

**A narrative of some late injurious proceedings of the managers of the Royal Infirmary, against the students of medicine in the University of Edinburgh / Published by the Students.**

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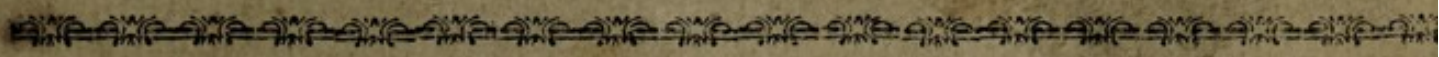
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A  
NARRATIVE

OF SOME LATE

INJURIOUS PROCEEDINGS

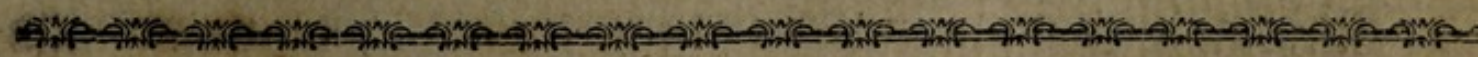
OF THE MANAGERS OF THE ROYAL INFIRMARY,

AGAINST THE STUDENTS OF MEDICINE

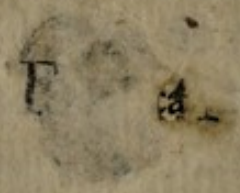
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

[PUBLISHED BY THE STUDENTS.]

CONFERRERE INJURIAS, ET INTERPRETANDO ACCENDERE. *Tacit.*



M A R R A M



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# N A R R A T I V E

OF SOME LATE

## INJURIOUS PROCEEDINGS

OF THE MANAGERS OF THE ROYAL INFIRMARY, AGAINST THE STUDENTS OF MEDICINE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

[PUBLISHED BY THE STUDENTS.]

**F**OR more than thirty years, the University of Edinburgh has been celebrated over Europe as a School of Medicine. The fame of its Professors drew a vast concourse of Students to attend Lectures that were soon distinguished for uncommon excellence. Of those who thus contributed to extend its early reputation, the respectable names of GREGORY and WHYTT ought chiefly to be mentioned; though to none a higher praise is due than to that of the late DR ALEXANDER MONRO, who indeed may be justly considered as the great parent of this medical seminary. Since his time, its fame has been rapidly and invariably increasing; and the number of strangers who resorted to it for instruction has continually augmented. Fortunately for the institution, the same merit which distinguished the founders descended to their successors; and the loss which otherwise might have arisen from their death, tended but little to retard that progress towards celebrity which their laudable exertions had so happily begun. The friends of the University perceived with pleasure, that under the present Professors its character has not been diminished. Students arrive not only from all parts of the British islands, the West Indies, and America, but the theatres are crowded with pupils from every nation in Eu-

have attended the Infirmary. The connection that subsisted between them and the Gentlemen who presided over its business, was an intercourse of mutual benefits. Their ample and uniform contributions \* afforded a convenient aid to scanty and precarious revenues, which every art of sollicitation had for a series of years been employed to extort from the generosity or ostentation of the public. The prudence of the Managers did not yet refuse every equitable effort that could render attendance in the House desirable, and as subservient to instruction as was consistent with the great ends of its institution. The regular conduct of the Students merited and obtained from them politeness and respect; and thus the welfare of the Hospital, and the benefit of its pupils, were equally promoted. At such a period, it could not easily have been foreseen, that a body of men, so much interested in the prosperity of the city, and the reputation of the University, should have departed all at once from the usual justice of their conduct, and, by any ungenerous innovation, should have deprived the Students of advantages they had so long enjoyed. Such an event, however, was not far distant. In the month of June 1785, under pretext of some irregularities supposed to have been committed by individuals, the Managers thought proper to involve the whole body in the punishment, and, by the following regulations, to render attendance on the Hospital entirely useless.

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\* For the last thirty years, the Students of Medicine have not contributed less than 500 l. annually to the funds of the Infirmary. The Managers at present talk loudly of the flourishing state of its revenue, and their total independence of any farther assistance from the Students. The time has been, when they did not disdain to have plays acted for its maintenance, nor to purchase, by the use of its long room, the profits of a subscription-ball. (See *History of the Royal Infirmary.*)

ROYAL

ROYAL INFIRMARY, June 15. 1785.

“ THE Managers finding that much abuse and disorder has been introduced  
 “ into the House, by the Students being admitted into the Wards at irregu-  
 “ lar hours, and almost at all times,

“ DO HEREBY RESOLVE,

“ That this business, hereafter, be put under certain regulations.—And,  
 “ therefore,

O R D E R,

“ 1. THAT no Student (except in company with the Physicians, or Surge-  
 “ ons in charge, or Clinical Professors) during the time of their attendance,  
 “ be admitted into the Hospital before twelve o'clock noon.

