

OBSERVATIONS  
ON  
MEDICAL REFORM:

ILLUSTRATING  
THE PRESENT CONDITION  
OF  
MEDICAL SCIENCE, EDUCATION,  
AND  
PRACTICE,  
*THROUGHOUT GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND;*

AND PROPOSING SUCH ALTERATIONS THEREIN,

AS APPEAR MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED  
IN REMEDYING THE SEVERAL EVILS,  
WHICH ABOUND IN THIS PROFESSION,  
AND WHICH HAVE, AT LENGTH, BECOME SUBJECTS OF  
UNIVERSAL COMPLAINT.

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1807

OBSERVATIONS

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RIGHT THE PRESENT CONDITION

MEDICAL SCIENCE, EDUCATION,

PRACTICE,

THROUGHOUT GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND;

AND PROPOSING SUCH ALTERATIONS THEREIN,

AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPROVE

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE

PROFESSION OF MEDICINE,

AND TO SECURE A MORE

EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICAL

MANAGEMENT OF THE

HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE.

BY

WILLIAM LUSHINGTON, ESQ.

OF THE BARR, DUBLIN.

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1845.

Houses of the Oireachtas

TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD HENRY PETTY,

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

THE propriety of dedicating the few following pages to your Lordship is unquestionable.—As a pure and enlightened politician, you will recognise and acknowledge therein principles, with which your mind has long been familiarised; as a statesman and patriot, you will glory in the opportunity for applying such principles to purposes of public

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utility;

utility; and as the avowed patron of that profession, whose real interests are therein developed, and whose constitution it is so necessary to amend, you will no doubt appreciate the assistance, which the following statements must afford you in comprehending a novel and extensive subject, and will rejoice in that timely wariness which they cannot but induce in your mind, against the machinations of any set of men, who may attempt, by importunate and plausible representations, to elude your scrutiny, and to precipitate you into a seeming approbation of measures, which, as being unequitable in principle, and inefficient in application, ought never to receive the sanction of the legislature. I have one more reason, my Lord, for obtruding my speculations on your notice,

tice, which is, that I understand they have already, by the too partial forwardness of a friend, been presented to you in a less impressive and less perfect form.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your obedient

Humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

*Dublin, 1807.*

Houses of the Oireachtas

## PREFACE.

THE following letters on the medical profession, were commenced with a view to correct the several misrepresentations, which were daily issuing from the press, on the subject of Medical Reform; and were presented to the world in the columns of an Irish newspaper—The Evening Herald. Had the industry of the reformists been directed only to making certain impressions on the public mind, these pages might possibly never have been written; for I have long admitted the conviction, that

there exists in the public mind a natural perception to discover truth, and detect falsehood,—and a natural bias, which ever inclines them towards the former. But it was in contemplation to procure the enactment of legislative measures, whose tendency should be to exalt one particular department of the profession, and by giving to this extensive power and control, to coerce the remainder. At such a moment, passiveness could be no longer justified, and silence would be a dereliction of public duty. At such a moment, I came forward to vindicate the cause of truth and justice; and opposed my feeble arm to avert that ruin, which was pending over my profession. But while I was thus meditating to counteract the evil influence of avowed intentions, I learned from a friend more conversant than I was in the business of professional intrigue, that a secret, insidious, undermining policy was at work, using every exertion to compass its ends; and rendering, by its privacy, all opposition abortive. Whence it appeared necessary, in the mind of my friend, to oppose a counterpoise to that influence, which he well knew

knew to be exercising; and with a partiality, more illustrative of the goodness of his heart, than expressive of the soundness of his judgment, he proposed to forward, with this view, the statements I was then engaged in preparing,—to him, whom the reformists had fixed on as their ministerial patron—Lord Henry Petty; on whose mind he conceived the language of truth must make an adequate impression.—He therefore adopted the measure of inclosing to Lord Henry my letters on Medical Reform, as they successively appeared in The Evening Herald; and with the first of the series he transmitted the following animated, but too ardent encomium on the productions of his friend.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD HENRY PETTY.

MY LORD,

In addressing the few following lines to your Lordship, I am influenced, by a real admiration of your talents, and most sincere respect for your public virtues. The degree

of interest too, with which you seem to have espoused the cause of Medical Reform, naturally points you out as one, to whom representations on this subject may, with singular propriety, be addressed. Most reluctant should I be, to trespass one moment unnecessarily on your Lordship's time; or to occupy, by insignificant remarks, that attention, which is so beneficially devoted to the service of the public. I trust, however, that while attending to the subject of my present communications, you will not consider yourself as withdrawn from that service; nor will I so undervalue the acknowledged comprehensiveness of your mind, as to suppose, that the few moments, during which I purpose to divert your thoughts from their accustomed exercise, can in the least tend to perplex the more immediate business of the state. Under these impressions, I beg leave to solicit your Lordship's attention to a few Letters on Medical Reform, presented to the public through the humble medium of an Irish newspaper. The first of the series I herewith inclose to your Lordship, and it shall be my care to transmit  
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to you the remainder, as they successively appear.

Intimately acquainted with the author, and apprised of the substance of those letters, which are yet unpublished, I can with confidence assert, that no statement so luminous, or so illustrative of the condition of medical science, and medical practice, as these are at present organized throughout the British dominions, has yet appeared; and I am well assured, that if I can succeed in introducing to your Lordship's attention, the lucubrations of my friend, you will in them recognize a purity of principle, an expansion of intellect, a simplifying, analytic mind, and a soundness of judgment, such as may in vain be sought for in the jejune productions of Doctor Harrison or his coadjutors. Let me intreat you, my Lord, not to throw aside, in contempt of an anonymous writer, that illustration of an important subject, by which even your ample mind may be informed; and should this—my humble attempt to co-operate with, and give efficacy to, the labours of my friend, unfortunately

nately meet your Lordship's eye at a time when public concerns demand exclusively to engross you, let me at least have influence enough to ensure your laying them aside, until a more favourable opportunity, when leisure shall permit you to resume them, or until a renewal of communications from Soho-square shall renew that interest you once professed to have in the subject. When such time shall arrive, I have no doubt that you will recur to the letters of my friend with conscious advantage; and from them derive your best assistance towards detecting the illusions of sophistry, and exposing the imbecile or corrupt propositions of ignorance or self-interest. I am not so enthusiastic an admirer of my friend, or so sanguine in my hopes from your Lordship, as to conceive, that his system of reform is to be immediately adopted, or acted on. My expectations extend only to warning your Lordship against the hasty adoption of measures, which a moment's investigation can prove to be futile and frivolous, if not injurious; and to establishing in your mind a conviction of those principles

principles, which can form the only effectual and unerring basis of a medical reform.

I have the honor to be,

My Lord,

With the highest respect and esteem,

Your most faithful

And obedient servant,

PHILALETHES.

*Dublin,*

*February 19, 1807.*

Withdrawn as I am from public notice, and veiled in an obscurity which curiosity shall in vain attempt to penetrate, I may readily be acquitted of vanity in inserting the foregoing; and may be credited in the assertion, that my only motive for thus giving it publicity is, to convey with more certainty to the notice of him, to whom these pages are dedicated, an impressive introduction to a most important subject—to which, from the manner in which it was heretofore conveyed to him, his attention has too probably never yet been directed.

In furtherance of all the foregoing objects and designs, I now present to the Public a collected series of the Letters in question, together with some supplementary remarks; and with the utmost deference and respect submit the whole to their most legitimate tribunal. In so doing, I shall neither sue for their approbation, nor deprecate their censure. Anxious only that from among contending opinions truth should emerge; and interested in the success of my projects, solely from the belief that they are calculated to benefit the community, I shall make no attempt to influence the public mind by any further observations.

OBSERVATIONS  
ON  
MEDICAL REFORM.



TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING HERALD.

LETTER I.

SIR,

I WILL again take the liberty of addressing you on the subject of Medical Reform, and, according to the tenour of my last communication, shall avoid as much as possible every allusion, which has not a direct relation, either to the plan of Reform proposed by Dr. Harrison and his associates, or to such a Reform, as arising out of just principles, and a fundamental knowledge of the rights and purposes of legislation, would be the most likely to meet the concurrence of the enlightened and unprejudiced, and ultimately to realize those expectations which its adoption would naturally give rise to.

On the present occasion I shall enter into a more minute investigation than on a former one I could have conceived justifiable.—My mind is now under different impressions, and is in a great measure freed from that alarm which it entertained lest the clamour of the superficial and the inte-

rested should precipitate the Legislature into an injudicious and fatal interference on a subject, where their incompetence to judge with accuracy of its merits, might well lead them into adopting, without due investigation, the crude suggestions about to be proposed for their ratification; and I may now without hazard to the welfare of my profession avow, that Reform is called for—But in this I betray no inconsistency; for when I formerly made an apparently opposite assertion, I did so in a relative sense, and in the contemplation only of that Reform, which alone seemed to be held out for the adoption of the Legislature, and of whose insufficiency I had the fullest conviction. I declared against Reform, entirely under the impression that the adoption of such as seemed about to be advanced, would, instead of protecting, violate every right of humanity, would err against all sound policy, and destroy the best interests of that profession it affected to uphold.

My first and nearest concern then seemed to be, to expose, as far as lay in my power the futility of such a Reform as was held out to public view, and in the warmth of my zeal to avert what could not but be both injurious and disgraceful, I exclaimed against any present Reform. Convinced early that none of that spirit could be traced in the proceedings either of the Lincolnshire or London Societies, which ought to guide the councils of those who volunteer in reforming the abuses of political society, I became impressed with a deep sense of the injuries that must result from such crude suggestions being imposed on the public as the result of deliberative wisdom, and I satisfied myself with adducing reasons why such a Reform should not take place.

To propose any amendment in a plan not merely defective, but radically erroneous, would have served but to weaken my opposition, and would have implied a constructive

structive assent in the basis of the projected Reform; while to propose a different system, would be in legal phrase to travel out of the record, as we were invited only to propose such measures as would correspond and cooperate with the views of the Reformers. To propose a system too which was to be laid before Parliament without delay, required more depth of learning, more profundity of judgment, and withal more confidence than I was conscious of possessing. Could I have discovered in the voluminous and widely circulated addresses of Dr. Harrison one ray of that intellect which illumines [every period of \* *Anti-Empiricus*, I would have resigned the subject with guarded confidence to his maturer judgment, and been silent alike on the policy or impolicy of reformation.

Released for the present from my fears of the immediate interference of the Legislature, I now feel myself at liberty to pursue the discussion in a temper suited to the occasion. I can now admit the existence of evils in the profession of medicine without hazard of having such admission construed into acquiescence in any given plan of reform; yet I am not the less impressed with the conviction that unless the whole spirit of the projected reformation is fundamentally corrected, we are better without any; for well am I assured, that unless Legislative measures are founded in extensive views and enlarged conceptions of social institutions, far better is it to leave all such reforms to the slow but unerring hand of time, and to trust to the public that care of their own health which they are so little likely to abandon.

The want of attention to a few fixed and universally admitted principles of political science has led men into numerous absurdities on the present question, which are somewhat ludicrously exemplified by comparing together the grievances complained of by different classes, and their several measures of redress. Their total dissonance, and

\* An occasional correspondent of the Evening Herald.

the want of congruity in any one leading feature, proves, that they have regarded nothing of principle in their speculations, but that they have groped in the dark in search of remedies for partial or imaginary grievances, without having any standard of reference for the solution of any doubts that might arise on either the one subject or the other. This may seem a tedious and uninteresting preamble—but a little reflection will serve to correct such impression, and as I write not to medical men or to men of science alone, I may be excused this trespass on their time, as the foregoing observations have an obvious tendency to prepare the public mind for investigating a subject, which though deeply interested in, it cannot be familiar with.

The present is a question, whose complicated nature and multiplied relationships require, that in discussing it, all the aids of scientific arrangement should be taken advantage of.—The history of human knowledge fully confirms the propriety, the indispensable necessity, of simplifying every complex study, and reducing it within the compass of human comprehension, by arguing from certain simple and unquestionable assumptions commonly termed axioms, to more elaborate and complicated propositions. To refer in illustration of this to the first of human sciences Mathematics, cannot here be deemed pedantic. But a more direct and conclusive evidence may be drawn from the contemplation of civil governments, in which a similar principle of reasoning is applied not to the mere discovery of abstract truth, but to purposes of practical utility; and as the regulating the profession of Medicine is but a subordinate exercise of civil authority, all arguments drawn from this source must have an immediate and direct application.

When man's necessities forced him from a state of nature into society, and when compelled by the evils of licentiousness he entered into the social compact of admitting  
and

and sanctioning a government, thereby resigning a portion of his natural liberty in order more securely and rationally to enjoy the remainder, certain regulations either tacitly concurred in, or resulting from the actual deliberations of delegated assemblies *must* have preceded the formation of any government. This first embryo of a constitution may be traced among the rudest nations of the earth, and it is from some such constitution whether understood or absolutely existing, that all governments assume their form and derive their authority. A constitution has that relation to government which axioms have to mathematics. It participates not either in its deliberative or executive powers, but it confers and regulates both; nor can the distinction between its province and that of its dependencies be too accurately defined. Its perfection consists in the simplicity, abstractedness and universality of its terms; these should be liable to no misconstruction; they should involve no question of doubtful propriety, nor of partial application; nor should they be of a nature to be affected by any contingency. All specific arrangements should be the province of that government which the constitution authorises, and in whose deliberations it should have no collision. The constitution may be so altered and amended as to alter and amend the government, but the government is endued with no authority to alter and amend the constitution.

These abstract principles of government I will now apply, and I trust not unsuccessfully, to the question before us. As a constitution is to government, so is legislation to the province of medicine. By legislative authority the whole medical department should be arranged and divided into its several branches, and each of these committed to the superintendance and management of a separate government or college, to which both deliberative and executive powers should be deputed, subject however to those restrictions which the legislature in their wisdom, and from their general views of adapting the energies of all to the ends of  
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public utility, might think proper to enact in the framing of what I may with great propriety term a medical constitution. Each college should advance to the highest possible perfection that branch allotted to its peculiar care, and the legislature should by their original statute, or by amendments made therein from time to time, secure to the community the most beneficial exercise of the combined energies of such colleges. The legislature should provide for all such general arrangements as men possessed only of general information are competent to decide on; the colleges should regulate in all things wherein professional learning is indispensable towards forming the judgment. The legislature should draw the outline; the colleges should delineate the several features. The legislature should ordain that each college, whether medical, surgical, or of whatsoever nature, should afford to its peculiar students every necessary information, and should require from them both previous literary attainments, a given attendance on lectures, and the test of actual examination previous to granting them collegiate licences or degrees; the quantum of previous literature, the nature of the preliminary studies, the period of attendance, and the species of examination might perhaps be committed to the exclusive control of the colleges. From arrangements founded on such a basis would flow such an order of things as would lead to all possible perfection, and be subject to no corruption, because the interest of all parties would be to perform their several duties unbiassed by any sinister motives or seductions, which when they do present themselves, human nature has not always the virtue to withstand.

It argues an evident absurdity to give to any set of men a jurisdiction over rival interests, where a superior authority exists to which all should be subservient; and on this principle any department of medical men coming forward to legislate for the whole are to be distrusted. Even when two or more branches coalesce to call for legislative interference,

ference, they should not be implicitly confided in—for each may forego some objects for the attainment of others more ardently desired; or the interests of inferior branches may be sacrificed by both, and thus a more perfect order of things will be commuted for a less perfect, because partial interests and prepossessions happen to be more served by the latter. And here the error would lie not in the corrupt and imperfect councils of such men, but in the supineness and ignorance of their superiors, admitting them to exercise a function for which they were radically incapacitated.

By framing such a constitution as I have been alluding to, the powers of the universities to confer degrees would be restricted and defined, and the possession of this test of ability would become unequivocal, inasmuch as no doubt could arise as to its being justly merited; nor could it be any longer confounded with mere titular distinctions, procured without any attendance on lectures, any test of examination, or any qualifications save the mere opinions of partial individuals. Then would the prostituted honors of an Aberdeen or St. Andrew's degree for ever fail of imposing its undeserving, at least untried, possessor on public credulity; then would the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin, hold that high rank in public estimation which they ought to do as seminaries of medical education; and then might they claim, as they unequivocally merit, a community of rights with the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, to which they are in no way inferior either in fame or utility. A reciprocity of intercourse might be maintained amongst all similarly constituted colleges, and the approbation of one deemed as equal to that of the whole.

A sentiment seems most unaccountably to prevail, and has even been made the object of a specific resolution now before me, by the Suffolk benevolent Medical Society, that the respectability of the medical profession is to be advanced.

advanced, by increasing the expences and difficulties of initiation. To such a position my reason has ever denied assent, and it has appeared to me like most of the partial and imperfect propositions of the day, to arise from a most confined and limited conception of the subject; it is holding up a very fallacious standard of excellence indeed, and substituting a casual and irrelative contingency, in place of what ought to be the only passport to obtaining a degree, the possession of learning and ability. I am well aware that even the test of examination is not always, nor can it in its nature, be conclusive; but it is the only one we can or ought to trust to: and when its result confirms, that the previous opportunities for acquiring information have been sedulously cultivated, the public may rest satisfied with its decisions.

