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ANNALS OF MEDICINE.

127
No. I.

SIR JAMES GRAHAM'S BILL

REPUDIATED,

BY

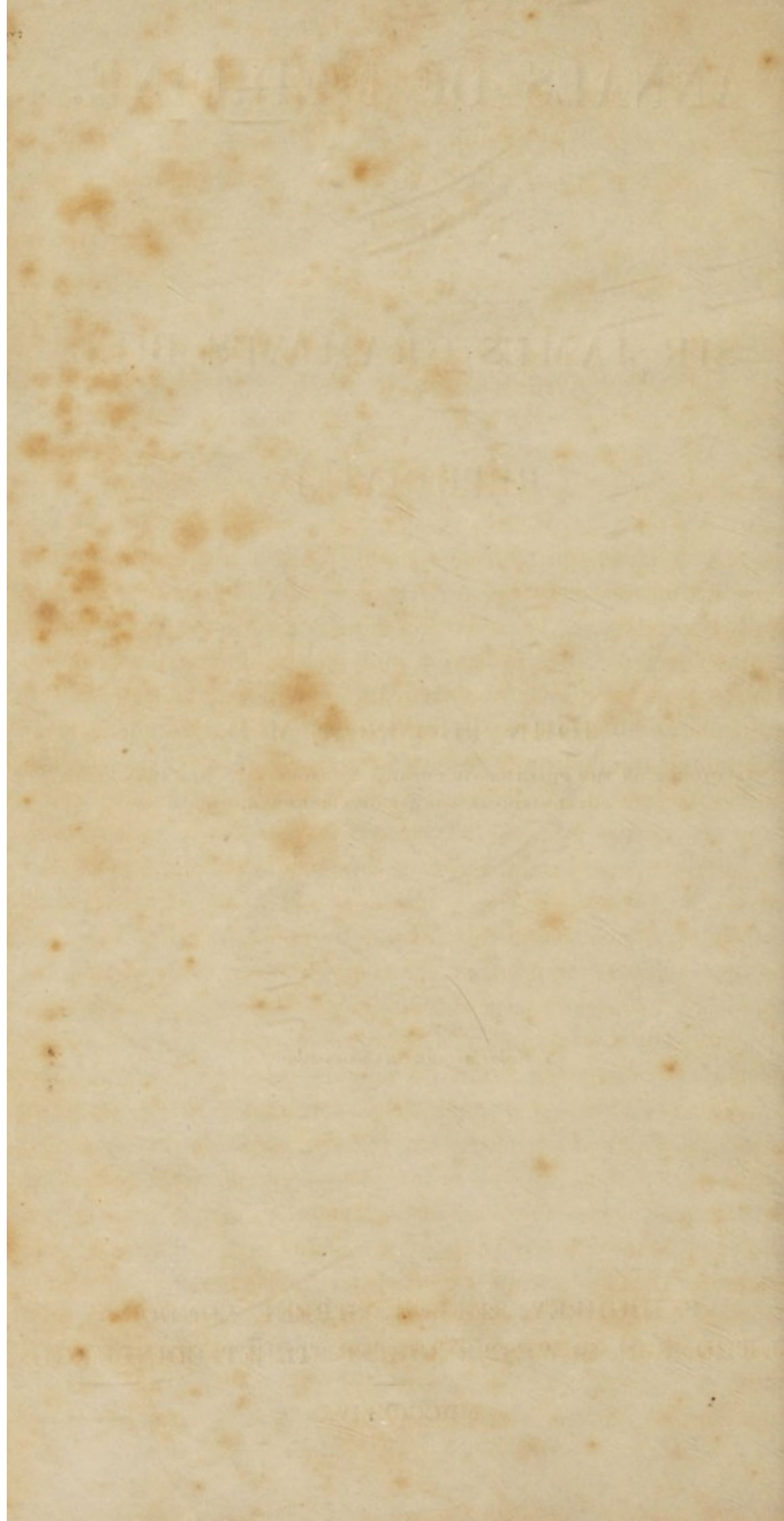
JOHN THOMSON, M. D.,

LECTURER ON THE PRACTICE OF PHYSIC, EXTRAORDINARY MEMBER OF THE
ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH, ETC.

Νίψον ανομηνία μη μόνον οψιν.

S. HIGHLEY, 32 FLEET STREET, LONDON,
J. THOMSON, 19 WEST REGISTER STREET, EDINBURGH.

MDCCCXLIV.



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR JAMES GRAHAM, &c.

SIR,

UPON the 13th day of July 1842 I had the honour of transmitting to you two printed papers upon Medical Education. With these papers I ventured to tender some brief remarks therewith connected. The proem of your speech in Parliament introducing your proposed Medical Bill, convinces me that in the multiplicity of concerns you have forgotten my statement. I in this public manner most respectfully again tender extended remarks to your most deliberate consideration.—I tender them from no motive inimical to yourself personally—certainly from no inimical motive against my invaluable, though most degraded profession. I have only one motive—a motive to alleviate or remove calamities created by medical men. I cannot for one moment doubt that with every wish to benefit mankind, your proposed measures can only add tremendous aggravation to existing mischief. Thus, Sir, we upon this momentous question are antipodes. On introducing your proposed Medical Bill into the House of Commons you ventured to affirm that “no science had done so much for the relief of suffering nature as had been accomplished by this noble science (medicine), and in no country in Europe had it attained greater eminence, or diffused its benefits more widely than in this kingdom.” If, Sir, you are convinced that the science of medicine is really so noble, so widely diffusing its benefits for the relief of suffering nature, why not leave such superlative excellence alone? Upon three points I must agree with Mr Wakley:—1st. That you “are wofully misinformed on the whole case;” 2d. That I am “convinced

that no measure ever had been introduced (into Parliament) of a character more unsatisfactory to the medical profession ;” and, 3*d*. That I too am “ confident it would be found perfectly impossible to pass such a bill.” Indeed, a few days before your proposed bill had been laid upon the table of the House of Commons, I had the honour to transmit to you a copy of a pamphlet of mine on Education, containing the following paragraph :—
 “ Thus Education has to proclaim to mankind, that of all punishments inflicted upon civilized humanity, the most tremendous are inflicted by what is vulgarly called the medical profession ; that medical men, as permitted, authorized, and protected by the laws, usages, and ignorance of Governments, corrupt, torture, murder more helpless, unsuspecting victims, than a permanent cholera could ever reach ; for every ten destroyed by war, medical men sacrifice twenty. Education looks forward with horror to the additional terrific incubus about to be immediately inflicted by Sir James Graham.”

The first step of a wise and honourable Government, Sir, is to wash their hands of mean, fraudulent quack medicines. Any Government touching one farthing from such a quarter, disregards their own personal character no less than humanity, justice, and the medical profession.

The second step of a wise and honourable Government, Sir, is to make it penal for any man, not legally educated to the medical and surgical profession, asking or receiving fee or reward for medical or surgical advice or attendance.

The third step of a wise and honourable Government, Sir, is to sweep away all medical and surgical Royal Colleges. The mischief and quackery of such rookeries immeasurably surpass the quackery of all the Solomons or Grahams that ever existed. While Royal Colleges flourish, medicine and surgery can never be respectable or useful or safe.

The fourth step of a wise and honourable Government, Sir, is to sweep away the false and absurd distinction between physician and surgeon,—to class them all under one name. And what shall I say of a man-midwife ? I shall borrow the words of the late illustrious Dr James Gregory, Edinburgh,—

“ But ” (says Dr Gregory) “ whatever reason I have for thinking unfavourably of the understanding and morals of one male

practitioner of midwifery, I never did, nor could extend that unfavourable opinion to all others of the same profession. If this had been possible, it would have been just as absurd as it would be to extend, by the power of fancy, the good opinion which I entertain of some individuals of every profession, to all others of the same profession; and withal, it would be most uncharitable and unjust. I should be very sorry, indeed, to be supposed capable of thinking and acting in a manner at once so irrational and illiberal; and I should be still more sorry to be thought capable of the folly of remonstrating or arguing seriously with the great and gay and fashionable world on the absurdity and the indelicacy of employing generally men-midwives, whether their assistance be needed or not. I should as soon think of running my head against the first axiom of geometry, or against all of them in succession, as of contraverting the fundamental maxim of all fashionable and profitable physic, *si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*. I only take the liberty to laugh at that, as at many other fashionable follies, which I know it is in vain, and which, at any rate, it is not my business, to attempt to reform.

“ In the first place, then, I hold it as a most sacred principle, too plain and obvious to require any proof or illustration, or to admit of dispute, that women labouring of child, just as much as women not labouring of child, ought to receive every assistance and comfort which their situation requires.

“ Further, I hold that when the situation of a woman labouring of child is such as to require chirurgical operation, or assistance by means of instruments, this assistance ought to be rendered to her by a *man* well instructed in anatomy, regularly bred to surgery, and accustomed to the use of chirurgical instruments. For I do not conceive that women are fit to practice surgery, and I am convinced that few, if any of them, would choose to attempt it.

“ I can hardly believe that any person should be such a monster of cruelty, or yet of so capricious a temper, as to object to women in labour receiving, whenever they need it, such assistance, and this from such hands as I have specified. But surely it does not follow from these principles, or from any others that ever I heard of, that women labouring of child ought to have the manual as-

sistance of male surgeons, any more than the application of surgical instruments, when they do not need them, which is the case at least ninety-nine times in the hundred.

“ As I have not the honour to be an atheist, I firmly believe that women by nature are just as able to bear and nurse children as their mates are to beget them,—often much better,—as they every now and then take occasion to convince the world in general, and their affectionate husbands in particular. Nay, I believe they are made for those very purposes, and so well qualified for them, that it would contribute greatly both to their health and happiness if they were constantly employed either in breeding or nursing children for five and twenty or thirty years of their lives. Everybody knows the reason for which the bearing of children was made a work of great pain and labour; but it was no part of the sentence passed upon Eve and her female descendants that it should be also a work of danger, or anything like a disease. There is much reason to suspect that the danger and the diseases often connected with child-bearing are produced by our own preposterous management, and our absurd contrivances and interference, in order to assist nature in one of her most important operations, which, like all the rest of them, is contrived with perfect knowledge and wisdom.

“ As soon as I knew what midwifery meant, I formed that notion of its importance expressed in the following passage of a very popular work, written by my father, and published near forty years ago.

“ ‘ Every other animal brings forth its young without any assistance; but we judge nature insufficient for that work, and think a midwife understands it better. What numbers of infants, as well as mothers, are destroyed by the preposterous management of these artists, is well known to all who have inquired into this matter. The most knowing and successful practitioners, if they are candid, will own that in common and natural cases nature is entirely sufficient, and their business is only to assist her efforts in case of weakness of the mother, or an unnatural position of the child.’

