government, as it may affect the first interests of the nation; while a possibility exists, at some future time, of fresh commotions in foreign politics, which may suddenly call for a large supply of professional aid for the army, navy, and colonies.*

As to the *third* head of inquiry, it cannot be doubted that many students must be unable to comply with new regulations, so greatly adding to, and, in some respects, nearly doubling the cost of an already highly expensive education; who may have acquired much insight into their professional duties; and, after a winter's attendance upon an hospital and lectures (which at best may be only managed for them but with considerable difficulty on the part of their friends) be equal to give proof of competence, and become useful servants of the public;—while it may be utterly impossible for them to have a year's residence in town—to pay a year's hospital fees—leading to a further fee of thirty-two or twenty guineas for a Diploma (now unnecessary); and thus their legitimate prospects,—

* The difficulty of obtaining sufficient surgical assistance after the expedition to the Helder in 1794, and at the commencement of the late war, must be yet within the recollection of some of his Majesty's Ministers.

the best hopes of themselves, and of their families, be sacrificed.

Should the Royal College substantiate their position, that encreased attendance and expenses are *now*, in general, found necessary for their Diploma, it cannot be expected that *all* must want double opportunities of acquiring science for competency. Is then the assiduous, studious, and well-informed pupil to suffer—to be excluded from a profession in which he must be useful, and to which he may be an ornament, because some of his brother students, idle, dissolute, or without talent, require double the time and pecuniary expenditure for equal sufficiency.

The Second Clause enacts, “That every person who shall have been so examined, and shall have received such Diploma or testimonial, under the seal of one of the said three Royal Colleges, shall be entitled, and shall have the right to practise Surgery in any and every part of his Majesty’s Dominions, any law or custom to the contrary notwithstanding.”

The Third Clause provides, “That all and every person, or persons, who shall have been duly examined, and shall have obtained a testimonial or qualification as a principal Surgeon in his Majesty’s army or navy, and who shall have actually served in that capacity, shall be entitled to practise Surgery, in any and every part of his Majesty’s Dominions.”

The propriety and justness of this clause cannot be doubted.

The Fourth Clause says, “Whereas by a certain Statute of the Parliament of Ireland, passed in the thirty-sixth year of the Reign of his present Majesty, intituled, ‘An Act for the further Regulation of Public Infirmaries or

Hospitals,' it is enacted, That from and after the passing of that Act, no person should be capable of being elected Surgeon to a county Infirmary or Hospital, who should not previously have obtained letters testimonial of his qualification, under the seal of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland; and that no other qualification or examination should be necessary to make any person capable of being elected Surgeon to such Infirmary or Hospital: And whereas, by another Act, passed in the fifty-fourth year of the Reign of his present Majesty, intituled, An 'Act to amend several Acts for erecting or establishing public Infirmaries or Hospitals in Ireland, so far as relates to the Surgeons or Apothecaries of such Infirmaries or Hospitals,' it is provided, that letters testimonial of the College of Surgeons in Ireland, shall be laid before the grand juries in the said Act mentioned previous to the requiring or making any presentment of any sum of money to be Surgeon of any Infirmary or Hospital by such grand juries: And whereas, it is just and expedient that the provisions of the said Acts should be extended to the Members of the Royal College of Surgeons in London and in Edinburgh; be it therefore enacted, That the Members of the Royal College of Surgeons in London, and of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, shall be eligible to all the offices and appointments mentioned in the first recited Act, and shall be entitled to all benefits and advantages given and intended by the second recited Act, on the production of the Diploma or testimonials, under the seal of their respective Royal Colleges, in the same manner as the Members of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland have been, since the passing of the said recited Acts.

In an highly interesting Essay, on "the Present State of the *Medical Profession*," it is observed, that in *Ireland* "Surgeons are restricted to *Surgery* only, and interdicted from the practice of *Pharmacy*, under the penalty of the forfeiture of their rights*." There may, there-

* Kerrison's Inquiry into the Medical Profession, p. 50.

fore, be considerable difficulty in making any law on the subject of *Surgery* and *Midwifery*, applicable to both countries ; as in *England*, the state of society requires, and custom recognizes, a *General Practitioner*.

