

**Remarks on an address to the members of the Corporation of Surgeons,  
respecting the proceedings of the Court of Assistants.**

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*The Medical Society*  
*the Act*  
*Mr King*  
REMARKS

ON  
AN ADDRESS

TO THE

MEMBERS

OF THE

CORPORATION OF SURGEONS,

RESPECTING THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

COURT OF ASSISTANTS.

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London :

1798.



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COMMISSIONERS OF SURVEY

REPORT

PROCEEDINGS

1870

COMMISSIONERS OF SURVEY

REPORT

1870

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## R E M A R K S,

&c.

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AN Address having been circulated with great industry, calculated to mislead those who are not well acquainted with the nature of the contest between the Court of Assistants and the majority of the Corporation; I beg leave to offer some remarks on that performance.

The Address is by no means deficient in art; but the author is either deceived himself, or tries to deceive others. His arguments rest on a series of unfounded assertions; and when assailed by the force of truth, must fall to the ground.

The Court of Assistants have been aiming at new honours and emoluments, till they have nearly lost the old: they have been grasping at a shadow, till they have nearly lost the substance. If, at length, after all their defeats, they are become more reasonable in their demands,



mands,—if they make a virtue of necessity,—that alteration in their conduct, which interest alone prompts, will by no means justify this author in asserting, that “ the Court *cannot* entertain a wish to curtail the privileges of any individual.”

Have we not seen them, from their very institution, curtailing the privileges of nine-tenths of the Corporation, by a disqualifying bye-law? Even when in embryo, they curtailed the elective franchise of the whole Corporation: an omen of the tyranny to be dreaded from this monstrous birth!

Since that time, they have curtailed the majority of the members of the privilege of advantageous offices; and the whole Corporation of the privilege of general Courts. They have curtailed the members at large, of the privilege of deliberating on the disposal of their own property; or on the new system of laws by which the Corporation was to be governed. They have also betrayed a wish to extend their tyranny; and to curtail the privileges of all army and navy surgeons, and others, who settle within ten miles of London.

If the proposed regulation had been intended to serve the purpose of public utility, why did they



they not propose for their regulations to extend through the whole kingdom?—If their sole motive is private avarice, no friend to the profession can wish the bounds of their jurisdiction to be enlarged.

If they no longer wish to pluck the grapes, it is because they are convinced the grapes are not within their reach.—If they no longer weary Parliament with their importunities, it is because they have met with a repulse from Parliament. If they have changed their scene of action, they have not changed their disposition. *Cælum, non animum, mutant.*

If they cease to petition for an increase of unconstitutional powers, and only try to perpetuate the past,—if, in pursuit of that object, they have appealed to another tribunal, thither let the victorious phalanx, who defeated them once before, direct their opposition,—Let *them* also appeal unto *Cæsar*,—

“ And fly from petty tyrants to the throne.”

This author endeavours to deter the members of the Corporation from a perseverance in their contest with the Court of Assistants, on account of the expense attending it. This is indeed an argument of some weight: but I hope the Corporation is not disgraced with a single member so mean,



mean, as tamely to surrender all his rights and privileges for fear of expense. If the arm of the law is not shortened, those who invade our property, and violate our privileges, will ultimately be compelled to defray all expenses; and not be suffered to trample on the rights of the subjects of this realm with impunity.

If, however, contrary to all expectation, the majority of the Corporation of Surgeons of London should be disposed to shrink from the contest, on account of expense, and to afford their antagonists an easy triumph; even in that case, the law officers of the state will not advise the Crown to grant an unjust charter; or affix the great seal to a patent that can tarnish its lustre.

Our author tells us, that the Court have no intention of relinquishing the lucrative trade of examining surgeons.—He also tells us, that although a *defect* in the constitution of the Company was occasioned by a breach of form, Government did not withdraw its confidence from the Court on that account; but on the contrary continued, and still continues, to send army and navy surgeons and mates to them for examination.—If what is asserted by a partisan of their own be true, they have already overwhelmed the army, navy, and the whole empire with impudent pretenders.—Hence it appears, that Government



vernment is not inclined to withdraw its confidence on account of *trifling defects*.

