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MEDICAL REFORM:

18

THE PRESENT CRISIS.

BY

SAMPSON GAMGEE, F.R.S., EDIN.

SURGEON TO THE QUEEN'S HOSPITAL, BIRMINGHAM;
 FOREIGN CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF SURGERY, PARIS;
 ASSOCIATE OF THE SURGICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND;
 LATE STAFF SURGEON OF THE FIRST CLASS;
 VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE MEDICAL REFORM UNION.



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MEDICAL REFORM.

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MEDICAL REFORM.

ENTHUSIASM in the cause of Medical Reform has been so suddenly awakened—the disapproval of the present system of granting licenses to practise is so general and unequivocal—the majority of the licensing bodies have evinced so much anxiety for the material interests of the few who wield their power and share their revenues, so little aptitude for conforming to the wishes of the profession and the general progress of society, that we run some risk of listening to two untrustworthy counsellors—indignation and haste.

It is clear, however, that sentiment ought not to be allowed to influence the decision of so important an issue; and the ills for which redress is sought have been borne so long, that no sufficient reason is apparent why an expeditious and dangerous remedy should be applied, in preference to one, slower perhaps in preparation, but offering better guarantees of a lasting cure. History tells that all struggles against abuses have eventually resulted in more complete victory, the greater the obstacles offered to them for a time by the interested few.

In the petition to Government and to the Medical Council, for the Amendment of the Medical Acts, commonly known as the Birmingham Memorial, a clear majority of the members of the profession in actual practice in the three kingdoms (9,724) has affirmed certain general principles on which legislation should be based.⁽¹⁾ The question now is, how are these principles to be carried out? How can they be embodied in an Act which shall be proof against the uncompromising advocates of vested interests, and win its way to Royal Assent, by convincing Parliament of the sincerity of the memorialists in the concluding words of their petition, "that they desire to obtain no privileges for the profession, without giving the public commensurate advantages? And they submit that an Act of Parliament so framed as to raise the standard of professional efficiency, protect life, and prevent the obtaining of money by false pretences, is an Act as much needed in the general interest of the community, as for the welfare and honour of the medical profession."

In framing the Memorial, details of legislation were intentionally avoided; the first object being to obtain the opinion of the profession on the main principles to be embodied in an amended Medical Act. It has been erroneously alleged by some, that the Memorial proposes to transfer the right of granting licences to practise to Examiners appointed by the State. The Memorialists have subscribed to no such proposal; and those⁽²⁾ deputed to

(1) For a copy of the Memorial see Appendix.

(2) Dr. Bell Fletcher, Mr. Arthur Oakes, Mr. Lloyd Owen, and myself.

represent them, before the Government and the Medical Council, have studiously adhered to the terms of the petition: "Composed as the Medical Council is, mainly, of the members of the Medical Corporations who grant licences to practise, the control of the system of Medical Examinations has proved to be very imperfect. The Memorialists are of opinion that the system of medical examination has proved very imperfect, and that the system of medical education should be revised, so as to ensure the possession of a thoroughly scientific and practical acquaintance with medicine and surgery, on the part of persons applying for the legal qualification. To this end it is held to be necessary to substitute for the present system of examination and for the many forms of licences to practise now granted, one high and uniform standard of examination, and one legal qualification."

This is an unequivocal affirmation in favour of the "one faculty" system; an outspoken protest against persistence in the absurd idea that young men can acquire a thorough knowledge of either medicine or surgery without studying both. What the 9,724 memorialists have prayed for is, that an end be put to the factitious rivalry and practical confusion created by the 19 licensing bodies; that candidates for a license to practise may have an opportunity of proving their knowledge in the theory and practice of medicine and surgery as one science; and, having given such proof, receive the full authorization to practise the profession in all its branches. As to who, or how many, shall be the Examiners, how they are to be

appointed and by whom, the Memorial is intentionally silent.