“ 2. THAT the doors of the Hospital be locked every day at two o'clock  
 “ in the evening, and that no Student be allowed to remain in the house after  
 “ that hour.

“ 3. THAT the Dressers shall come every day to do their respective pieces  
 “ of business enjoined them by the Physicians or Surgeons, exactly at four  
 “ o'clock; and, that they shall finish the same before five; so that there be  
 “ no pretence for opening the doors of the Hospital before the first, or keep-  
 “ ing them open after the second hour mentioned.—And the Managers order,  
 “ that no Student whatever be allowed to enter with the Dressers, or to re-  
 “ main with them while they are doing their business.

“ 4. THAT no Student be admitted into any of the Wards of the Hospital  
 “ to visit any of the patients, before seven o'clock in the evening; and that  
 “ when admitted, then it shall be *only in company with the Physicians or Surge-*  
 “ *ons Clerks*, who are also ordered to put every question to the patients that  
 “ any Student may desire, as the Managers judge it proper, that questions be  
 “ put to the patients by the Clerks only.

“ 5. THAT these visits of the Students be always finished before eight  
 “ o’clock, and that then the doors of the several Wards be locked up;  
 “ and that no Student be allowed to remain in any of the Wards, or to en-  
 “ ter them again for that night.

THE Managers, however, hereby declare, That the above regulations  
 are not intended to affect the business of the Lying-in-ward, to which they  
 allow Students to have access at all times of the day and night; but, at the  
 same time, discharging any of the Students attending that Ward from  
 going into any other part of the Hospital.

6. “ IT is hereby further declared, That those Gentlemen (Students)  
 “ who may desire to consult, and perhaps, to copy the journals of the Phyfi-  
 “ cians and Surgeons, shall have access so to do. And for that purpose,  
 “ that the Students waiting-room, and the books of the Clerks, be open to  
 “ them every forenoon, from eleven to twelve o’clock, and every evening  
 “ from six to seven.”

ALARMED at these innovations, which they conceived to convey both in-  
 fult and injury, the Students assembled to deliberate by what means they  
 might best vindicate their dignity, and preserve their interests. The result  
 of their deliberations was a remonstrance to the Managers of the Infirmary,  
 in which they urged their grievances, with that freedom of complaint which  
 the circumstances demanded, their right to which they did not yet ima-  
 gine was so soon to be denied. A Gentleman distinguished by his abilities,  
 his literary acquisitions, and his firmness of conduct, on this occasion presided  
 at their meeting.

The Students of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh, inform the  
 Managers of the Royal Infirmary,

“ THAT they consider themselves as much injured, and likely to be de-  
 “ prived of the benefits to be derived from the Infirmary, by several regula-

“ tions lately formed by the Managers. These regulations contain a general  
 “ charge against them, of introducing much disorder and abuse into the In-  
 “ firmary; which they conceive not only to be injurious, but unjust. Inju-  
 “ rious, because they will impress a bad opinion of the Students in general,  
 “ upon every person under whose notice they may fall, without knowing the  
 “ manner in which they originated. Unjust, because they involve a great  
 “ number of Gentlemen, who have never committed either abuse or disor-  
 “ der, as the regulations state.

“ THAT they will be deprived of many of the benefits that may be deri-  
 “ ved from the Infirmary, by the restrictions respecting the time of visiting pa-  
 “ tients, because these restrictions render it impossible for the Students to at-  
 “ tend to the patients themselves.

“ THE great object of a Student's attendance at an Infirmary, is to exa-  
 “ mine the phænomena of diseases for himself, and to see the method of  
 “ treating the sick. These regulations have a direct tendency to prevent  
 “ this. They are calculated to divert the Student's attention from the pa-  
 “ tient to the Physicians and Clerks of the Infirmary; and, therefore, will  
 “ be of the highest detriment to the Student who wishes to become acquaint-  
 “ ed with diseases.

“ THAT the restrictions from attending the Dressers, are equally excep-  
 “ tionable. A knowledge of the small operations which are performed by  
 “ the Dressers, and of the method of applying electricity, &c. is so necessary  
 “ for every Medical Gentleman, that it would be shameful to be ignorant of  
 “ them. Many Gentlemen have no other way of acquiring this knowledge,  
 “ but by attending in afternoons, and this regulation deprives them of that  
 “ important opportunity.

“ THAT the Students are prevented from attending to the accidents that  
 “ may be brought into the Infirmary; to dissections, and to many other ob-  
 “ jects that may occur at those times when they are not permitted to enter  
 “ it.