I would by no means go so far as to open the Universities to all who might claim examination for degrees, as I have heard some recommend, but I would ensure examination and a decisive universal licence to practice, on being approved of, to all who could prove their claim to undergo this, founded on a just and faithful compliance with the ordinances of the Universities, as these regard the prescribed courses of direct and accessory studies. Once approved of too by that University which the convenience of the individual led him to prefer, I would secure to him the free exercise of his profession in any part of the British dominions, where his pursuits in life might induce him to settle, nor subject him to the useless, unavailing ceremony of reiterated examination, by every chartered body, which under the present system, can exercise such power over him. If not qualified to practice his profession, his original degree should never be conferred—and if qualified, *this* should to all intents and purposes be sufficient; for I can see no reason why the graduate of a University, which after every trial confers on him the dearly earned privilege to practice his profession *ubique gentium*

*gentium*, should afterwards be restricted by any body of men, proud of their boasted authority, and jealous of encroachment.

Let it not be replied to me that reiterated examinations of medical men are not a grievance. I maintain the contrary; for independent of the opportunity which such powers give to corporate bodies of exercising a vexatious privilege, and of visiting on individuals any animosities they may entertain against the Universities who sanctioned them; we have the authority of the admirable and truly discriminating Dr. Johnson, for asserting, that men advanced in any science reluctantly go back to elements; it is on elements that a medical examination must principally hinge, and a minute recurrence to these must be both vexatious and embarrassing to him, who after years of successful practice, is compelled by domestic necessities, perhaps by domestic misfortunes, to change the scene of his professional exertions.

It is on such subjects that Reform is wanted, and to this and similar fundamental errors should attention be directed. Constitute a regular practitioner in any branch of the profession of medicine, remove the possibility for equal and similar honours being conferred as a reward for very unequal and dissimilar qualifications, and you remove all necessity, all pretence for torturing by repeated ordeals him who has once passed with credit. A pretence for such examination has certainly been fairly afforded by the corruption of the Universities of Aberdeen and St. Andrews, rendering it impossible to deem Scottish degrees a test of merit; and in order to avoid giving offence to these learned bodies, by any *exclusive* arrangements, all the Scottish Universities are involved in one common censure, and their graduates denied admission, save by special examination, into any of the subordinate corporations (for such only can I deem the several Colleges of Physicians),

either of England or Ireland. This species of jealousy is placed beyond a doubt by referring to the several statutes by which Colleges of Physicians are constituted; for in the exclusion of all Physicians excepting only the graduates of that University, which each College of Physicians acknowledges for its *alma mater*, there appears in all these a wonderful coincidence. By the statute of Henry VIII. the College of Physicians of London, are empowered to examine all doctors of medicine, save *those* of Oxford and Cambridge, who are said by the statute, "to have accomplished all things for their form without any grace." That of Dublin possesses a similar but more limited power, and examines all Physicians practicing within the city, excepting only the graduate Physicians of Dublin University, as appears by their original charter granted by William and Mary. The College of Physicians of Edinburgh, are required to admit every *Scottish* graduate without examination, but are privileged to examine all who possess only English or Irish degrees.

From its being mandatory to admit *instanter* every graduate of any *Scottish* University, who may apply for their licence, this latter body has sometimes been placed in rather a provoking predicament—for the fact is recorded by one of their own Presidents, of a person applying for a medical degree to the University of Edinburgh, prepared with a Northern degree ready in his pocket, which, when *rejected* by the University according to his own anticipation, he produced to the College of Physicians, and on the credit of it claimed admission into their body and a full licence to practice, although his incapacity so to do had just been unequivocally confirmed. This confessedly was a hardship on the College of Physicians, or rather on the public—and it is yet unredressed—and any blockhead who has money and interest to procure a St. Andrew's degree may on any day demand admission to the Edinburgh College of Physicians, and practice in that city with all the rights and privileges of a Gregory, a Rutherford,

a Rutherford, or a Monro. Yet the remedy here assuredly, is not to alter the Charter of the College of Physicians, but to correct the evil at its source, and to deprive the Northern Universities entirely of that power which they have so shamefully prostituted. Again I repeat, constitute the regular Physician—facilitate rather than impede his acquisition of knowledge—distinguish him from the mere pretender by signs which shall be unequivocal—and you will effectually supplant the latter by expressively indicating to the public those whom they ought to employ. Facilitate the acquisition of real knowledge, and place the expences of procuring a degree or whatever testimonium may be deemed a full qualification, within the compass of a limited income, and you will remove all temptation to set medical degrees at defiance, or to practice unsanctioned by authority.

It is only by the multiplication of regularly educated Practitioners, that Quackery can ever be effectually arrested in its course. The wants of society require that these should be numerous; they should undoubtedly be liberally educated, and possess a competence, both to provide them with the necessary collateral acquirements, and also to support them respectably during those years of probation, and neglect, which every professional man is doomed to encounter. But it is a great fallacy in reasoning to require from them expenditures as a test either of merit or respectability; or to increase these with any view to rendering the profession more pure and select—for never by such means can the object be arrived at. To consider wealth as a test of talents is ridiculous; as a proof of respectability it is equally fallacious—it should therefore receive *no* exclusive consideration in arranging a system of medical reform. Already are the necessary expences attendant on the study of the medical profession sufficiently great, to all who pursue them in that manner which every man ought to do, who looks forward to a conscientious discharge

of his duties. Sufficient are they already for that class of the community who are best calculated to reflect honour and credit on the profession by embarking in it, namely the well educated younger sons of respectable families. I really know of no inducement the profession of medicine holds out in any of its branches, to incline the wealthy and independent to engage in it. It opens no road to ambition; and indisputably it offers not to its general professors that golden harvest which some have tauntingly alleged, a harvest reaped but by few. More certainly does it devote its minister to a succession of anxious days and sleepless nights—to years of study, toil, and labour, unrequited, and unsupported by any cheering anticipation of future elevation, or any consolation, save the internal consciousness of a life passed in the active exercise of charity and beneficence. Contrasted with the Bar how poor are its remunerations—and how natural is it that the respectable sons of the wealthy and the prosperous should recoil from such discouragements as I have been enumerating, and embrace the more alluring profession of the law—which requires but moderate finances in order to enter it—where a moderate period of time suffices for the accomplishment of all necessary forms—where the studies are completely optional, the admission without any examination, and the possible rewards of assiduity and talent almost unlimited. The physician even in his most sanguine moments can contemplate only extensive practice and proportional labour—the lawyer may look forward to wealth, exceeding beyond all due proportion the labour expended in acquiring it—to official distinction—to titular honours the reward of professional eminence—and finally to the highest offices and dignities of the state. In him every hope of the wildest ambition may be realized—his family may become enriched, ennobled, and his name descend to posterity in the annals of his country.

Under such obvious disparity then, 'tis surely rather required to *remove* impediments to entering the medical profession, than to *multiply* them; to allure rather than to repel—I require no concessions to be made to the Student of Medicine, which can in the remotest degree become subversive of the interests of the community, but I am justified in demanding that no unnecessary impediments be opposed to his progress, and in asserting that all multiplication of expence so far from increasing the respectability of the profession, or serving to repress charlatanism, has a direct tendency to discourage the introduction of those who are most worthy of admission, to divert the resources of the student from their proper application, into useless and unprofitable channels, and finally, by contracting the number of regularly educated Physicians, to open a direct door for quackery, and to force the public upon employing such assistance as chance presents to or impudence obtrudes upon their notice.

As I suspect that I have already trespassed unreasonably on you by the length of this letter, I will here take my leave. In my next I mean to resume the subject, and am, Sir, your obliged humble servant.

A. Z.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING HERALD.

LETTER II.

SIR,

A Retrospective view of the history of Medicine, and a cursory investigation of the progressive steps by which our schools of medicine arrived at their present state of improvement, may serve many useful purposes. It will place more immediately before us, and in a clearer point of view, the present state of these seminaries as it relates to medical education. It will enable us to distinguish those measures which arose from preconcerted arrangement, from such as chance introduced; to discriminate between the results of foresight and of necessity; and, by allowing us to contrast the several medical schools of Great Britain as they are at present constituted, it will enable us to discover the peculiar advantages and disadvantages of each, and to devise means for extending the former, and remedying the latter.

It was in the nature of things that this improvement should be slow and gradual. Medicine was first practised as an art, founded only on limited observation and experience of the effects of remedies in curing disease, and was utterly unconnected with any collateral or accessory pursuit. As such it descended from father to son as an absolute right of inheritance, and was exclusively practised by particular families. In time it lapsed into other hands, and from the increase of society it naturally became more extended. Its importance to mankind soon attracted towards it the attention of the learned, and from an art it ascended to the dignity of a science. We are at the present moment however only interested in considering its advancement from the first introduction of medical studies

studies into the universities of Great Britain. In each of the principal of these we find a regius professor of physic constituted, who was originally the chief medical officer for superintending the education, and sanctioning the practice of the future physician.—At the present day this office is nearly become nugatory, and the officer a mere cypher. In process of time the progress of learning and science induced a manifest necessity for increasing the sphere of medical studies, and for committing its several departments to the care of different professors. Some of the professorships were endowed by the universities, others by the bequests of individuals; and the capriciousness, uncertainty, and inefficiency of this mode of constituting and bringing to perfection the schools of medicine is incontestibly proved by attending to the disparity which marks the several institutions which at the present day are entrusted with supplying physicians to the British dominions.

In order fully to illustrate this subject I must here enter into some details whose purport and tendency however will be better understood, by first informing the public mind respecting that range of study which the present state of science requires every candidate for medical honours to be intimately versed in—He should understand anatomy, and physiology, as the basis of all reasoning whereof the human body is the subject; the former demonstrates the several parts of which it is composed; the latter explains their several uses and the powers which vitality confers on them. He should understand pathology, or that department which explains the general derangements which the several divisions of the animal system are liable to, and therapeutics, which investigates the general *effects* produced on the system by the remedies employed. He should understand botany, which treats of the whole vegetable kingdom, and chemistry, which explores the intimate constitution of all matter whether animate or inanimate; for  
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though its peculiar province is the inanimate kingdom of nature, inasmuch as it affects to explain the actions which the minute particles of matter exert upon each other, and as all matter must consequently become inanimate ere it is subjected to chemical analysis, yet, as by the aid of chemical reasoning we are *enabled* satisfactorily to understand and explain many of the changes which take place in the animated systems whether of animals or of vegetables, I feel myself fully warranted in adopting the foregoing more extensive definition of the objects of chemistry. The physician should understand the *materia medica*, which selects, arranges, and explains the several productions of nature, whether animal, vegetable, or fossil, which are in any way conducive to the preservation of health, or removal of disease; and also pharmacy, which teaches the art of properly combining and compounding these. Finally, he should understand the practice of physic, which defines and distinguishes the several identical diseases to which the human body is liable, and which applies to their removal the concentrated powers of all the foregoing acquirements. It is further incumbent on him to be familiarised, by attendance on some extensive public hospital, with the actual appearance of disease, and the effects produced on these by medical treatment; and also to have the practice adopted in each disease explained and impressed upon his mind by the remarks of the attendant physician, conveyed in the form of clinical lectures: by this his faith in all fundamental doctrines becomes confirmed, and the speculative errors of his teachers are subjected to the best of all scrutiny; by this he is endued with a just confidence in his own powers of giving relief; he is saved from that embarrassment, which the novel appearance of disease is so calculated to excite, and from the consequent timidity which would paralyze his best efforts; and he learns to judge with accuracy both of the value and imperfection of his art.

Such is the course of study which the present state of science requires that every physician should be grounded in, and it should be the business of the Universities to provide for the student an adequate course of lectures in each of the foregoing departments.

This course requires to be divided into seven different departments, and to each, in order to do full justice thereto, a separate professor should be devoted. Thus each perfect school of medicine should have a professor of anatomy, who for strong reasons should be and generally is professor of surgery also—a professor of botany—a professor of chemistry—a professor of materia medica and pharmacy—a professor of the theory, or, as it is generally termed in our Universities, the institutes of medicine, a course which comprises the several branches of physiology, pathology, and therapeutics—and a professor of the practice of medicine. The clinical department may be filled by each of these in succession, as its duties can never interfere with those of their other professorships; and it is even advisable that such should be the arrangement, as the practice of different physicians can thus be contrasted by the student, who will hence be induced to exercise his reason in making his own observations, and drawing his own inferences. The expediency of this course cannot and will not be disputed.

Let us now review the constitution and practices of the several schools of medicine of Gt. Britain as attached to our several universities, and mark in what degree they are conformable to the foregoing system of medical education, or to each other. The school of medicine of Edinburgh is under the exclusive management and controul of the *senatus academicus*, or heads of the university. It consists of the several professorships already enumerated, with the addition of a professor of midwifry, whose course of lectures is however not essential to a degree, and may therefore be

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passed over without further notice. Each course of lectures is ample, satisfactory, and complete; and the professors are in general men eminent in science and literature as well as in their particular profession. Yet they are not elected by the members of the university, or by the college of physicians, or by any body of men peculiarly qualified to judge of their merits; but simply by the city magistracy, the Provost and Town Council for the time being—and strange to say, these men have rarely been known to make any choice but such as time has fully justified. As the same happy result has not always been found to attend similar elections in other universities, where they are made by men who must be supposed superiorly gifted with powers of judgment and discrimination, we are warranted I fear in concluding, that prepossession and prejudice are more to be guarded against in determining to whom such powers ought to be confided, than any alleged incapacity. This university ordains that every candidate applying for medical degrees, shall have been for three years a student of medicine in some university, and shall have regularly attended a course of lectures by each of the professors already mentioned; that he shall then be examined *five* several times as to his progress in medical knowledge—shall publish an inaugural dissertation on some subject connected with medicine, and produce such other written exercises as are enjoined by the *senatus academicus*, previous to his obtaining his degree of Doctor of Medicine. His first examination is a general one by the *facultas medica* (which consists of the six medical professors), and is the principal and most important of the whole. It is supposed to be private and in a great measure is so, in order to skreen from observation the unsuccessful candidate, and to prevent his future exertions being repressed by a too keen sense of shame or of ill directed ridicule. The first *acknowledged* examination (the second in the series) is of a similar nature with respect to its general object; but is by two professors only, and for a shorter period of time. In the third examination

examination the candidate defends two commentaries written by him on two given subjects—the one an aphorism of Hippocrates, the other a medical question. In the fourth he defends similar commentaries on two histories of diseases, the one an acute disease, the other a chronic; and in treating of each he ascertains its nature, explains its causes, discriminates its peculiar and distinctive marks, states its probable termination, and lays down the mode of treatment. His fifth and last examination, which is a public one in the hall of the University, is devoted to explaining and defending the opinions advanced in his *thesis* or inaugural dissertation; and now being fully proved and approved of, he is at length honoured with a medical degree. It should be understood that all his examinations and exercises are conducted in the Latin language.

In the course adopted by this university I discern as much perfection, as I can well conceive a course of medical education capable of attaining; and the tests of ability required, seem to me fully to authorize that unqualified approbation which the language of a degree conveys.

In the university of Dublin a similar course of study, and an equal period of attendance are required as qualifications for examination. But it differs from that of Edinburgh in a variety of particulars, which deserve to be explained and exposed. In the first place, though the school of medicine consists of the six usual professorships, yet the constitution of these is so curious, and so fraught with the elements of disunion, that the want of concord and harmony among its constituent parts has effectually barred its advancement to that height, to which its manifold advantages would otherwise have elevated it; has placed it far behind the university of Edinburgh both in fame and utility; and has had the necessary effect of forcing hundreds of the youth of this country, contrary to their manifest interest—contrary to any real necessity—and contrary to that unsophisticated patriotism

patriotism which finds its first best country ever at home, to migrate to what to them may be deemed a foreign land, there exclusively to pursue their studies, and there to receive (which they are enabled to do without being subjected to unnecessary vexations) the first meed of their labours, an university degree.

The first error in this institution is a want of unity in its origin—three of its professors are endowed by the university—three by funds bequeathed for that purpose by a private individual, Sir Patrick Dunn. The former are elected by the heads of the university—the latter by the college of physicians to whom the execution of Sir Patrick Dunn's will was by him entrusted ; and this collision seems to have engendered between these learned bodies a perpetual animosity and misunderstanding. This circumstance forcibly illustrates the evils which inevitably attend every departure from simplicity in establishing the first rudiments of any institution ; it proves the radical error of hazarding any degree of rivalship, where unanimity is indispensable ; and it shews that power can never be placed in worse hands, than where sinister considerations can possibly arise to warp the inclinations or bias the judgments of those to whom authority is confided. The obvious imperfections too of this school of medicine previous to the bequest of Sir P. Dunn, and the opportunity thus afforded to an individual of supplying deficiencies in a public seminary, such as ought never to have existed, throw light on another subject, and serve to shew to the legislature how far in the series of arrangements necessary to constitute a perfect school of medicine, they are warranted to advance in the enactment of what I will persist in calling a medical constitution. The circumstance proves that they should not rest satisfied with ordaining, “ that all necessary professorships “ be endowed,” but that their decree should ramify into the subordinate enactments of adjusting the number, nature, and actual endowments of these ; for we can readily conjecture

jecture that the heads of a university, in whom the management of its funds centers, will ever be slow and reluctant to dissipate these in the endowment of any avoidable professorships, be they ever so valuable or indispensable. The principle should therefore be borne in mind, never to leave material arrangements at the option of those whose interest it is that they should not take place.