“ That portion of common sense and sympathetic kindness which nature hath planted in all mankind has taught them universally that it is proper for women, in those hours of pain and sorrow,

to have the *comfort* and *encouragement* which those of their own sex can best give them, and which in general is much better for them than the *assistance* of professed midwives. But as the discharge of that humane and charitable office must often have been irksome and inconvenient to women who had other business and other duties to perform, in all towns and populous countries midwifery has become the profession of a few experienced matrons. There is too much reason to believe that many of these have often been too busy, and have endeavoured to give assistance where none was needed ; sometimes with a view to shorten the time of their own irksome attendance ; sometimes to gratify the impatience of those under their care ; sometimes to raise their art and themselves in the opinion of their patients and others. There is at least equal reason to believe that the same considerations, and the additional motive of wishing to shew their vast superiority in knowledge and dexterity over the common midwives, have induced, and ever will induce, many male practitioners of midwifery to be as needlessly and as perniciously busy. A man who is to live by midwifery as a profession, must be well established in reputation and practice before he dare venture to tell his patients, or even to let them perceive by his conduct, that in ninety-nine cases of the hundred they had no occasion of his assistance, and that he did nothing for them : in short, that bearing children is one of the things that they must do for themselves, because nobody can do it for them. At least, I do not remember to have heard or read of any women who became mothers by proxy, as many great and good men have become fathers, without any trouble to themselves. That women may bear children for themselves in the great proportion of cases specified, must be pretty evident from the most obvious considerations. When the first man-midwife that we know of, Paulus Ægineta, was born, there were about one hundred millions of people in the Roman Empire. At this time there is not in the great Empire of China one man-midwife ; and yet at least thirty thousand children are born in that empire EVERY DAY ; and probably twice as many in the rest of the world, without any such preternatural assistance. Even in those countries of Europe in which the fashion of employing men-midwives has prevailed the most and the longest, still a large proportion of the women bear children

without their help, as the grandmothers and great-grandmothers of all of them did. Our ladies, who most firmly believe that they cannot bear their own children, but must be delivered by a male operator, and our gentlemen, who, no less wisely, believe that such is the case with their wives, and their sisters, and their daughters, cannot fail to know that their mothers, and aunts, and grandmothers, in all the generations that have been since the creation of the world, bore their own children; yet none of them think of inquiring when and why this new curse was entailed upon the daughters of Eve. Any of them who have a little curiosity and not much to do, may perhaps find some amusement in calculating the number of persons from whom they are lineally descended, even within forty or fifty generations. The series increases rapidly, 2, 4, 8, 16 for the first, second, third, and fourth generations past; then all these numbers are to be added together to shew the sum total of their ancestors in any given number of generations: but if they take only the last great number of the series, they will soon find that they must have had, within the number of generations specified, *thousands*, nay *millions of millions* of ancestors, if there had been so many on the face of the earth at any one time; and whatever deductions may be made from those vast numbers, on the score of cousinship, still it will remain certain that every person must have had millions of ancestors, one half of whom must have been females, who bore their own children without the help of men-midwives.

“ The same kind of calculation must also afford comfort to those who have succeeded in persuading, and labour hard to persuade, their physicians that in their families there are no hereditary diseases.

“ As to the business of Midwifery which led to these remarks, I have only further to add, that in every case in which there is reason to apprehend any danger, or any preternatural difficulty in childbirth, that is whenever a woman is deformed, for I know of nothing else that can enable any person to foresee such danger or difficulty, the assistance of a skilful male operator, with all his proper instruments, should be provided in due time, but certainly not employed unless absolutely needed. In those cases, whether of deformity or not, in which some assistance, but not that of surgical instruments, is needed, I conceive it may be

given as well, and probably better, for a most obvious reason, by a woman.

“ I consider bearing children as exactly on the same footing with performing the more common offices of nature. Every lady who experiences preternatural difficulty or impediment on any such occasion, and is thereby exposed to disease or danger, ought unquestionably to receive such assistance as her situation requires ; and all of us I am sure, physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries, will at all times be found eager to render her every service in our power. But unless there be absolute necessity for it, I should think it indelicate and improper for any male person to give his manual assistance ; and I should think it amply sufficient for all purposes of safety and dignity on such occasions, and also more consistent with vulgar notions of decency and delicacy, if a knight of the discreetest, or, according to the rank or fortune of the lady, two or more such knights, properly armed and accoutred, should mount guard at her ladyship's door.

“ The remark with which my father has introduced the passage that I have quoted from his *COMPARATIVE VIEW*, I know, is not strictly correct :—it must be understood with certain limitations and exceptions. The industry and patient observations of modern naturalists have ascertained that the females of some kind of animals do really need assistance, and particularly the assistance of the male in bringing forth their young. This is well known to be the case with the toad, and with some other loathsome reptiles ; but it has never been pretended that such is the case with any of those animals whose bodily constitution and functions most nearly resemble our own ; and whom we perhaps foolishly and presumptuously call the nobler and more perfect animals. In strict philosophical propriety, we must admit that all the productions of nature are good and perfect. Even the ingenious Frenchman, to whom we owe that interesting discovery with respect to the toad, introduces his account of it by wishing, for the benefit of some readers, that what he had to tell us had related rather to pigeons and turtledoves than to a kind of animal that we cannot think of without horror ; but he adds very sagaciously, that the imagination and eyes *du physicien* are not so delicate. (See *Memoirs de l'Academie Royale des Sciences*, 1741.—Article, *Crapaud male Accoucheur de sa femelle*.) Such being, for reasons

which we do not fully understand, the wise institution of nature with respect to that animal, it is evidently as proper and becoming for the male toad to give his assistance, and for the female to receive it when she is in labour, as it is for men and women to become fathers and mothers. But men and women are not toads, nor under any obligation, physical or moral, that I can perceive, to follow their example in that respect.

“ If the case were not real, and so recent as to be still in the memory of many thousands, not near so old as I am, it would be thought a most extravagant fiction, to state, by way of illustration of my opinion on this subject, what was proposed, and in some measure done, by a certain unworthy member of our most noble faculty (Dr Graham). This celebrated mountebank, observing how many difficulties and deficiencies often occur, with respect to that function which must always precede the bearing of children, and is therefore just as necessary to the prosperity, and even to the existence of every state; knowing also how often such deficiencies and diseases are the objects of regular medical practice in private, nobly resolved to make his superior knowledge of that branch of physic a public benefit for the good of his country. In prosecution of this generous and spirited plan, he publicly read lectures in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and, I believe, several other cities of this kingdom. He also fitted up, and opened for public use, a splendid Temple of Health, as he called it, and a still more splendid Temple of Hymen—in one or both of which temples the rosy goddess of health appeared *in propria persona*, and dispensed very freely her healthful favours among her ardent votaries. If my memory does not greatly deceive me, his Temple of Hymen was within a few doors of his Majesty’s palace of St James’. I believe he had in that temple several convenient chambers for the sake of clinical practice; but he had one in particular, fitted up in a style of extraordinary magnificence, with what he called a Celestial Bed, and a most splendid electrical apparatus, and many other contrivances, aërial, etherial, and magnetical, with which he was to perform miracles, and to enable many great and gay people to become fathers and mothers; which honour, without his aid, they had no chance of attaining. As his doctrine and practice were equally repugnant to decency and common sense, and as there are no bounds to the folly and

credulity of the people among whom he practised, I have no doubt that the fashion so auspiciously begun by him would soon have become general, at least among the rich and the great. But the genial doctor's too ardent zeal for his favourite science carried him a step too far ; it carried him to Dublin. Thither he went express to teach and help Irishmen to beget children. One bold Scotchman, to the immortal honour of our country be it known, went singly to attack a great and gallant people on their strong corner. Such an insult could not be endured by any people ; least of all by the chosen people of St Patrick, who, on this occasion, behaved with infinitely more spirit and good sense than the inhabitants of either end of this island had shewn. The Lord Mayor of Dublin, feeling no doubt his own share of the indignity, threatened to send him to Bridewell ; and measures, as I have been told, were actually concerted for tossing him in a blanket at his first lecture. But the genial doctor, understanding his danger, by a quick retreat escaped the fate of Sancho Panza ; leaving however the men of Ireland as ignorant, and as incapable as he found them, of their first great duty as men and citizens. Yet we hear of no complaints, from that country, of ignorance, incapacity, or neglect of that duty ; nor has there been any failure in its population ; and I firmly believe that the case would have been the same, and that the females would have done their part of that first duty to their country just as well, if they had had as little assistance from men-midwives, as the males had from that illustrious mountebank."

Now, Sir, marshal your 30,000 men, and tell the House of Commons how such a mass is to be classified. On one point of classification you have certainly been already most explicit: no person can possibly misunderstand you. Sir James Clarke and Dr Eddy walk arm in arm. As this is a settled point in your classification, proceed with the remainder. Marshal then your 30,000 men, and tell the House of Commons how many of these men are men-midwives. I believe that 25,000 of these men are men-midwives. How and where are they to be classed? I do not see the slightest reference to them in your proposed medical bill. Now, you cannot plead ignorance of their existence or of their character. The bill, which you lately pinned upon the English College of Surgeons, bears internal evidence of two

facts,—1st. That you knew well that men-midwives were and are a part and portion of the “noble science which had done so much for the relief of suffering human nature.” 2d. That at the same time you knew that men-midwives, though members of the “noble science” of medicine, must injure or disgrace your pet (the College of Surgeons in England); you knew this, because, by the express regulation of that college a man is pointedly prohibited from being admitted there if at any time during the last five years he has been a man-midwife. If a man-midwife injures or degrades a Royal College of English Surgeons, shall even a Minister of the Crown dare to throw his garbage among honourable gentlemen? I repeat it, Sir, proceed with your classification?

I have now placed before you, Sir, the highest medical authority attainable bearing upon man-midwifery, never presuming to suppose that my own humble status could fix your attention; and I trust, Sir, that you are now convinced, that next to Medical Education, the wide spreading mischief and curse of Man-midwifery demand the speedy and most searching scrutiny of Parliament. “Among 115 deaths there may be reckoned one woman in childbed, but only one in 400 dies in labour.”

There is, Sir, a second vital omission in your propounded medical bill—the dispensing of drugs. Should this most important point be left, like your quacks, an open question, it is physically impossible for Parliament, or any human agency to protect the public safety or the medical profession. Drugs are sold and exhibited by men, women, and children; by intelligent men and by fools; by honest men and by knaves; by medical men and by grocers, painters, booksellers, washerwomen, &c. The professed quack does much less mischief to society than these busy ignorant men, women, and boys, who are neither doctors or quacks, do. Indeed, it argues most unfavourably for your elevated notion of medical science that the most sacred efforts of an intelligent physician at this hour is not so much to discover remedies to remove pain or sickness, as it is to remove aggravations and frauds super-added upon pain and sickness by the medical profession and such extra-professional men, women, and boys. No person should be allowed to be an apothecary who has not received a liberal education, and served a regular apprenticeship of three or four years. Besides, Government should make it penal for any other than an

apothecary to dispense drugs; and the articles included in a carefully improved pharmacopeia, edited under the authority of the Council of Medical Education, should define what articles are drugs; and all apothecaries should be punished if they sell any other articles, such as tea, snuff, perfumery, paints, pickles, &c. But specified very active articles, such as prussic acid, should never be intrusted either to apothecary or nurse or patient;—they should be prepared and exhibited by the hands of the physician or surgeon himself. One *Latin* pharmacopeia should be positively enforced upon the whole British Empire. Indeed, a great number of frivolous and useless articles enrolled in the present should be carefully expunged. Uniformity in nomenclature, measures, and weights should be indispensable. At present apothecaries buy their drugs and sell them by avoirdupoise weight, but dispense them by apothecaries' weight; and thus the same individual is obliged to use two different kinds of weights in cases where one answers every purpose. Above all, the nomenclature of the pharmacopeia should be uniform and most distinct. The ruin and confusion originating in protoxides, deutoxides, peroxides, perchlorides, protochlorides, and the illegible writing of practitioners are devastating, and imperatively claim the strictest attention of any Council of Medical Education.