“ THAT



“ THAT, if any abuses have been committed, they object to the principles upon which these regulations have been formed ; as it is unjustifiable to deprive the whole body of Students of those privileges, to which they are entitled, (by long custom, as well as justice,) merely because a few irregularities have been committed by individuals.”

THE Managers had not yet conceived the idea of refusing intercourse with those to whose contributions they had so long been indebted. They accordingly commanded their Secretary to return an answer to this remonstrance, in terms sufficiently decent and respectful, intimating, That they would take the subject of it into their consideration. A month elapsed, however, without any apparent progress towards redress. The patience of the Students was exhausted, and their suspicions were excited by a neglect which aggravated the insult they had already received. They again assembled, and expressed by their resolutions that resentment and alarm, which this conduct naturally inspired. A copy of these resolutions is subjoined.

*To the HONOURABLE the MANAGERS of the ROYAL INFIRMARY.*

“ THE Students of Medicine represent to the Managers, That having patiently waited for a whole month, in expectation of a decisive answer to their remonstrances, they take this mode of acquainting them, that they have adopted the following Resolutions :

“ 1. THAT the privilege of visiting the sick, at least during the day, and examining them ourselves, is indispensibly requisite, in order to derive benefit from our attendance at the Hospital.

“ 2. THAT as the Managers have so long deferred the restitution of these privileges, we have reason to apprehend that they do not intend to restore them at all.

“ AND, therefore,

“ 3. THAT we will withhold our future contributions to the Infirmary, till  
 “ the said privileges are restored.

“ THAT, unless the Managers will restore to the Students the right of at-  
 “ tending the Hospital, and examining the patients, at least from nine in the  
 “ morning to eight in the evening, or grant such redress as to the Com-  
 “ mittee shall appear equivalent to this, before the 6th day of September  
 “ 1785, two thousand copies of the whole proceedings be printed at the  
 “ expence of the meeting, and distributed among the Students, in order  
 “ that they may be dispersed as widely as possible; and that a short account  
 “ of the proceedings be published in the British, Irish, and American pa-  
 “ pers, and the periodical publications at home and abroad.”

By these resolutions the attention of the Managers was roused.—An answer was pasted up on the walls of the Infirmary, containing a specious parade of regulations, most of which had never been disputed; and of concessions, at once trifling in themselves, and clogged with a disgraceful condition.—The clerks of the house were appointed to watch over the Students in their visits.

WEARIED with an intercourse which, on the part of the Managers, consisted only of a repetition of indignity and evasion, they solicited the interposition of a learned and respectable body, to whose protection they had a natural claim. In the representation which they gave in to the Faculty of Medicine in this University, they proposed an alternative; either to restore that easy access to the Infirmary they had so long enjoyed; or, to repeal that statute which rendered necessary to graduation an attendance no longer profitable.

WE have subjoined their answer, as a specimen of the candour and urbanity of an illustrious body; and as a proof, that Students of Medicine receive from *some persons* with whom they are connected, other language than that of derision and insult.

ANSWER *from the* PROFESSORS, *to the* ADDRESS *of the* STUDENTS *of* MEDICINE.

“ THE Professors of Medicine are very sorry to find, that there has been  
 “ any misunderstanding between the Students and the Managers of the Royal  
 “ Infirmary, and should be happy to do every thing in their power to remove  
 “ it.

“ As the Professors conceive, that some of the regulations lately made by  
 “ the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, may not have the good effects which  
 “ were expected from them, and that others of them may be attended with  
 “ inconveniencies which were not thought of at first, they mention the follow-  
 “ ing heads of regulation, as appearing to them more eligible, not likely to be  
 “ prejudicial to the patients, and sufficient to afford the Students ample op-  
 “ portunity for instruction.

“ 1. THAT the Students be allowed a morning hour, viz. between eleven  
 “ and twelve o'clock, besides the hour from twelve to two, and the evening  
 “ hours from six to eight, for visiting the patients.

“ THE Professors consider the hour from eleven to twelve as the properest  
 “ morning hour that can be allowed the Students for visiting the patients, as  
 “ it is connected with the hour of the public visit of the Physicians and Sur-  
 “ geons, and therefore will not give the Students any additional trouble in  
 “ going to and from the Hospital; as the patients will be disturbed but once,  
 “ instead of twice in the forenoon; and as the Wards may be always well  
 “ cleaned, and thoroughly ventilated, before the Students enter them. The  
 “ expediency of this caution, and the bad consequences that proceed from  
 “ the neglect of it, are as well known to the Students as they are to the  
 “ Professors.