Of the present system of examination for granting licenses to practise, it is impossible to speak too severely, after Dr. Parkes's recent denunciation before the Medical Council. With the twofold responsibility of a Crown Member of the Medical Council and of an Examiner for the Public Medical Services, he did not hesitate to say that he had found some candidates for appointments in the Services, so ignorant of their profession, though already in possession of a diploma, that rather than entrust Her Majesty's soldiers to their care, he would prefer leaving them without any medical attendant at all.⁽¹⁾ These words were spoken only a few days ago in the London College of Physicians, in the presence of all the representatives of the licensing bodies; yet none of them thought fit to ask what Corporation had disgraced itself, and the Profession, by passing such men: not one of the Councillors ventured to impugn the justice of the damnatory words, spoken, be it remembered, by one of the most urbane, moderate, and learned Physicians of our time.

The best men in the rank and file of the Profession have never ceased to inveigh against the monstrous state

(1) Dr. Parkes's words as quoted in the *Lancet* for the 6th of March ult., p. 338, are: "Men are still admitted into the profession who are not properly qualified; at the last examination there were three candidates so ignorant that he could not conceive how they had been permitted to pass. Rather than admit such men he would leave the soldiers and sailors without doctors at all." The report in the *British Medical Journal* (March 5, p. 237), is substantially the same.

of things laid bare by Dr. Parkes ; but debarred, as the great majority have been, from exercising any influence whatever in the government of the Medical Corporations, not a few of these have filled their coffers, by granting licenses, for a pecuniary consideration, to men rejected by other licensing bodies which have evinced some anxiety for their own honour and for the public good.

No one attempts to justify the continuance of such a state of things, and it is reported, on trustworthy authority, that the Corporations contemplate amalgamation, so as to provide one examining board in each division of the kingdom, on condition that the rights of the existing licensing bodies be reserved, and that candidates for the license be mulcted in a heavy fee, which by a fixed scale of repartition shall go to support the Corporations.

It cannot be conceded that the Corporations shall be allowed to make such a reservation of their privileges a condition precedent to concessions which the exigencies of the age render imperative. Neither is it politic nor just that future generations of medical students shall be mulcted in heavy fees to maintain in perpetuity all the Medical Corporations, some of which have done nothing whatever for science, and have grown out of conditions which have long ceased to exist. To protect the colleges, by fixing their revenues in perpetuity from candidates for the license to practise, would be, apart from oppressive injustice to the latter, rewarding inactivity with an endowment, without concurrent responsibility or obligation,

in institutions which it is eminently to the interest of the public and the profession to stimulate to exertion in the common good.

Assuming it to be agreed that all candidates for licenses to practise are to demonstrate, by thoroughly scientific and practical examination, their knowledge of medicine and surgery as one science; and further assuming it proved that very many of the Corporations have hitherto so exercised their licensing powers as to have forfeited the confidence of the Profession, the Government, and the public, it does not necessarily follow that the examiners under the new Bill should be appointed by the Government.

It will be well not to attach too much importance to the fact, that for many years successive Governments have had the benefit of the advice of a gentleman, no less distinguished as a philosophical surgeon than as an authority in State Medicine. Under his advice, the Crown nominations in the General Medical Council have been made with the fullest regard to the great interests involved; and if we are to judge from the notices of motion which he has given from time to time in the Corporation in which he holds office as a Member of Council, the sympathies of the chief adviser of the Government in medical legislation are with the profession and the best interests of the community. But it might prove injudicious to overlook the fact that the Governments of this country, from whichever side of the House they have been chosen, have as

a rule shewn little favour to the Medical Profession. Those who remember the stinging protests of Mr. Guthrie when serving under Wellington in the Peninsula, may learn from many living sources, if they have not had the impressive teaching of personal experience, how the surgeons of the Army were treated during the Crimean War. The contest is a comparatively recent one which resulted in obtaining some measure of justice for the Assistant-Surgeons in the Navy. The Indian Medical Service since its transfer from the Company to the Crown, could bear some testimony to the amount of sympathy to be expected from Government Departments; and if anyone wishes to know something more of what the profession may expect from Ministers, let him but look at the state of the Poor Law Medical Service.