On the occasion of *Dr. Harrison's* proposed reform, the Royal College of Surgeons in *Dublin*, resolved, “ *That they did not think it necessary to call for the interference of the legislature to regulate the profession of Surgery in Ireland ;*”* it therefore excites no surprise to find, that the members of that College disapprove of the present Bill, which includes *Ireland*, in any legislative enactments it may lead to ;—but it does excite considerable surprise to find, that they are actively taking measures of opposition to it, on the ground that even the qualification of a *Diploma* from the *London College*, with its new regulations as to hospital attendance and fees, is defective and insufficient.†

The Royal Dublin College, perhaps, considers the question only as it affects appointments to *Public Charities* in *Ireland*, and their own interests as Individuals ; and the modesty and considerateness of the Dublin Colleges have

* Resolutions of the Royal College of Surgeons in *Ireland*, Dec. 6th, 1806.

† *London Medical Repository*, No. 34, page 345.

been long proverbial.—As one instance of which it is gravely stated—nay, the transaction is described “as a matter of notoriety, and its truth unquestionable,”—that the Royal College of Physicians there, having some time ago taken into serious consideration the manifest and increasing tendency to deterioration in their branch of the profession, and having adopted as the basis of reformation, the profound hypothesis, that the respectability of the profession must ever be in direct proportion to the wealth of its members;—of which wealth they very naturally deemed the payment of fees to their body as the very best and least fallacious criterion,—after due deliberation, came to the resolution of *doubling* the expenses attendant upon procuring their *license*. When the unlicensed presented, by deputation, their humble petition to the College, stating the hardship of requiring from them precipitately, and most unexpectedly, a *double qualification*; and praying to have the objectionable resolution rescinded, or at least modified, so as to press less heavily on the petitioners, the Royal College was graciously pleased to reply,—that they could not possibly think of reducing the admission fee to its former standard; but that from their wish to accommodate the petitioners, they would consent *to take half the amount in cash, and the remain-*

*der in approved bills at twelve months date.**
 Thus not only obliging their licentiates to leave them with pockets empty, except as to seals and parchment, but sagaciously securing to themselves some of the first fruits of their professional honours.

“ Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,

Auri sacra fames? VIRGIL, *ÆNEID*.

When the points of opposition of the Royal Dublin College of Surgeons to the projected Bill, are more fully developed; it will be seen what pecuniary sacrifice they also consider necessary;—what tribute they are also disposed to exact, to the all-grasping and insatiable mammon of *monopoly*. In legislating, however, on so important a subject, as affects an adequate supply of assistance in surgery and midwifery for the united kingdom, it cannot be doubted that the wisdom of parliament, will make the PUBLIC GOOD their first consideration; and it cannot also be doubted, that *chartered bodies*, as well as individuals, owe obedience to that law of reason, which teacheth moderation.

The fifth clause states “Whereas Surgical aid is frequently required in Midwifery, and it is expedient that male persons so practising, should be qualified to render such aid; be it therefore enacted that from and after it shall not be lawful for any male

* Medical and Chirurgical Review, No 87, page 305.

person to practice Midwifery, unless he shall have obtained a diploma or testimonial to practise Surgery under the seal of one of the said three Royal Colleges ; or unless he shall have obtained a testimonial of qualification as a principal Surgeon in the army or navy, and shall have actually served in that capacity.’

While the official reports that have been quoted, shew that the greater part of the practitioners in Midwifery, are uninstructed and devoid of science—while in the proposed bill we have the acknowledged fact, that from incapable persons practising, the lives of many are destroyed—while we have seen almost under the walls of the Royal College, a practitioner unacquainted with the obstetric art, sacrificing life to ignorance and rashness—and while, the necessity of some efficient superintendence for Midwifery has been so generally, and so long acknowledged, the security offered to the public on this head demands particular consideration.