Of all pictures exhibited by truth or fiction, by poet or painter, an accurate picture of the agony and ruin inflicted upon man by our Royal Colleges would be the most horrific. The State, for wise and humane purposes and intentions, created these colleges, and a credulous public for centuries have placed implicit reliance upon their honour, their medical knowledge, and their strict and faithful attention to the purposes of the State. Can they point to an effort ever made by them, even to caution the public against what devastates every day, every hour, against murders perpetrated by rash and ignorant people dispensing drugs. They know well that a single hour never passes free from such atrocity, and continue apathetic lookers on—servile imitators of the philosopher, who, when he was informed that his house was on fire, replied, “Go, and tell my wife, I do not meddle with household affairs.” From ten thousand examples take one which occurred in this neighbourhood only a few days ago—that of an emetic “obtained from a grocer’s shop where drugs

of different kinds are sold," and where the poor man died ex-cruciated. "The shopman, when questioned, at once admitted, in terms exhibiting no small degree of confidence in his own knowledge of such matters, *that he had supplied the dead man with two drops, or about fifty-five grains of tartar emetic, as a safe and proper vomit.*" A safe and proper vomit for forty men, but fatal to one. While all this quietly goes on, your Fellows, and would-be Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, are too busy about their own concerns to bestow a thought upon such atrocity. Anxious are their struggles for a little contempt-able notoriety;—agitation among them is superabundantly rampant to grasp a tinsel, tawdry, unearned title—to obtain Gulliver's scarlet thread, perish whoever may! This same principle of apathy they have also carried to a most dangerous extent in their neglect of the pharmacopeias. I know not whether Government assigned such duty to them, or whether they assumed it. At all events, for many years past they have pretended to take charge of the pharmacopeias, which, at this hour, are a disgrace to an enlightened country. If your Council of Medical Education leaves the pharmacopeia in their hands, every man must know where the merit or shame rests.

Let me again, Sir, supplicate you to examine these facts carefully and minutely before you allow yourself to become the leading and powerful and active agent in perpetuating and multiplying the malign and sinister agencies of the medical profession. Be not deceived by sycophants, who zealously assure you that British medical schools are perfection personified. Turn the astute energy of your own powerful mind upon the present and past condition of our medical students—upon the present and past condition of our medical and surgical professors or teachers—upon the condition of infirmaries—upon the condition of dispensaries—upon the condition of lying-in hospitals—upon the condition of lunatic asylums. When you have scrutinized these points, ask all Royal Colleges of Physicians what service or benefit they confer, or ever did confer, or ever can confer upon the medical profession, or upon mankind; and next put the same questions to all Royal Colleges of Surgeons; and the same to your Apothecaries' Company. Positively instructed upon all and each of those points, you can, like an English gentleman, stand up in

the House of Commons and boldly challenge Mr Wakley ; who, wofully misinformed, surgeon though he be, on many vital points of this medical question, is nevertheless entitled to my gratitude, which I beg here to tender him, with sincere thanks for the firm and manly opposition and exposition of your proposed medical bill ; and, beyond a doubt, the whole profession join me.

Withal, Sir James Graham, Mr Wakley, and I, take our stand upon three very different fields. Sir James Graham, armed with the power of a mighty nation, is resolved “ to permit any man whatever” “ who possesses skill and knowledge,” get them where and how he may, to practise medicine. “ To make quackery legal, to give great encouragement to quacks, and to inflict a heavy blow and great discouragement on the 30,000 medical men, with whose very subsistence it will in many instances most materially interfere ;” in short, to place the expensively educated physician and the self-created ignorant charlatan in one and the same show-box,—and to do all this through the instrumentality of a solemn Act of Parliament. On a second field Mr Wakley has raised his standard, upon which is inscribed *concoirs*, resolved to draw out his 30,000 men,—a political army of doctors,—every man brandishing his scalpel :—no man troubling his head much about medical education, about medical charities, or about men-midwives. I place myself upon a field very different from both ; and for many years I have entreated all who could to elevate my noble profession,—clipping the wings of regular and irregular quacks,—to scrutinize carefully medical charities, testing their advantages and disadvantages by the plain dictates of common sense,—and, finally, to define and establish a simple, uniform, and precise STATE curriculum of Medical Education.

To you, Sir, and to the world I proclaim (and at the same time I stake my existence to prove it) that all your Royal Colleges are men of straw, ridiculous state quacks (if unutterable misery could be separated from their omissions and commissions), corporations altogether unworthy of the countenance, or even notice, of a British House of Commons. Indeed the very idea of a Royal College is monkish, charlatanical, preposterous. Perhaps you may still have some recollection of a Queen’s College of Medicine which you lately helped to create in Edinburgh. Where is it

now? Laughed at, and almost extinct. If in a state a Royal College of Physicians be necessary for the advancement or preservation of medical knowledge, or for protecting the public health, it cannot be less necessary for the state to have a royal college of shoemakers, tailors, and, in short, of every art and handicraft whereby the public convenience or comfort is promoted. At least I can see no peculiarity in the situation or functions of the former which entitle it to peculiar favour.

On the third reading of the English Surgeons' Bill, 3d July 1797, Lord Thurlow rose :—" He said there had never been a case before their Lordships in which a stronger disposition to take the House by surprise had been manifested ; and the conduct of those who promoted the bill appeared to him to merit no small degree of disapprobation. When first he attended the committee on the bill, he was astonished to find them engaged in profound discussion on aristocracy, democracy, and all the learned terms which were employed in speculative policy. The opposers of the bill were stigmatized as Jacobins. It was a cry raised to excite alarm, as children cry a mad dog, when they wish to raise a panic. For his own part, he did not like Jacobinism, but he saw no reason why people should be called Jacobins who merely wished to protect their property, and to guard themselves against measures which they deemed to be injurious. The present bill, in his opinion, was a most wretched performance, in which the arrogance of the provision maintained an equal contest with the absurdity. His Lordship then traced the bill through the several committees to which it had successively been referred, and contended that it appeared to him equally monstrous as upon its first introduction. The different provisions of it, to which, if the bill was to be carried on, he should move specific amendments, were these. The object of the bill was to have the Corporation of Surgeons erected into a College, without being an incorporated trade, under the jurisdiction of the city. They at present contended that they were not a trade, but he would defy any lawyer of three years' standing to say so. The surgeons had originally formed one corporation with the barbers, enjoyed the same privileges, and been liable to the same burthens. These younger brothers of the barber trade, for the surgeons could not boast so much antiquity as the barbers, were at length desirous to be se-

parated from their associates. It was said that it was not proper that those who were going about among foul disorders, the pox and putrid sores, should be allowed to wash people's faces and lather their beards. The surgeons, therefore, for a public convenience, and to comply with their own wishes, were made a distinct corporation, yet, on the same principles as the barbers, and described in the Act of Parliament *ipissimis terminis* with the barbers. They were therefore clearly a corporate trading company. By a statute still in force, the barbers and surgeons were each to use a pole. The barbers were to have theirs blue and white striped, with no other appendage; but the surgeons, which was the same in other respects, was likewise to have a galley-pot and a red rag, to denote the particular nature of their vocation. If the bill was to be carried on, one of the amendments he meant to propose was, that the surgeons should be obliged to use this pole. With regard to their erection into a college, it was a demand to which scarce any answer could be made. Upon the principles by which their profession was to be regulated, they would form one of the most extraordinary useless set of learned men that ever were hung round the neck of learning. By their regulations (fortified too by strong penalties), no man was to attempt to practise midwifery, pharmacy, or anything of this kind. These men who claimed the right of examining all the persons to be employed as surgeons for the army and navy were to examine upon pharmacy, and yet they would not touch a drug; they were to examine medicine-chests, and they were not to touch medicines themselves. In short, he did not know what they were to do. A man who ventured to exercise any of these proscribed branches of the science or art was rendered incapable of being promoted to any rank in the college. If a man was an oculist, a dentist, &c., he was thus incapacitated. They would not cure these maladies themselves, or could not (as he himself had feelingly experienced as to the former), nor would they allow others to practise who could. Those who could afford to employ a number of medical people of every denomination might be able to procure the assistance of those who professed only a particular branch; but what must be the situation of the poor—how could they procure any alleviation of their distresses, if such regulations were to be enforced? Besides the

expenses of purchasing diplomas, which would bring in money quadruple beyond whatever would be required for any purchase of the institution, men were to be fined ten pounds on conviction of having practised those branches which the regulations of the college prescribed ; and that there might be no bounds to the malignity of prosecutions, they were to be at the expense of the corporation, were to carry full costs, while no costs were to be allowed to the defender. The merciless cruelty of these regulations could only be suggested by a surgeon. To all these points he should move special amendments. Besides these provisions, the bill went to vest the funds of the corporation in a committee of twenty-one persons. The parties opposing the bill, therefore, had an obvious right to oppose it ; and he was convinced that the House never would transfer (to use no harsh term) the property of men without their consent. In opposing the bill he did it entirely from a view to the interest the public had in the well-ordering this community : he knew none of the parties, and his observation of the conduct of the authors of this bill gave him a worse opinion of them than ever he had before. With regard to the opposers of it, he was now past the time of requiring their assistance. Upon the ground he had stated, therefore, he should move ‘ that the third reading of the bill be put off till this day three months.’ And, upon the motion of the Lord Chancellor, the bill was then rejected.”

Mark, Sir, most particularly that the experience of half a century has most decidedly established Lord Thurlow’s strong assertions. “ With regard to the erection of English surgeons into a college, it was a demand,” said his Lordship, “ to which scarce any answer could be made.” To this hour no answer has been made, because it is impossible. “ Upon the principles by which their profession was to be regulated,” said Lord Thurlow, “ they would form one of the most extraordinary useless set of learned men that ever were hung round the neck of learning.” I think it was Cicero who was surprised that one Roman priest could look into the face of a fellow-priest without a horse-laugh. I cannot suppose it possible that a fellow of a Royal College can take his place at a college table without laughing in his sleeve. Of this same college, so admirably lashed by Lord Thurlow, I

am mortified to find you an omnipotent patron. Be assured if Parliament admit your Royal College of Surgeons in England, or any Royal College whatever, into the machinery of Medical Education, *plectuntur Achivi*; because members of colleges are the very individuals most interested in the continuance and extension of the present horrible system—the last to divulge, and the first to defend it;—of course the least worthy and the most dangerous men to be armed with power. It is indeed a practical bull. It would be as rational to consult a prisoner at the bar of any court what witnesses or what crime should be preferred against him to seal his conviction. The Morning Chronicle (14th September 1844) very briefly, but accurately, describes them as “public bodies existing but for private good.—Confusion confounded.—Nineteen or twenty corporate licensing societies, with the liberty of fixing their own terms, the time for study, and the price for the diploma.”

The Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, is very generally believed, even by intelligent men, to be the University of Edinburgh. This is a mistake. They are two separate and distinct bodies. The University is in no shape or manner connected with, or impeachable for the deeds and conduct of this Royal College. For forty years I have keenly watched their proceedings, and for forty years I could never discover a why or a wherefor, such exquisite buffoonery should be tolerated or patronised either by government or the public. Such, certainly, had been their estimation, until, in 1809, when they made themselves notorious by publishing “Narrative of the conduct of Dr James Gregory.” This Royal College was a gang who had been scathed and blighted by Dr Gregory’s thunder; three of the seven Members (for this College could then only muster seven Fellows) stood erect as gentlemen at Dr Gregory’s side. Only picture, Sir, four blighted Fellows, because a majority, assuming the designation of The Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, and as cool as cucumbers sitting in judgment upon Dr Gregory and *themselves*! They did so, and condemned him as guilty of perjury, and suspended him as a Fellow. Dr James Gregory, the most illustrious physician that ever breathed—the most virtuous and honourable—the author of “*Conspectus Medicinæ Theoreticæ*”—sunk into his honoured grave the martyr of this infamous con-

spiracy—a suspended Fellow! Daniel in the lion's den bears no analogy to this. The lion in Beelzebub's den, entrapped, tortured, and poisoned by four false, degraded, fallen fiends, might be wrought up into a finer picture of the illustrious Dr James Gregory standing erect in the Hall of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, now an object of disgust and abhorrence, and, corresponding with its masters, in dilapidation and ruin. To my deepest sorrow, I see that your proposed bill protects and extends the delusions and atrocities of this pestiferous corporation. Here I have entered my caution. I am very sorry I can do no more.

A few days ago a Birmingham leviathan-fisher writes thus in the *Lancet*, so far in confirmation of my opinion of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh; but the Royal College of Physicians, London, are in every respect, moral degradation excepted, precisely similar. “I determined” (quoth the Birmingham man) “upon a little recreation in the fishing way. I thought I would have a throw at the leviathan College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and I baited my hook with the University * * * I attack no individuals, but a monstrous national evil and absurdity,—an evil, the consequences of which are felt far beyond the limits of the Scottish capital or the Scottish nation,—an evil which has given title and ascendancy to men mean enough to be exalted by such means, and has in some cases enabled them to tread over the heads of their professional brethern, by gulling the public with tinsel decorations, which our high minded profession is too noble to oppose, too dignified to decry.

“As long as the graduates of Edinburgh constitute the majority of the Fellows of the College of Physicians, and as long as any of their members are allowed to pander the honours of the College (?) to their needy retainers, and upon German degrees, giving to these worthless baubles a British name and a British sanction, so long shall I consider myself at liberty, in any way, to call down upon the Edinburgh College (?) the whole weight of honest indignation; and I am still of opinion that the University of Edinburgh would have consulted its own dignity far more by attacking the lucre-loving title-pandering College of Physicians, by endeavouring to blot out the last venal medical corporation in these kingdoms, than by attacking a solitary individual, a British

subject, a stranger in a foreign land. Let the University remember the Latin proverb ‘*Aquila non captat muscas.*’ ” All medical Royal Colleges are indeed beacons of monopoly, of folly, and of deception. The Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, stands prominently forward a giant beacon of my assertion. In their great struggle against Dr Gregory, their sederunt could never rise beyond seven. Now their Fellows count 134. Thus since his death they have sold perhaps 125 parchment humbugs, and placed in their strong box £12,500 sterling.

Take a specimen of the modesty of a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, who for many years reigned in that mischievous corporation.

“ The following is meant as an explanation of the memorial formerly transmitted to * * * * * in favour of Benjamin Bell by his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch.

“ The memorialist sets forth that many years ago he formed the plan of an extensive work in the line of his profession of surgery, at that time greatly wanted, not merely in Britain, but over all Europe. He alludes to a work comprehending a system of modern surgery in its improved state.

“ That the plan being approved of by many of the best employed surgeons of that period, both of London and this place, the memorialist immediately engaged in it with much assiduity. He soon found, however, the difficulty to be great of carrying on the very extensive practice with which he was occupied, together with the new undertaking ; but his credit and reputation being likely to suffer had the scheme been relinquished, he was resolved at all events to proceed with it ; and, at last, after a perseverance of *twelve years*—during the whole period a great part of every night was employed in writing—he brought his work, extending to nine large volumes, to a conclusion.

“ That although he has reason to believe, from the extensive sale which it has met with in Britain, and from its being translated into every language in Europe, that it has answered the chief purpose that he had in view from it,—that of conveying professional information to young surgeons in an easier and fuller manner than had ever been done before ; and while he has reason to know that it has been particularly well received by surgeons

in our Navy and Army, it has not tended to remunerate the author, for the emoluments arising from the sale of professional books are in no instance great, and at all times must be divided with booksellers, so that he calculates low when he says that the loss which he sustained during the whole time that he was engaged in it was not less than £300 sterling yearly, owing to the great proportion of his time necessarily employed in writing that might have been more profitably employed in business.

“ That, in order to render his system of surgery more complete, he wishes to publish a collection of cases and observations on different parts of surgery, which he began to form early in life while attending the hospitals of London, Paris, and Edinburgh, and to which he has all along been making additions; but as these also will occupy a considerable portion of time, it was the chief object of his memorial humbly to submit, whether, under the circumstances that he has mentioned, he may not be allowed to apply for, and to hope that some mark of public attention may be conferred on him, in order to make it an object with him to proceed; for, although his success in business has been considerable, by which, as an individual, he feels himself entirely satisfied and independent, yet he does not hesitate to say that his fortune is not such that he can with propriety, or in justice to his family, continue to incur the loss of some hundred pounds yearly, with which the farther prosecution of his work must necessarily be attended.

“ That any allowance that his Majesty may graciously be pleased to award to him would be now particularly acceptable, if accompanied with an appointment in the line of his profession.

“ That the particular denomination of an appointment for this purpose might be, ‘ Surgeon to his Majesty for Scotland,’ ‘ Surgeon to the King’s Household,’ or ‘ Sergeant-surgeon to the King for Scotland.’

“ That he is the more induced to hope for some encouragement of this kind, from his having reason to believe that such an extensive undertaking—he means as a professional work—as that which he has written was never accomplished in this country,—from his having reason to flatter himself that a favourable report of it will be given by those who can best judge of it; that is, of its having proved materially useful both in the Army

and Navy,—from those who, in other branches of literature, have spent much of their time in any degree usefully, having during the present reign been, in general, very fully recompensed,—from their being many places, both of emolument and honour, given to surgeons in London, while in Scotland nothing of a similar nature has, in any instance, for upwards of a century past, been done for surgeons; although, all along, there have been *two* physicians to his Majesty for Scotland—as is the case at this moment—and also an apothecary.

“ That if an appointment of this kind shall be established, and the memorialist shall be judged to be a fit person for filling it, he shall not only continue to do all in his power to promote in this place the advancement of science to which it relates, but at all times will reflect with gratitude on the obligations that he shall owe to those by whom it is procured.”

In every attempt that has yet been made for Medical Education—and I cannot make your present effort an exception—two most important parties, medical students and poor patients, have received no attention whatever. The 30,000 medical men have 30,000 ways and means to bear upon their interest, *ne respublica capiat quid detrimenti*. Universities have wealth and friends and learned men to bear upon their interest. The impudence and arrogance and licensed quackery of Royal Colleges deceive men in power, and even jockey and undermine Universities, who originally spawned them to bolster up bigotry. These parties monopolise every drop of attention that goes—witness your Medical Bill, certainly not *pro bono publico*, but *pro bono eorum*. As you have omitted men-midwives in marshalling your men, I pray you mercifully to amend your proposed Bill, and bestow a reasonable attention upon medical students, who, in process of time, must renovate your medical ranks—and, *pour la grace de Dieu*, when they have no friend—attend to the poor, the sick, the friendless poor.

The sick, the friendless poor, Sir, are received into hospitals or infirmaries. Although you are a Minister of State, I venture to say that you never imagined that two and very opposite kinds of hospitals existed in Britain—government hospitals and civil hospitals. The naval and military hospitals of this country are

perfect patterns of science and humanity. Why, Sir, should our civil hospitals or infirmaries come under a very opposite category?

The diseased poor are received into infirmaries. Be as nobly humane to other infirmaries of the empire as you have in a glorious manner been to the Cumberland Infirmary. I believe that you have created and established the only infirmary in Britain—spurning the terms of the whole medical profession in Carlisle. Look, Sir, into all the London hospitals, and mark how the diseased and wounded poor are parcelled out, like gangs of slaves, among this lecturer and that lecturer—and, when they die, exposed and mangled by heartless boys. Look into the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, and see these atrocities perhaps aggravated:—

“ To the MANAGERS of the ROYAL INFIRMARY of EDINBURGH.

“ *12th February 1843.*

“ Gentlemen—Certain late movements regarding the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh induce me respectfully to bring under your most particular consideration three simple questions, vitally bearing upon the primary, the essential, the only design of your charitable institution.

“ 1. What is the primary, the essential, the only design of an infirmary?

“ 2. What authority have you, as Managers of your Infirmary, to mix up the primary, the essential, the only design of an infirmary, with medical education?

“ 3. Supposing that you, as Managers of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, are in such management, and in such mixing up, supported by your charter, what are the advantages of such management?

“ These are questions which, as a physician, it is my duty to ask—which, as a member of your General Court, it is my legal privilege to ask—and which, as a man most anxious to put forth every exertion, however feeble, to alleviate human misery, it is my pride to place under your consideration. The position which I thus venture to assume is perhaps, at first view, an ungracious one; nevertheless, I do take it deliberately, and with profound respect for the Managers of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

“ What, then, is the primary, the essential, the only design of an infirmary? I answer, The relief of the poor from sickness and pain. If you wish for any comment upon this, be pleased to recollect what the illustrious Dr James Gregory told your predecessors forty years ago :—‘ But the patients in the Royal Infirmary ’ (said this admirable man) ‘ are not the property of the Managers—nor can they ever be made property, or sold or bartered, as if they were—nor can the Managers ever acquire a right of disposing even of a single limb of a poor man admitted into the hospital—on any other principle or consideration, or *for any other purpose*, but for the utmost benefit which can be procured *for that poor man*, according to the best of their judgment. So far are the *patients* in the Infirmary from being the property either of the Managers or of the medical gentlemen employed by them, that, on the contrary, the Managers are a kind of trustees or agents for *them*, expressly for the purpose of procuring them all the comforts and benefits which can be procured, and are most needful to them; and, above all, the best medical assistance; and the physicians and surgeons employed by the Managers to give their professional assistance to the patients in the Infirmary, are, to this purpose and effect, as much the *servants* of those patients as they are of their richest patients in private practice, who pay them the most liberally for their services. They owe just the same care and attention and assistance to a poor man in the Infirmary, as to a rich lord in a palace—and would be just as blameable, and as criminal, if they voluntarily neglected any part of their professional duty to the poor man, as if they did so to the rich.’ I cannot believe it possible that one Manager can ever object to this Gregorian axiom, comprehending the primary, the essential, the only design of every infirmary.