It may reasonably be argued that these evils are the fruits of inherited abuses, which under an amended Medical Act would admit of remedy; but how far the profession itself shall have a share in redressing its wrongs and raising itself in the social scale, must depend on whether the new Act shall provide for self-government on a representative basis, leave us still in the irresponsible power of the Corporations, or hand us over to a Chief of Department at Whitehall.

If the profession be well advised it will seek to establish a *locus standi* to represent its own interests, make the best terms it can with the Government and the Corporations, and create an influence in Parliament, which may be a

power for good when the promised Bill is on the table for discussion.

The Medical Corporations have yet to learn that their best chance—possibly their only chance—of survivorship, in the inevitable and rapidly approaching struggle, lies in their doing justice to the vast majority of the members of the profession, whom they have so long treated with undeserved and impolitic exclusiveness. It seems inexplicable that the representatives of the Corporations on the Council have not seen the wisdom of coming to terms with the 9,724 memorialists; and yet it has been reported on very trustworthy authority⁽¹⁾ that they only consented after a division to enter upon their minutes a document⁽²⁾ setting forth the objects of the Memorial addressed to the Council by the 9,724 members of the profession in the three kingdoms who have subscribed their assent to the petition. When the document referred to had been read, one of the members actually proposed that the Council should proceed to the next business; and the motion for entering the communication on the minutes was only carried on a division, after a warning by Dr. Andrew Wood that “the Council would be acting very unwisely if it did not receive memorials from the profession with every mark of respect.” Considering the value which constitutional Englishmen attach to the right of petition, it says something for the rudimentary ideas of public responsibility

(1) *Lancet*.

(2) Appendix.

entertained by the General Medical Council, that it required a formal warning from one of its members, not to dismiss summarily a communication from a number of gentlemen, officially deputed to present to the Council a petition signed by a clear majority of the profession in the United Kingdom.

It is pretty clear that some of the members of the General Medical Council have yet to learn that no men conduce so powerfully to the destruction of time-honoured institutions, as those who refuse to restore and develop them, to compensate for the wear of time, and to meet the growing wants of society, in its progress to a higher civilization. They have not, it would seem, yet learned that, in the long run, there is no conservatism so safe as timely concession to reasonable demands, concession such as the members of the Medical Profession urge when they plead their right to representation on the General Medical Council. To quote the words which I recently had the honour to address to the Home Secretary⁽¹⁾ —“A large number of us over the country, however much we may have worked at our profession, whatever position we may have attained, have no more voice in its government than the coachmen who drive us. How, or in what proportion, the franchise should be given to us, we do not say; we simply say this, that the time has ceased when the great bulk of the practitioners of the country should be destitute of any professional franchise.”

(1) Report of Deputation, *Lancet*, March 12, p. 391.

One great difficulty lies in the fact that the Corporations, with few exceptions, refuse to admit to a voice in the management of the Medical Colleges and Halls, the members to whom equitably, if not always by express legal provision, they unquestionably belong. Let the Corporations be remodelled on a representative basis, and no small proportion of the existing difficulty will vanish.

If once the Profession had the power of self-government, there would be a truce to such pointless talk as that for which the Medical Council has acquired an unenviable notoriety. Granted, in the words of one of our foremost statesmen, that no great beneficent change has ever been enacted by our legislature without a vast deal of preliminary talk, unity has no more enduring basis than a free development of differences; but it is useless to arrive at a conclusion when those who arrive at it have not the power of carrying it into execution. Such has been the case on the Medical Council, owing to the nicely adjusted balance of those interests which the Crown representatives have not been able to reconcile. Dr. Parkes's speech, already referred to, was such a complete justification of his heavy bill of indictment against the Corporations, that none of his colleagues seriously attempted to rebut him: and yet the Netley Professor was so successfully squeezed, that he was forced to drop the resolution he had moved, and adopt one which ended in reserving the rights of the existing Corporations. What chance would there have been for a Reform Bill in '32 if Gatton, Old Sarum, *et hoc omne genus*, had been allowed

to stipulate for a full reservation of the privileges of rotten boroughs? How could Mr. Disraeli have carried his famous resolutions to amend the laws affecting the representation of the people, if he had conceded to all the members of the then House of Commons such an immunity from change in the general interest, as Dr. Parkes consented to stipulate for in behalf of his brother Councilors, regardless of the insignificance and venality of the Corporations which not a few of them represent.