The clause then enacts, that, as Surgery is frequently required in Midwifery, it shall not be lawful for any male person to practise Midwifery unless he shall have obtained a diploma or testimonial of his knowledge and ability to practise Surgery; or unless he shall have obtained a testimonial of qualification as a principal Surgeon in the army or navy, and shall have actually served in such capacity; but, as a knowledge of *Surgery* in Midwifery is only provided for, does the Royal College consider

an acquaintance with the rules and principles of the obstetric art as unnecessary? Are they not aware that the consequences of pregnancy, both before and after delivery, are often fatal, and that the treatment of them is in general confided to the accoucheur? Do they intend to ascertain the competence of their future Diplomats to practice Midwifery? Or do they consider the Surgeon *ipso facto* the *qualified Man-Midwife*, while no member of the court of assistants, nor of the court of examiners, nor any true surgeon will condescend to practise Midwifery? It is true that the Diplomatist *may* have studied it, and be competent to act in cases of difficulty—but the possibility gives no *security* to the public—the object of the projected Bill.

With respect to army and navy Surgeons, their qualifications, as far as Surgery and the practice of medicine are concerned, cannot be doubted;—and it is much to be regretted that in the Apothecaries Act, a clause to exonerate them from its effects was not introduced.* It is well known that army and navy Surgeons, undergo an examination as to their medical knowledge previous to their appointments;—

* It is understood that the Right Hon. Secretary at War will introduce a Bill for this purpose during the next Session of Parliament.

and that there is not a General Hospital Regiment, or Ship, that has not sickness under the management of its principal medical officer.

It, therefore, could never have been intended that men, who have seen and treated disease in different forms, and under different climates—who have been faithful servants of their country, with every claim upon its protection and justice, should be subjected, when their public services are no longer wanted, to renewed examinations and expense, where their competence cannot be doubted.

With Midwifery, however, the case is far otherwise:—The Army Surgeon is not required to give any proof of knowledge of the obstetric art during his examinations at the College, or at the Army Medical Board,—nor is he required to practise it.

The Navy Surgeon seldom even thinks on the subject of Midwifery during his other studies;—and yet, the bill enacts that to the navy Surgeon “if he has actually served in that capacity;”—if he has passed the greater part of his life on the boisterous seas, amidst the roar of cannon and uproar of sailors;—and his experience has been that of the diseases and casualties that are met with between the decks of a ship of war—to the college Diplomatist in

Surgery,—and to the army Surgeon,—competent or not competent to the office, is to be *exclusively* confided the care of females in the most important period of human existence—in the pains and perils of child-birth and child-bed.

It will, perhaps, be said, Is it likely that men of liberal minds like the college Diplomatist and the army and navy Surgeon, will undertake the responsibility of any department of practice without having qualified themselves?—but the reasoning can only apply to them, as to human nature in general;—is it probable, that persons of any sort of education or respectability will undertake that for lucre and profit for which they are incapable? Experience and the preamble of this Bill say, that such is the case,—and that a waste of health, and of life, is the consequence.

The last clause of the Bill enacts, “That nothing in this Act contained shall be deemed or taken, to extend to any person resident in Great Britain or Ireland, and actually practising Surgery and Midwifery at the time of passing this act; but that every such person may continue to practise Surgery or Midwifery respectively, so far as any such person lawfully might have done if this Act had not been passed.”

The Act is very properly intended not to have a retrospective effect upon persons now actually in practice, however little qualified; and while the public good requires that such as are now in a course of studies should not un-

dertake the responsible duties of their profession in Surgery and Midwifery without having given a proof of competence, common justice seems to demand if they alone are to be subjected to an *ex post facto* law, that it should not be to such an extent, as to prevent their being admitted even as candidates for examination.

It is not in the practice of Surgery and Midwifery only, but in that of Medicine also, that great abuses have been found to exist; which indeed, must have been expected, while any one without a common education, common sense, or common honesty, might assume the professional character, to delude the public, and disgrace his brethren. Happily, however, in the department of Medicine, much good has been already done through the wisdom and strong arm of the legislature.