“ 2. THAT, at these visits, the Students have the liberty of examining the  
 “ patients directly, and not through the intervention of a Clerk.

“ THE Professors need scarce say, that if the Managers grant this, it must  
 “ be in confidence that the Students will use the liberty allowed them with  
 “ caution and prudence, and due attention to the infirm condition of many  
 “ of the patients.

“ 3. THAT the Students have admission to the Infirmary from four to five  
 “ o'clock, to see the lesser operations performed by the Dressers, as formerly.

“ 4. THAT the Students have admission to the Infirmary at all times when  
 “ patients are brought in, in consequence of sudden accidents, as well as to  
 “ all dissections; of which last due notice is to be given, as formerly.

“ 5. THAT the journals of the Physicians and Surgeons practice be open  
 “ to the Students at all hours, from nine in the morning till eight at night,  
 “ excepting only from twelve to three, and the time that the Clerks go their  
 “ evening rounds; at which times the books must necessarily be in the hands  
 “ of the Physicians and Surgeons Clerks, and of the Apothecary.

“ THE Professors wish to know if there be any thing further which the  
 “ Students think necessary for their instruction; as they will gladly recom-  
 “ mend to the Managers the preceding regulations, and any others that may  
 “ be useful to the Students, and not hurtful to the patients.

“ THE Professors must mention, however, that far from having any right  
 “ to direct the management of the Hospital, they are not even entitled to  
 “ suggest any thing to the Managers relating to it; and when they take this  
 “ liberty, it must be confiding in the candour of the Managers, and their  
 “ readiness to listen to any suggestions that are meant for the good of the in-  
 “ stitution over which they preside. And it would be unreasonable to expect,  
 “ that they should grant any indulgence that was not plainly necessary for  
 “ the instruction of Students, or that was inconsistent with the welfare of the  
 “ patients.

“ THE Students must consider too, that none can have any right, or ought  
 “ to have any privilege, about the Infirmary, that is inconsistent with the

“ good of the patients. If the accommodation of the Professors, and the in-  
 “ struction of the Students, should ever be found in any respect incompatible  
 “ with the immediate interests of humanity, there can be no doubt which  
 “ must be preferred. And in that case, which the Professors hope will ne-  
 “ ver occur, they and the Students must be content to have access to the  
 “ Hospital on such terms as the Managers could with propriety allow them.

“ THE practice of the Students having access to the Hospital at all hours,  
 “ which had gradually crept in, was necessarily attended with much inconve-  
 “ nience to the patients. This being more and more felt and complained of,  
 “ some regulations concerning the attendance of the Students became abso-  
 “ lutely necessary.

“ THE Professors have no doubt that regulations may be framed, allowing  
 “ every opportunity of instruction to the Students, that is consistent with the  
 “ good of the patients; which they are persuaded is all that the Students can  
 “ desire. It would be needless and improper to request of the Managers  
 “ completely to rescind their late regulations, and to place things exactly on  
 “ the former footing; as it would be injurious to them to suppose, that, at  
 “ the request of any set of men, they should either do what they judged to  
 “ be wrong, or neglect what they judged to be right, in the discharge of  
 “ their important trust.

“ WITH respect to the manner in which the late regulations of the Mana-  
 “ gers of the Infirmary were first expressed, and which the Students have con-  
 “ sidered as so unjust and injurious to them; as the Professors are sure that  
 “ the Managers did not mean to give any offence to the Students, or to throw  
 “ any reflection on them, they are persuaded that any expression in those re-  
 “ gulations, which the Students could complain of, must have proceeded  
 “ merely from haste and inadvertency.

“ WITH respect to the request of the Students to the College, “ no longer  
 “ to consider attendance at the Infirmary as necessary to graduation,” they  
 “ must recollect, that such attendance, and clinical instruction, which cannot  
 “ be obtained without it, have long been regarded as very important parts of

“ medical education. This opinion has been fully confirmed by many years  
 “ experience in this University; and the truth of it is now universally acknow-  
 “ ledged. In consequence of this, it was enacted by the University, That no  
 “ Student should be admitted to examination till he first had had the opportu-  
 “ nity of such instruction. The Professors cannot alter either their own opi-  
 “ nion, or that of the public at large, on this point. If they were to say, that  
 “ such instruction is not necessary to a Physician, or that it is less necessary  
 “ now than it was a year ago, they would gain no credit with any body, and  
 “ the Students themselves could not fail to know that they would deserve  
 “ none.

By order of the Professors of Medicine,

(Signed) JAMES GREGORY, F. M. D. p. t.