No greater mistake has been committed in and out of the General Medical Council, than proceeding on the assumption that all the Corporations therein represented stand on an equality and have an equal claim to respect for their vested interests, are equally responsible for the miscarriage of the Act of 1858, and for the present state of things. If the Profession, as a body, can once succeed in attaining a *locus standi* in the discussion, it will be for the representatives of the Government and the Profession to weigh the claims of any Corporation to a continuation of such privileges as may enable it to accomplish good work, in the interest of science and the public. Far from the Medical Corporations having a prescriptive right to immunity from change, the onus lies on them to shew why they should be continued at all, if such continuance involves a tax upon the Profession and the public, without commensurate return to either.

These are not days when vested interests, as such, can claim immunity from parliamentary control and abolition,

if such radical treatment be found necessary in the general interest.

The Oxford Colleges and Greenwich Hospital, with all their pious and glorious memories, have had to yield to the exigencies of the time. Are not the admirers of Schedule A of the Medical Act a little too sanguine in hoping that it will prove invulnerable?

I frankly confess not to be one of those who deride the Act of 1858. Let any one think of the state in which the Profession was in this country when the House of Lords decided for it, in the historical case of *Rose v. The College of Physicians*. Go back to the Apothecaries' Act of 1815; bear in mind that it was only in the year of John Hunter's second interment, nearly three quarters of a century after his death, that candidates for a surgical diploma in England were first asked a single question in physiology, and it must be admitted that since the Act of 1858 became law, things have mended a good deal. The Corporations, then all powerful, yielded with ill grace, stipulated all manner of reservations, and offered that dead weight of inert opposition which tells so powerfully in resisting the attacks of a body, ill disciplined and unused to public life as the Medical Profession. Things have changed. In spite of such admixture as the trio of dunces, not improbably prolific, which Dr. Parkes has made famous, the profession has become educated. It was for a very long while impossible to obtain the expression of collective medical opinion

on any one point ; but the Birmingham Memorial proves that the process of education, though very tedious, has borne some fruit.

Withal, the Memorial of the majority is only an affirmation of principles. The question is, how can these principles be introduced into practical legislation ?

The daily practice of the Profession teaches that, unquestionable as is the value of sound principles, a clear acquaintance with them does not necessarily ensure practical knowledge. Circumstances have to be considered, causes investigated, complications averted and removed, and a variety of means have often to be employed before the desired end can be secured. This process of thought, of careful observation and strict induction, is quite as necessary in dealing with social problems as with pathological conditions. Before the knowledge to deal with either can be applied, it must be acquired. As a Profession we have little experience in the management of great social questions. In the particular instance of the desired reform of the Medical Acts, we are suffering from injustices and anxious for redress. The bulk of the Profession, entirely excluded from all influence in their Colleges, feel that they have in them a power for good which, if allowed scope for development, must redound to the honour of their calling, in direct measure to the good it can confer upon society. All the greater reason why no chance should be thrown away. The case of the Profession against the Corporations is a good one ; we

have only to hold our own, to adhere to the unassailable principles of the Birmingham Memorial, and the victory of those principles will be safe. A little more pressure will not fail to convey to those bodies which have the strongest instinct of self preservation, that evils such as those under which the Medical Profession has so long laboured in this country, never fail to work out their own cure. It is a case for expectant medicine, not for heroic remedies, for conservative surgery, not for amputation. We well know that in saving a life or a limb it is not always possible to save every organ and part. Weak and bruised structures die and are eliminated, but the trunk lives, and wounds heal up kindly, under judicious management.