But the truth is, that it would be equally absurd to censure Government, or to compliment the Court of Examiners, on this occasion. No man can justly blame Government for sending military surgeons to them for examination, till the Legislature has appointed another tribunal.

Our author next acquaints us, that the Court of Assistants, for more than fifty years, have continued, under the authority of an act of Parliament, to superintend and protect the science of surgery; and that, during that period, it has advanced with unexampled rapidity.

In order to do justice to the exertions of the Court, and explain the means by which they improved the science with such wonderful rapidity, I shall select a few observations from the minute entered on the books of the Corporation by Mr. Gunning, in the year 1790.

By this minute it appears, that although the Company had a fund for the support of anatomical lectures, they had *neither instituted lectures of any importance in anatomy or surgery; nor held out any reward for rising merit*: and that the *feeble attempts* they had made, up to that time, a  
period



period of above *forty years*, though *totally inadequate and ineffectual*, had been *shamefully expensive*.

Three lectures on the bones, in 1786 and 1787, cost upwards of 30*l.* without the expense of subjects or dissection. Mr. G. remarks, that it would be scarcely credible, with what needless expenses, and with what exactions, it has been usual for every thing of this kind to be conducted in the Corporation; a proof of the care and fidelity of the stewards of the Corporation, and *superintendants and protectors of the science*. “In the present year,” says Mr. G. “a charge “is made of 3*l.* to men who attend executions: “—a mere imposition; and, what is more extraordinary, this allowance is made at a time “*when no lectures at all have been given.*”

“In 1782,” adds Mr. G. “you voted a crown “per head to all those members of the Court of “Assistants who should be present at these lectures, “by way of encouraging the attendance of others, “by their own appearance; so that every lecture, “*putting your right of doing this out of the question*, “would cost the Company, if the whole Court “attended, an additional expense of five guineas “to what they had originally done: and what “man of sense would advise the Company to be at “the expense of seven or eight guineas for each “lecture, *unless the lectures were given on the most* “*useful*



*“ useful subjects in surgery, and delivered by gentle-*

*men of the first experience in the profession ?”*

Hence it is evident, *with what disinterested zeal*, with what credit to themselves, and advantage to the public, the Court of Assistants have “super-  
“intended and protected the science.” It is no wonder, that under their influence, and fostering protection, the science advanced with unexampled rapidity, when they had sometimes *three* whole lectures in a year, on the drier of all subjects, delivered by persons *not of the first experience in the profession*:—lectures, to which the members in general would not come without a *decoy*; nor the Court of Assistants, without a crown a head from the treasury of the Corporation.

Mr. G. observes, that from the construction of the Hall, as well as from the names and nature of the offices founded in the Corporation, it plainly appears, that one great object of the institution was to raise a school for anatomy. “Why it failed in the beginning,” says he, “I cannot readily conceive:—why it fails now, I can readily explain.”

This shows that Mr. G. thought, as others think now, that the affairs of the Company were managed worse and worse. From the partial and impolitic mode of election, which has prevailed,



in regard to the Court of Assistants, and Court of Examiners, they have degenerated, and are likely to degenerate *ad infinitum*.

Let us hear Mr. Gunning's opinion, of the advantages resulting from the method of instruction instituted at the Hall. "*Your lectures,*" says he, "*were bad,—or your demonstrations were bad,—or your parts were ill prepared : or ignorant persons were appointed ; who disgraced you by acting, or thought themselves hardly treated, by being obliged to pay a fine.*"

"Should you revise these plans, gentlemen, as you can hardly avoid to do, to *preserve the spirit*, or rather to *rouse the spirit*, of your institution, and indeed to apply properly the income of funds created as it were for those specific purposes ; should you direct only fifteen lectures to be given, as above stipulated, on a solid and permanent foundation, after having determined on their nature,—you will take care, I hope, never to lose sight of two objects ; *one, that your professors are properly qualified for the intended purpose,—the other, that you provide for them an adequate reward.*"

"I am apprehensive, gentlemen, that you will think me rather tedious on this subject : but I thought it necessary to give even an imperfect



“ perfect account, rather than no account at all.”

That the gentlemen of the Court of Assistants thought this lecture on their misconduct,—on their gross neglect of duty, *since they had superintended and protected the science*, rather tedious, there is no room to doubt: but it was a wholesome truth, however *grating* it might have been to the ears of *some people*.