*Edinburgh, August 30. 1785.*

THE Committee of Students returned the following reply :

*To the Learned and Respectable PROFESSORS of MEDICINE.*

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ FOR your offer of doing every thing in your power to obtain a redress  
 “ of the injury and insult which they lately received from the Managers of the  
 “ Infirmary, the Students must certainly be very thankful. The rectitude of  
 “ your intentions is abundantly manifest in the regulations you propose. They  
 “ contain almost every thing which the Students, in their last resolutions, re-  
 “ quire. We trust, therefore, that if the Managers comply, the Students  
 “ will be satisfied.

“ BUT should experience discover, that the time allotted for visiting pa-  
 “ tients, during the clinical lectures, is not sufficient, we hope another hour  
 “ (from 5 to 6 in the afternoon) will be added to those you propose. You  
 “ well know, that, during the winter, different Students are engaged at very  
 “ different hours.

“ OF the regulations of June the 5th, the alterations made by the Managers diminish the injury, but encrease the insult. If the feelings of a liberal mind had been consulted, to watch the Students the Clerks of the Infirmary would never have been appointed. You view the subject in its proper light ; and your regulations, if they are adopted, will restore the Students to the level which they have never forfeited.

“ THAT the Students, when they requested the College to consider attendance at the Infirmary not necessary to graduation, were convinced of the important utility of clinical instruction, cannot be doubted. They were determined, however, to forego advantages, rather than submit to insults. *They would be sorry to leave their old and respected masters ; but, if your laws render submission to indignities necessary to graduation, what must be the consequence?* Let us not, by reflection, anticipate evils. Your mediation may settle our differences : It will, at least, add to the obligations we already owe.

By order of the Committee,

(Signed) THOMAS BEDDOES.”

ON the suggestion of the Professors, the obnoxious regulations were at length repealed ; and the final determination of the Managers to that effect was communicated to our President by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, with a request that he would lay it before the Committee.

TO MR BEDDOES.

“ DR GREGORY offers best compliments to Mr Beddoes ; informs him, That he has this moment received a letter from the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, mentioning, that at their meeting to-day they agreed to make the alterations and additions, with respect to the attendance of Students at the Infirmary, which were proposed by the Faculty of Medicine, *and approved by the Committee of Students ;* and desiring him to communicate this intelligence to the Students.”

St John's Street, Monday September 5th 2

THE deliberations of the Students having thus happily and honourably terminated, their views were not limited to the present moment.—It was proposed, that the union which injury had, on this occasion, produced, and the effects of whose exertions had been so important, should be rendered permanent and regular.—The propriety of such a suggestion was soon discerned. It was easy to recollect, that in every institution where power has been entrusted to individuals or bodies, oppression had been sometimes practiced, and grievances sometimes endured; and, as these have ever become enormous where complaint is denied, it seemed expedient, that a mode of intercourse should exist, that might enable Students to address those who are connected with medical education, by which candour might be informed, and injury repelled. Every individual looked forward, with confidence, to the united exertions of those, with whom he was connected by the same liberal pursuits, to protect him from attacks to which, without that assistance, he must have yielded. They indulged neither an unpleasing nor an improper sentiment, when they hoped, that a Student might, in the assembly of his brethren, discern the importance of the body of which he was a member, and learn to assert his own dignity. Besides these considerations, the friends of the union did not fail to urge the virtual approbation that the Professors and Managers of the Infirmary had given to such measures, by correspondence and recognition. They could not doubt that, as the representation of the associated Students had corrected the error of the Managers in their regulations concerning the pupils of the Hospital, these gentlemen would desire the continuance of the institution, in order to afford to their successors the same assistance in their deliberations. Influenced by these reasons, the Students of Medicine in this University unanimously resolved, That a general meeting of their body should be held annually. They appointed their President and a Committee to watch over their interests in the interval between the times of assembling; and they gave them a power to summon them occasionally, should any emergency require it. The gentlemen whom they honoured by placing in these offices, had flattered themselves, that no occasion could have rendered it necessary for them to disturb the quiet, or interrupt the pursuits of their fellow-Students, and that they might have again met them with the pleasing reports of prosperity and peace. In such expectations, however, they have been unfortunately disappointed. An event has happened, which, though it has disturbed this tranquillity, yet, in



the end, may not be prejudicial to their body. The bonds of union which the attack of the Managers had the former year produced, have been drawn still closer by a fresh repetition of injury and insult from the same hand that inflicted the last.