Since the passing of the Apothecaries' Act last year, no person can lawfully commence practise as an Apothecary without having undergone an examination, and received a certificate of qualification;—for which purpose examiners are appointed, of attainments and ex-

perience to ensure their sufficiency ;—before whom, any one who can give proof of having served an apprenticeship,—of a classical education,—of having attended an Hospital or Infirmary for six months ; and certain lectures on Anatomy,—the practice of Medicine,—Chemistry,—Materia Medica,—and Botany,—may submit his acquirements in such studies, to the test of an efficient investigation ; and if found qualified to practise, he becomes a licentiate of the company, for which he pays a moderate fee.*

This course of studies may without doubt be considered as indispensable to form the qualified practitioner ;—and if the student is of fair talent and industry, he may get his certificate without any unnecessary pecuniary sacrifice :—if on the contrary, he is without common application and of insufficient acquirements, it is necessary for the public health that he be sent back for further studies, and subjected to further expenses.

But such as have passed the ordeal, have their names annually published as recognized and competent practitioners in Pharmacy ; and have also the satisfaction of knowing that their competitors of equal standing, and junior to themselves, must have likewise given proof of clas-

* Ten guineas if for practice within seven miles of London, and six guineas for the country.

sical and professional attainments, and from whom, they may calculate only upon liberal and honorable competition in their future pursuits.

Guided by this moderate but beneficial plan of reform for one branch of the profession, it is, with every proper respect, suggested to the Royal College of Surgeons, that the Legislature be petitioned to enact, that no person shall in future commence practice either in Surgery or Midwifery unless of proved competence ;—the quantum of intelligence imbibed, not the quantum of money spent, can be the only real security to the public.

As to Surgery, then, it is proposed, that the Diplomatsists of the Royal Colleges of London, Edinburgh, or Dublin be authorized to practise Surgery throughout the united kingdom :—that none others than such diplomatsists be elected or eligible to act as Surgeons to any public Hospital, Infirmary, or Dispensary ;—that Army and Navy Surgeons be at liberty to practise Surgery in any part of his Majesty's Dominions ;—and that the Court of Examiners of the Royal College of Surgeons in London be empowered and *required* to examine and to license as practitioners in Surgery for England and Wales, if found qualified, all such persons as can give proof of a regular education, and

of having attended a public Hospital for six months, with lectures on Anatomy, Physiology, and Surgery, and Dissections;* and that for such license or authority to practise, a moderate fee only be demanded and received. It may be observed, that while the College Diploma would remain on its present footing as to preliminary studies, and expenses, and be necessary for public appointments, it would be still a more honorary acquisition for country practice than the license, and an object of laudable ambition to the student with pecuniary means equal to it.

In respect to *Midwifery*, it is also proposed, that the Royal College of Surgeons in London, should ask the authority of Parliament for appointing a board of examiners from their Members, of sufficient standing and experience in that department of practice; before whom any Diplomatist or Licentiate of a Royal College or Army and Navy Surgeon, upon giving proof of having attended certain lectures upon the subject of the *Obstetric Art*, might claim an examination, and if found competent to practise, receive a certificate of qualification, for which, an inconsiderable fee only should be demanded

* The course of studies required and found sufficient for the great mass of the present members of the Royal College of Surgeons in London.

and received ;—and that none others than such Licentiates, or Members of the Royal Colleges of Edinburgh and Dublin who may have been examined in Midwifery, be in future allowed to commence practice as man-midwives throughout England or Wales—

It is understood that the Royal College of Physicians of London, decline licensing any more of their Members in Midwifery, and any interference with the Obstetric Art.—Should the Royal College of Surgeons also, refuse any *efficient* superintendence, as *infra dignitatem*,—it is to be hoped, and indeed expected, that the committee of associated Apothecaries and Surgeon-Apothecaries of England and Wales, who, it is said, have ample funds at their command, vested with them by their brethren throughout the country, for the very purpose of obtaining some salutary protection for all the branches of their profession, will themselves submit to the consideration of Parliament, a Bill to delegate to the Apothecaries' Company, the other superintending body recognized by law, (if they do not also refuse the office) the formation of a Board of Practitioners (sufficiently qualified) to examine, and to license, such persons as may in future wish to commence practice in Midwifery.