If the members of the Court were entitled to a crown a head for attending a lecture on a professional subject, surely they were entitled to two crowns for sitting to hear Mr. Gunning’s lecture on their misdeeds. However, in justice to their merits, we must confess, that whatever aversion they betrayed to learning and science, they were by no means destitute of ambition; for at the conclusion of every lecture, there were a number of *candidates for the crown*.

When our author took a retrospective view of the long and meritorious labours of the Court of Assistants in the vineyard of science, he might well say, that “ No longer clogged with the heavy incumbrances which formerly oppressed and degraded it, a spirit of general exertion has been diffused among its professors; and



“ pupils from all parts of Europe, have been sent  
 “ to England, for instruction in surgery.”

Of the *exertions* of the Court of Assistants I have given a sufficient account. That pupils from all parts of Europe have been sent to England for instruction, is well known : it is equally well known, that the last place in England from which they were likely to derive instruction, was — *Surgeons' Hall*.

After displaying the merits, and recounting the services, of these ornaments and protectors of the science, our author proceeds to vindicate their late conduct. “ It therefore appeared improper,” says he, “ that the Court, on account of an occurrence they could not prevent, or a mistaken opposition to which that occurrence had given rise, should abandon their stations, forsake the principles on which they had acted, and in the face of facts so strongly evincing the *fitness of that establishment*, at the head of which the law of the country had placed them, see it totally subverted without a struggle for its preservation.”

Whatever may be the opinion of others, I confess it is my opinion, that it is no disgrace for any man to *forsake the principles* on which *they* have acted ;



acted ; or to abandon a station which he cannot fill with honour.

But it is not natural to expect this event. It is not agreeable to reason or experience to suppose, that ambitious men, who have tasted the sweets of power, will relinquish it with indifference, or the Kings of the Surgeons' Company resign the *Crown*, that is, the crown they receive for attending lectures, without a struggle for its preservation.

If there was a fitness in the establishment, as this author asserts,—if that establishment was calculated to answer its design, and to be adequate to its end, how has it happened, that it has never from its first institution been conducted in such a manner as to correspond with this design, or to fulfil that end? How has it happened, that in its infancy it teemed with abuses, which, in its riper age, grew with its growth, and strengthened with its strength?”

The cause was, that it contained within itself the seeds of abuse. “It was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did its mother conceive it.” It was founded on encroachment ; abuse was its *punctum saliens* : its *primum vivens* and its *ultimum moriens*. It has existed in its constitution, and contaminated its whole frame.



To particularize every species of abuse, that has prevailed in the management of the affairs of the Corporation, would require a volume. Mr. Gunning himself, whose remarks on that subject occupy thirteen pages in folio, acknowledges that his account of them is imperfect.

Among other observations he makes the following, when speaking of the Hall.—“ You  
 “ have in it a theatre for your lectures ; a room  
 “ for a library ; a committee-room for your  
 “ Court ; a large room for the reception of your  
 “ community, together with the necessary accom-  
 “ modations for your clerk.

“ But how great soever your intentions were,  
 “ I am sorry to observe they have been but very  
 “ ill executed.

“ *Your theatre is without lectures ; your library-  
 “ room, without books, is converted into an office for  
 “ your clerk ; your committee-room is become his  
 “ eating parlour, and is not always used even in  
 “ your common business ; and when it is thus  
 “ made use of, it is seldom in a fit and proper  
 “ state.”*

After some other remarks, he adds, “ *The  
 “ lower part of your house is by this means not inha-  
 “ bited ; and I need not observe what damage the  
 “ whole*



“ *whole building may receive from hence, in a short  
“ space of time.*”

It appears too evidently, that the whole building has received great damage from this, or some other extraordinary cause, in a short space of time: for although, at that period, considerable sums were expended in repairing it, and Mr. G. seems to have thought no substantial repairs were wanting, yet within seven years, the building is reported to be in a ruinous condition.

“ If,” says Mr. G. “ your committee-room is  
“ to be converted into an eating parlour, why  
“ should we not eat in it ourselves? Your din-  
“ ners at the tavern are exceedingly inconvenient  
“ and *expensive*, and attended with great loss of  
“ time.”