“ What authority then have you, as Managers of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, to mix up this primary, this essential, this only design of your charity, with medical education? I have carefully examined your charter. In that document I cannot find even the shadow of an apology for your mixing up medical education, or any other concern whatever unconnected with the relief of the poor from sickness or pain, with that momentous trust confided to you by your charter of corporation. I find there

imperative authority to administer to each manager an oath *de fidei administratione*. If you wish for any comment upon this, permit me to place before you one, not Gregorian, not mine. Forty years ago, John Bell and Charles Bell, Members of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, presented a memorial at the bar of the Court of Session, from which, as a comment, I copy these words—‘ Can there be a more shocking spectacle, than that of a fellow creature brought out to be operated upon publicly in the eyes of 500 spectators, (collected in the operation room of your Infirmary)? Can there be any state of anxiety more distressing, any addition to the horrors of disease and pain more distracting, than the idea of being stretched out upon a table, and exposed in all the weaknesses of anguish to multitudes of gazing spectators? Have these Managers any feeling of charity about them—have they any regard for the poor, any sympathy for distresses which so greatly aggravate all the evils of a sick man’s condition—and do they still permit public operations?’ Thus, then, Sir Charles Bell, the present distinguished Professor in the University, was one of two surgeons who forty years ago to this tune commented upon the oaths *de fidei* of your predecessors in office. Forty years ago two professional anatomists lifted up their eyes and hands with horror at the bar of our Supreme Court, asking—‘ Have these managers any feeling of charity about them—have they any regard for the poor, any sympathy for distresses which so greatly aggravate all the evils of a sick man’s condition—and do they still permit public operations?’ For mercy’s sake anatomize your own oaths *de fidei*, or deny that horn of my Gregorian axiom, which sayeth, ‘ the Managers of the Royal Infirmary are a kind of trustees or agents for all poor patients in that house, expressly for the purpose of procuring them all the comforts and benefits which can be procured and are most needful to them.’ Do your oaths authorize you to believe that the public exposure of females before a rabble of 500 individuals—that ‘ distresses which so greatly aggravate a sick man’s condition’—that a scene which makes the blood of professed anatomists run frigid in their veins—are really any portion of those ‘ comforts and benefits’ deliberately destined by you as Managers to your patients, and in perfect open honest accordance with your oaths *de fidei*?

“ I look up to the Infirmary of Edinburgh with the highest veneration. Recollections of early life as a student, and as a clinical clerk there, are dear to me, even while descending into the vale of years. Thirty years of my manhood were spent in keeping an inquisitive eye daily upon your Infirmary; and, at this hour, I esteem the Infirmary of Edinburgh the *punctum saliens* of my profession,—affecting, beneficially or injuriously, every portion of the earth where civilized man exists. I rejoice to bury in oblivion that past history of her calamities, when a College of Physicians and a College of Surgeons prowled in every avenue for plunder. Pull down, demolish your operation room, formed and fabricated by them for their own selfish purposes; and present to my profession, and the world, a *pure* Infirmary, exclusively consecrated to the relief of the poor from sickness and pain.—I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

JOHN THOMSON, M.D.”

Look also into a provincial infirmary—the Royal Infirmary of Dumfries :—

“ MEMORIAL addressed to the Governors of the Dumfries Infirmary by JOHN THOMSON, M.D., one of the Governors.

“ Truths would you teach to save a sinking land,
All shun, none aid you, and few understand.”

“ My appeal to the Governors of the Dumfries Infirmary, published in 1838, denounced three gross abuses in the management of that charity,—1st. Clergymen being, in the teeth of the charter, *ex officio* governors. 2d. Physicians and surgeons, in the teeth of the otherwise universal courtesy of their professions, demanding and pocketing professional remuneration out of the charity-box. 3d. The cruel, indecent, and illegal dissection of patients who die in the infirmary.

“ The first mentioned abuse has, since my appeal was printed, been extinguished. I rejoice to think that it can never again raise its head up to face the broad light of day; and that I am now precluded from extending my comments upon it.

“ The second abuse, ruinous to the funds of the infirmary—a

heavy blow to the comfort and the recovery of helpless patients there—a solitary stigma upon my profession—still exists. Indeed a party is resolved, at all hazards, to continue this abuse; and, most unfortunately, this party is a parcel of invisibles. They vote and cater for mandates, but dare not openly defend this abuse. The only apology they tender is, ‘That when men are paid, the most efficient services are rendered.’ A misanthrope, a hermit immured in his cell, may subscribe to its accuracy: I will not. What remuneration does the Provost of Dumfries receive for his civic services? What the Weekly Committee of this Infirmary? What, even among lawyers, the agents for the poor? Looking farther abroad into the world, what did the late Reverend Dr John Inglis ever receive for his endless labour applied to the propagation of Christianity in India? What did the late Reverend Dr Johnstone ever receive for such a large portion of a protracted life devoted to the welfare of the blind? What do the physicians and surgeons of every infirmary in Great Britain (Dumfries the single exception) receive for their professional services? Look into every department of life, and the same humane, honourable, disinterested, gratuitous, professional services may be found abundantly. Indeed it is a noble debt which good men, in all professions, and in all countries, pay with assiduity and pride. From this source infirmaries had their origin: withdraw it, and infirmaries must become embarrassed and imbecile. The present lamentable condition of the Dumfries Infirmary is a positive example of what I state. Already (according to the annual report, 1838) the physicians and surgeons *only* have extracted from its charity-box about £2000, including interest. ‘To this grant of medical salaries’ (the same report emphatically continues) ‘the meeting attribute mainly the present embarrassment of the institution; for, whilst this large sum, if still in the hands of the managers, would relieve them from all the difficulty that now presses upon them, it is evident that, if these salaries, or even the half of the amount, had been paid from the funds from the commencement, the whole scheme must have fallen to the ground, and the district been deprived of one of its brightest ornaments.’

“For one moment pause and calmly contrast this plunder system of management with the gratuitous system. Recollect that

the contrast is not drawn by me. I quote from the same report, 1838 :—

“ ‘ This benevolent institution, like most others of a similar nature, had its beginning in very slender means, for in the year 1777, when the building was begun, the funds collected by the trustees amounted to little more than £800, and the promised annual contributions only to £150; but by a rigid economy on the part of the managers, aided by the Christian spirit of the medical practitioners of Dumfries, who cheerfully gave their valuable services *gratuitously* to the charity, the whole moved on more prosperously than could have been anticipated by its most sanguine supporters. It was founded on the broad basis of universal benevolence: all, of every sect and party, were its supporters, and all, of every sect and party, benefited by it. Every one vied with his neighbour in supporting so good a work; its funds were held sacred, and applied strictly and rigidly to their legitimate object—the care and treatment of the sick; and a blessing seemed to attend it.’ ”

“ Is it possible then that any governor can venture to apologize for the monstrous shameful anomaly of the Dumfries Infirmary being the only infirmary in Britain where physicians and surgeons demand and pocket wages from the charity-box.

“ Thus far I have fought to obtain the gratuitous services of physicians and surgeons to the Dumfries Infirmary, and have been defeated. We all know that the invisibles, at the annual court, May 1839, put forth their utmost exertions, and continued the medical and surgical salaries there—yes, the very £6 *for ale* to the clerk and apothecary. Mr Blacklock ‘ knows that in the year 1792 the salaries and wages paid by the infirmary amounted to about £66; they now (1833) amount to very nearly £300 annually.’ The invisibles are indeed resolved to patronize the plunder system. Fully aware of this, I carried to the annual court, 1839, the following notices for motions in the annual court, 1840 :—

“ 1. That a resident physician be appointed in this infirmary for the exclusive advantage of the poor, and to superintend all its concerns.

“ 2. That two unpaid surgeons be elected to take charge of surgical cases in the house.

“ 3. That an unpaid clerk and apothecary be elected.

“ 4. That the apothecary be prohibited from giving medicine to any out-patient.

“ As an annual court is unfortunately the worst possible place to examine and decide upon a complicated question ; and as I believe that the existence of this infirmary now entirely depends upon the appointment of a resident physician, I respectfully submit the following hints to the cool deliberate consideration of the governors.

“ We have been told that ‘ when men are paid, the most efficient services are rendered.’ The governors of the Dumfries Infirmary may, to their astonishment, find their infirmary a positive proof of the fallacy of this supposed axiom. You pay your physicians and surgeons, and what is the consequence ? You have what one of the invisibles designates ‘ a nominal infirmary, but not one for the benefit of the sick poor.’ I ask no man, governor or not governor, to adjudicate this question by any proof or assertion of mine. All I ask of him is to apply common sense to the examination of that admirable ‘ Report by the Committee of Inquiry into the condition of the Dumfries Infirmary, 1833.’ No man can call this an unreasonable request.

“ Every governor knows that the clerk and apothecary is always a young man just returned from attending the classes—at all events, by no means qualified to be physician and surgeon to an infirmary. Indeed everybody knows that he accepts the appointment for the avowed purpose of obtaining professional knowledge ; that he continues in the infirmary for only a few months : he is always a bird of passage.

The Report of the Committee of Inquiry, 1833, has, after full investigation, certified to all whom it may concern (page 16), that ‘ the duty of attending the out-patients is chiefly discharged by the apothecary.’ It has also recorded Mr Spalding’s consideration upon that point,—‘ He considers it to be the duty of physicians to give advice to out-patients ; but, on this point, the late Dr Laing and Dr Symons (he tells the committee) have entertained an opinion different from that of the surgeons ; and, for several months, the apothecary has discharged the greater part of that duty.’ Mr Robson told the same committee,—‘ Since the appointment of Dr Symons, or shortly after, he believes the out-

patients have been attended *solely* by the apothecary.' And Mr Blacklock (page 19) says,—‘ At present (1833) this numerous body of patients (the out-patients) are not considered by the medical men of the infirmary as under the care of any of them.’

“ Thus, then, beyond a shadow of doubt, the governors have now for seven years been in possession of the appalling fact that thousands of out-patients, encouraged to resort to their infirmary for relief, have been handed over *by them* to the tender mercies ‘ of a young man just returned from the classes,’ and his apprentices. For God’s sake—for the pecuniary advantage of the infirmary—for humanity to the out-patients themselves, cast them off entirely,—and, as regards them, cast off the shame and guilt of having ‘ a nominal infirmary, but not one for the benefit of the poor out-patients.’

“ The report (1833) records the declaration of Mr Samuel Shortridge, the clerk and apothecary of the day, certifying that ‘ since his appointment he has been the principal individual who prescribed for the out-patients.’ No doubt his apprentices prescribed for and doctored the rest.

“ But we must not part with Mr Shortridge so rapidly. For the edification of the governors we must quote his own words farther on—I know that he tells the truth—as recorded by the committee, 1833. He says, ‘ He prescribes any medicines that may appear necessary before the expected forenoon visit ; but should the medical officers not call as expected, which occasionally happens, the above duty of course devolves upon himself. His next visit takes place between six and seven P.M., when he ascertains the effects of the medicines, and, if found necessary, prescribes others. The apprentices compound the medicine.’ Dr G—— very properly remarks—‘ The clerk should see the medicines prescribed, and that part of the duty not, as at present, be left to the apprentices.’ But we must not lose sight of Mr Shortridge : He continues—‘ The physician and surgeon do not in general intimate when they are not coming down to the house,—the surgeon is more generally absent than the physician, as the daily attendance of the former is, in ordinary cases, unnecessary ; and, should he act so, he would very likely have nothing to do when he came down to the house.’ Here Mr Shortridge distinctly is physician, surgeon, and clerk, but not apothecary.

eary (his apprentices, as he tells the committee, compound the medicines), to the Dumfries Infirmary. ‘When men are paid, the most efficient services are rendered.’ Physicians are paid—surgeons are paid out of the charity-box—but Mr Shortridge prescribes what medicines he pleases. The physicians and surgeons are absent just as they please,—disease must sist proceedings until it suits their convenience to check it; and the only sentinel at his post, or more properly at their post, is the clerk and apothecary.