I have further improprieties yet to notice in the management of the school of medicine of Dublin. In it we may witness the solecism of a botanical chair without a botanical garden, although it is incumbent both on the university and the college of physicians to provide one, the former from their proper funds, the latter from those of Sir Patrick Dunn. Here too we have a school of medicine without a clinical hospital, or any regular accredited course of clinical lectures;—and yet the university requires from its candidates for medical degrees, a previous attendance upon both of these, and has in the plenitude of its power been betrayed into the absurdity of insisting on this qualification when no opportunity for compliance had been afforded, and of refusing to admit as a substitute repeated courses of clinical lectures and hospital attendance sanctioned and certified by the truly respectable University of Edinburgh.

I have to condemn too the want of reciprocal indulgence between this and its sister universities. To the students of Dublin College every privilege is granted by the University of Edinburgh that their own students can claim; and a candidate from Ireland may there apply for, and will be allowed his examination and subsequent degree as doctor of medicine, although his entire studies shall have been pursued under the Dublin professors, and without his passing in Edinburgh a single hour beyond what is necessary for subjecting him to the requisite tests of his ability.

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Though some Edinburgh lectures are allowed to a Dublin candidate, yet others are denied; and, paradoxical as it may seem, that very course is denied for which the College of Dublin affords no opportunity, namely, the clinical lectures and hospital attendance.

Another incongruity which I have yet to notice is, the issuing from this university degrees under different establishments. A literary graduate of the university may be examined by the three medical professors belonging to the university, and by the regius professor of physic, and when approved of, constituted a bachelor of medicine. This candidate undergoes one examination, and writes one dissertation, which he reads publicly in the hall of the university, but is not required to publish. A candidate who is not a literary graduate, is compelled to adopt a different course. He is examined by all the medical professors, save the regius professor, he publishes his thesis, and in due course is constituted a doctor of medicine. This introduces a variety which should never exist—it establishes a distinction without a difference—and creates a jealousy amongst men of the same profession, subversive of harmony and the interests of society.

Such are the leading features of the school of medicine in Ireland. In this investigation I have alluded to the college of physicians only from their connexion with the school of medicine; but I shall soon have occasion to notice them as a separate and distinct corporation.

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, altho' the only universities recognised in England as conferring full qualification by their degrees, are yet little known as schools of medicine. Their inaptitude for being considered such, is manifested on explaining how imperfectly they are constituted; for full opportunities for informing the physician seem not to be afforded by either. In each there exist  
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professors only of anatomy, botany, chemistry, and medicine. Now I conceive it nearly impracticable to comprise effectually within this last the several courses of *materia medica*, the theory, and the practice of medicine. In Oxford a clinical professor is superadded, and in each a *regius* professor is to be met with.

The University of Glasgow though advanced considerably in respectability and public estimation since the establishment of some recent regulations, yet is not, as far as my information extends, perfect with respect to the number and destination of its professors. Here, however, I am rather inclined to believe that my information is defective, and that the Glasgow school of medicine is modelled nearly after that of Edinburgh.

Of Aberdeen and St. Andrew's, though sufficiently celebrated for conferring degrees, I can yet say little as schools of medicine. In the former, three medical professorships may be noticed, namely, two of medicine, and one of chemistry. In the latter the medical school consists of but one professor only—Hence we may fairly infer the incompetence of these universities either to inform, or sanction by their authority, practitioners in medicine.—In my next I shall continue the subject, and am, &c. &c.

A. Z.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING HERALD.

LETTER III.

SIR,

FROM the transient review I have taken of the medical departments of our universities, we must allow, that in them there is much room for reformation ; and it is to reforming fundamental errors and abuses only, that the energies of government can, consistent with its dignity, be directed. It should be the business of the legislature to establish in each university a school of medicine, and to frame for each a simple and efficient constitution, under which no subordinate association should possess such powers as could by any corruption or abandonment of principle be so exercised as to subvert the original purpose and design. Certain general positions should be established containing the outline which all the universities should adopt as a common basis ; and as there exist no physical incapacities in any of these for arriving at the necessary degree of perfection, this constitution should ordain amongst them a perfect equality of rights, and a reciprocity of privileges and indulgencies, on all matters wherein the convenience or permanent advantage of the student is concerned. In all minor arrangements requiring the interference of the legislature, but in which their enactments cannot admit of universal application, it would be easy to adjust the internal policy of each university in separate clauses, or even separate statutes ; in terms however so guarded as neither to give undue latitude to, or to cripple the necessary and salutary exertions  
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of the universities ; so general too, as not to militate against that principle of simplicity in which the rudiments of all governments should be founded ; for it should ever be borne in mind, that all enactments, not having an obvious tendency to do good must unquestionably do evil—and that superfluous legislation, though its injuries to society may not be speedily manifested, can yet never be a matter of indifference.

Such a constitution would be so simple as to defy misconstruction ; for such ever arises, not from any real or inherent necessity, but from the neglect of making truth which is immutable the basis of all ordinances, and from admitting the insertion of clauses founded only in human imbecility, human passions, and human caprices. It would lessen the frequency of the well known expedient so disgraceful to our statute books, of passing reiterated acts to amend and explain foregoing acts, before *these* have well been promulgated.

Such a constitution too would be efficient, as answering all the ends which the contemplation of the most perfect schools of medicine we at present know of, can suggest ; its simplicity would effectually secure it from all misinterpretation or misconception ; and in carrying it into execution nothing could be hazarded ; for a reform so pure in its principles, and so innoxious in all its active properties, and its bearings, never could induce any of that convulsion in the state, which all violent reforms in the political body are too apt to be attended with. I will go one step further, and say it would be in itself complete, and a perfect substitute for all these lesser corporations whose only influence, as far as I can judge, is to shackle the profession with unnecessary bonds, and to exercise a tyranny to which they can establish no claim by any demonstration of advantages imparted by them either to the profession of medicine or to the world.

From what policy these bodies were first instituted, if not to remedy in some measure the evils arising from the corrupt practices of certain universities, I am at a loss to understand. I am at a loss to know why associations of men, who whether individually or collectively considered, have no share, unless a casual one, in conducting the business of medical education, but who are, or look forward to be, immersed in extensive and lucrative private practice, can be supposed peculiarly qualified to judge of professional excellence; or why they should be clothed with authority for either confirming or reversing the decrees of an university solemnly announced. I confess I am so little friendly to the whole of corporation policy, that even on the general principles I would object to the existence of any medical corporation. But if such are required like other corporations in great cities, to watch over their own interests, and guard these from encroachments, let them be confined to this their proper office, nor dare to arrogate to themselves a jurisdiction over the profession at large for which they are so every way disqualified. Yet even on this principle, I am averse to such a corporation, for I can see no necessity to call for or sanction its existence. The profession of medicine if duly regulated could not be subjected, like the vulgar trades, to having men imposed on it as qualified who were not so—Their essentially different courses of education would preclude all such coincidence. In trades, the qualification must be taken on the credit of an individual, to whom the period prescribed by law for the apprenticeship, may or may not have been served, and this possibility of practicing deceit may perhaps induce a necessity for some immediate tribunal to appeal to in cases of delinquency, though with what degree of justice or sound policy I will not venture to decide. But in the profession of medicine when constituted as it ought to be, the qualifications must rest on the credit of an university, which, under that equality of rights and restrictions which ought to exist among all bodies similarly constituted, can surely incur no suspicion

suspicion of being accessory to the practice of evasion or deceit.

This qualification of a degree once fairly obtained from that university, whose locality or other casual advantage procured for it a preference, should be decisive and unlimited, and should be a full and sufficient authority to its possessor to practice his profession in any part of the British dominions his individual convenience may lead him to. Is it not an insult, an injustice, a palpable fraud on him who after a faithful and strict observance of academic discipline, has been honoured with the approbation of the *highest of all literary associations, an university*, which derives its right of conferring this, immediately from the *highest legal authority* our constitution acknowledges, and which, to use its own expressive and energetic language as conveyed in the body of a medical degree, gives to the approved candidate "*Amplissimam potestatem, medicinam ubique gentium legendi, docendi, faciendi—aliaque omnia privilegia, immunitates, jura quæ hîc aut usquam alibi ad Doctoratus apicem evectis concedi solent*"—Is it not I say, to a man so qualified and so privileged, a breach of all public faith to be denied exercising this privilege so solemnly conferred, unless he submits himself to further ordeals, and acquires the approbation and sanction of a college of physicians—who, although his abilities may be transcendant, will yet withhold this, unless he also pays to their treasurer a sum beyond what the exhausted finances of medical graduates can in general afford.

And here I cannot repress the wish to indulge my readers with a most delectable anecdote, strikingly illustrative of the spirit in which corporate bodies exercise the powers vested in them for regulating one of their MOST MOMENTOUS CONCERNS, namely the fees of admission to the rights and privileges of their charter. The College of Physicians of Dublin, having some time ago taken into serious consideration,

deration, the manifest and increasing tendency to deterioration in their profession, and having adopted as the basis of reformation that most profound hypothesis, *that the respectability of the profession must ever be in direct proportion to the wealth of its ministers*, of which wealth they very naturally deemed the payment of fees to their body as the very best and least fallible criterion—after due deliberation came to the resolution of *doubling* the expences attendant on procuring their licence. But their reasonings not being very conclusive, nor their resolutions very palatable to the several unlicensed practitioners of Dublin, who nevertheless felt a very natural and very laudable desire to remove from themselves every imputation of irregularity by attaching themselves to the college—These said unlicensed physicians presented by deputation their humble petition to the college of physicians, stating the hardships of requiring from them thus precipitately and most unexpectedly a *double* qualification, and praying to have the objectionable resolution of the college rescinded, or at least modified so as to press less heavily on the petitioners. To which remonstrance the college was graciously pleased to reply—that they could not possibly think of reducing the admission fee to its former standard; but that from their wish to accommodate the petitioners, they would consent *to take half the amount in cash, and the remainder in approved bills at twelve months date*. This transaction is a matter of notoriety, and its truth unquestionable. I shall not by any comment lessen the effect its publication is so calculated to produce. If in recording it I have been betrayed into undue or unbecoming levity I heartily ask pardon of the public, and assure them that I deem not the subject of medical reform one to be lightly treated; but the impression made on my mind by the foregoing narrative was so irresistably ludicrous, and the ingenious expedient of modified taxation devised by the college, appeared to my imagination with so farcical an aspect, that it put to flight all serious cogitations, and caused me for a moment to lose sight of that respect to  
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the public with which I most sincerely wish to treat them, and which I trust I shall not again be tempted to depart from.

To return—the college of physicians of London possesses by the statute of Henry 8th a jurisdiction over the whole body of physicians practising in England, nor can admission to it be obtained by any physician without previous examination, unless by doctors issuing from the universities of Oxford or Cambridge.

It would be difficult to assign a reason why a similar indulgence should not be allowed to graduates of Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Dublin, who in point of medical information are at least equally qualified as the doctors of the English universities.

The Dublin college of physicians is more limited in its control, and partakes more of the nature of a local corporation. And in the truest spirit of corporation monopoly and illiberality is it founded, and its management conducted, as will appear to all who will take the trouble of reading over the list of the college published under its own sanction. Like other colleges we find it governed by a president, vice-president, and board of fellows—to the list of these is subjoined a numerous one of licentiates—these however are not to be understood as forming any part of the body corporate, as they enter not into its councils, are ineligible to its offices, and are hardly recognised as belonging to it in any way; they are merely permitted, in consequence of undergoing certain examinations, and paying certain and not inconsiderable fees, to exercise within the city privileges which had already been solemnly and without limitation conferred on them by an university.

A stranger to the subject would hardly believe, that (owing to disqualifications and other causes impeding the appointment of fellows), notwithstanding there are above  
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sixty regularly bred physicians residing and practicing in the city of Dublin, the actual fellows of the college of physicians, including their president, vice president, and treasurer, amount in number to *ten* only. To this I am to add five honorary fellows, who have arrived at their dignity by special favour. Of the ten actual fellows, two are non-residents, so that the entire management of this doughty college, and its influence over the medical profession, is exercised and directed by a president, vice-president, treasurer, and ten fellows, five of whom are honorary fellows only. It is scarcely requisite after this statement, to point out to the public the unfitness of this body for regulating the profession of medicine; and it cannot but excite surprise, that the Irish legislature, whose acquaintance with the constitution of this body ought to have been intimate, should ever have been betrayed into allowing these men to legislate for the profession at large; for the legislature certainly made a virtual surrender of its own rights, when it deputed or allowed the college of physicians to prepare an act by which the whole profession of medicine was to be controuled. The substance of that act, which the college of physicians had interest enough to impose upon the Irish Parliament, I am but little acquainted with, for I confess want of curiosity, with some degree of abhorrence of the principles in which I knew it to be founded, prevented me from ever examining it; and I trust, I shall on this subject escape censure when I mention, that a principal enactment of this vaunted medical statute is to withdraw that privilege which the original charter of William and Mary gave to the medical graduates of Dublin university, of entering the college of physicians without examination. Thus reversing their charter in that very instance wherein its approximation to right was possibly the closest that could be adduced.

My first objection, however to this body, arises from the interference which the will of an individual has given them

them in the school of medicine of Ireland. And here I must reprobate that supineness in our university which allowed such palpable deficiencies to exist in their medical school as Sir Patrick Dunn's bequest went to supply, without directing towards these the attention of the Legislature, which would undoubtedly, on such representation, have remedied them by means more consistent with national dignity, and more conducive to the purposes designed; and however we may reverence the good intentions of that benevolent individual to whom the school of medicine of Ireland is so deeply indebted, we cannot lose sight of the impolicy of admitting or accepting of such extraneous aid. The public has a just claim on the Legislature, which should not either in justice or policy be disregarded, for the establishment of an efficient medical school; it is incumbent on them to establish such an order of things as shall require no pecuniary assistance from individuals towards its accomplishment, and which shall admit of no interference in its internal policy by any set of men not immediately constituted for the purpose by the legislature, and under their direct controul. Should the legislature think proper on any future day to simplify and amend upon sound and rational principles the constitution of our several medical schools throughout Great Britain, a primary step towards reforming that of Dublin will be to withdraw from its present controllers that power which they possess over the funds of Sir Patrick Dunn, and the interference which it gives them in the school of medicine. If this alteration in the declared will of an individual (tending not to subvert but to confirm the purposes set forth in said will), is yet unprecedented and contrary to law, in such case the legislature should forego all claim on the property of Sir Patrick Dunn, and cause it to be restored to his rightful heirs. If the existence of two supreme courts of Parliament in one and the same empire, was deemed a political monster, can that legislature which passed such a judgment deem the present medical school of Ireland otherwise than monstrous.

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But I trust I have already fully explained the injuries which the interference of this body in any of the general interests of the profession, is calculated to produce—it only remains, as far as this body is concerned, to examine the effects they produce on the state of medical practice.

The foregoing statements respecting the officers, fellows, and licentiates of the college of physicians, would *primâ facie* lead one to suspect that there must be some radical error, some innate, exclusive, monopolizing spirit predominant in the first elements of their constitution, which denies a just participation in its rights and privileges, to so large a body of men, whose manifest interest it would be to enter into its councils, and assist in the management of its concerns. There must also be some bar to the admission of licentiates beyond what any necessity could require, which at this very moment places totally without the pale of the college, above twenty regularly educated physicians, residing and practising in the city of Dublin, among which number I have not included one whose qualifications can admit of a doubt, but have passed over all graduates of foreign universities, as well as those of the universities of Aberdeen and St. Andrew's.

I have no doubt that the principle of this exclusion may be traced to that short-sighted, illiberal, and even unjust policy of increasing the difficulties and expences of entering the profession, under pretence of reforming it; a policy, which when acted on as a principle, cannot be too much reprobated and exposed.

So far from accomplishing such an object, it is on the contrary more owing to this than any other cause that charlatanism is allowed to have any footing in the city of Dublin. It is owing to this that all ranks and classes of men engaged in the practice of medicine, are so confounded together in public estimation, that no just line of discrimination

nation can be perceived by them capable of guiding or directing their choice. It is owing to this that a regular and almost imperceptible gradation may be traced among the practitioners of Dublin, from the president, of the college of physicians, down to the merest pretender. But how is the public to decide—shall they adopt that standard which the law points out, and employ members of the college of physicians only? No—for they are in daily habits of intimacy and friendship with men eminently endowed with wisdom and learning, and every qualification essential to a physician, who yet are strangers to that body. They see these men, whose talents are such as to command reverence and respect, grow old in the service of the public, without deeming this college of sufficient importance even to ask admission thereto; and they consequently lose all sense of the importance of the college when they see it utterly disregarded by men whose obvious interest it should be to uphold by all rational means the dignity of their profession. Thus the great line of distinction is removed by which the public mind should be guided and informed; they see that the qualifications to practice medicine required by law, are intrinsically no qualifications; they see that the powers granted by the legislature to this its favourite medical assembly are nugatory, and must be absurd; for notwithstanding the college are impowered by their charter expressly to fine to a certain amount every physician, who, however otherwise qualified, dares to practice medicine in the city unsanctioned by their licence, and to continue to levy such fines so long as he shall continue so to practice—yet they have never, as far as I could learn, deemed it prudent to enforce this their unquestionable authority, but on the contrary are in daily habits of consulting with these outlaws, provided those conscientious sticklers for collegiate regulations are called in over the extra-collegiate attendant.