Mr. G. recommended an abolition of the dinners; and that the members of the Court of Examiners should receive half a guinea each, in addition to their present emoluments, every examination day, instead of the dinner. The consequence of this, he observes, would be, that they would be less *beated*, and sooner ready for examinations. Here we may observe, that no man can be fit to explain the sober mysteries of *Æsculapius*, when he has just been celebrating the frantic orgies of *Bacchus*.



He adds, " To the alteration of a custom so  
 " much to your advantage, no solid objection  
 " can be made. You have increased your own  
 " fees; you have added others; and you have  
 " raised the emoluments and gratuities of your  
 " servants, in points not quite clear, and rather  
 " problematical.

" How many hundred pounds (I am inclined  
 " to think 1500*l.* or 2000*l.*) would have been  
 " saved by these means? &c.

" You meet," says Mr. G. " at the Hall, you  
 " adjourn to the tavern, you return to the Hall  
 " again; and all this when you have a house of  
 " your own, inhabited at a great expense to you,  
 " and where, if you have not already all the con-  
 " veniencies you want, you may at any time be  
 " furnished with them.

" *If, gentlemen, you make no better use of your*  
*Hall than you have already done, you had better sell*  
*it, and apply the money for the good of the Company*  
*in some other way.* Your Hall has cost you a  
 " sum, during the last four years, very little less  
 " than 1200*l.* and the bills for repairs, inde-  
 " pendently of the taxes and ground-rent, have  
 " amounted to upwards of 250*l.* within the last  
 " two."



After perusing these strictures, entered on the records of the Company by Mr. Gunning, who had no interest distinct from his colleagues, on his retiring from the highest office in the gift of the Corporation ; where he had the best opportunity of acquiring an intimate knowledge of their affairs, and where he took particular pains to acquire it ; every impartial person must own, that if there was any *fitness* in this establishment, there was a singular want of *fitness* in those who filled its offices, and discharged its functions.

They who have scrutinized the subject with a critical eye, must discern the fault. It arose entirely from the mode of electing the officers. Instead of leaving it open to the members at large, it was left to a junto. Ten were sufficient to elect a candidate into the Court of Assistants, and five were sufficient to elect one into the Court of Examiners. Hence, the council of the Corporation resembled the firm of a mercantile house ; where the relatives were sure to be taken into partnership, at a proper age. This is to be the constitution of the Royal College. But what has science to do with *such a college* ?

Mr. G. expresses his surprise, at the blind confidence which the Court of Assistants placed in the late clerk of the Company ; whom they suffered to abscond with eight or nine hundred  
C pounds



pounds of the money belonging to the Corporation: and declares he was astonished, that this supineness in the *responsible* part of the Company was not made the subject of inquiry.

This is easily answered. There was no check or control appointed, to prevent the misapplication of the revenues of the Company by the Court of Assistants, or others to whom they chose to entrust them. It was not natural to suppose, the *responsible* part of the Corporation would institute an inquiry into their *own* misconduct; and we know the expense of a contest with the Court of Assistants, who have the treasury of the Corporation at their disposal.

Mr. G. expresses his surprise at the rapid increase of allowance to the clerk, which was advanced, within a few years, from 6*cl. per annum* to 25*cl.* The apartments originally granted to him for his residence, Mr. G. values at 70*l. per annum.* After adverting to the rise of the beadle's salary also, he adds, "Gentlemen, I cannot blame your servants for asking, when they know you are always ready to give. The evil originates with yourselves."

Thus much it appeared necessary to detail, in order to refute an assertion of the author of the Address, "That it must be obvious, the Court of Assistants *can* hold the property for no other  
" purposes,



“ purposes, than those for which the Company is  
 “ incorporated.” The absurdity of this proposition is so glaring, that I am almost ashamed to give it a serious answer. They who maintain it, must maintain, that the Court of Assistants can do no wrong. That they cannot hold it for any other purposes *de jure*, we all agree; that they can *de facto*, we all know and lament.