“The committee, 1833, have also recorded the declaration of one of their paid surgeons, Mr Spalding:—‘If, by reason of absence from home, or other causes, he (Mr Spalding) is not at the infirmary, he does not think of communicating with his colleague, unless he has some particular case under his charge at the time; because, if absent at the usual visiting hour, it is the duty of the apothecary to apprise him—or, failing him, his colleague—that his attendance is required. He thinks, upon an average, the surgeon cannot be engaged in the infirmary, at his ordinary visits, less than an hour.’ In one breath he tells the committee, 1833, that, upon an average, one hour daily should be occupied by him in the infirmary by his professional duties, for which he receives wages out of the charity-box; and, in the next breath, that being at his post of duty in the infirmary was a matter of perfect indifference to him. If he was wanted, the apothecary must ferret him out, &c. I wonder that no member of the committee, 1833, pointed out to him the positive rules of the house (Nos. 42 and 47)—‘The surgeons shall visit their patients at eleven o’clock every day; the surgeon who may be necessarily absent shall engage his colleague to officiate for him.’ In this infirmary physicians are paid, and surgeons are paid wages out of the charity-box. They even receive twelve months wages for six months services. Were two nurses in the infirmary to play the same game, every governor would instantly cry fie at their naughtiness; but physicians and surgeons, in open defiance of the distinct rules of the infirmary, do precisely the same, and have done so for years.

“The committee, 1833, affirm (page 24) that ‘the relief of the poor from sickness and pain, is not only the primary, but the sole object of this institution.’ No governor can for one moment

believe that this primary and sole object of their infirmary can be the fruit of such confusion confounded. The second best plan—medical officers acting gratuitously—has been rejected. I now claim the best plan,—That a resident physician be appointed in this infirmary for the exclusive benefit of the poor patients, and to superintend all its concerns: That the management of the Dumfries Infirmary be entirely assimilated to that of the Crichton Royal Institution. More I need not say to recommend my intended motion. The charter makes it imperative that a physician and *surgeons* be appointed. The resident physician obeys the first portion of the behest; and if surgeons were not specifically mentioned, he might act in the infirmary both as physician and surgeon. The proposed arrangement, as stated in my intended motion, ‘that two unpaid surgeons be elected to take charge of the surgical cases in the house,’ explicitly satisfies the charter, and, in addition, must keep up operative surgery among practising surgeons in Dumfries, to the great benefit of the community, without a shadow of injury or disadvantage to the poor patients in the infirmary.

“ I thought that my appeal had given information to the governors sufficiently ample to fix their attention upon that cruel, indecent abuse—dissection. I have been disappointed and disgusted to find within the infirmary a regular dissecting room, *lit by gas*. With all this provocation I shall not, at present, venture farther detail, trusting confidently that the correct management of a resident physician must extinguish that abuse.

“ A resident physician placed in the infirmary, resembles a mechanical power placed in the centre of a circle, regulating fixed and positive mechanical action. He resembles the father of a family, tenderly and anxiously, and diligently and economically providing for the comfort and the wants of his helpless inmates—keeping every servant to his duty, and in his proper place. What would any family be, if managed upon precisely the same plan and principle as the Dumfries Infirmary is? What would the consequence be, if the Commercial Hotel was managed upon precisely the same plan and principle? There would, beyond doubt, be ‘a nominal Commercial Hotel;’ but no Commercial for the benefit of the worthy proprietor or travellers. ‘It would soon come to an end.’ Like the infirmary, every

thing would be doleful externally ; confusion confounded internally. Every one master and mistress—responsibility laid upon no person—every one grasping for his ‘ snap-dragon snatch.’ The ‘ relief of the poor from sickness and pain—the primary, but the sole object of this institution’—committed chiefly to the professional knowledge and tender mercies of ‘ a young man just returned from the classes,’ and his apprentices, who never saw a class-room ;—in pain and agony, and disgust and horror, the wretched patient may indeed exclaim, as the frog did to the harrows thundering over his back, it may be fun to you, but, alas, it is death to me.

‘ Claudite jam rivos, pueri, sat prata biberunt.’

The Dumfries Infirmary is certainly a heavy curse to the district. During seven years I practised in Dumfries, I never rose one day without several typhus cases upon my list—sometimes even fifteen or twenty. I state positively that this calamity arose entirely from the infirmary ; typhus patients having been dismissed from the infirmary, extruded as soon as they could stand upon their feet, just in the incipient convalescent stage, when contagion is most powerful. Thus every typhus patient from the infirmary became a focus to extend the disease among his family and neighbours. No place suffered from cholera more than Dumfries did in 1832. From 15th September to 27th November 900 were affected ; 44 died in one day, 415 were reported as recovered, and 420 were buried *in one enclosure*.

All infirmaries, Sir, are bad, inconceivably bad, pupils and apprentices, and apothecaries and surgeons and physicians, each and all contributing their portion of devastation and torture ; but I dare not prefix an appellation to dispensaries or lying-in hospitals. Parturition is no disease, no more than nutrition or mictrition or digestion. Still a few deluded men and women, hoodwinked by men who reap the rich harvest, give the mother-to-be food for a few days and a bed, besetting that bed night and day with swarms of young men—pupils forsooth—subjecting her to the apprentice hands and management of juvenile men-midwives. Quiet and retirement to a female in such a condition are most acceptable and salutary ; but groups of young lads, young men-midwives, commixed with a batch of grocers’ boys to see the

fun, must to a female parturient be a torment and a heavy punishment.

With regard to dispensaries.—The havoc inflicted by British dispensaries far exceeds all the havoc of British quacks. Dispensary patients and the out-patients of the Dumfries Infirmary, already placed under your eyes, are precisely upon a par. Rash ignorant apprentices and pupils attend the poor. Your English poor unions are recently created instruments to extend this dreadful calamity.

Examine next, I beseech you, how medical students are punished. At the very first step the fraudulent blister of an apprenticeship is applied, and an apprentice-fee is extracted. The occupation of an apprentice is to be errand-boy to a medical man, or to stand behind an apothecary's counter; in either of which conditions he learns as much medical or surgical knowledge as he could learn behind a grocer's counter or in a toy-shop. After the corruption of an apprenticeship, he perhaps repairs to a medical school, where a teacher, or, more properly speaking, a legion of misnamed teachers, fasten upon him, and suck him like horse-leeches. All these teachers teach, or pretend to teach, the medical or surgical student in a manner no other profession or art known to me is taught;—they pretend to teach anatomy, surgery, chemistry, and so forth, by preaching; and their audience have neither power nor possibility of coming into near contact with their teachers or preachers, although each preacher has pocketed the pupil's fee. Indeed the generality of medical teachers or preachers have scarcely time to blow their noses, their numerous other occupations and professional pursuits compelling them to measure a carefully-meted hour for their lecture or sermon. Nothing can exceed the injustice and deception of such a course as affecting the medical student. The University of Edinburgh saddles a medical student with fourteen such preachers or professors, when three, or at the utmost four, *bona fide* medical teachers or professors are all that an honest medical curriculum require; and you, Sir, know so little about a medical curriculum that you are resolved to make one of these useless preachers—the professor of clinical surgery—an *ex officio* member of the council of Medical Education! This is shameful—1st. Because he is a most unnecessary blister upon the medical

student. 2*d.* Because, like all the rest, he does not teach, he only preaches. 3*d.* Because he, as professor of clinical surgery, is an illegal and mischievous intruder into the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, in the very teeth of its charter.

In addition to these fourteen blisters inflicted upon him, the worried, deluded, and robbed medical student is, during two years, compelled to pay for infirmary tickets, at a period when walking the hospital is positively useless to himself and pernicious to the patients. But he sees operations. Examine, Sir, a very accurate picture of

“ MEDICAL STUDENTS IN LONDON.”

“ *Walking the Hospitals—Operation Hunting, &c.*”

“ It was in the year —— that I commenced what is popularly denominated “ Walking the Hospitals ;” a finer satire than this phrase conveys can hardly be conceived. Great stress is laid by people in general upon this portion of the student’s education. I am sorry to undeceive them, it is little more than a farce, and I will challenge any man to prove that he has derived much real and substantial information from it. My own attendance at the hospital was punctual for a while, in order that my person might be known to the parties who would have to sign my certificate ; had this not been needful, I would have stayed away altogether. Though I was exceedingly anxious to take down a few cases, with their treatment, diagnosis and prognosis, my note-book shows a beggarly account of bare names and mere sketches ; nor can this be wondered at, when it is known what was the system pursued. It was as follows :—Dr C——, for instance, made his appearance about eleven o’clock ; after spending some time in the board room he proceeded through the wards, followed by a crowd of twenty or thirty young fellows, all elbowing and pressing to plant themselves round a narrow bed, and thrust their faces forwards so as to get a sight of the patient. In this strife, the brief period devoted to each case was consumed. Scarcely a word was spoken—the house apothecary received what directions were thought necessary to be given. No clinical instruction was afforded, and half an hour sufficed to get through a dozen or two patients. The doctor retired, the pupils dispersed, and ‘ the

hospital had been walked' for one day. I have frequently seen fifty, sixty, or seventy young men forming the 'tail' of a celebrated surgeon, and dogging his steps through the wards, almost suffocating both him and his patient by pressing round and most grievously annoying those to whom repose and quietude were essential. There always appeared to me something cruel and degrading in thus making the unfortunate creatures spectacles and objects of exhibition, more especially the females, who were treated as if modesty and feminine feelings were extinct among them. That this was not so, was sufficiently indicated by the agitation and uneasiness visible in the countenances of the sufferers, when they found themselves surrounded by so many persons of an opposite sex, by whom they were treated as if they had been insensate beings.