And this brings to my mind an anecdote respecting another expedient which a learned member of this college once happily devised in order to get over a difficulty of this kind—A lady of rank was attended by this member of the college of physicians—but conceiving (as ladies will be whimsical) that the assistance of a celebrated surgeon of the city might conduce to her speedier recovery, about which she was naturally interested, she, unmindful of the ordinances of the college of physicians, and attending only to her own wishes and her own feelings, requested this surgeon's advice. He, on learning that a physician had already been in attendance, very properly declined interfering, until such time as the physician could meet him in consultation. This, the physician, prohibited by collegiate restrictions, felt himself called on to resist; but willing to accommodate, or unwilling to lose an advantageous attendance, or possibly influenced by both motives, he kindly suggested the hint of discontinuing his attendance, for a *few* days, in order that in this interval the surgeon might be called in as if to a new case—after which, if the surgeon requested his assistance, he would no longer refuse. Far be it from me to attach ridicule to any man for obeying those laws to which he has submitted himself, and which he may even have been concerned in framing—on the contrary I honour the fruitfulness of his invention, and regard him even with something of respect for thus giving the rights of humanity a preponderance over the restrictions of a corporation; but I will affix my most unqualified censure to that body which created a necessity for this exercise of ingenuity, and forced him upon practising so shameful and contemptible a subterfuge. The human mind is endowed by nature with a singularly strong sense of what is ridiculous, and this is extended by natural association much beyond what the self importance of men in authority will suffer them to believe. From certain ridiculous traits in the constitution of the college of physicians, ridicule becomes attached to the whole body; in time it extends

tends even to the individuals who compose it, for the progress of any sentiment traversing the public mind, is with difficulty restrained within its just limits, and in this body, the number composing it is so confined, that the force of the general sentiment as it applies to each individual is but little weakened by division: what once excites our ridicule we soon learn to despise, for this sentiment is very nearly allied to contempt. Here then we view the seeds of that degradation, into which the medical profession is said to be falling, most thickly sown in the constitution of that very body which exists only for upholding it; and I leave it to the reflecting minds of my readers to discern how far mere reformations of this body, or legislative measures founded on their opinions are likely to meet the evil. I have dwelt so long on this corporation, the rather, as what I have said respecting it will apply in a certain measure to all the colleges of physicians now existing; with them I shall dismiss this part of my subject, and in my next proceed to the remaining departments of which the medical community consists.

I am, Sir, &c.

A. Z,

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING HERALD.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

BEFORE entering on the discussion of the remaining departments of the *medical profession*, I wish it to be understood, that I use this term always in its most comprehensive sense, conceiving the profession at large as a political *order*, of which physic, surgery, midwifry, and pharmacy, are the *genera*. Whoever will take the trouble to reflect on this arrangement will at once admit its correctness, and find it abundantly justified by the indispensable necessity of each branch to the completion of a medical system, however varied their relative importance may be. In this view, the error so sedulously fostered and disseminated by the medical department, of identifying their branch with the profession at large, and regarding every other as inferior and subordinate, becomes manifested. And yet, notwithstanding the conviction is deeply impressed on my mind that the abolition of error must ever lead to beneficial consequences, I might be tempted to overlook this as unworthy of regard, and to leave its development to the slow but certain cognizance of public acumen, did I not discern in the uses made of this sentiment by that department, and in its operation on the public mind, a fruitful source of multiplied error, and of extensive deducible injury both to the profession and the public. By adopting this sentiment, the department of physic affects a relative altitude to which it is not justly entitled; it assumes an aristocratic arrogance of demeanour unfounded in political necessity, and repugnant to every sense of natural equality; and it is led to grasp at inordinate municipal power, in order that it may the more effectually repress

press all tendency to rebellion against its usurped sovereignty, and hold as by right of villainage its vassals in subjection. Ample proofs of this latter tendency are on record; and others equally conclusive may be arrived at by all who will take the trouble of retracing the histories of our several medical colleges, and the several propositions for regulating the profession of medicine which from time to time have issued from these, all of which coincide in one implied principle of reform, namely the concentration and increase of power to their bodies for the correction of alleged abuses.

The claim of this department to antiquity as a profession recognised by the state, I have no wish to dispute; but I cannot consent to establish on this slender and insufficient basis, an acknowledgment of pre-eminence, which as undervalued from intrinsic excellence, and unfounded in superior utility cannot be real; and as a member of this very department I feel that I serve the best interests of my profession, and that I give it a prouder, because a juster consequence in all rational minds, by thus divesting it of its borrowed plumage, and clothing it in the garb of truth and candour.

In adapting to the remaining departments of the profession those principles which I have heretofore, and not unsuccessfully I trust, attempted to establish, I shall bear in mind my former arrangement, and first, illustrate as far as lies in my power that constitution by which in the present state of science and learning each department ought to be regulated, and afterwards compare therewith the condition of each as at present organized.

I have stated that the several departments of physic, surgery, midwifery, and pharmacy, are but the generic divisions of the profession of medicine. The business of this last is conveniently divided between the druggist and apothecary;

apothecary ; but in the three former the generic character admits not of subdivision, and the practice of each is fully within the sphere of individual capacity. It even appears that they are *condensable* into each other, as the latter of the three is most frequently an appendage only to either of the preceding. And we may readily conceive a still more intimate incorporation, by recognizing in the professions of surgery and midwifry, not variations from, but superadditions to the profession of physic ; for I maintain and hope to prove that a perfect equality of medical knowledge should pervade these several co-operating and co-existing professions, and that any arrangement of the medical constitution which enjoins not this must necessarily be imperfect and incomplete. I do not understand the consistency of admitting unequal qualifications among professions, where the human body is the great object of investigation to all, and the removal of its diseases the end to which the energies of all are to be directed. Let it not here be triumphantly remarked, that by this latter part of the definition the accoucheur becomes excluded, for I cannot consent to the humiliating designation which would confine this member of the profession to the mere mechanical employment of assisting in parturition ; on the contrary I will with more justice recognize him as the enlightened and intelligent physician directing for manifest purposes of public utility the ample resources of his mind more peculiarly to the consideration of diseases incident to women and children ; and grieved am I say, that such are the changes induced in the female constitution by the several destructive practices of fashionable life ; such, throughout all ranks of society, the depraved state of the female habit consequent to the indulgence in luxury and excess, that the natural act of parturition itself is but too often assimilated to disease ; hence this profession merits, equally with physic and surgery to be considered among the higher departments of the medical profession, nor should any misplaced ridicule be employed to degrade it. Popular opinion is  
seldom

seldom unjust where the results of any system are reducible to the test of public convenience : the public has long sanctioned this practitioner with its most unqualified approbation ; and in the dearth of regular practitioners in this department, and from the negligence both of our universities and of the legislature to provide these, they have been forced upon employing men, who though unqualified in every sense to officiate as medical men, had acuteness enough to discern the public necessities, and to profit by their knowledge thereof ; and hence it is, and not from any deficiency in the powers of the colleges of physicians or of any other body, that this department has in so many instances been shamefully abandoned to men possessed of no qualification save imprudence and effrontery. It is a profession wherein the real merits of a practitioner can less *than in any other* be appreciated by arguing from evidence derived from his success ; fortunate results will in the eyes of the delighted mother elevate a common mortal, and possibly of the lowest class both in information and intellect, to a demi-god ; while an unfortunate determination of a most intricate case, such as no human power could avert, will indelibly stamp with incapacity the character of a man eminently endowed with every qualification : Should we not then yield to the manifest necessities of the public, and provide for them such practitioners in midwifery as shall be equal to meet every exigency, rather than by indulging in unmeaning witticisms affect a contempt for that which the public voice has proclaimed of value and importance.—The public voice unequivocally expressed is always entitled to respect, nor shall I ever be the advocate for contemning it. In truth it irks me not a little to hear so often as I am compelled to do, the absurd affectations of false delicacy, which are imposed on the world as the result of natural feeling, and to listen to propositions seriously advanced by these dainty speculators, for confining all midwifery practice to illiterate females, or for conceding (as the more moderate only are content

content to do) that a male practitioner shall be in attendance in order to give his assistance when this shall be required by his venerable and sagacious sister artist. Has it never occurred to these delicately minded and enlightened casuists, that a man thus fortuitously made acquainted with the practice of midwifry, must know but little of his art, and must be very inadequate indeed to affording effectual aid, where this shall be most required; or have they never allowed themselves in their wisdom to reflect, that the moment in which only effectual assistance can oftentimes be yielded, may, from ignorance, or vanity, or a sense of competition thus injudiciously excited, be allowed to pass over by the too confident female to whose skill this truly important office may have been committed? While procreation continues to supply the defalcations of the human species—while apprehensions respecting an uncertain event in which the life of a mother, or a child, or of both may be at stake, have power to agonize the mind—while sterling genuine feeling holds its empire in the hearts of husbands, parents, or friends, so long will midwifry be practised as an art by men, who either are or pretend to be enlightened. And it behoves the legislature to guard this (which as being intimately connected with political œconomy should be an object of their peculiar regard,) from falling into insufficient hands. The means for more effectually performing this manifest and unquestionable duty of Government, will soon come under consideration; for the present I shall dismiss the subject of midwifry, into which I have been rather precipitated by the desire I felt of doing impartial justice to each branch of an important and most valuable profession, and of rescuing one much insulted department, from unmerited obloquy and mistaken ridicule.

I shall now proceed to consider the subject of surgery, as this seems naturally in the order of discussion to follow that

that of physic, which latter has been fully treated of already.

Surgery was considerably later in attracting legislative notice than physic; and although its utility was vindicated and asserted by the conclusive testimony of public opinion, it was long degraded from its just rank among the liberal professions, and recognised only as an appendage to one of the lowest among the order of mechanical corporations. At length the degree of estimation to which it was exalted by the concurrent sentiments of a discerning public, made it imperative on the legislature to withdraw it from its obscurity, and to give to it a constitution more congenial to its dispositions, and more consonant to the justice of its claims.

Colleges of surgeons were established by charter, but so lately, that these have all issued under the present reign, that for Ireland, which I believe to be the earliest, having been granted in the year 1784. To these were powers given for regulating the profession of surgery, and of legalising its practice, and from the number of surgical practitioners required for the purposes of our army and navy, as well as for the general service of the community, this must be considered as a most important object of legislative attention. The rapid advancement of the profession of surgery, since the acquisition of these privileges, and the rivalry which has commenced between it and the department of physic, incontestibly demonstrates a superiority of some kind in the constitution established for the former, over that which regulates the latter, this having had the incalculable advantage of a priority in legislative countenance and protection, of nearly a century. And I hesitate not to pronounce that, when the constitution of the surgical school is demonstrated and explained, as I shall soon have occasion to do, this superiority will be readily discovered

vered to proceed from, and be a necessary consequence of that unity which marks its elementary formation, and of the absence of all sources of undue collision or interference among its component materials, which as at present arranged, being in unison with each other, and harmonised in their united tendency, incur no risque of leading to discordant or inconsistent consequences. And yet this amelioration of the condition of surgery has been in defiance of manifold disadvantages under which it even yet labours, and which I trust I shall hereafter be able satisfactorily to demonstrate.

It must be manifest to every one that the perfection of surgical education must consist in its comprising every branch of information by which the animal frame and its constitution are illustrated and explained; and also those by which the several medical agents afforded by nature are developed, or by which their agency can be directed to the preservation of health or the removal of disease.— This is to appropriate to the surgeon, with only a variation of terms, *all* the information which on a former occasion I detailed as essential to the physician. Nor can I see how, consistent with his duties to the public, or the repose of his own conscience, he can dispense with less; for whoever regards surgery as a mere art depending on manual dexterity as its basis, must, if a practitioner therein, most grossly fail in the discharge of a great and awful responsibility—and if a general member only of society, he will be guilty of an absurdity from which a moment's reflection would have saved him. For even among cases which are admitted as purely surgical, how many necessities arise, and under circumstances the most critical, for the exercise of discrimination and medical acumen, either towards enjoining or decrying particular modes of treatment; and how can any man be deemed competent to decide with judgment and precision, whose only knowledge is that of a mechanist, whose only merit is dexterity, and  
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who therefore regards himself as a mere operator unconcerned in consequences.

The question is one which needs no reply—and fortunately for mankind they have, in despite of the many degradations and discouragements to which this branch of the profession so long submitted, at length succeeded in assigning to it that place among the liberal professions it so well deserves to hold.

The public have long protected the otherwise unprotected surgeon. The indispensable necessity there existed for his acquiring medical knowledge, was the best stimulus to his exertions in procuring this—and the confidence which the public, from conviction of his talents, reposed in him, was his best reward for the industry, and the undirected and unsanctioned perseverance with which he combated all difficulties, and combined medical with surgical attainments: the justice too which they did to his medical talents, was the best surety to the public for these being perpetuated among succeeding practitioners; hence it is that so large a proportion of medical practice is every where engrossed by the surgeons; and hence we may learn how ineffectual all attempts must ever be to impede this practice by legislative restrictions.

The profession of physic is probably at the present moment more overstocked with candidates for practice than at any former period. Insufficiently employed, and disappointed in the expectations with which they entered the profession, they are naturally dissatisfied, and as the human mind has ever a tendency to ascend from effects to causes, they look around them in order to discover the origin of their grievances; and finding the surgeons deeply engaged in that practice which they had almost looked on as a birth-right, they become satisfied with the result of

their investigations;—they conceive *these* to be the only obstacles to their own success;—they look on them as unjust and impertinent intruders; and they deem no exertions misapplied which can conduce to remove or paralyse these their more favoured rivals.

These opinions, and this mode of reasoning are so prevalent among the medical department, at least in this city, that it merits serious attention to discover how far this accusation is founded in truth and justice, and how far the grievances complained of may be traced to other causes.— If the physician is unemployed, it must certainly proceed either from encroachment from without, or from excess within his own department. This last surmise he is at once taught to distrust, by adverting to the principle so often recognised by writers on political œconomy, that in all questions involving a computation between the relative complements of demand and supply, a tendency is evinced to finding spontaneously a just equilibrium; and therefore they incline to the former supposition. But although this maxim of political œconomy taken in its general sense is most true, yet human experience has often proved that this tendency may be biassed or frustrated by many extraneous or intrinsic contingencies; and human reason can I think be easily made to comprehend that such is actually the case in the present instance. Could we calculate on a simple supply for satisfying a simple demand, material error could scarcely arise; but this is not the case—for in the physical department of the profession, several circumstances conspire to alter this from a simple to a complicated calculation. The supply is derived from several sources, and consists of several species whose relative value is unascertained. Now it is easy to conceive, that different sentiments will operate on different minds in entering this profession. Some will regard one particular authority for practising, as highest in public estimation, and consequently prefer it; some will decide in favour of another.

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Some, enamoured of collegiate distinctions, will become regular practitioners; others founding their choice on their own observations and their real or supposed knowledge of human nature, will prefer being irregular.—Thus, from the circumstance of several standards of opinion being held out to govern the same decision, the natural consequence is, that this confluence of so many streams produces an overflow in their particular department, which they are very willing so to direct in its course as to find for itself a channel by the dislodgement of the surgeons. As these, however, cannot by any sophistry be considered as accessory to this their deception, it seems rather inconsistent with justice to expect that they should indemnify the physicians for their mistake, by any relinquishment of their practice, especially as they derive their right to this, not from any clamorous assertions of self-constituted or imaginary claims; not from being obtruded on the public by the strong arm of legislative authority; not from the possession of municipal power under which to exercise any exclusive or monopolizing policy; but, from the most legitimate of all sources, the natural necessities of mankind, which first demanded their services and then requited them, which drew them forward from obscurity, ministered to their wants, appreciated their merit and finally raised them to that elevation, whence they are now enabled to repay by inestimable services the debt of gratitude they owe to the public. We are thus taught to understand how the surgeon, though unhappily not the physician of an university, has yet very generally become the physician of the people. It does not appear that any undue influence has been employed on his part, or that any sinister practices have been, or indeed could be entered into by him in collusion with the public, for the purpose of defrauding of its just rights any class of the medical community; and therefore, the revolution in practice whereof the physicians complain (and I believe with perfect justice as to the fact), is such as the surgeon is in no way responsible for. If  
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the physician asserts that his complaints of encroachment, and of the want of practice to *which he never arrived*, are founded in justice, and in claims on the public, which he conceives his condescension in entering into their service conferred on him; with what consistency can he propose to withdraw from its *actual possessors* that practice which, even by his own confession, the public voice has committed to its present hands? There are two principles only, on which his accusations against the surgeon can at all rest, namely, private justice, and public utility. Now as both parties in the first instance were free to select a profession, and as the surgeon was in no way accessory to that error in calculation into which the physician seems to have fallen, nor at all culpable save in making a more fortunate election for himself; I cannot see how the former of these principles can be at all outraged by the surgeon's acceptance of all practice that may be offered to him. The physician is therefore reduced to his last ground, and even this will be found to be untenable; for how can public utility be violated by that system of things which public convenience, arising out of public necessity had created? The arguments of the physician, however, appear here to derive force from the medical incapacity of many surgeons, by whose interference in medical cases it is asserted that the public is injured. This indeed would be a serious charge, and, if established, would subject the profession of surgery to the severest reprehension. But I will ask, are there no inadequate practitioners in physic? Are there no Aberdeen or St. Andrew's doctors, equally trifling with the public health, and calling equally for public indignation? I adduce not this in extenuation of any delinquency on the part of the surgeons, for I trust I am not so weak a reasoner, as to attempt the vindicating error by examples of greater error: my object is to shew, that they are not *exclusively* liable to this imputation, and that therefore, the ends of public justice or public utility cannot be answered by detruding them from the situation they at present occupy.

copy. These ends can never be effectually served, but by radically reforming the present system, and by equally qualifying as medical men the physician, the surgeon, and the accoucheur, prescribing to both the latter those necessary courses by which their peculiar attainments are to be compassed. As no line of distinction is founded either in nature or policy, by which each of these can be circumscribed; and as under the strictest division the human mind can devise, there will yet remain many points of contact, and even of mutual insinuation, the public must of necessity be left to the full and unrestrained exercise of its own judgment. It cannot be that they will ever submit either to be restricted in employing him who *has* received their confidence, or forced into admitting the visits of one who, however he may merit that confidence, has not procured it. Neither will they patiently submit to any dictatorial decisions of the profession, however backed by legislative power, which enjoins them to vary their practitioner according as successive and varying diseases may assail them. All these are considerations which an enlightened legislature ought not, and I trust will not, lose sight of. Let their councils be guided, not by the limited and puerile conceptions of any corporation, or other partial association, but by the enlarged and comprehensive maxims of sound policy; and their exertions will then naturally and necessarily tend, not to depreciate any useful department, or to give to any an undue preponderance, but to constitute such an order of things as shall be most consonant to the wants and the wishes of mankind; and I have no doubt, that it is in such a constitution of things only, that the individual interests of those engaged in the several departments of the profession, can ever be effectually or unerringly secured.