Would it be supposed, that a Company where such an extravagant and prodigal expenditure prevailed, had at that time scarcely recovered from a state of bankruptcy? As a proof how far the Court could hold the property of the Corporation for purposes foreign to its institution, it has been remarked by a gentleman who has examined minutely into their accounts, that their general expenses had been increasing; and that they had grown frugal *only in their charity*. This agrees with Mr. Gunning’s Report, who says, he is sorry to observe, that this expense has decreased in proportion as others have increased.—“ I hope,” adds he, “ if gentlemen  
 “ are of opinion that the Company’s affairs are  
 “ in so flourishing a state as to make a further  
 “ accumulation unnecessary, that they will be  
 “ more liberal in this article.

“ The widows and children of Surgeons,  
 “ who may be left in a distressed condition, are



“ much more proper objects of your attention  
 “ than others which have been so much insisted  
 “ upon, and which, surely, are objects of a very  
 “ inferior consideration. These have the true  
 “ claim to be benefited from the overflowing of  
 “ a fund, created, in some respects, by the in-  
 “ dustry of their fathers. I could wish, there-  
 “ fore, that the sum of 8*ol. per annum* at the  
 “ least, might be put aside, to establish a fund  
 “ for this purpose, to be disposed of wholly by a  
 “ majority of this Court.”

Mr. G. gives his opinion, that the Society  
 ought to be possessed of a *library*; and savings  
 might be made, in dinners and other unneces-  
 sary expenses, which would enable them to  
 provide for that purpose; as well as for *lec-  
 tures, charities*, and such a reward as they might  
 think fit to bestow on *merit*.

He proceeds as follows:—“ When monies  
 “ are expended judiciously and liberally for the  
 “ public good, *as well as for the private emolument*  
 “ *of the governing part of the Society*, no inquiry  
 “ will be made, even if we should exceed the  
 “ bounds of what, strictly speaking, we have  
 “ a right to do.”

After giving his opinion, that at that time  
 they were rather differently circumstanced, he  
 recom-



recommends an inquiry into their expenses, and a retrenchment of those which were unnecessary; and concludes thus:

*“ Believing further, that when these plans are  
 “ put into execution, and when, unaided by royal do-  
 “ nations or the public, we have put ourselves on the  
 “ footing of a liberal, humane, and learned So-  
 “ ciety, and one that shall be beneficial to the public,  
 “ from the proper exertions of our own private fund;  
 “ we shall have a better pretence to ask for an exten-  
 “ sion of those powers from Parliament, which we  
 “ have discovered a disposition to execute so much for  
 “ the advantage of the community.”*

After reading these remarks, and maturely considering the conduct of the Court of Assistants, and the shameful abuses which have prevailed in the Corporation from its first establishment, we shall be the better able to judge of the sentiments expressed in the pamphlet under consideration.

After telling us, that the Court of Assistants hoped, ere long, to perceive an alteration of the public opinion in their favour, he says—  
*“ But at all events it appeared their indispensa-  
 “ ble duty, to exert their best endeavours, to  
 “ deliver down to posterity entire and un-  
 “ changed,*



“ changed, *that system, the utility of which both*  
 “ *reason and experience had fully evinced.*”

We have seen by Mr. Gunning's report, that the Court of Assistants never exerted their endeavours to turn the established system, over which they presided, to the advantage of the Corporation, or of the public, “ *but to the*  
 “ *private emolument of the governing part of the*  
 “ *Society.*” This is the *utility of the system* of which our author speaks so *feelingly*; and I doubt not but he will likewise exert *his best endeavours*, to make it last *his time*, and to continue in office as long as he lives.

The defects of the system are so palpable, the impositions are so gross, that I fear I shall be censured for bestowing so much argument on his unfounded assertions, and for taking the trouble

“ To break a butterfly upon a wheel.”

But although his pamphlet is frivolous, the subject is important; and I deemed it advisable to treat the question rather according to its own magnitude, than the insignificance of his production.

That



That the fear of an examination hanging over the head of a student, acts as a spur to his industry, is an undeniable truth: but that the self-elected Examiners of the Surgeons' Company have not discharged the duties of their office with abilities or exertions equal to the weight and importance of the trust, is evident from the concurring testimonies of their advocates, as well as of their opponents.