A SUMMONS had been received by one of our number, to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, held on Monday the 14th of August, in consequence of an accusation exhibited against him by the Corporation of Surgeons. The resentment of that body was, it seems, excited, by some altercation which had taken place in the Operating Room of the Hospital, between one of their members and this gentleman. As we had hoped, from our union, not only protection, but to repress irregularity by the weight of public opinion, the Committee conceived that they would fulfil both objects of the institution, by investigating the circumstances that gave rise to this complaint. The person accused did not decline the scrutiny of so natural a tribunal. They requested that the Students who had been present would communicate to them every information respecting this business necessary to guide their judgment. A number of respectable gentlemen complied with the requisition; and, induced by their accurate and uniform testimony, the Committee had no hesitation in unanimously approving the conduct of Mr \*.

On such an occasion, when the enmity of one body was avowed, and that of another not ambiguously threatened, against an individual whose behaviour we had thus approved, it was part of our duty, and cannot be deemed premature, if we afforded him every assistance in a contest so unequal. To have addressed our sentiments to the public, in the form of resolutions, would at this period have been indelicate. We conceived a representation to the Managers the most respectful way of conveying to them that information which we had received; and, by thus opposing to the accusation facts of unquestionable authority, we wished to place ourselves in the light of counsel for the accused. The Corporation of Surgeons deemed private difference an object of general resentment. The body of Students claimed an equal right to feel an affront offered

to

\* As every part of this transaction, which regards the young Gentleman originally concerned, has been amicably terminated, it has been thought proper not to offend his delicacy by bringing

to one of their number as a public injury. Excited by what they conceived to be an insult to a Surgeon, the one body appeared at the bar of the Managers as accusers; the other thought themselves equally justified in appealing to the same tribunal in defence. They THEN knew of no title by which the complaint of the Surgeons deserved to be heard in preference to their representation. Under these impressions, the following address was transmitted to the Secretary of the Managers, in order to be laid before them on the day appointed for considering this accusation.

*To the MANAGERS of the ROYAL INFIRMARY,*

*The REPRESENTATION of the COMMITTEE of the ASSOCIATED STUDENTS.*

“ THE Committee elected by the Students of Medicine, for the purpose  
 “ of preserving a regular intercourse with the respectable bodies who preside  
 “ over Medical education in this University, have learned with regret, that  
 “ a complaint against one of their number has been presented by the College  
 “ of Surgeons, to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary.

“ THE importance of such an accusation seemed to demand an enquiry,  
 “ which should terminate either in the censure of an unworthy member, or  
 “ the support of one of our brethren, oppressed in an unequal contest.

“ UNDER these impressions, the Committee have laboured to discover the  
 “ true state of this matter, from the testimony of several Gentlemen who  
 “ were present; and they now beg leave to lay the result of their enquiry  
 “ before the Managers. They cannot doubt, that they will be acquitted of  
 “ presumption, for offering a detail of facts, which they conceive may tend  
 “ to obviate misconception; and they cannot think it necessary to propose  
 “ any excuse, for urging whatever appears to them to justify the conduct of  
 “ their friend and fellow Student.

“ THEY therefore represent,

“ THAT whatever written statutes of the Royal Infirmary might enjoin pupils to be uncovered at operations, it appears from very copious evidence, that they have been neither generally known nor obeyed. All the Gentlemen who have been consulted agree, that they have been accustomed to consider the Operation Room as a place of public resort, where the same indifference with respect to this circumstance of decorum is permitted, as is usual in the Medical Classes. From the testimony of several Gentlemen, it appears, that on the day when the transaction happened, which furnished the grounds of this complaint, the pupils were sitting as they were accustomed, some covered, and some uncovered, when Mr Wood entered the Theatre. His first address to the assembly, was an injunction to take off their hats. It was delivered in a tone and manner, which the Students felt as little suited to that politeness, with which they had been accustomed to be treated as Gentlemen; to that hospitality, which they might perhaps have expected as strangers; or that liberal and equal intercourse, which they conceive should subsist among men cultivating the same honourable profession, and destined to fill a similar rank in life. This injunction was generally, but not universally obeyed. He then pointed his finger, with a contemptuous side-look to Mr — one of the Gentlemen who had refused obedience; and, with the same tone, twice commanded him to take off his hat. Mr — replied, in a manner, which we cannot help thinking manly and proper. “ Sir, I will not; if you had asked me like a Gentleman, I would.” Mr Wood then threatened him with consequences, which our respect for the equity of the Managers will not permit us even to mention.

“ In behalf of Mr —, we beg leave to urge, that, like other Gentlemen, he was ignorant of the existence of the law, and had been a witness of its neglect: That he was not in a situation to interrupt the view of any Gentleman. That thus ignorant of the existence of the law, or of any authority in the person who enforced it, and unacquainted with that Gentleman, therefore unable to make allowance for any peculiarities of manner which his  
“ friends

“ friends may have been accustomed to indulge; it is not surprising, that he  
“ should have refused obedience to a command which he must have regarded  
“ as arbitrary, and perhaps capricious.