But I perceive that I am in danger of trespassing unreasonably on your columns, and shall postpone, to my next letter, the further consideration of this subject.—I am, &c.  
&c.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING HERALD.

LETTER V.

SIR,

AN impression may possibly be received from my last letter, that the constitution of things therein proposed has a tendency to advance the Surgeon even beyond the Physician, inasmuch as it presumes him to possess all the information of the latter, superadded to that of his own immediate department; in consequence of which he may be expected to become the favourite practitioner of the public, and thus supplant the physician. But the inference so applied is not just—It is undoubtedly true that from superior utility he would be the most sought after of medical men; but does it follow that this is to promote monopoly, or to lead to private injustice? Certainly not; on the contrary it follows from a principle already adduced and recognized, that as the eligibility of the surgical profession, and the demand for its ministers increases, their number must increase in an equal ratio. On the same principle the number of physicians must be expected to decrease, and thus relief will ultimately, though not immediately, be given to that body, among whom the simple consequences of being in excess have at the present moment excited so acute a sense of what they are pleased to term their privations. The individuals composing this body may rest assured, that although the proposed arrangement of the profession affects not peculiarly to relieve them, it has no tendency to aggravate their grievances.—

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They seem perfectly conscious that such already exist, and I will agree with them that they have reached their acme; but even under the present constitution of affairs the evil would find its own remedy, for numbers *will not* continue to crowd into a profession wherein dissatisfaction so generally prevails. And although the medical system which I contemplate would undoubtedly tend eventually to diminish the number of the physicians, or at least to cause a relative increase in the number of the surgeons, is this a subject of regret? Or can any one confound with this representation, any impression approaching to a consciousness of individual or even corporate injustice? Even he, who divested of all motives of self-interest, is disposed to regard with peculiar affection the profession of physic abstracted from its members, need have no alarm concerning this his favourite department. The profession of physic ever will and ever must exist; and though its numbers may be diminished, its respectability will be increased. Motives can never be wanting to the public for ensuring to it that rank and consequence in society which it ought to hold; for independent of its claim on their regards as a liberal and useful profession, it can never fail of exciting that reverence and respect, which the high literary sanction it practices under must ever ensure to it. The physicians too should derive consolation from reflecting, that notwithstanding their ill-judged efforts towards self-advancement—notwithstanding that prurient desire and overweening anxiety so depreciating to real dignity, which their chartered bodies incessantly evince for being fondled as the peculiar favourites of the public; a jealousy which attaches to them all the ridicule and all the reprehension that would follow a philosopher, who awkwardly aiming to excite the tender fondnesses of society would desert his stronger claim to their respect and esteem; or, who would seek to attract the exclusive attentions of some polite circle, not by displaying those talents for which he was justly eminent, but by labouring to depreciate some other more fortunate

fortunate competitor; notwithstanding these, and many other efforts towards self-debasement, still the public, influenced by that respect which the human mind so tenaciously affixes to all long-constituted authorities, and to all ancient ordinances, has not withdrawn from them its just consideration, nor can they ever become debased unless by undue attempts on their own part to reach an insecure and hazardous exaltation.

In the foregoing attempts to define the provinces of the several medical departments, and to explain their mutual relationship, and inseparable connexion with each other, the arguments advanced are sufficient I trust for setting the long agitated question of rivalry completely at rest.— I shall now proceed to consider more particularly the department of surgery, and to ascertain that constitution by which its interests may be best supported, and the advantages derivable from it best secured to the world.

From the view I have taken of it as a liberal profession it might seem that the business of conducting its education and of sanctioning its practice might be advantageously committed to the universities, which appear so well calculated for superintending the department of physic, from which I have shewn that surgery differs, only in being more extensive.—Much reflection however on this subject has rendered it clear to my mind that this would *not* be the best possible arrangement. Surgery, though unquestionably entitled to be considered a science equally as physic, yet essentially comprises a mechanical department; and as in this it assimilates itself in some degree to the mechanical arts, it is perhaps indispensably necessary that it should participate also in their peculiar mode of education, namely that by apprenticeship.

Wherever manual dexterity is required, or a practical art to be learned, the student cannot have too frequent intercourse

tercourse with the adepts therein ; nor can he be too much familiarized with the actual routine of operation, with the minutest concerns of which it is so incumbent on him to be intimately acquainted. How forcibly must these observations apply where the human body is the machine to be repaired, whose nature must ever prevent its being subjected to the rude inartificial handling of ignorance or inexperience. A mere mechanist may form his own experience without regard to the waste of his materials ; a surgeon must establish his, by a long continued, and steady observance of the practice of others ; and, whenever he is competent to undertake the responsibility, by a cautious and deliberate exercise of his own practice, commenced under the immediate inspection, and aided by the direct assistance of the more experienced in his art. Hence it appears that an apprenticeship which alone can be depended on for giving those opportunities for practical knowledge, or for directing to them that necessary degree of attention which the young and volatile are in general indisposed to bestow, cannot be dispensed with in a course of surgical education. This is a necessity which an university is ill calculated either to provide for or supply ; many circumstances too, connected with an apprenticeship would come very imperfectly under the cognizance of an university ; and therefore I conceive that the superintendance on this department of medicine, is much better entrusted to a separate association.

Such associations have been provided for the public by the establishment of surgical colleges. But a college of surgeons should have no analogy to a common corporation, from which it should be perfectly distinct both in principle and design. It should direct its energies towards communicating to the rising generation all possible knowledge and information, not pervert its powers by employing them to establish frivolous and vexatious distinctions in practice. It should assume the elevated ground of enlarging and

expanding the minds of its votaries, not degrade itself by participating in that exercise of power, to which other corporations seem exclusively to devote themselves, of heaping on those whose subjection to them precludes all resistance, restrictions and penalties which are both illiberal and unjust, and which can be regarded in no other light than as direct and unjustifiable encroachments on individual rights and individual liberty. Possessed of a just and unarrogating consciousness of its own worth, it should soar towards the height of an university, which it so much resembles in its designation, and not debase itself by any approximation to the nature of a *college of physicians*.

The legislature, therefore, in arranging on just principles the necessary schools of surgery, should by a *surgical constitution* establish, in each of the united kingdoms, a college of surgeons, whose business it should be to direct the education, and licence the practice of future practitioners. In so doing the legislature should either prescribe to those a well regulated course of education; or it should invest them with powers sufficient for directing and ensuring this, neither of which is at present the case; for in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, which I believe to be one of the best regulated we have, no qualification is enjoined by the charter previous to examination, except an apprenticeship, and whoever can prove his having served this to a *regularly educated surgeon* (a term which the infancy of the college renders it oftentimes a matter of difficulty and perplexity to define), may compel the college to admit him to examination and consequent licence, under the terror of a *mandamus* issuing from the Court of King's Bench, and founded on a literal interpretation of the words of the charter. And it may be conceived perhaps that if he passes his examination, he must of necessity merit his licence; but I think otherwise—nor need I in defence of this opinion enter into arguments in order to prove how inadequate

inadequate a mere apprenticeship must be to ensure the possession of all the necessary information. Of its utter inadequacy the almost uniform practice of surgical pupils is a tacit but unequivocal acknowledgment; for these in general, and without any injunction except what their own consciousness of its necessity imposes, are known to attend the several lectures of our universities previous to applying for a surgical examination. Many even go the length of absolutely graduating in physic, thereby affording to the public an undeniable proof of their possessing that proportion of medical knowledge so essential to the profession of surgery, but which the present course of surgical education as enjoined by law does not necessarily imply. And these circumstances, while they place the diligence of the surgeon in the strongest point of view, inasmuch as they present him to us voluntarily multiplying his studies and expences from the best and purest motives, motives which cannot be misunderstood, because his university degree has been already shewn to confer on him *no real privileges*, and as the titular honours annexed to it must *even be disclaimed* by him who looks forward to practice as a surgeon; these circumstances I say point out most accurately where the deficiencies exist in our present system of surgical education, and teach us how these are to be best supplied.

A college of surgeons should take every advantage of the several medical classes which may be attached to our universities under the *medical constitution*. It should require from its candidates, ere it admits them to examination, proofs of having attended the university classes of the theory of physic, of the practice of physic, of chemistry, of *materia medica*, and pharmacy, and of botany. The anatomical and surgical courses, I consider as best delivered by professors established by the college itself; for surgery, being its peculiar branch, should not be entrusted to less interested hands; and as the perfection of  
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this is so intimately combined with and dependant on anatomy, it is better that this also should be committed to professors of the college, who will naturally teach it more minutely, and with more frequent and immediate references to surgical diseases, and surgical operations, than a mere medical anatomist can be deemed capable of. This dependance of the colleges of surgeons on the schools of physic, while it would ensure to the surgical pupil full and sufficient information, would likewise be a bond of union between professions which can never be effectually disunited; and this incorporation of the studies of both departments, would do away every aspersion of medical incapacity which surgery at present is with too much justice liable to, and which no instances of individual zeal or exertion, however numerous, will ever remove from it.

A surgeon educated under the foregoing system must be peculiarly qualified to advance the surgical profession, and must also assuredly be equal to engage in any proportion of medical practice the public may think proper to assign to him.

From such a system of surgical education, peculiar and most important advantages would also result in those instances wherein the demands of the state for medical attendants are to be supplied, as these would be infinitely better than at present, or than is provided for in any hitherto proposed plan of medical reform. The public has occasion for medical attendants to superintend the public hospitals, and it has frequently been objected, and not without reason, that these have been officered by mere surgeons, although it was a matter of notoriety that the great proportion of cases requiring relief from these institutions were purely medical, and such as a mere surgeon could not be deemed competent to attend. This is supposed to be peculiarly the case with respect to the county infirmaries of Ireland; and the facts are in a great measure true; but the inferences generally

generally deduced from them are not so ; for with respect to these it must at once appear that the surgeon cannot be removed in order to make way for the physician ; and the state of their funds will seldom admit of two medical officers being attached. Nor would this be adviseable, unless the practice was very extensive and the funds very ample indeed—but when, as it generally happens, neither of these is the case, then I will aver, that the expedient adopted by the public of appointing a medical superintendent in whom both characters are combined, is one of the very best that can be devised. In cities, where wealth and population abound I have no possible objection to dividing the practice of extensive hospitals, and assigning each department to its appropriate curators, and I will most freely admit, that when circumstances allow it, this is the best of all arrangements. But in county infirmaries I will maintain that no medical superintendance can be provided so suited to their necessities and the state of their funds (considerations which with them cannot be separated) than that already provided by the public ; if they have oftentimes failed, the fault assuredly can be attributed only to the imperfection of our present system of surgical education—if they fail hence forward, it is equally clear that blame can only attach to those by whose neglect the public necessities are overlooked, and the necessary reforms in medicine and surgery misunderstood or unheeded.

The medical service too of the army and navy is of such a nature as to require a concentration of medical and surgical knowledge in the individual practitioner, which such a system as the foregoing can alone ensure his possessing. This necessity should never be lost sight of by the surgical colleges to whom the qualification of naval and military surgeons is entrusted ; and I must here cursorily observe that their extreme utility in this way affords an additional argument for committing to a separate association the interests of the surgical profession. But while the colleges provide

provide for the foregoing necessity, a modification of studies should at the same time be so arranged for the army and navy surgeon, as that his sacrifice of time and money shall bear a reasonable proportion to the remuneration he is to receive; for as this is necessarily very limited, it would be most unjust to require from him that full qualification which every candidate for general practice should possess. He might therefore be admitted to examination after a shorter apprenticeship, and without attendance on some of the least material of the medical lectures. It would also be consistent with justice to provide for him some feasible means of entering on general practice, should his convenience at any future period lead him to adopt this in preference to his original design. Such could easily be devised; but to enter further into this subject would exceed my purpose, which was not to give any detailed system of medical reform, but to detect and to disclose the evils and imperfections of our present medical system; to expose the fallacy of any partial attempts at reform, founded only in illiberal and confined conceptions; and to point out a few fundamental principles, of which any violation must lead to injurious and most baneful consequences. The necessary reform as far as the surgical school is concerned, would be easily accomplished, and in reality would be little more than an amendment of the present state of things. A previous reform of the medical schools, and of the universities as connected therewith, being assumed, it would require only to revise and new model the present charters, or as would be infinitely preferable, to establish in lieu thereof a general ordinance or *surgical constitution*, thereby establishing the necessary colleges of surgeons, defining their powers, prescribing the necessary courses of education, and enjoining a free and mutual intercourse with perfect reciprocity of rights and privileges amongst them.

Little remains to be said on the subject of midwifery in addition to what I have already expressed. Though it may  
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exist as a separate department in practice, no difference of education should be recognised or admitted, except that by which the necessary additional qualifications are enjoined to the previously educated surgeon or physician. These qualifications could easily be arrived at, by attending professors of midwifery attached to the medical schools, and by witnessing the practice of the Lying-in-Hospitals, with one of which each capital in the United Kingdom is already provided.

Here I shall conclude my remarks on the three principal departments of the profession of medicine; and I do so under the fullest conviction that the reforms which these observations point out, being founded in the pure and unerring principles of private right, and public utility, could have no injurious bearing. By it the interests of the public, of the professions, and of the individuals composing these would be all secured and confirmed.—The public would unquestionably be better supplied with medical attendants; these would be better secured in their rights and just privileges: and from the want of all opportunity for dissipating their attentions on subjects of partial interest, or of confined policy, there can be no doubt but that the general science of medicine would be proportionably improved.

How grateful to the unvitiated mind is the contemplation of such a reform, on which it can repose with full reliance for its permanence and efficacy—a reform by which no private right is violated, while every end of public utility is fully and effectually served; and how superior must such a reform rise in our estimation, over any partial provisions originating from factious and interested men, provisions which exhibit as their most striking features an inevitable necessity imposed on the public for evading them; and which are derived from men, to whose self-exalting policy every principle of right or equity is made to yield, and who by their uniform ardour to grasp at inordi-

nate authority induce more than a suspicion that if acquired, it would be exercised less with a view to the public welfare and advantage, than to their own aggrandisement.

It was my intention before finally dismissing this subject, to have offered some remarks on the last, though not least useful department, that of pharmacy. Conscious however that I have already exceeded the ordinary limits of ephemeral dissertations, I shall here take my leave, and for the present conclude my lucubrations, with which my general readers are no doubt by this time satiated, and which many of my professional brethren will think might have been altogether dispensed with. My last sentence shall be devoted to expressing the gratitude I feel to the Editor of *The Evening Herald*, for his ready acquiescence to give insertion to these my speculations, and for the singular accuracy and correctness with which these and all his other communications are given to the public; a perfection which the daily opportunity of contrast renders us more acutely sensible of, and which we hence learn more justly to appreciate.

I am, Sir, &c.

A. Z.

## SUPPLEMENTARY OBSERVATIONS.

FROM the foregoing letters, a tolerably distinct conception may be formed of that arrangement of the medical profession which ought to prevail. But lest I err in mistaking my own distinctness of conception for that of the public mind, it may not be amiss to recapitulate and enforce the foregoing observations,—to concentrate their spirit,—and to exhibit in a more connected view the outlines of that medical system which ought to supercede all less perfect establishments, as being founded in the pure and unequivocal principles of truth and equity,—as respecting equally the rights of all individuals,—and as effectually providing for every necessity of the public. The simplicity of this system, and the facility with which it could be put into immediate execution, are strong recommendatory features; for all the materials already exist, and require only the plastic hand of a wise and enlightened legislature to mould them into perfect symmetry of proportions.

Universities already exist in each of the united kingdoms, with schools of medicine attached to them. To organize these latter,—to equalize their rights, powers, and privileges,—and to ordain in each a given course of medical education, could be attended with but little difficulty. In England, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge could with ease be so modelled as to answer these several purposes.—In Ireland the University of Dublin would require but little reformation. In Scotland the Universities of

Edinburgh and of Glasgow must be deemed amply sufficient for that part of the united kingdom ; and hence, and for other reasons formerly given, it would be indispensably necessary to deprive the Universities of Aberdeen and St. Andrews of all power to grant medical degrees.

Some may consider one University as sufficient for Scotland, and may deem that of Glasgow as unnecessary ; but I can see no good reason for depriving it of its medical school, and I even think its continuance may be fully justified, on the ground of its own merits as a medical seminary,—of the number of medical men which Scotland supplies to the British dominions,—and of the convenience which the vicinage of this University presents to the inhabitants of the northern parts both of England and Ireland. With the proscribed Universities I have no wish to interfere farther than in depriving them of a power which is confessedly exercised corruptly, and without any regard to principle, or public welfare :—let them therefore still retain their medical professorships,—let these continue to be what they at present are, mere sinecures,—and let them be devoted to affording to indigent merit, an honourable asylum—and to superannuated talents, a deserved and acceptable repose.