How the public have been duped by their artifices, has been already shown; what their talents are, has been already stated;—that the art of surgery is much improved of late, but not by them, has been already demonstrated.—If the Corporation can boast no talents more splendid than theirs, it labours under an eclipse, and reflects no credit on those, who have lately superintended and protected the profession.—These, it is pretended, are the lights of our world of science; “but if the light which is “in us be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

We are told by this author, that “the “Court cannot entertain a wish to curtail the “privileges of any individual.”—If the subjects of this Court will swallow this, on the simple assertion of this anonymous author, in opposition to the clearest evidence of all their senses,



senses, in opposition to the decided opinion of all the world, they will indeed deserve to be branded with the reproach of ignorance, which has been so lavishly bestowed on them by the members of that Court.—If the petitioners for the late Surgeons' Bill no longer aim at absolute dominion over all the Corporation, over all army and navy Surgeons, and over all Surgeons in and within ten miles of this metropolis, it is because they are convinced they cannot succeed in their attempts, nor elude the vigilance of Parliament.

If they have renounced their ambitious projects, it is because their artifices are detected.—If they are willing to proceed in their ancient routine, it is because a successful opposition has frustrated their designs.

Our author tells us, that the present state of the Corporation does not affect the privileges of its members: but there was no occasion for him to tell us, that the *civil capacity* of the Court of Assistants was *dormant*;—their own conduct told us this long ago.

We are told in this Address, that the contest with the Court of Assistants “has not for its  
“object the preservation of our rights as practi-  
“tioners in surgery, on which it is impossible  
“for



“ for them to infringe.”—If the author is so ignorant as to believe what he asserts, he is indeed a stranger in Israel, and a stranger to the subject on which he ventures to write.

It was affirmed by Mr. Warren, one of the counsel for the Court of Assistants, as well as by themselves, and will be admitted by every man of common sense who has ever followed the medical profession, that the public are not judges of the merits of medical men. This was a candid confession in Mr. Warren, whose father enjoyed so large a share of the public confidence. But the public confidence would not have been a proof of his merit, had it not been confirmed by a more certain criterion,—*the confidence of medical men.*

To secure the public confidence, nothing more was necessary than a public appointment, whether obtained by merit or patronage. Rank and title are the alluring baits which they never fail to swallow. Hence the value of the rank of Examiner in the Surgeons' Company; which it would be folly to be ignorant of, and falsehood to deny. If then a practitioner is excluded from an honourable situation by jealousy and sordid self-interest, he is injured in the most essential point, and his professional rights are *infringed*.—If, in addition to this exclusion,

D

he



he is declared ineligible, he is degraded and disgraced, and branded with an unjust stigma in the eyes of the public;—and this, perhaps, by men more ignorant than himself; who nevertheless have sense enough to know, that whatever talents he may possess as a surgeon, this is an almost infallible method of whelming them in obscurity.

We are told by this author, that the contest is merely a trial, through whose hands, in future, those rights shall be transmitted to others. This is an artful misrepresentation, and a snare to delude the unwary. The question is not, through whose hands the rights of the Company shall be transmitted; but whether they shall possess any rights worth transmitting. As it is allowed on all hands that the Corporation is defunct, the question is, Whether it shall rise again with all its imperfections on its head, and retain all its corruption? or, Whether it shall rise a more glorious body, animated with new spirit, illumined with new understanding, and endowed with new vigour throughout its whole constitution?

We have already seen every species of abuse prevail in the management of the affairs of the Corporation; owing to the unwise and impolitic provisions of the former act. We have  
seen



seen an attempt to convert the directors of the Company into *perpetual Dictators*. Even now, after all their defeats, they still hope to be *perpetual Dictators*;

—————“and, rather than be less,  
“Care not to be at all.”

What would be said of the Directors of the Bank or the East India Company, if they were to procure from Parliament a power to elect themselves? What would be said of the House of Commons, if they were to usurp that privilege? They would no longer be representatives and protectors, but oppressors.

What opinion should we entertain of the President and Censors of the College of Physicians, or of the Council of the Royal or Antiquary Society, if they assumed this power, even though varnished over with the mockery of an act of Parliament obtained under false pretences? What opinion should we entertain of them, if they wrested not only *the right of election*, but also *the property* from their constituents? From a transaction of so deep a dye, not all the waters of the ocean could wash out the stain.