“ IF we can trust any thing to the rectitude of our own feelings, if we can  
“ conclude any thing from the indignation that was so warmly expressed by our  
“ friends who were present, we cannot persuade ourselves, that those ho-  
“ nourable and respectable Gentlemen, to whom we address ourselves, should  
“ wish Mr ——— to have been indifferent on this occasion; or would  
“ censure a conduct, which only implied a just sense of what he conceived to  
“ be indignity. We have not, therefore, the least reluctance in committing  
“ our own dignity, and that of our friend, to the honour and equity of the  
“ Managers. Nothing can be a higher proof of our confidence in the im-  
“ partiality and candour of that body, than the freedom with which we de-  
“ liver our sentiments of the conduct of one of its members. We trust that  
“ we have said nothing inconsistent with that high and sincere respect which we  
“ entertain for the College of Surgeons, which increases not a little our for-  
“ row for an accusation from so respectable a body. We profess our inten-  
“ tion to pay exact obedience to the regulations of the Royal Infirmary.  
“ WE beg leave, finally, to declare our entire approbation of the conduct of  
“ Mr ———, and our resolution to suffer with him.”

(Signed) *James Mackintosh.*  
*Richard Millar.*  
*John Haslam.*  
*Henry Luxmore.*  
*Thomas Burnside.*

*John Dobson.*  
*John Lane.*  
*Theobald M<sup>c</sup>Kenna.*  
*Thomas Pym Weeks.*

WILLIAM ALEXANDER, Chairman.

THE Students were abundantly satisfied with the issue of this business, in so far as it related to Mr ——. His Judges excused him from any personal apology, upon declaring that he meant no insult to them, or the body that accused him. It may, perhaps, appear wonderful, how the disavowal of sentiments, which could never have been imputed to him, without absurdity, should have been at one time the only motive of a formal complaint from the College of Surgeons, and an extraordinary meeting of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary.

AFTER a decision so equitable concerning an individual, the Students could hardly have suspected that their resentment was again to be excited, and their avocations disturbed, by a wanton and insolent attack upon their whole body. It was not, therefore, without astonishment, that they heard the following letter communicated to them by their President :

“ S I R,

“ I received your letter, dated this morning; in consequence of which I  
 “ produced the letter therein inclosed, addressed to the Managers of the Roy-  
 “ al Infirmary, at their extraordinary meeting held here this day. But, as  
 “ you were pleased to inform me, that, in said letter, a Committee of Affocia-  
 “ ted Students had given their opinion of the conduct of Mr ——, one of  
 “ the Students, in the Operation Room,

“ THE Managers knowing nothing of any body distinguished by the name  
 “ of Affociated Students; and presuming, that they are capable of conduct-  
 “ ing their own affairs, without any opinion from them, they have directed  
 “ me to return your letter unopened, which I therefore now take the liber-  
 “ ty of enclosing, and am respectfully,

“ S I R,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

(Signed)

RO. BOSWELL.”

*Royal Infirmary, 14th August, 1786.*

To wipe off the stain that had been thus cast upon them, the Committee naturally sought for the apprehension of a full and

THEY accordingly summoned a general meeting of the whole body, to be held on Saturday the 19th of August, in which they were gratified with the most entire approbation of every measure that had been taken. At the same meeting, after a full discussion of the whole transaction, the Students of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh, UNANIMOUSLY agreed to the following resolutions:

1. UNANIMOUSLY, That a letter signed, *Ro. Boswell*, received by the President of this meeting, and said to be written by order of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, contains an unmerited insult upon the body of Students and their Committee, as well as assertions injurious to the privileges of the Students of Medicine in this University.

2. RESOLVED THEREFORE UNANIMOUSLY, That the Managers having refused to open the representation of the Committee of Students, under pretence that they "knew nothing of any such body," did virtually deny to the Students of Medicine in this University, that right of deliberating and acting together, which they themselves had, on a former occasion, repeatedly recognised, and which the Students conceive to be the undoubted right of all persons who may have a common interest.

3. UNANIMOUSLY, That the Managers having refused to hear our representation, under pretence that the Students had no right to interfere in their affairs, do evidently confound the peculiar business of the Infirmary, in which no Student ever pretended to intermeddle, with that part of it which relates to the conduct of the Students; as if the representation of the Students could, without the most glaring absurdity, be considered more in the light of an interference with their business, than the complaint of the corporation of Surgeons.