The simile may be carried a little further. However a man may speculate in his study, at the bedside with a serious case he must be judicious. Theories and systems must be held in abeyance when life is in the scale.

It is the life of the Profession which is involved in the present crisis of Medical Reform. A proper understanding of the nature and causes of the ills under which the body is labouring, is essential to the choice and application of a remedy. Is that knowledge available in the particular case? The meetings held here before, and at the establishment of the Medical Reform Union, our vast correspondence with the Profession in connection with the Memorial, the proceedings of the General Medical Council,

and the report of the meeting held the other day at the Royal College of Surgeons, incline me to the belief that further enquiry and discussion are desirable, before we are quite prepared for the Parliamentary contest which must inevitably precede the passing of the prayed for amended Medical Act.

What is the real value to the Profession of the respective Corporations? How can they be made use of in the cause of progress? Is it quite impossible that their rulers can be brought to see the wisdom of timely concession? Assuming it to be conceded that the Profession is to be represented in the Medical Council, is it best that the representation should be direct or indirect, by election of the collegiate representatives, or by election of the deputies from the whole body? These and many other allied questions are worthy of investigation.

It is suggested that a meeting of the Profession in London might promote the desired solution. Of course such meeting, if held, must be publicly convened and with sufficient length of notice.

If the idea meet with approval, the Executive of the Medical Reform Union will be happy to make the necessary arrangements. A great deal of experience has been accumulated in connection with the Memorial, and the knowledge so gained might be advantageously incorporated with the history and proceedings of the

Medical Reform Union. The report embodying such information might be published before the meeting, and taking it as read if deemed more convenient, the question of adoption of the report might be made the basis of the discussion. We should consider no personal matter involved, and look upon the debate on the report as a convenient method of eliciting opinions, however various.

The Executive of the Medical Reform Union would have great pleasure in resigning its functions into the hands of a larger and more representative Committee, which could then and there be elected and empowered to confer with the Government, the Medical Council, and the Corporations, on behalf of the Profession.

The occasion is a great one. Let us meet it, not as Physicians, Surgeons, or Apothecaries, however keenly and honourably each may feel for his particular section. A great public work has to be done. It is no time for pet theories and recriminations. Generous forgetfulness, broad faith, and manly resolve, may do a great deal towards settling the difficulty.

This pamphlet has no preface—it shall have a very short conclusion. I have aimed at supplying matter for reflection. Those who agree, need not say much; let those who differ speak out quite openly. Criticism is wholesome. If convicted of error, the reflection will be

consolatory that truth cometh sooner out of error than out of chaos, and that motion, even in a wrong direction, is better than stagnation.

SAMPSON GAMGEE.

BIRMINGHAM, 29th March, 1870.

APPENDIX.

MEMORIAL.—The undersigned Members of the Medical Profession respectfully submit to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department the necessity of passing an Act of Parliament to amend the Medical Act of 1858, and the Acts subsequently passed with a view to amend it.

The Act of 1858 affirms that "It is expedient that persons requiring Medical Aid should be enabled to distinguish qualified from unqualified Practitioners." The experience of the past ten years has proved that the Act is practically inoperative as a guide to the public in distinguishing legally qualified Members of the Medical Profession. A large number of men are practising Medicine and Surgery in different parts of the country, not only without any legal qualification, but without having undergone any regular course of Medical Education. In some places men are practising under fictitious names, assuming the title of doctor, and obtaining considerable sums of money from weak persons, by intimidation and extortion. The Medical Act of 1858 is practically inoperative in restraining these offenders.

It is capable of proof that some legally qualified men have lent their names to persons without qualification, to enable them to practice Medicine and Surgery, without incurring liability to prosecution. Such a proceeding is regarded as a fraud on the public and the profession; and it is suggested that in any future Bill greater powers be given to the General Medical Council to remove from the Register, and deprive of their professional rights, qualified men who shall aid and abet illegal practitioners.

The present state of the Law touching Certificates of Death, greatly favours the successful practice of Secret Poisoning and Infanticide. It is suggested that the Certificate of a legally qualified

Member of the Medical Profession, in the absence of a Coroner's Order, shall be indispensable as a preliminary to every Burial.