One question more remains respecting the Universities ; namely, that which regards the literary qualifications of those who enter on the study of medicine. This has unfortunately been heretofore utterly overlooked. That medical students should possess such information, no one will deny ; it is essential not only from its direct connexion with their very profession, but also from the enlargement of mind,—the expansion of intellect and ideas,—and the precision of judgment which literary and scientific pursuits are so eminently calculated to produce. An illiterate man should not enter this profession, and therefore a literary degree from some University should precede the grant of a  
 medical

medical degree;—or if this measure could have any injurious bearing, as I strongly suspect it might, let the candidate undergo examination in certain branches of science and literature, preparatory to being acknowledged as a University pupil, and let his matriculation serve for an assurance thereof.—With respect to colleges of physicians, I have already I conceive advanced abundant reasons to prove, if such are to exist, of what nature they ought to be; and to shew how circumscribed the powers ought to be with which it may be prudent to invest them. In order to effect in *them* the necessary reformation, I see not adequacy in any measures short of a total subversion of their present condition, and of constituting them completely anew. Corruption and imbecility are too intimately interwoven in their present texture ever to be separated;—and even where these have been less glaring, and where their inaction has assumed the semblance of liberality, we have but too ready a solution of this seeming paradox, and can trace their conduct to causes, such as should make us but the more solicitous for terminating a state of things where we are indebted to chance only, and a gratuitous suspension of power for our exemption from evil.

A minute history of the several colleges of physicians, their charters, proceedings, and bye-laws, would at once develop their utter inconsistency with the well being of the medical profession, and would be the best assurance of the inefficacy of any attempts to reform them by any partial amendments of their present system. But such a history I am little disposed to write, nor would my readers be much disposed to wade through it: to me the labour of collecting materials would be poorly indeed compensated by any gratification I could derive from such an exercise of industry;—while their patience would be worse than trifled with, would be abused by being cheated into an unprofitable attention, to an irritating detail.

But

But let not *my* silence be a cause of triumph to these colleges; they know well that other tongues and other pens have been less reluctant to disclose their weaknesses. Of the Medical College of Dublin, I have in the preceding pages given some decisive proofs of high delinquency;—of desertion of public duty; and of regardlessness of public interests. Whoever is disposed to seek for further, let him turn to the recent pamphlets of Doctor Hill of this city and he will there find abundant evidence: nor should that exhibition of irritated feelings so manifest through that gentleman's several publications be suffered to create any prepossession against his unequivocal statements. Much more could I adduce against this body if more were necessary. Even where my former representations respecting them admit of inferences in their favour, I can but too well explain the motives for that apparent liberality of conduct which my unwillingness to hazard any violation of truth, or to urge even truth beyond its just bearing, made me tacitly admit to them. I gave them credit for not enforcing their right to fine such physicians as practiced in Dublin unauthorised by their license, and left it to be understood that this motive must be a regard to the public advantage, and a conscientious forbearance from conviction that such an exercise of power would both violate private rights and prove adverse to public utility. But I was wrong, and here I avow my misconception. A motive much more powerful swayed this body in this most astonishing relinquishment of power; and by it the apparent inconsistency of struggling for increased powers, while those already possessed remained unexercised becomes reconciled.—Not from considerations of public utility—not from regard to the rights of rival interests—not from any one praiseworthy motive did this college abstain from crushing with the full pressure of its vengeance all unlicensed encroachers, but solely from a principle which exerts an universal influence over the actions of mankind—the principle of self-preservation; for they well knew that the  
 continuance

continuance of many of the powers they enjoyed, depended on their abstaining from every exercise of power which could excite such opposition as would send them back to their charter for proofs of its sufficiency to confer such powers; they well knew that no charter can constitutionally confer powers admitting of vexatious exercise; that it never can be identified, or give equal powers with an act of the legislature; that to confer these is beyond the prerogative of the Crown; that this, although it can constitute a body corporate, can confer thereon no powers but such as its members individually possess; and that by the act of incorporation by the throne, no powers can strictly speaking be said to be conferred at all, because this merely authorises a combined exercise of rights and privileges, which previous thereto each individual already inherited. Too well did they know their own interests to agitate the question;—they knew that the first breath of judicial investigation into their alleged rights and privileges would in a moment annihilate many of these, and lay them open to numberless demands for restitution from the aggrieved licentiates whose money they had so unmercifully and so illegally extorted.

And to what purpose may I ask was it extorted? this question the college will not readily answer. Will they condescend to explain to the world and to the profession how its appropriation has conduced to benefit either? Has it been expended in building a college or hall of meeting, in establishing a library, in founding a museum? No, for no such monuments of just appropriation exist to justify them. I will tell the world how a part is expended, namely by an annual vote of a hogshead of claret to their president, in order to ensure to the fellows of this college suitable entertainment!

But as it appears unequivocally that they possess no legal powers to do injury, I will now let them rest in peace; for  
generally

generally as the fact of their insufficiency is now known, I can no longer conceive how the most pusillanimous can hereafter sue for admission to their society, or purchase at the expence of *fifty pounds*, and a vexatious examination a privilege so valueless.—Let the uninitiated physicians beware therefore how they yield to any seductive advances made to them by this nerveless college; for I can readily apprehend that at the present moment their policy may lead that body to facilitate even by violations of their own bye-laws, the introduction of licentiates, both with a view to weaken opposition by reducing the number of opponents, and to affect a liberality of conduct which fatal experience has shewn to be foreign to their nature. But let those concerned beware how they yield to the crafty delusion; for if selfishness does not wholly engross them; if they feel one rising sensation in their breasts having for its object the public good, and the real welfare of the profession, they may rest assured that every such feeling is destined to be outraged to its utmost bent, so soon as the College of Physicians shall have accomplished their present ardently desired purpose, a legislative confirmation and extension of their charter. That they look with confidence to procuring this is notorious from their own undisguised assurances and exultations; and that those powers once obtained will be still more vexatiously exercised than heretofore is made no secret of.—But that they will be disappointed in their perverted aim, I with equal and I trust better founded confidence hope and expect, from the wisdom of our legislature, and the patriotism of many of the present ministers of the Crown. The public attention too is aroused to the question;—its feelings interested, and its judgment informed; nor will it rest satisfied with any ordination short of a radical and effectual reform.—Let the Physicians at large retain a just sense of their own dignity and importance, and not barter this for any concession that this unsupported college may be now too ready to hold out to them, and they will contribute not a little to  
render

render this salutary and much wanted reform a matter of certainty. That arts will be practised, concessions offered, and allurements held out in order to weaken that opposition which has sprung up, cannot be doubted; or could it—the recent instance wherein the college volunteered in electing to an honorary fellowship an adverse licentiate, who from increasing practice and increasing public confidence seemed to be growing formidable, would make assurance doubly sure. The ready acquiescence too of this member in their wily project;—his acceptance of an *honour* conferred for purposes which only the most egregious vanity could overlook, the grossest selfishness concur in, and his apostacy to that cause to whose support he had openly and unequivocally pledged himself, should serve as a salutary lesson to all those whom I now address;—should induce in their minds a timely distrust of the weaknesses of their nature, and excite in them an unwearied spirit of watchfulness against the first heavings of a vain ambition, or the suggestions of an insatiate and credulous self-love, by whose united impulse, unless timely resisted, they will be precipitated into merited ignominy and contempt.

The fact of the insufficiency of this College should not be lost sight of by the legislature, as it leaves them but half the expected work to accomplish. Prejudices in favour of an existing order of things can here have little weight, in continuing a state of things adverse to the general interests of society;—the destructive powers of this College are annihilated to their hands, and any others they possess can oppose no obstacle to the salutary interposition of the legislature; hence little else remains for them than to establish such a Medical College as shall have every power to do good, but none to do evil.

The College of Physicians of London has been so quiescent as to leave few public acts for animadversion. Its

control as I formerly stated extends over the whole medical practice of England. But it is scarcely known in any instance to exercise any authority derived from its charter, or to interfere in medical practice save with those who have submitted themselves to the power of the bye laws of the College by becoming extra-licentiates thereof.—Over these indeed the College keeps a watchful eye should such be found trespassing within the precincts of London. In proof of this I may be allowed to adduce the authority of *Veritas* whose letter in the Medical and Physical Journal of last October is unanswered, and his statements of course uncontradicted.—This writer who seems well acquainted with the London College and its practices, thus remarks on Doctor Harrison's pamphlet, "The statement of Doctor Harrison would lead one to believe that in London physic was administered by none but regular hands—that there the Colleges were omnipotent—that the moment a pseudo-practitioner shewed his head, the beadle of one or other College was at his heels, and that the culprit was immediately summoned to the assemblage of wisdom in Warwick lane, or Lincoln's-Inn Fields, to shew cause why he presumed to assassinate his Majesty's liege subjects, proper medical licence not being first attained. How far this is true the daily newspapers will at once decide, and the inhabitants of London will bear testimony to the liberality of those gentlemen who so amply supply them with recommendatory papers in every alley about the 'change, the walls of whose buildings are ornamented with the portraits of many such illustrious personages as Doctors Brodum, Sibly, &c. who equally smile at the hand bill of the College, and the circulating inquiries of Doctor Harrison," Again this writer remarks; "over their own members 'tis true they are specially watchful; and should any extra-licentiate be found practicing within the prescribed distance, there is no doubt that he would be visited by the necessary Officer to remind him of his error, and to demand the additional fees."

*feces.*" This prescribed distance is seven miles, and it appears that over all licentiates practising within this distance, the London Colleges asserts an unlimited power. The following extract from Doctor Pemberton's oration, delivered before the College at their annual meeting in October last defines their powers with accuracy, and describes them as " *medicinæ doctorum ordinem qui omnibus hanc artem exercentibus intra Londinum et circumcirca septem millia passuum, auctoritate summa præessent; et omnium qui artem professi per Angliam dispersi fuerint, studia eorum percontarentur.*"

Their power over the members of their own body is voluntarily submitted to, and their exercise thereof need not here be demurred to. But it is a matter of surprize why their power over the utterly unqualified practitioner is allowed to lie dormant, so decidedly to the prejudice of the community. Is it that the extent of their authority, like that of the Dublin College, is doubtful or insufficient? or are their powers nugatory, from penalty not being attached to the neglect of submitting to their laws? From their own advertisement this latter circumstance may be inferred, for in the extract from the 14th and 15th Henry 8th there given, it is ordained, that no person shall practice medicine throughout England without undergoing examination by the President and Elects of the Royal College of Physicians, and receiving from them letters testimonial; but no penalty is herein specified as attaching to the neglect of so doing — Whence we are warranted in the belief that no penalty exists, for so important an omission could scarcely have been made in the advertisement in question. Does this College fail of effectually suppressing quacks and quackery from a too extended dominion, and a consequent inadequacy to enforce their authority in the remote parts of so extended a kingdom? this cannot be the case, for these powers are dormant in the very capital where their greatest exercise is called for,—where the evils of quackery

are concentrated, and collected as to a focus, to be thence reflected and dispersed over the whole empire. Is their forbearance induced by any principle of deference to public opinion;—from any tremulous unwillingness to encroach on the liberties of the subject?—I apprehend not;—for ill-judged as such an operation of these principles would be; an operation resulting from a most mistaken conception of their real essence and spirit, and of most injurious tendency, inasmuch as, instead of repressing, it goes directly to countenance and perpetuate evils of no common magnitude; they have not even the plea of good intentions to offer in vindication of their inactivity; and, however circumstances may have conspired to repress and moderate that control which this body affects to possess over the practice of medicine; we can have no doubt of their dispositions to make their own well-being a paramount consideration over every other;—of their disregard to every principle which ought to regulate their policy and public conduct; and of their consequent unfitness for regulating the medical profession, so as to ensure from it consequences beneficial to mankind.

These several circumstances cannot be more forcibly depicted, than by the following declamation of Doctor Pemberton, uttered in the oration before mentioned; wherein he thus exclaims, in allusion to the reforming zeal of Dr. Harrison and his coadjutors—“ *Quis vestrum ignorat, alienorum hominum concessum habitum esse, novis consiliis, nova audacia erectum, ad reformandum ut aiunt, sed potius evertendum eam medicam disciplinam quæ in hac nostra domo per tria secula feliciter constituta est. Immo eo processit hæcce rerum novarum cupiditas, ut consulerent de petitione senatui referenda ad inceptum suum lege sancendum. In tali casu ubi is vestrum invenitur qui non ad arma currat? quis non clamat “stet fortuna domus,” clamandoque pro salute nostræ reipublicæ propugnet?*”

Aune

“ Anne antiquam illam majorum domum quæ talem  
 “ heroum progeniem quasi in gremio aluit, dirui tandem et  
 “ collabi patiemur? Uno animo statuimus pugnandum esse  
 “ pro hac nostra patria; aserenda quæcunque sunt jura;  
 “ vindicanda privilegia; tenendosque mores a patribus re-  
 “ ceptos. Neque deficient nobis periti viri amantesque  
 “ nostrum, qui causam contra hostium insidias advocati  
 “ tuebuntur: quinimo etiam et duce gloriamur huic nostræ  
 “ civitati præfecto, quem nullæ rerum angustię exanimant,  
 “ nulli labores fatigant, quem in consulendo gravissimum,  
 “ in agendo promptissimum cognovimus.”

We may smile, 'tis true, at this rhapsody, this empty  
 declamation; and may even regard it with something of  
 tolerance if we view it only as opposed to the puerile  
 conceptions of Doctor Harrison; but if we enter into its  
 real spirit, our mirth and levity will cease, for in the whole  
 preceding *verbiage* of the orator, can we trace a single  
 principle, save of offended pride, of jealousy at extraneous  
 interference, and of a too ready disposition to direct their  
 utmost efforts towards silencing every murmur of discon-  
 tent, every intimation whereby their insufficiency to re-  
 gulate the profession of medicine, can be laid open to the  
 world.

That they are insufficient for accomplishing any one  
 useful purpose, requires no further proof; sufficiently is it  
 manifested by the preceding statements, which exhibit this  
 body as devoting their whole attention to those who, from  
 having undergone examination by the college, are, or ought  
 to be, unequivocally qualified to practice medicine, while  
 they wholly disregard the herd of quacks and pretenders  
 who impiously traffic in public health, and who audaciously  
 affix their bombastic advertisements to the very doors of  
 the college. Does it not hence appear that the insufficiency  
 of this body calls loudly for reform, and that as it is proved  
 to be unequal to the purposes for which alone it exists,  
 another

another more effective should, instead thereof, be constituted.

The College of Physicians of Edinburgh affords less opportunity for censure than either of those which I have descanted on. Actuated by that good sense which is seldom known to desert the temperate sons of Scotland, it saw its best policy in a liberal interpretation of its powers, and though permitted by its charter to examine all physicians of English and Irish Universities, it is generally understood to have rested satisfied in the few cases wherein an opportunity for this exercise of power presented itself, with a simple inquiry into the previous qualifications of the candidate, and into the reality of his previous medical degree. It no doubt felt a just consciousness of the absurdity of examining the tried graduates of Oxford, Cambridge, or Dublin, when compelled to admit unexamined the justly suspected graduates of Aberdeen and St. Andrews.

It is not unworthy of remark that degrees have been formerly sought from these convenient Universities, in cases where no suspicion could arise of their being used as cloaks for ignorance: On the contrary many, whose names have ranked high in the annals of medicine, and whose abilities were certified by the celebrated University of Leyden, whose degree was never obtained but by long continued studies, and strict examinations, have not disdained to apply afterwards for degrees to the Universities of Aberdeen or St. Andrews, in order to avail themselves of the privilege these conferred on them of entering the Edinburgh College of physicians without examination. As the University of Edinburgh had not at the period I allude to attained to its present celebrity, it was customary for even Scotchmen to graduate at Leyden;—and the fact of such graduates afterwards purchasing a degree, as qualification for admission to the College of Physicians, in preference to undergoing examination for that purpose, affords a most unequivocal proof that repeated examinations are a grievance.—

From

From all that has been stated, little doubt I think can remain that the functions to be exercised by a College of Physicians are few and simple;—that their principal purpose should be to enquire into the qualifications of those who present themselves to the public as candidates for medical practice, a University degree in physic to be an indispensable, but at the same time a sufficient test thereof;—and to distinguish those who prove themselves qualified, by admitting such into their body. All this should be attended with the least possible expence to the Noviciate, nor should he be shackled by any oath or other declaration of doubtful propriety, or complicated tendency; neither should peculiarities of religious belief disqualify any man from becoming an associate. As collateral and subordinate purposes, colleges of physicians should become the repositories of medical knowledge of every kind;—they should establish libraries, and should form museums both in human, comparative, and morbid anatomy, and also in natural history. They should exert whatever energies they may possess, towards promoting and extending the sphere of useful knowledge, and instead of browbeating the timid, and oppressing the impoverished and friendless, they should foster and encourage every effort which tends to enlarge medical science, and consequently to improve the condition of mankind.