4. UNANIMOUSLY, That the Managers having thus attempted, both by precluding all intercourse with the Students, and consequently all complaints in case of grievances, to establish a precedent which may countenance future oppression, it has become necessary for the Students publicly to assert those rights to deliberate together, as well as to address the different bodies with whom their education has connected them, which they find so unjustly and arrogantly denied.

warmest wishes for its prosperity, and the highest reverence for its respectable Professors.

6. RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman and Secretary.

7. UNANIMOUSLY, That these Resolutions, with a narrative of the whole transactions, be immediately published.

Signed in name, and by appointment of the Students,

WILLIAM ALEXANDER, Chairman.

RICHARD MILLAR, Secretary.

HOWEVER painful the task, necessity imposes it; and the Students of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh, in justice both to themselves, and to those who may succeed them, have been thus compelled to lay before the public an account of the injurious treatment they have twice experienced from the Managers of the Infirmary. The manner in which they behaved to our Committee was gross and indecent. To have excused that behaviour by such pretexts was insulting to our understanding. They affected not to recognise that body with which they had so lately corresponded, because the Students happened to apply to themselves the epithet *associated*, not surely with any pretence to a *nomen juris*, but to express a fact, that they had exerted the natural rights of men, in deliberating together concerning their common interest. How so paltry an evasion could have crept into the deliberation of a respectable body, it is difficult to conceive. Were conjectures allowable, we might perhaps suppose it the suggestion of an eminent Author, whose pen has often softened, by its elegance, the deformities of oppression; but has ever recognised, with reluctance, on more important occasions than the present, the right of opposition to the acts of established government. Nor has the conduct of the Managers been less unreasonable than unjust. They had heard an accusation, and listened not to defence. They assumed the character of a court of justice, yet refused to hear evidence; and they are not ashamed to avow it.

BUT the letter they transmitted to us is still more reprehensible on another account. It is attended with the peculiarly oppressive effect of preventing those who considered themselves aggrieved by its decision, from giving in

must either silently acquiesce under sophistry and insult, or by thus addressing the Managers as part of the public, convey to them an unanimous dissent against their conduct.

ALTHOUGH prudence has concealed the real reasons which produced the attacks of this and the preceding year against the Students, yet the whisper of retainers has not been wanting either in their defence, or in propagating base and dishonourable pretexts.

HAD we passed over these in silence, their meanness and ambiguous origin might perhaps have justified the omission. Our sense of duty, however, prevails over contempt; and we will not refuse to expose them, without commentary or refutation, to complete the picture of the consistency of these Gentlemen. Offending against all distinctions of language, they refuse to hear the complaints of the Students, under pretence that they will not suffer dictates. They hope to exercise oppression, with ease and impunity, against a fluctuating body, incapable, as they think, of opposing to them any regular or permanent resistance. They do not even disdain that inhospitable victory, which power and reputation may readily obtain over defenceless and unfriended strangers. But the last motive of their conduct conveys an imputation of a blacker kind. It is equally mean with the others, but it is meanness aggravated by ingratitude. The funds of the Hospital are, it seems, at present in a flourishing condition\*: The contributions of the Students, are, on that account, less necessary; and, the prudence of the Managers suggests, that an equitable attention to their interests is by no means so indispensable as in former times. Forgetful, therefore, of the liberal support we have long afforded, unmindful of the promises they have held out to us †, and regardless of the interests of the University, (for where gratitude is wanting, it is vain to look for patriotism), they are not ashamed to avow the base design of excluding us  
for

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\* The language of the Managers is extremely different in their own publication formerly alluded to, where they lament the insufficiency of the funds of the Hospital, and hold it out to the world as still the object both of public and private charity. (See *History of Royal Infirmary*, p. 32.)



for ever from all benefits of the Infirmary. That such a proposal has been agitated among them, we assert upon unquestionable authority\*. It is more than probable, that the injuries of the present and preceding year, may have been but the preludes to this last of outrages it is in their power to commit against us.

BUT whatever be the period they have fixed upon for putting this scheme in execution, and, if we may judge of the future by the past, it cannot be far distant, we shall take care that a timely hint of such intentions shall not be wanting to our successors. The present publication shall be transmitted, not only to every School of Medicine in the British Islands and America; it shall be dispersed through every University in Europe. Strangers shall at least be informed, that if they expect the same opportunities of improvement, and the same advantages, which were formerly derived from the Infirmary, a body of men presides over the Institution, who are willing to convert those advantages, and these opportunities of improvement, into mean and ungenerous instruments of insult and oppression.

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\* So prevalent is this spirit of excluding the Students among these Gentlemen, that one of them having proposed it, another observed with warmth, That the "sooner the doors of the House were shut against the Students, the better." Some remains of decency, however, may have prevented so violent a measure from being *immediately* complied with.