"The greatest absurdity, however, which characterised the London hospitals and London students, was the anxiety to witness surgical operations. No sooner was it known that a great operation was to be performed at any of the hospitals, than the whole posse of students from all parts literally swarmed to the appointed theatre. Orders were repeatedly given to the door-keepers to exclude all but the gentlemen attached to the hospital. A regiment of soldiers would have been required to have executed this command. The doors were stormed—the keepers trampled under foot; and several times it happened that they suffered very severely from bruises and kicks. The confusion arising from this cause was extreme; and another evil consequence was, that as the operating theatres in most of the hospitals were far too small to accomodate comfortably one-half of those who were squeezed into them, there was nothing but complaints and efforts to escape from those who were nearly smothered by the press, whilst the place became hot as a furnace, to the serious detriment of patient, surgeons, and pupils. On one occasion, just as the patient was being removed, the whole paraphernalia of forms and railing gave way, and precipitated the pupils head over heels on the floor; and the crush would inevitably have killed him had he not fortunately passed the door. Had the accident occurred a few minutes sooner, it is impossible to say what might have been the amount of mischief done. Now it may be supposed that this anxiety to see operations is a laudable trait in the character of

the pupils, and evinces a disposition to avail themselves of the opportunities thrown in their way. That they may think so is possible ; and also, that their friends, when they hear of such things, may fancy that they must of necessity make young men wonderfully clever. Both are mistaken. In the first place, there is nothing to be seen except the struggles of the patient ; and in the second, if there were, no benefit would result from it. In most operating theatres the backs of the operator and his assistants are towards the pupils, and these with their heads form an impervious screen ; and, indeed, were an opening left, through which one might get a glimpse, the first deep cut covers every thing with blood, and, for what may be learnt, the surgeon might as well have his hands in his pockets. Yet, to witness these operations, two or three hundred young men would flock together. As to the more delicate operations, such as those upon the eye, the instruments themselves are so small, and the quickness of hand required so great, that nothing whatever can be learned by the bystander. Even were it different, could parties see, they would be no wiser. There is no leisure for demonstration or explanation : in twenty cases out of twenty-one, the pupil's knowledge of anatomy is not sufficient to enable him to follow the knife ; all that he knows about it is that there is a bloody surface—that arteries are secured if necessary—that the patient is then removed—and so there is an end of the matter. He is not a whit nearer being capable of performing such an operation safely, and he receives a wrong impression as to its difficulty, facility, or risk to the patient, from the imposing ceremonial attending it.

“ But he is led astray in a still more dangerous track—he is taught to consider those operations as the triumphs of his art—when in reality they are its disgrace. The first effect of this is, that he wastes his time in running from place to place to witness them ; and the next, that he is led into the belief that a capability of performing them is a mark of an enlightened and skilful surgeon. Neither does the harm end here, for the hospital-surgeon also is led away by the *eclat* of these operations, and is induced to seek opportunities to bring himself into notice, at the expense of limbs and life, and to build his reputation upon a blood-stained pedestal. Far higher honour is nevertheless due

to the man who can save a limb, than to him who can cut one off; and in this respect Mr Abernethy was a brilliant exception to the great body of London hospital-surgeons, and had he no other claim to the gratitude of his pupils and patients, this is one of the utmost value. An operator enters a crowded theatre just as a favourite actor steps upon the boards of Covent Garden—bows to the company, and eyes his patient as a hungry man eyes a fowl he is on the point of dismembering. Every thing is ready—one assistant holds the knife, another the saw, a third the retractor, the fourth a tenaculum, a fifth stands ready with the ligatures, and the dressings are all laid in exact order. The tourniquet is now screwed down, watches are pulled out, and all is breathless expectation to see *how soon he can get through*. He takes hold of the knife, sweeps it round the limb, uses his saw, and lo! five minutes, and the theatre is evacuated. And this is trumpeted forth as the perfection of skill! Philip of Macedon ordered the man, who, by dint of unwearied practice, could throw a pea with unerring exactness through the eye of a large needle, a bag of pease as a recompence. James the Second gave the adventurer who clambered in safety up the outside of a church tower a patent to enable him to practise his hair-brained folly without competition; and I would advise these quick operators to carry a coat of arms, bearing a figure of death, supporting an hour-glass just run out. It would be a curious inquiry to seek out how many lives have been lost by such measures. That a proper degree of speed is desirable in operations so exquisitely painful, as a means of shortening the torture and agony which has to be undergone, is undeniable. I have seen great numbers of cases in which an operation has been declared, by what was to be supposed competent authority, to be quite essential to the life of the patient, but in which fear or despair has induced the party to refuse to submit to the knife, and yet he has recovered and lived for many years—a standing reproach to science.”

I pause, Sir, for one minute, to supplicate your forgiveness for my strong language, for my tenour of writing, almost bordering upon impertinence. I would loathe myself if a thought of that description could arise in my breast. Place, Sir, my strong language and urgent manner purely as cause and effect, irresistibly

proceeding from that agony, and devastation, and fraud and corruption, which the practice of medicine has, for many years, presented to my view. For thirty years I have entreated many influential men to correct the mischief. The late Henry Dundas, Lord Melville, and the late Chief Baron Dundas, entered keenly into my views. Several years ago, by their advice, I circulated the following statement, and I believe that the Royal Commission to visit the Scotch Universities sprung out of my communication. It certainly was placed before the Royal Commission, and also before the Patrons of the University of Edinburgh. Instead of being beneficial, it has only stimulated parties in power to make what was very bad, if possible, worse; but no man ever pointed out to me any mis-statement in the following particulars, a mis-statement applicable to the period when these particulars were written.

“ MEDICAL EDUCATION.—It is a remarkable fact that the medical profession, at this advanced stage of society in Britain, continues to be mischievous and degraded. It has been my profession for nearly forty years, and to the day of my death it must be my support. I can have no wish or interest, I am certain that I have no inclination to humble my profession; my highest ambition is to see her fine gold separated from all that alloy or dross which does mischief or degrades.

“ The Government of this country is, in my opinion, the positive cause of all this mischief and degradation. It either takes no concern whatever about the medical profession, or legislates in regard to it erroneously. In support of this opinion I may mention—*First*, That Government takes no concern whatever about Medical Education. *Secondly*, That Government creates and supports Colleges of Physicians, Colleges of Surgeons, and Apothecary Companies, which contribute almost nothing to the respectability or utility of the medical profession. *Thirdly*, That Government and the public nurse men-midwives, the ruin of the medical profession—

“ ‘ Nor uglier follows the night-hag, when called
In secret, riding through the air, she comes
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon
Eclipses at their charms.’ ”

“ My intention is to examine each of these points separately and in their order.—*First*, Medical Education.

“ Medical Education is a very indefinite term ; its perfection or defects are entirely regulated by opinion. A paternal government cannot permit such an important and powerful instrument to operate at random. Public health and individual safety demand that Government define with scrupulous accuracy what medical education is ; and, when so defined, that Government compel a scrupulous and uniform completion. But, up to this hour, Government have indeed taken no concern about medical education. Everything connected with it in this intellectual empire is in a mass of confusion—at sixes and sevens. The *London Courier* sums the whole up in one sentence—‘ There are,’ says that journal, ‘ seventeen medical corporations in the kingdom, each of which has a different curriculum of education ; and, according to the late Dr Maccarteny, at a meeting of the British graduates of medicine and surgery, held in Dublin, not one of the seventeen systems of education is good for any thing.’ From these seventeen medical corporations in the kingdom, each of which has a different curriculum of education, we shall here select the most illustrious of them all—the University of Edinburgh, as a fair specimen. I shall, therefore, confine my remarks to medical and surgical students there ; and as the point at issue affects all medical and surgical students there and elsewhere, it has, and ever has been the sole cause of positive calamity—in particular, loading the student with unnecessary expense, and, what is infinitely worse, but equally certain, sending almost every medical and surgical student out into the world to learn his profession after he has left a medical school.

“ I feel assured that a simple unvarnished statement of the case must convince every person ; but I will not venture to state it in my own words, or upon my individual testimony. I shall borrow the words and illustration of a most respectable author, so far in lieu of any statement of my own. This author is the present Right Reverend Bishop of Glasgow. ‘ There are two views (says Bishop Russel) in which we may regard plans of education ; and according to which we may regulate our judgments regarding them ; namely, as they are calculated to exercise and improve the mind ; or, as they are intended, simply to convey information.

This distinction (he says), is perhaps not very clear, as the communication of knowledge almost necessarily implies mental cultivation and improvement; but it respects at present the comparatively active or passive state of the pupil's mind during the process of instruction, or the co-operation which is demanded by the teacher on the part of the pupil, to make him teach himself. Now (he continues) it has all along been my firm opinion that residence at college is useful to young men, not so much for what they learn, as for what they do; not so much for the knowledge of the doctrines and theories which are submitted to their examination, as for the habits of diligence and exertion which are acquired by the regular and constant application of their faculties to a particular subject. The important thing is to teach a pupil to think, to remember, and to arrange the ideas which you have given him. According to this view, the system of an university is bad, exactly as it is deficient in the means of enforcing regular and assiduous application on the part of the pupil; and this deficiency respects, in my opinion, a matter so radically and essentially important that no degree of ability in the master, no eminence in scientific acquirement, and no eloquence of manner, can be held a compensation.

“ ‘ It is on this ground (the Bishop continues), and according to this view of academical instruction, that the plan of teaching at Edinburgh appears to me to be decidedly the worst with which I am acquainted, for there is neither discipline nor exertion in any part of it. Everything is done by the professors, and the students do nothing. I am afraid (Bishop Russel says), that I shall hardly gain credit when I say that the young men at Edinburgh may attend class or not, just as they please, and be idle or busy, just as it shall suit their inclination. No tasks are imposed—no demand of any kind is made upon the memory or the judgment—no regular exercises are enjoined, and no examinations, either public or private, are practised. The doors of the classrooms are thrown open at a certain hour, like the doors of a church, and such of the students belonging to them as choose may walk in, where they will hear a lecture as they would hear a sermon, and be allowed the same facility of forgetting it.

“ ‘ What shall we think,’ the Bishop asks, ‘ of such a mode of academical instruction as this, where the students are

mere auditors or spectators ; and where diligence and regularity of attendance are left entirely to their own discretion and steadiness ? ‘ It exhibits,’ says the Bishop, ‘ about the same share of wisdom, and is likely to produce the same share of success, as if a dancing-master were to teach his pupils by placing them round a room and dancing before them an hour a day ; and the result too would be somewhat similar—for at the end of a year or two the young folks would be able to talk fluently about steps, hornpipes, and waltzes, and of the uncommon ability with which they were executed by the teacher ; but as to their own acquirements it would be necessary to say nothing;—for what proficiency in dancing could be expected from pupils who had never moved their feet according to the rules of that art ? To make the cases completely parallel, it is necessary only to grant that the pupils of the professional man shall have the liberty to absent themselves whenever they please from the daily exhibitions of his agility, and, like the students of Edinburgh, have the privilege of suiting the amusements of the day to the state of the weather. * * * * A course of academical education without either task or inducement, without either the means of prescribing study or of ascertaining progress, is beyond all conception absurd, and is both an injury and an affront to the community at large ’

“ Such language is strong. It is quoted here from no inimical motive, but to establish with the greatest possible force these facts :—

“ 1st. That ‘ those habits of diligence and exertion which are acquired by the regular and constant application of the faculties of medical students to a particular subject ’ are not cultivated at the University of Edinburgh, or at any other medical school.

“ 2d. That there are ‘ no means of enforcing regular and assiduous application ’ on the part of the medical student at the University of Edinburgh, or at any other medical school—that ‘ diligence and regularity of attendance are left entirely to their own discretion and steadiness.’