Should the Bill be thus modified as to Surgery, and made *efficient* as to Midwifery, although the expenses of a general Professional Education will be much reduced to the student, it will be seen, that the general practitioner for the country must (as already provided by the Apothecaries Act) have had a liberal education, and have attended the Physician's practice of an Hospital and various lectures for six months;—he must also have attended the Surgeon's practice of an Hospital, and lectures on Anatomy, Physiology, and Surgery, for at least six months—and lectures on Midwifery;—and on having successively gone through the three Ordeals of Examination, must have paid for the three Certificates of Qualification—certainly, no inconsiderable security, as far as both attainments and money are concerned, for the respectability of the future Members of the Profession;—but it will, perhaps, be objected to this proposition, that the preliminary studies, as to the Department of Surgery, are insufficient;—compared, however, with the many irregular, totally uninstructed, and incompetent practitioners throughout the kingdom, a member of the profession so qualified, must command the confidence and support of the public;—and with such confidence, and support, the numbers of

regularly educated practitioners may be expected to encrease;—and of irregulars, and empirics to diminish.—While any measure, reducing the numbers of competent practitioners below what the exigencies of the public require, and calling for remuneration beyond what the ordinary emoluments of practice afford, must defeat its very object,

Any ultra-restrictive proposition, even if it becomes law, cannot long have being and effect,

“Nihil potest esse diuturnum cui non subest ratio.”

No legislative enactments can prevent the people throwing themselves into the delusive arms of ignorance and quackery in their misfortunes, if educated and proper advice is placed beyond their reach and command. It does, therefore, appear, that the true interest of the Royal College itself,—of the present race of pupils—of every well-wisher to the profession, and of the public, —requires some rational, and moderate enactments only, but such as will make the general practitioner *invariably educated*—and consequently, the professional character, more respectable and useful.—Surely, then, in submitting a “Bill of Reform” to the wisdom, and to the decision of Parliament, we may say to the Royal College in the words of Ovid,

“Medio tutissimus ibis!”

In concluding these Observations, the Author is wishing to observe, as he has no College Honors to seek,—that the question of expense for their diploma is not to him one of pecuniary interest;—but no stranger to calamity in his early days himself, he cannot be otherwise than feelingly alive to the hard fate of some (perhaps of many) of the present students in London; who, he well knows, as orphans, with misfortune for their patrimony—from the pressure of the times,—and the “*res Angusta Domi*,”—cannot, under any circumstances, prolong their stay and studies beyond the present winter; and who, consequently, if this Bill becomes “Law,” *debarred from even approaching the probationary tribunal*, must return into the country to see empiricism in its various shapes flourish, while they are cut off from the profession of Surgery and Midwifery, for which they have been educated—and from which they have been led to expect a livelihood, honourable to themselves, and useful to the community.

If the author has appeared to think, that the Royal College has not sufficiently attended to the interest and fair claims of the present race of students, he is anxious to explain that, in his belief, it is in their corporate capacities only, that a breathing of inconsiderateness can attach to them. As *individuals*, they are not only of *eminence* in their profession,—but of known li-

berality of sentiment * ;—and he is further most anxious to acknowledge,—what indeed is universally acknowledged,—that in no profession is there a man, who, through a long life has, by sound judgment, been more extensively useful,—more esteemed by the public,—more respected and beloved as a teacher—possessing more of urbanity, and all the better attributes of Human Nature, than the eminent character who, at the present moment, is Master of the Royal College of Surgeons in London †,—and consequently at the head of the Profession of *Surgery* in England.

* It is to be regretted, that on the occasion of the public Lectures, and Orations at the Royal College, the *reception* of its Diplomatsists between the pillars of a Temple, consecrated to a Divine Art, of which they are acknowledged Members ; and *supported by their annual contributions*—with their accommodation when ultimately under its walls—do not partake more of the courtesy and considerateness of *individual* arrangement.

† Mr. Cline.

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It is to be regretted, that on a revision of the paper
the Lectures, and Oration at the Royal College, the views
of its importance between the pillars of a temple,
consecrated to a Divine Art, of which it is not possible
to be a member; and supported by a sacred and
—with it, its consecration which is not to be
—a not possible more of the — and consecrated
—and not a member.

+ Mr. Cline.