Of Surgery I have heretofore treated at such length, that little remains to observe concerning it. I have already shewn that its interests and the superintendance on its education are with propriety confided to associations distinct from the Universities; that certain literary attainments should precede the study thereof, these to be ascertained by actual examination previous to the student being registered as a pupil of the college;—that apprenticeship is essential towards attaining a perfect familiarity with the mechanical department of this profession; and finally that an extensive acquaintance with every branch of medical science is absolutely

lutely necessary to fit this member of the medical community for the faithful and conscientious discharge of those duties which he is called on by the public to perform. I have shewn that such is the only system that can adequately supply the wants of the public, and provide competent practitioners for our public hospitals; for our army and navy; and even for general society; and I have incontestably proved that such a constitution is perfectly consistent with both the great leading principles of regard to private right and public utility.

In this department equally as in that of physic, it is necessary that the enactment of the legislature should extend to directing in detail a full and complete course of education, for it is by such enactment only that we can with certainty guard against negligence or corruption on the part of the Colleges. Its necessity will be further manifested by considering it as the basis of another most essential enactment, namely that which enjoins the perfect equalization of rights and privileges, and a complete mutuality of indulgencies; provisions which without the previous ordinance above mentioned would unquestionably lead to corruption of the system. For it would too probably happen; that casual circumstances might operate in raising certain colleges highest in public estimation, and that the others instead of aiming to recover their balance by a fair competition and honorable efforts to evince equal or superior merits, would take the shorter way, and hold out relaxed discipline and lighter studies as a lure to the indolent and unapprehensive. Thus would the system degenerate from causes arising out of its very constitution, and therefore it must be clearly understood that the outline of Surgical Education should be ordained by the legislature.

For accomplishing this salutary reform, and for advancing to perfection this part of the medical system, little would be required save to revise, purify and amend the present

present Surgical Charters;—to define and equalise their powers; to ordain in each an approved course of education; to decree a perfect mutuality of indulgencies; and to restrict the making of any bye-laws which can interfere with the rights of admission conferred by the charter or constitution.—For it matters little that a corporation is enjoined to admit persons possessing certain given qualifications, if it has power by exacting enormous fees, or practising other vexatious interdictions, so to repel the community as virtually to abrogate the declared rights of that community. It might perhaps be conceived by many, that a corporation must ever find its best interest in restraining its avarice within moderate bounds, and that therefore the error of exacting exorbitant fees would never be committed: but we have already seen, in the instance of the college of Physicians, that this error has been committed; and that so far from repressing their covetousness, this body even strengthened its operation by giving it the disguise of principle, and by alleging that exaction of fees contributed to increase the respectability of the profession.—We have seen them bring about one of the most glaring monopolies that ever was effected in any corporation, and this in some measure from possessing, or rather exercising, the power of regulating the amount of admission fees.

Although the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland has hitherto evinced no such disposition, and may seem less to require such restriction, yet I wish this body too well to leave with it the power of contributing to its own destruction. Besides a necessary degree of caution is immediately suggested on turning our eyes to the English College of Surgeons, who appear to me to lay quite too much stress on the payment of fees, and too little on essential qualifications. I understand that it admits to examination, especially for Country diplomas, without apprenticeship, or any certainty of previous acquirements, except such as are implied by an attendance for one or more seasons at the London hospitals;

that it grants different licenses for town and country practice, and that the only difference between these is founded in a difference in the amount of *pecuniary fine* paid to the college. For a person, possessed of a *country diploma*, may migrate to the city, and there practice with full privileges, provided he pays to the college the balance between his originally paid fee, and that which the college demands from city practitioners: and that no security may be wanting to the college, on any subject where their pecuniary interests are concerned, an obligation is imposed by oath or declaration, on each member entering the college, that he, if possessed of a country diploma only, will not presume to practise within the precincts of London, without first paying to the college the debt he thus incurs to them. As every association must incur certain expences, and as these, when considerable, are better defrayed by the associations themselves, I have no objection to allow of admission fines on this principle, provided they are restrained within very moderate limits, and appropriated to the real and necessary expenditures of the corporation, and not to giving claret to its officers. These expences can never be considerable, and therefore the fees need never be oppressive. It should not be lost sight of, that the whole obligation is not on the part of the individual, who is permitted to exert his energies in the public service. Some obligation is surely due to him from that public for such exertion; and therefore he should not be made to purchase too dearly the privilege of becoming their humble servant. I have already I trust clearly proved, that taxation of students can never ensure the possession of either talents or respectability; and I have now demonstrated, that oppressive taxation can never be required to satisfy the real wants of a corporation. What in fact are these wants? Pens, ink, paper, and a room to meet in—no more.—And when more is required, in order more effectually to provide for the service of the public, that public is ever ready to countervail any increased expenditure its service may require. Thus we have recently witnessed munificent grants by parliament

liament to the College of Surgeons of Ireland, for the purpose of erecting an appropriate edifice for that body, in which to conduct on a more perfect and extended scale, the business of Surgical Education. And is it to be supposed, that the bounty of the public will be withheld from supplying such further wants of this most useful association, as it might become burdensome to its professors to provide for? Certainly not,—and the supposition is little short of a national libel.

I have been led into this discussion from hearing that it is in the contemplation of the college to levy an annual tax off its members, for the purpose of paying to the Government *its* taxes; a charge, which the very bounty of that Government has been the direct means of subjecting the college to. If exemption from such taxes has not been ceded by parliament, it must clearly be from neglect of application being made for the purpose;—or if refused, the motive for such refusal must be essentially different from a denial of the justice of the claim; and in such case I would look with confidence to receiving from parliament an annual grant, adequate to the payment of all taxes, and other incidental charges, which the college might be unequal to defray; nor can I think that this confidence would be disappointed. A few hundred pounds annually, is as nothing to the state, while the raising such a sum would press grievously on the individual members of this college. Such a tax indeed would tend to destroy the vital interests of the college, and would give an influence to wealth, which it should never in such an association possess:—for if levied off the licentiates, its tendency would undoubtedly be to reduce their number, inasmuch as it would be a bar to their increase; and if collected from the members alone, the individual proportions must consequently be greater, and there can therefore be no doubt that it would operate to the exclusion of licentiates from this rank, and would repress the desire these naturally have to unite themselves to the college, by becoming mem-

bers thereof. Thus such a system of taxation would directly lay the groundwork of an absolute monopoly in the government of the college, than which no fatality should be so sedulously guarded against,—and hence I will affix my most unqualified disapprobation to the enactment of any such measure by the college, and will from the clearest conviction pronounce, that the *power* of resorting to such measures should not be allowed them. If supplies are wanted by the college, let them apply to the legislature, on whom they have so strong a claim, and they will not be refused. The power of levying them off their own body may to some appear of little importance;—but a moment's reflection will correct such a supposition. Let them review the parliamentary history of these countries, and they may soon assure themselves that a command over the public purse is not of little moment, as they will there see this trivial power of granting or withholding supplies, operating as an effectual counterbalance to a despotism otherwise absolute; and will hence learn not to consider any measure as trivial, without first estimating its consequences. Although there is no analogy whatever, between the operation of this power of the legislature and that which the College of Surgeons contemplate the exercise of, it may yet serve as some illustration, to shew us the real extent and influence of such a power, and may put us on our guard against the evil consequences, that an exertion thereof would, in the present instance, assuredly lead to,—consequences ruinous to the college, and destructive to the profession. This discussion I have freely pursued, as the arguments will apply to all medical corporations whatever; and as a knowledge of the principle may be a guide to the legislature in directing them as to what powers they may with safety grant to these corporations, and what they are bound to withhold.

In regulating the system of Surgical practice, regard should be had to the peculiar necessities of each part of the empire, and to the habits and customs which have arisen

out of these necessities. In Ireland, the practice of surgery is more distinct than in either England or Scotland—or if occasionally conjoined with other departments, it is with those of physic and midwifry.—In England, pharmacy is very generally combined with surgery; and throughout the whole of that kingdom, the Surgeon Apothecary is a well known character.—In Scotland, pharmacy is united to surgery in the very capital; and by the operation of the very bye-laws of their surgical college, which enjoins a knowledge of practical pharmacy, and absolutely requires specimens of compound medicine, prepared by the hands of the candidate, previous to granting their full licence.—Even the very heads of this college keep their own shops in the city of Edinburgh, and dispense their own medicines; however to their own patients only, and not to the public. In order to provide for all these peculiarities, and yet do no injury either to the public or the profession, nothing is requisite, save adequately to educate the surgeon, and then leave him free and unshackled by restriction.—A coalition with a minor department can never be a matter of choice—and if it is one of necessity, it ought assuredly be complied with. The conjunction or separation of the several departments of medicine, should know of no influence but that which the actual state of society gives rise to.—These must ever be regulated by the degree of wealth and population of that particular district which is the scene of practice. In cities, where both of these abound, the separation is naturally as complete as it is possible to be;—while in the country, in general, the professions are rarely disunited. Even the exceptions to this general rule afford a still further illustration:—for in Edinburgh we find, that in consequence of the want of sufficient wealth, an intimate coalition exists between surgery and pharmacy—while from the operation of the same principle we see, in all the principal towns of England, that although the surgeon-apothecaries abound, yet that in each, one or more surgeons may uniformly be met with, who are not apothecaries, because they find ample

ample employment in the higher department alone.—As no system of legislative enactments, therefore, can ever be so minute as accurately to adjust to each district the exact species of practitioner its wants require, I see no alternative, but to leave the profession, in this respect, free and unrestrained; and I have no doubt that such negative legislation would here be the wisest and most politic. The adoption of such a system, would leave the state of medical practice, in every part of the country, free to accommodate itself to existing necessities, and to vary with the changes which time may induce; nor should any false pride, on the part of the colleges, be suffered to interfere with this system of accommodation; for it is infinitely better, in such districts as can support one practitioner only, that in him every department should be concentrated, and a fair provision thus secured to him, sufficient to set him above the mean and too often flagitious practices, which to the disgrace of the profession, and of human nature, are not unfrequently resorted to, than that by any absurd and unjustifiable prohibitions against combining these professions, two or more half-employed candidates for practice should starve. Much better is it, that the surgeon or physician should dispense medicine, whose properties he must of necessity be familiar with, than that the apothecary should practise physic or surgery, with which he cannot be adequately acquainted; and it is by such a system only, that the evils, which unquestionably attend this latter practice, can ever be effectually prevented.

In this country, the profession of Pharmacy is regulated by a particular corporation—and this alone, of all the medical corporations I know of, possesses efficient powers to confine its practice within the members of its own body, or to men sanctioned by its authority. And was the operation of this power limited to excluding the ignorant and uneducated, it would be most salutary; but it excludes from the practice of pharmacy, equally, the surgeon and physician,  
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who are further prohibited from entering on this practice, by express bye laws of their several colleges,—laws, originating in pride and false reasoning.—Whence it happens, that as no restrictions can ever effectually deter the apothecary from the practice of medicine and surgery, for which he is utterly unqualified, while he has full power to shut out both physician and surgeon from pharmaceutical practice, with which their professional education makes them necessarily well acquainted; the apothecary, consequently, and by the necessary operation of circumstances alone, is enabled to contend successfully with both surgeon and physician; and finally, by their secedence from practice, which downright necessity and the want of employment compels them to, he remains triumphantly in possession of all the medical departments centered in his own person. This is an evil universally felt and acknowledged—but by few understood.—And let no one here allow his feelings, and his passions, so to blind his judgment, as to lead him to advise legislative restrictions, with a view to remedy the evil.—Such, under existing circumstances, would be both inoperative and unjust; for the public, under the present constitution of medicine, would unquestionably be injured by any such penal enactments, and they would have a manifest interest, therefore, in evading them.—Without the public concurrence and co-operation, no general reform can ever, in any instance, be accomplished;—and propositions, affecting an operation independant of the public will, must be founded in weakness, and must eventually lead to inevitable disappointment.—But let a just reformation take place in the whole medical system;—let every imputation of imperfect qualification be removed from both surgeons and physicians;—let them have full power to combine pharmaceutical practice with their own, in any way that the necessities of each particular district may require; and the medical and surgical practice of mere apothecaries will become a non-entity. The public would then be no longer at the mercy of any adventurer;—the apothecary would only be found, where

where ample employment existed to occupy him in his own proper sphere; and he would find no opportunity for deserting his counter, or for imposing himself on the world in characters unjustifiably assumed. Far be it from my mind to calumniate any set of men, whose efforts may be faithfully and honestly exercised for the public good: and as far as this great end can appear to be answered, by leaving the apothecary unmolested in his present employments, so far will I be his advocate against every outcry that may be raised against him; for though he does much harm,—yet he does much good also;—and I am well assured, that any restrictions, *immediately* opposed to him, would prove a national misfortune. Reform, even though immediately commenced, must be slow and gradual in its operation; and this practitioner must be removed, not by legislative prohibitions levelled against him, but by the silently concurring approbation of the public becoming imperceptibly transferred to those more competent practitioners, whom a wise and provident senate shall substitute.

This declaration cannot surely be tortured into any approbation of the present state of things, as this regards the apothecary. On the contrary, no one is more firmly convinced than I am, of the gross and radical incapacity of this class for officiating as surgeons or physicians, or can be more sensible of the error of allowing them to transgress the boundaries of their own department. Too many instances have come to my own knowledge, of their deadly interference, in cases beyond their skill, to leave a doubt upon my mind.—In every branch of medical practice, I have seen instances of this deleterious ineptitude.—I have known a practitioner of this class have the temerity to cut into the bladder, in order to remove a stone impacted in the neck of it;—yet this undaunted operator had never heard a single lecture delivered either on anatomy or surgery,—had never witnessed a single dissection,—and, in truth, knew not the difference, either in organization or vital properties, between  
a nerve

a nerve and a tendon.—The consequences, as may be anticipated, were fatal—and they were, in this instance, clearly referable to the insufficiency of this misguided empiric:—for when he had cut into the bladder with his scalpel, and the urine began to flow, the boy, who was the subject of operation, became terrified and escaped, and his mother, who was the assistant on the occasion, yielded to her own alarms, and ran away also—the stone remained unre-moved—the urine became effused among the cellular membrane of the scrotum—mortification supervened—and the victim died.—After this case, further illustrations would be vapid and superfluous. Many of a similar nature could I adduce, both in physic and midwifry,—in which latter, the apothecary is perhaps less reprehensible for embarking, inasmuch as every old woman is said to be competent to undertake it.

Yet this is the condition of medical practice, which some will say should not be interfered with! For my own part, I have given this subject long and scrutinising investigation. I have seen evils, and of a magnitude to appal the most steady mind, result from the ignorance of apothecaries. But I have also seen inestimable advantages attend the unre-mitting assiduity of this practitioner, to the diseases of the poor;—I have seen health, cheerfulness, and labour, restored to the support of that hovel, which, but for his timely aid, disease would have sapped to its foundation; and I have seen the prayers and the blessings of its grateful and almost adoring inmates showered upon his head. With these impressions, and this conviction, I feel that I should not do impartial justice, were I to withhold my testimony from the benevolence and humanity I have so often witnessed—impressions, which are the more permanent, because made at that age, when all the finer feelings, which the after inter-courses of life are too apt to render callous and insusceptible, are yet tremblingly alive to the exquisite delights of virtue and beneficence—when every chord of the yet unsophisti-

cated heart vibrates to the hand of nature, and conveys to the soul sweet and indescribable sensations of almost celestial happiness.—But while I concede thus far to truth and justice, I must still deprecate that system of things, which subjects this member of the profession to so many temptations to do evil—and which, by leaving him but too often to the exclusive practice of what he does not understand, allows him no escape from the commission of error, as the want of better aid makes it almost mandatory on him to give his precarious assistance.—I know of but one remedy, that can effectually meet the evil, and yet cause no suspension in the real service of the public; and that is, to allow both surgeons and physicians to conjoin pharmacy, wherever the separate professions cannot meet adequate support. Where this latter is the case, it is clear that several practitioners will not remain to their own detriment—some must resign; and it cannot be the apothecary, for his place cannot be supplied by either of his opponents.—Consequently, he is ultimately left in exclusive possession of every department; and he embraces the practice of all, in obedience to the first law of nature, and in order to arrive at that competence, which his own particular department could not afford him. Whereas if either the surgeon or physician had power to conjoin pharmacy with his appropriate profession, there can be no doubt to which side the public would incline—thus they would, in every instance, have medical assistance of undoubted worth, and the practitioner would be enabled to obtain adequate remuneration.

Having entered so far in the consideration of pharmacy, I shall not dismiss it without a few remarks on the constitution of this department. It seems essentially necessary to divide it into two branches—and to distinguish between the Druggist and the Apothecary. The former of these I can regard in no other light, than as a merchant employing his capital in drugs and chemicals. As such, I see no necessity whatever, for enjoining him any particular qualification.—

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His own interest will ensure his importing and providing articles of unexceptionable quality; and his errors, whether of wilfulness or neglect, must be harmless, because subject to the cognizance of the apothecary—who may be effectually deterred from entering into collusion with his druggist, for the purpose of imposing improper medicines on the public, by such salutary checks and restraints, as without interfering with the just rights and privileges of any, may have the effect of securing the public health from suffering by turpitude or avarice.