Are the Surgeons of London,—a scientific body who are to be dignified with the title of the Royal College of Surgeons, unfit to judge of the characters and qualifications of the stewards who are to manage their own property? Are they incapable of appreciating the merits of the members, who are to execute the offices, and support the honours of their own society? If they are, it reflects little honour on those, who have so long superintended and protected the science.

Doctor Latham, in his Oration, delivered at the College of Physicians, in the year 1794, passes an encomium on the constitution of that medical republic, because, while the administration of their government is in the hands of a few, all its members enjoy a participation of power.—He compares it to the constitution of the British empire; and concludes there is no fear of its future splendour, while it resembles so illustrious an example.—If the converse of this proposition be true, what hope can be entertained of the future splendour of a society, where the members at large not only enjoy no participation of power, but are subject to a legislature in which they are not even virtually represented?



We are told by this author, that “ it is obvious the Court of Assistants can hold the property of the Corporation for no other purposes than those for which the Company is incorporated.” Let any reasonable and impartial man determine, whether the Company is incorporated for the public good, or for the sake of *luxurious entertainments*, for the sake of *beating Examiners with wine*; for the sake of enriching their clerk, and granting all he asks, as Mr. Gunning assures us was done, and providing a palace for his accommodation.

While the funds of the Corporation of Surgeons of London were diverted from their destined channels, and wasted in extravagance, we are told by this author, that the Royal Academy of Surgery at Paris sent pupils to London for instruction. How must they have been surprised, on the return of those pupils, to hear, that at Surgeons’ Hall they saw no preparations made, but preparations for a dinner; no skeleton made, but the skeleton of a goose; no injection, but that of the stomach with port wine, and no dissection but that of a calf’s head!

While the institution is thus perverted from its original design, and rendered *subservient to the private interests of the ruling powers*, as it was in the time of Mr. Gunning, and from its earliest period,



period, to solicit a patent for a renewal of the powers of the Corporation upon the old establishment, is to solicit a patent for the perpetuation of abuses.

As our author appears insensible that the Court of Assistants can possibly infringe on the rights of the members at large, or wish to curtail their privileges, or alienate their property,—I shall repeat, for the sake of correcting his error, what has been already quoted on another occasion.—The words are memorable, both on account of their own importance, the dignity of the person by whom they were spoken, and the awful manner in which they were pronounced.—They were spoken in reply to a right reverend Prelate, when he tried to prevent the counsel for the petitioners against the Surgeons' bill from going over the same ground in the House of Lords, which he had gone over in a committee of that House; from advancing the same arguments in the House which he had advanced in the committee; and from expatiating on the demerits of the Court of Assistants, according to the statement of Mr. Gunning.

It will readily be perceived that when these words were spoken, the principal champions for the bill were present. “The petitioners against  
“this bill have great reason to complain. Their  
“privileges



“ privileges have been violated ; and even their  
 “ property has been invaded. They have been  
 “ too long trampled under foot ; and however  
 “ *grating* it may be to the ears of *some people*, they  
 “ have the strongest title in the world to have  
 “ their complaints heard with patience and at-  
 “ tention.”

Let the members of the Corporation and the  
 world judge, whether they will believe this  
 great oracle of law and justice, or *a thing without  
 a name* ; a thing compiled by some person or per-  
 sons, in whose defence it is written. Let them  
 judge, whether the Legislature would have re-  
 jected a bill it had once entertained,—a bill it  
 had nearly passed,—if no violation of rights had  
 appeared.

If the efforts of the Court of Assistants to re-  
 duce the members of the Corporation to a state  
 of still more abject vassalage than that under  
 which they have hitherto groaned have been in-  
 effectual, if their attempts have been frustrated,  
 we are indebted, not to their moderation, but  
 to the justice of Parliament. If they no longer  
 weary Parliament with their importunities, it is  
 because they have forfeited its esteem.

These observations appeared necessary, in an-  
 swer to the misrepresentations with which the  
 afore said



aforesaid artful and insidious pamphlet abounds. The author tells us, that his remarks are addressed to *reason* and *judgment* : otherwise we should have supposed, from their nature, they were intended to be addressed to *ignorance* and *credulity*. He disclaims making an appeal to the passions ; and indeed his Address is not calculated to excite any passion but one ; pity, bordering on contempt.

# FINIS.