The Medical Act of 1858 purports to constitute the General Medical Council for the purpose of regulating Medical Education and Registration throughout the United Kingdom; but composed as the Council is, mainly, of the members of the Medical Corporations who grant licenses to practice, the control of the system of Medical Education has proved to be very imperfect.

The undersigned are of opinion that the system of Medical Education should be revised, so as to ensure the possession of a thoroughly scientific and practical acquaintance with Medicine and Surgery, on the part of persons applying for the legal qualification.

To this end, it is held to be necessary to substitute for the present system of examination, and for the many forms of license to practice now granted, one high and uniform standard of examination, and one legal qualification.

The practical part of the course of professional study stands in special need of improvement, and the undersigned would gladly see the regulations made stringent, to ensure the attendance of Students on a thorough course of practical study in Hospitals; but in the event of any Student engaging in private practice on his own responsibility before he is legally qualified, it is suggested that he forfeit the year, or years, as a Student during which he has so practised.

It is respectfully, but very earnestly, submitted, that the influence and power for good, of the General Medical Council would be greatly extended, with the profession and the public, if provision were made in a new Act of Parliament for the representation on the Council of the general body of Practitioners of Medicine and Surgery, who are now, for the most part, deprived of any professional franchise.

In any future Act of Parliament, it is suggested that provisions be made for instituting prosecutions under it by a Public Prosecutor or other Public Functionary, on behalf of the General Medical Council, instead of leaving the voluntary enforcement of the Law to individuals.

The undersigned desire to obtain no privileges for the profession, without giving the public commensurate advantages, and they submit that an Act of Parliament so framed as to raise the standard of professional efficiency, to protect life, and prevent the obtaining of

money on false pretences, is an Act as much needed in the general interest of the community, as for the welfare and honour of the Medical Profession. (1)

TO THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—When we had the honour of being received by you as a deputation, in July last, to present a memorial from the members of the medical profession concerning the amendment of the Medical Acts, 5,200 registered practitioners had signed that document: 4,524 have since added it, so that at present the number of assents is 9,724, a considerably larger number, we have every reason to believe, than has ever been appended to a similar document in the history of the medical profession.

The events of the last few months have proved that our memorial represents the feelings and wishes of the medical profession throughout the United Kingdom, in a still greater degree than is implied by the number and the character of the signatures.

At the close of your last session we were favoured, through your registrar, with copies of the report of your committee appointed to consider the amendment of the Medical Acts; and we had intended submitting to you some observations on that report, on the approach of your ordinary session.

It having come to our knowledge that a special meeting of your Council has been convened to consider matters bearing intimately on the proposed amendment of the Medical Acts, and it being evident from your committee's report, already referred to, and from the resolutions of your Council (July 12, 1869) founded on that report, that the prayer of your 9,724 memorialists whom we are deputed to represent, has not yet produced the desired effect upon you, we are anxious to rectify any existing misapprehension which may be possibly due to the brevity of the explanations offered on your invitation at the personal interview of July last.

We take this opportunity of tendering our sincere acknowledgments of the patience and courtesy with which our remarks were listened to by your Council at the interview just referred to. We

(1) Any member of the Profession who has not yet signed the Memorial, may have a copy of it forwarded to him, on application to my friend Mr. Lloyd Owen, Secretary of the Medical Reform Union, 9, Easy Row, Birmingham.—S. G.

deemed it unadvisable to add to the length of your sittings by speeches ; and we were under the impression that the memorial was so clearly though tersely expressed, that the wishes of your petitioners could not be misunderstood.

Under existing circumstances, we respectfully beg your attention to an explanatory statement.

The present system of granting licenses to practise finds so few defenders, that your memorialists for its abolition can scarcely fail to be successful. We deem it necessary, however, to call your attention to the fact that your petitioners do not only pray that an end be put to the present system of examinations for licenses to practise which distracts students, fails to protect the honour of the medical profession, and is opposed to scientific unity and to the best interests of the public ; but your petitioners furthermore pray that the one legal qualification to be hereafter granted to candidates for admission into the medical profession, shall only be granted on proof being given, by a high standard of examination, that the applicant for the license does really possess a competent scientific and practical knowledge of medicine and surgery.