“ 3d. That there is neither ‘ discipline nor exertion in any part of the plan ’ of teaching medicine or surgery at the University of Edinburgh, or any other medical school—that ‘ every

thing is done by the professors, and the students do nothing.'—
And,

“ 4th. That ‘ young men at Edinburgh,’ and at every other medical school, ‘ may attend classes or not, just as they please, and be idle or busy just as it shall suit their inclination.’ These are facts which for many years have been published to the world, and which to this hour remain uncontradicted. I leave them without comment, and shall only add one or two additional facts :—

“ 1. When a medical student enters the University of Edinburgh, the first thing he is obliged to do is to matriculate—that is, he enters his name and place of birth in the album or register of the University. Were this album really and truly a register, then its benefits to the community and to the individual student, would be of the first importance. The certificate obtained from it might amply testify that the medical student had spent with regularity a defined and specified period at that university, in pursuit of medical and surgical knowledge; that his diligence and application to medical studies had given satisfaction to his teachers; and of such a certificate the student might in future life upon many occasions avail himself. But the album of this university cannot furnish such a certificate, either as a stimulus to the student’s industry, or as a reward for his exemplary conduct. The most diligent and the idlest, the most virtuous and the most profligate—all for five shillings each, get the same copperplate certificate. The album, in truth, can only certify that during a specified period the student had been *civis bibliothecæ Edinensis*; or, in other words, that during a particular period, the student had been entitled to borrow books from the university library, and, for payment, to have tickets from any professor.

“ 2. From the day a medical student matriculates, up to perhaps six months before he goes in for his degree,—that is, during a period of two years and a-half, or three years and a-half, he is like a mariner upon a dangerous coast without a compass. The professor, during the whole of this pilgrimage, never exchanges a word with him. He scarcely even knows the student by head-mark. Emancipated from school, or from an irksome appren-

ticeship, the levity and buoyant spirit of youth, the temptations in a great city, the general propensities of human nature, even in the best, have no control, no monitor, no protector. In one word, the whole of this period, that period which parents and friends trust too confidently as being spent in diligent study and correct moral conduct,—that period which must form the accomplished physician or surgeon, the guardian and ornament of society, or the ignorant quack, its bane and disgrace,—is too generally spent in idleness and dissipation ; thus ‘ sending almost every medical or surgical student into the world to learn his profession after he has left the University.’ And what else can be expected from any class of young men placed in similar circumstances ?

“ 3. From the hour a medical or surgical student matriculates, up to perhaps six or eight months before he goes in for his degree, his time thus passes without plan, and too often without profit. When his day of trial approaches, he begins to discover that he is placed in a dilemma. To extricate himself he, for a few months before his examination, has recourse to a class of teachers called Grinders. From a teacher of this description he picks up answers to a set of routine questions. Such routine questions and answers may perhaps thus far fill up former neglect, and he perhaps passes. But if this interrogatory system had been continued daily and regularly from his first matriculation to the end of his curriculum, the benefit to the student must have been in an arithmetical proportion. But *grinding* during the whole curriculum is too expensive. This, added to the fees paid to professors, makes the expense exceed what the generality of students can pay, and loads the medical and surgical student at the end of his curriculum with oppressive expense. Here I must distinctly declare that none of these facts are produced or advanced by me as casting blame upon the professors. The fault lies in the internal economy of the medical school itself. Government only can remove the calamity.”

Since these lines were written, Sir, I have lived to see the day when I honestly avow a very different conviction. I am convinced that your Medical Bill has as much to do with even the

few atrocities of medical practitioners which I have here very imperfectly placed under your eyes, as it has to do with navigation. The public press, without mincing the matter, openly asserts, that, armed with the lever of a strong government, quack advertisements defy you. "We should like to see with what countenance the Right Honourable Baronet could face the editor and part-proprietor of the 'Cumberland Chronicle' or 'the Carlisle Independent,' in the prospect of an election, had he been accessory to cutting off supplies to the amount of several hundreds per annum. We can fancy the glow of virtuous indignation that would suffuse the face of the said editor and part-proprietor upon receiving the proposal of the Right Honourable Secretary for his 'vote and interest,' and the extreme satisfaction which the said editor and part-proprietor would have in telling the said Right Honourable Secretary that 'he would see him d——d first.'" Will you subscribe this with your family motto—"Reason contents me?" Reason contents me, Sir, that the very first step of a wise and honourable and humane Government, to wash their hands of mean, fraudulent, homicidal quack trash, is utterly hopeless. Indeed, the present proposed Medical Bill has not even a shadow or semblance of reference thereto.

Reason contents me that the next step of a wise and honourable and humane Government—to make it penal for any man without a fair medical education—asking or receiving fee or reward for medical or surgical advice or attendance, is just equally hopeless; that your proposed Medical Bill has not even a semblance of reference thereto.

Reason contents me that the next step of a wise and honourable and humane Government—to sweep away all Medical and Surgical Royal Colleges, is equally hopeless; that your proposed Medical Bill has not even a semblance of reference thereto; nay, with horror and disgust I find a new cut-and-dry College of Chemistry launched under your special patronage. Again, *plec-
tabuntur Achivi*.

Reason contents me that the next step of a wise Government—to abolish the absurd, the pernicious distinction between physician and surgeon—to class them both under one name, and under one and the same parliamentary measure, is equally hopeless; that your proposed Medical Bill has not even a semblance

of reference thereto. As you have not yet classed the men-midwives, pray get them knighted *secundum artem*.

Reason contents me that the next step of a wise and honourable and humane Government—to place naval and military and civil hospitals or infirmaries upon one and the same arrangement or plan, is equally hopeless. Your proposed Medical Bill has not even a semblance of reference thereto. Nevertheless, what is proper medical or surgical treatment for a sailor or for a soldier, is equally proper for a poor friendless man or woman. The atrocities perpetrated in dispensaries, the murders committed by ignorant dispensers of most active drugs are all passed over by your proposed Medical Bill in profound silence and apparent contempt. Yes, the preposterous Medical Education of the day—the monster calamity of all—seems to be far, very far, from your consideration. Carry your Medical Bill when you may, I am convinced that the upshot must correspond precisely with that of the Royal Commissioners appointed to visit the Scottish Universities in 1826. They ruined the medical school of Edinburgh as effectually as your carried Medical Bill must ruin the respectability and utility of the medical profession, yes, legalize and aggravate the atrocities committed under that shield. The University of Philadelphia has, in 1844, 153 graduates; Edinburgh, 66 graduates; St Andrews, with one medical student, has 53 graduates! —

Finally, examine the condition of anatomical education in Edinburgh.

“ ANATOMY IN EDINBURGH.

“ *To the Editor of the Lancet.*

“ Sir—I feel that I am unnecessarily taking up your time with complaints of the bad system the operation of the Anatomy Act has fallen into, but as I want your advice, I thought it proper to state the reason for asking it. I have seen in your valuable journal letters from students complaining of the systematic way of overcharging for subjects in London. I wish, however, to point out an evil no less injurious to the student in Edinburgh. Before the *cadavre* quits the infirmary, it is taken to the theatre appropriated to the post mortems, and the contents of the thorax

and abdomen examined, so that the relations being destroyed, these 'parts' are worthless to the student. In the majority of cases it is the same with the brain. I have been informed that this system has continued for upwards of two years. If the subject comes from a dispensary, the parts are likewise mutilated. Add to these grievances the great dearth of subjects in Modern Athens (last winter session, in a large school, there were two parts for each pupil during the whole six months), and no one, I think, will feel surprised at the decline of the Edinburgh school.

"The advice I would ask is, your opinion of the Dublin schools, of the lecturers, and of their dissecting-rooms. Really, Sir, the present system is most pernicious to the students' interests. In order to lay a proper foundation for the science, he must be constantly dissecting, and how can he accomplish this with only a part every three months. And, again, he passes for surgeon without ever having attempted an operation on the dead body. For these evils the passed surgeon sees only two ways before him—to go to Paris for six months to operate on the dead body, or, qualified, to practise upon the living unfortunates of his own country. Hoping that this letter and the advice I ask will not be too great a tax upon your patience, I remain, yours obediently,

UN ETUDIANT EN MEDECINE."

A dangerous and grossly vulgar error regarding the medical question now at issue universally prevails. Every man shrugs up his shoulders and says—fight dog, fight bear, this is no business of mine, let the doctors fight it out. Even the admirable and amiable writer in the Times, 10th August 1844, discussed the question as purely a question between the regulars and irregulars. The question at issue, Sir, certainly comprehends that despicable insignificant limb—the quacks—as certainly as it includes what an Edinburgh professor of midwifery used pompously to style "The Art of Human Procreation:"—but the real question at issue extends far far beyond these whimwham limits. It is indeed a very gross vulgar error to confine the question within such lilliputian bounds. Were your bill, your whole bill, the law of the land to-day, it could not effect me personally, *qua* physician, one cent of a farthing. I would not register.

Yes, Sir, the true, the self-evident matter at issue, effects every

man, woman, and child on earth. The acute editor of our Scotsman, 10th August 1844,—proclaims, *ex cathedra*, “that physicians and surgeons are not the best jury on a question of self-reform.” Even he is up to his knees in the vulgar error. I deny that it is in any shape a question of self-reform. The whole pandemonium and agony, are created for want of a jury. The doctors are jurymen and judges. The Scotsman breaks his lance only upon a small small limb of the vulgar error in my eye. But your proposed Medical Bill, Sir, jugulates prince and beggar—all and sundries, manufactured though it be from the same vulgar error. Your proposed Medical Bill, like an angel of vengeance bearing upon his front Council of Health and Medical Education, bedaggles our fears—bedims the horizon. Were I to meet a carman driving his team cart before the horse, I must instinctively conclude, from such arrangement, that no good can be expected. In the same manner, until the word health be erased from the title of your proposed bill; even then, reason contents me that your labour and intentions on that point are hopeless; because you have “constituted a council out of impossible and degraded elements.” Legislate for the benefit of mankind, and you to a certainty legislate for the benefit of the medical profession. Fail in, or reverse, this point; the Doctor Graham of former days may exhibit his splended genial celestial bed, while the Doctor Graham of the present day makes every sick man’s bed a Damien’s-bed, beyond the power of imagination to picture.

Public safety wants very little; and wants that little long:—A Council of Medical Education, from which all Royal Colleges, all Universities, and all Medical Men are excluded. When the council require medical information—that information can be obtained from a jury of medical men upon oath. 2. An uniform latin pharmacopeia for the whole empire. 3. Teachers bound to devote undivided attention and time to medical and surgical instruction: from nine o’clock A. M. to three o’clock P. M. An hour *viva voce* examination daily. 4. Pupils to devote their first year to anatomy exclusively, and to commence with comparative anatomy—zootomy—the uninterrupted dissection of animals. The second year to be devoted entirely to human anatomy, with dissection of the human subject. The third year, anatomy—human

and comparative, continued—chemistry, occupying half of each day—socratically—no preaching. The fourth year, socratic teaching of medicine. After this the pupil can go in for a degree. When he has got this degree, he can then, and only then, with benefit to himself and safety to the patients, walk the hospital. Thus instructed, government manumits him, and the world is all before him. Let the legally educated medical man wear a medal instead of a diploma. Public safety demands no more.

I am well aware that you will say, “*Graecum est, nec potest legi, nec intelligi*,” and that you will hazard every thing for victory. A bold man he must be who can look such a victory in the face. Recollect, Sir—

“ The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame than shedding seas of gore ;
And why ? Because it brings self-satisfaction.” —

Taking plain common sense as your guide, the self-satisfaction of protecting the health and strength and comfort of civilised man—of drying up ten thousand tears every hour—is at present within your grasp.

I have the honour to be,

RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR,

Your most obed^t. humble serv^t.

JOHN THOMSON, M.D.