We are convinced that any alteration of the present system would fail to satisfy your 9,724 memorialists if it aimed at protecting and consolidating the interests of the Corporations which now grant licenses to practise, in preference to promoting the real interests of science, of the profession, and the public. We hold these interests to be identical, and we submit that they have hitherto suffered very seriously, in consequence of the line of action pursued by several of the licensing bodies.

We beg to quote your Resolutions Nos. 3 & 4, of July 12th ult., on the Report of your Medical Acts Amendment Committee:—

“(3) That having carefully considered the objects of the Medical Acts of 1858, and the constitution of the Council appointed under that Act to carry out its objects, the Council are of opinion that, for the purposes of the existing Act, the present Council is essentially well constituted.

“(4) That the Council are of opinion that if the Legislature should think proper to invest the Council with extensive powers and fresh duties, by which the profession at large would be brought more under the direct influence of the Council ; then in that case the profession at large should have more direct influence in the appointment of members of Council.”

You agree with your petitioners in thinking that the existing Medical Acts need amendment, and even if it be conceded that for the purposes of the existing Medical Act the present Council is essentially well constituted, it does not follow that the present constitution would be adequate to carrying out the objects of an amended Act. It is generally conceded that the present Council is defective in power, and we take your Resolution No. 4 to be an admission of the justice of our prayer, that provision be made in a new Act of Parliament for the representation in the Council of the general body of practitioners of medicine and surgery, who are now, for the most part, deprived of any professional franchise.

At present the Corporations are dominant in the Council. We feel that we are giving expression to the wishes of the memorialists when we urge that an amended Medical Act should give full power to the Medical Council to govern the Corporations as well as the profession. Such a Council could only command the respect of the profession and the country, by being representative of the profession, and responsible to Government and to public opinion.

We are not unmindful of the good which the Medical Corporations have wrought, and we shall be glad to see an amended Medical Act so framed as to enable them to devote their resources to the advancement of science and to the lasting interests of the profession. Our present duty is to convey to you respectfully, but very candidly, the conviction of the memorialists that, in framing an amended Medical Act, the first interests to be considered are the interests of the public and of the profession.

Should you desire any further explanation of the object and intention of your memorialists, we shall be happy to furnish it.

We enclose a duplicate of this communication, with a copy of the memorial, requesting that you will do us the honour of forwarding them to the Lord President of her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, on the first occasion of your communicating with his Lordship touching the amendment of the Medical Acts.

We have the honour to be, Mr. President and Gentlemen,
your very humble servants,

BELL FLETCHER, President of the Medical Reform Union.

SAMPSON GAMGEE, Vice-President.

ARTHUR OAKES, Treasurer.

D. C. LLOYD OWEN, Secretary.

Birmingham, Feb. 21st, 1870.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

HISTORY
OF A SUCCESSFUL CASE OF
AMPUTATION AT THE HIP JOINT.

(*The Limb 48 inches in circumference, 99 Pounds weight.*)

WITH FOUR PHOTOGRAPHS, BY SARONY AND PIERRE-PETIT.

“The case reflects great credit on Mr. Gamgee. The accuracy of his diagnosis, the skill and courage which he showed in performing the operation, the wisdom which regulated the after treatment, are all features which deserve commendation.”—*British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review.*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

HISTORY

OF A SURGICAL CASE

AMPUTATION AT THE HIP JOINT.

(The title is indistinctly visible in the original.)

WITH FOUR ENGRAVINGS BY GILBERT AND GIBSON.

The case reflects great credit on Mr. Gage. The accuracy of his diagnosis, the skill and courage which he showed in performing the operation, the wisdom which regulated the after treatment, are all features which deserve commendation.—British and Foreign Medical-Chirurgical Review.