In this view, it seems decidedly requisite to the public safety, that the druggist should confine himself to the sale of medicines in the gross; and that he should not trespass, in any way, on the province of the apothecary.—He should therefore be prohibited, under a penalty, or by some other more effectual means, from preparing medicine in composition, either from the prescriptions of medical men or otherwise; and in order to prevent this salutary interdiction being evaded, it would perhaps be necessary to prevent him selling under certain quantities. It seems difficult, however, to arrange any satisfactory code for confining the druggist to the general sale of medicines—and I confess I have not satisfied my mind as to the means of so doing. I place no faith in penal codes—and, were I prepared with a substitute, I would on principle deprecate all such; for on principle, and a due investigation and deep conviction of the evils they have heaped upon society, have I long since learned to condemn them; an investigation, which scrutinized the social history of mankind—and a conviction doubly impressed, by reference both to abstract reasoning and to universal experience. But I have no doubt remaining, as to the propriety of such restriction. A few cases may no doubt be adduced, wherein partial and trifling inconveniences may attend this—but they are so insignificant, when compared with the mass of evil which is caused by druggists acting as apothecaries, that they are no counter-

terbalance. By such restriction no injustice is practised towards the individual, as he enters on his employment with a view to mercantile profits only—and these should content him. Neither is public convenience interfered with, as this is fully secured so long as medicine continues to be dispensed by the apothecary.

Of this latter, the office is one of undoubted importance, and merits our serious attention. It seems to condense within it the essence of various occupations; to be a connecting link, as it were, between commerce, trades and professions. In the manipulations of the shop, and the laboratory, it partakes of the nature of the mechanical arts;—in disposing of the produce of these, it is indubitably a retail trade;—while it assimilates itself to a profession, in its education;—in the degree of mental exertion it requires;—and in its remunerations;—inasmuch as the prices, affixed to its commodities, far exceed their material value.—The first of these qualities renders apprenticeship necessary—the second seems not to require any particular attention—the last requires the apothecary to possess, both a certain portion of literary information, and also of professional knowledge.—In order to ensure all these, it is decidedly adviseable to commit its concerns to the care of a separate association, as is at present the case in this country. But the course of study, or of education, should not be optional with this body, but should be enjoined by the legislature, so as to prevent so material an object being either overlooked or neglected.—A student of pharmacy should, previous to commencing his apprenticeship, be able to read the Latin language with fluency, and to write it with grammatical correctness. He should also understand the rudiments of the Greek tongue—his apprenticeship should not exceed five years; and need not, in my mind, be nearly so long. During it, he should be required to attend the two University courses, of Chemistry, and of *Materia Medica* and Pharmacy. He should afterwards prove, by undergoing examination, that his opportunities

opportunities have not been neglected.—Thus prepared, this member of the profession would possess undoubted qualifications for practising as an apothecary, but not one requisite for entitling him to practice either physic, surgery, or midwifery.—Nor is it necessary to the public that he should engage in either of these;—neither is it required with any view to his own remuneration.—From what has lately been observed, it is manifest, that the public can very well dispense with his extra-ordinary services, when not compelled by necessity to accept them—and it may easily be comprehended, that his own immediate department will afford him abundant employment, and ample remuneration, provided the members thereof are not multiplied to excess, by allowing them to embrace this profession in contemplation of the unwarranted allurements of medical and surgical practice.

By putting an end to this kind of expectation, the profession of pharmacy would find its proper level, and many of the evils, arising from the excessive number and insufficient employment of its members, would come to a natural termination. The apothecary would, of necessity, decline in public esteem, as a medical and surgical practitioner, while a more adequate substitute would be provided, by the operation of that reformed medical system, which I have so strenuously recommended, and which I have now nearly brought to a close.

This twofold encroachment on the apothecaries, of both retrenching their present employments, and of opening to physicians and surgeons their direct and legitimate occupation, may however excite some alarm; and may induce some too apprehensive casuists to conceive, that such provisions may border on injustice, and be a breach of that faith on which many have embarked in the profession of pharmacy.—Although such injustice, even if proved, could have no effect, in setting aside a measure of great national

national importance, yet it is worth while to investigate such a position, as its validity would undoubtedly demand some modification in the proposed system of reform, with a view to counterbalancing, in some degree, this partial injustice. On one ground only can such a charge be recognized, namely, the latter of those mentioned; for no one will assert, that the apothecary can, with any justice, complain of being deprived of that practice, to which no claim of his, either legal or moral, can be substantiated: or could such an absurdity be conceived, it must be recollected, that no penal enactments whatever are proposed, in order to detrude him from medical and surgical practice; but that his removal from thence is left to the unforced agency of circumstances only, which will meet their most powerful support, towards accomplishing this purpose, in the increasing conviction which the public mind will be every day receiving, of this member's utter incapacity to perform the duties of either surgeon or physician.—On the second ground, his complaint of grievance may seem better founded; for political justice certainly requires, that each member of the community, who engages in the service of the public, should be secured in the continuance of those advantages, which, whether by expressed or implied public concurrence, belonged to any acknowledged association or profession at the period of his entering therein. Although a position of this kind must be admitted with many limitations, yet it is clear, that, consistent with it, the legislature ought not, except on the strongest grounds, open the profession of pharmacy to such, as they who commenced their career in this profession could not have previously calculated on.—Let us first inquire into the reality and extent of this injustice,—and then examine into the necessity that may exist to justify the commission thereof.

In Practical Pharmacy there must, on this occasion, be distinguished, two great bodies—namely, the initiated, and the uninitiated—or, those who have completed their studies

dies—and those who are yet engaged in them. The former of these are so secured, both by prescription and possession, in their present holds; and the operation of the proposed reform, as regarding them, must be yet so remote, that they have little cause indeed to apprehend any dislodgement. To the uninitiated, therefore, we may confine our remarks; and a little reflection on the subject will, I have no doubt, shew, that even these have but little cause for complaint.—The necessity for altering the present system seems universally admitted—the effect of the proposed reform must be, to diminish the number of mere apothecaries,—and the danger here seems to be, lest the number of young men, already embarked in this profession, may prove to be in excess, beyond what its necessities may be found to require.

For this the obvious remedy seems to be, to give suitable employment to this surplus. Now it is a matter of sufficient notoriety, that the great majority of those who of late years have entered this profession have afterwards deserted it, and extending their views in life have qualified themselves as surgeons for the army and navy.—It is well known too, that it is principally from this source that both these services are supplied. Here then an obvious channel is found already existing into which any overflow of this department seems by a natural impulse to direct its course. Thus every supposed evil likely to arise from such a change, seems to find its natural remedy; and although future regulations may enjoin a more defined and more perfect course of education to those who are destined for the important and too much neglected services of the army and navy, yet this can afford no just plea of complaint to the present pharmaceutical pupil; for the legislature, when assured of the insufficiency of any professional education, has an undoubted right to enjoin a better one—and if there is here the semblance of overstrained authority, inasmuch as he who entered on the study of pharmacy with limited views may thus find himself virtually compelled to  
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extend these,—the consequences surely cannot much be deprecated, which tend only to make men wiser and better servants of the public.—It should be recollected too, that the new order of things proposes to leave the department of pharmacy still open to these, and that they will find themselves at perfect liberty to resume this, if it continues to engage any particular share of their regards,—and with the increased advantage too of being also adequate to undertake both medical and surgical practice.

But in addition to the force which my arguments in favour of throwing open the profession of pharmacy to surgeons and physicians, derive from the general principles on which I have already argued the question, a most striking illustration of the advantages derivable from such a system presents itself;—an illustration so forcible and impressive, as to merit the particular attention of both the government and the nation. A numerous and meritorious class of medical men exists, devoting their best energies to the exigencies of the state, and performing services such as no pecuniary stipend consistent with public œconomy can adequately remunerate. I need scarcely observe, that I allude to the medical department of our army and navy.—It is true, that this useful body of men have not been overlooked—and that their situation has been ameliorated as far as was deemed consistent with a prudent œconomy of the public funds.—With this, they of course rest satisfied; and to their present condition my introduction of them, in this place, has therefore no reference.—But war is, surely, not to be perennial; and when its cessation shall restore our fleets and armies to the bosom of their country, in what situation may, I ask will, the discarded naval or military surgeon find himself? What will be his recompence, for years of toil, peril and anxiety?—what his reward, for having borne the burden and heat of the day?—Not ease and competence; for to the former the latter is essential, and this the public purse is inadequate to bestow;—not otium  
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cum dignitate; for his necessities will preclude the former, and the imputation of insufficiency in early cultivation, the latter. To his own continued exertions he must look, therefore, for that modicum of wealth or respectability it may be his fortune to arrive at. The legislature cannot, by any liberality, place him above the necessity for such exertion; or could it, to do so would not be desirable, or conducive to the public interests. These would not be served by the wisdom and experience of so many valuable minds being suffered to lie dormant; and much experience has proved, that a change from active employment to indolence conduces not to happiness. As therefore the continuance of his exertions is a matter of necessity, and as both the public interests and his own require this, it is surely the bounden duty of that nation, whose services he so faithfully performs, and to which he sacrifices so largely, to provide that every facility be given to him, in the exercise of his talents, which a general sense of public duty shall warrant.—If it shall appear, as I trust it must, that the facility thus afforded is not only consistent with, but even highly conducive to the public welfare, I cannot see on what principle; the system, which so provides, can be opposed or remain unregarded.

There is but one expedient, by which these praiseworthy characters can be preserved from becoming a burden to themselves, and a reproach to their country—and that is, by allowing them to conjoin the practice of pharmacy with that of their profession. By this simple expedient they will be enabled so to accommodate themselves to the situations in which alone they can hope to succeed, namely, the several country towns and villages of the empire, as to render a certain portion of success tolerably secure. In the capitals they would have no chance; for, even if the jealousy of chartered bodies would permit the trial, their real merits would there be overlooked, and their early deficiencies could hardly escape the cognizance of their more flippant and better educated, though not

more meritorious fellow-labourers. Besides the moderate allowance of Government would be utterly insufficient to enable them, in expensive cities, to bear up through that probationary period, which every candidate for professional practice is doomed to encounter. Thus their feelings would be outraged, and their prospects destroyed. Whereas in the calm retreat of country life, no such mortification could be encountered; there this meritorious member of the community would find his best and most appropriate asylum,—and in the tranquil exercise of his talents would experience a relief to his necessities, and a solace to his mind. Independent of this invaluable application, I have already shewn, that the opening of pharmacy to the higher departments of medicine, is a measure which rests on sound principles, and therefore this application of the doctrine may be received with less distrust.

In no instance can the principle formerly advanced lead to error. Both the surgeon and physician must ever possess more theoretic knowledge of pharmacy than most apothecaries can shew claim to—and an intimate acquaintance with the identical drugs—and a familiarity with pharmaceutical processes might readily be ensured, by a given attendance at Apothecaries-hall.

From these extended relationships, a just arrangement of a corporation of apothecaries becomes a matter of considerable moment; and as this department is under stricter regulations, in this city, than in any other of the empire, I will, in the first instance, review the provisions which have been made for regulating the profession of pharmacy in Ireland—in order that the weaknesses and imperfections thereof may serve as a beacon to warn us against falling into similar errors; and by contrast enable us to judge, with accuracy, of some more perfect system.

It is needless to revert to any corporation of apothecaries, possessed of political influence only. Some such, I believe, exists in this city, but with it I have no concern; although the propriety of its continuance, after the appointment of another body corporate, on whom its duties have devolved, might well be disputed. In the year 1791, an association of apothecaries was incorporated by act of parliament, for the purpose of regulating the profession of pharmacy, and for establishing a hall for the sale of simple and compound medicines. This act, which is the 31st Geo. 3. professes to have issued, in consequence of a petition from the Master, Warden, and Commonalty of the Corporation of Apothecaries, and other apothecaries of the city of Dublin, complaining of various abuses in the profession of pharmacy. It incorporates together the petitioners and certain others, under the denomination of the Governor and Company of the Apothecaries-hall;—gives them power to have a common seal; to possess estates; to sue and be sued; with all other usual rights, privileges and immunities.—Among others, a clause, enacting that they shall have perpetual succession, is, of course inserted—and yet, strange to say, such a constitution is afterwards given to this body, as, even in the short space of sixteen years, to have gone far towards completely contravening this most essential of all the clauses provided by the statute.

The error in this body will at once be seen to arise from an indefensible complication of purposes in the original design; and the manifestation of this error, and its consequences, may serve as an useful caution to all legislators, and creators of systems, against every departure from simplicity in fabricating these; and will illustrate the danger and difficulty of applying the abstract reasonings of material philosophy to political questions; as in them it rarely happens, that the compound effect bears any preconceivable ratio to the sums of the simple forces.—The framers of this act, in consequence of some such false reasoning, have fallen

into gross error; and in giving to this body a double impulse have nearly depressed all motion therein.

It appears from the preamble to the act, already set forth, that this body was incorporated, for the purposes of regulating the profession of pharmacy in Ireland, and of *establishing a hall for the sale of simple and compound medicines*. Had the reformists of pharmacy rested satisfied with making the first of these purposes their great leading principle, they would have acted more wisely; and they might afterwards, with full effect, have arranged measures for accomplishing the second and subordinate purpose.—But with the short-sightedness which ever accompanies selfish dispositions, they, in attempting to combine private with public interests, completely overlooked the tendency, which, under such combination, the former ever have to depress the latter. In this way, the great fundamental purpose of the act has been defeated, as I shall now explain.

In incorporating the original members of this body, the act recognizes certain individuals, as subscribers of *one hundred pounds each*, towards building a hall, and establishing a laboratory and shop, for the preparation and sale of medicines of assured excellence. It allows these subscribers to extend in number to sixty; and vests in them, as the acknowledged body corporate, all the beforementioned powers, with several others; giving at the same time, to said subscribers, full right and title to proportional shares in all such profits as should accrue from the employment of their several subscriptions. It decrees that this number of sixty shall not be exceeded; and that, according as subscribers die, it may be lawful for any other regular apothecaries to purchase the shares of such deceased subscribers. But it does not make it mandatory on the corporation so to dispose of them—it does not limit any subscriber in the number of shares he may engross—it does not provide against the retention of shares by *devisees* not of the profession—and hence the number of actual

actual subscribers, eligible to the government of this corporation, is, in sixteen years, reduced from sixty to *less than one half that number*. Many subscribers possess several shares—the devisees of others, conscious of the value of stock yielding above fifty per cent. annual profit, will not alienate theirs—and thus we can readily contemplate the rapidity with which this body is rushing towards annihilation.—I have already noticed the radical error of introducing complexity into the rudiments of any system—and have further remarked on the peculiar oversight, committed in this statute, of conjoining, as first principles, a primary and secondary purpose; and of giving these an implied equality of importance. To these causes, all its imperfections are clearly referable; for these have rendered necessary, a limitation of number, where this should, in justice, be indefinite;—these have given rise to the absurdity of an apothecaries corporation including men who are not apothecaries;—these have converted a school of pharmacy into a mere trading corporation;—and have been the means of enduing its very elements with the principles of inevitable self-destruction. When this body shall have arrived at that state, to which it is rapidly hastening, wherein the subscribers shall be barely sufficient to supply a governor, deputy-governor, and thirteen directors—how, may I ask, will the business of pharmaceutical education be then conducted or superintended? Or is it probable that this body, after having so successfully emulated our College of Physicians, in thus establishing a complete monopoly in their corporation; after having, with unprecedented rapidity, effected as much in a few years as it required that college a century to accomplish; is it likely, I say, that it will evince a wisdom or liberality of conduct beyond what its *superior* has exhibited? Our knowledge of mankind, and especially of mankind associated in corporations, forbids us to admit such a belief;—and except that prudential considerations may have the effect of averting the last extremity of corruption, we might  
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much rather expect to witness a return of this profession to its original barbarism, or some worse condition.

This may seem strong language ; and perhaps it should not be literally understood : yet I confess I see not in the present system any powers adequate to arrest such rapidly extending corruption, or to averting that doom from the profession, the anticipation of which many may ridicule, but which is nevertheless both possible and probable.

The public interests are never exposed to such danger as when their management is undertaken by insufficient hands, or is committed to those who can render them subservient to private advantage. Seldom are they so secure as when under the guardianship of their immediate vindicators, their legitimate protectors—I mean the public at large ; who oftentimes run much less risque by assuming the undivided sovereignty, than by deputing thereto men who may be weak,—who may be corrupt—and who too often acquire the public confidence, lull them into a false security—and betray them. So convinced am I of these truths, that could I conceive it possible for the medical profession to subsist under public countenance alone, I would give to it a decided preference over any deputed protection. But it unhappily is not equal to ensuring adequate education in this profession, although it will go far towards establishing an equitable distribution of practice :—hence we are compelled to take advantage of the greater efficiency of more limited associations, and on this ground to entrust power to corporations such as their purity of character would never entitle them to.

Attention to the foregoing observations may direct us in applying a remedy to the evil more immediately before us. But as the public faith seems in some measure pledged to existing individual interests, these should receive as much consideration

consideration in a plan of reform, as may be found compatible with public welfare.

Fortunately in the present case, no individual rights need be violated—and yet the system may be effectually reformed. The interests of the existing company are of a two-fold nature, and consist of their controul over pharmaceutical education, and over their own capital. The former is obviously that in which the public is most interested—the latter is very naturally dearest to the feelings of its proprietors. With it I have happily no interference. The superior interest, however, of the public in the former object, and their paramount right to its control, beyond that of any corporation, I will boldly and confidently assert, and will maintain that this ought to be committed to, whoever may be most competent to conduct it.—It cannot be denied that the objects of the present corporation ought and must be separated. The business of superintending and regulating the pharmaceutical education of a kingdom is of sufficient magnitude and importance to give exclusive employment to any corporation. An apothecaries company should therefore be instituted with power to direct by a given scale the business of pharmaceutical education, and to regulate its practice. It should be the duty of such a company to examine into previous literary attainments—to enjoin and regulate a certain limited apprenticeship to ensure attendance on the necessary university lectures,—and to prove the actual qualifications by examination.

This body should be open to the admission of every one capable of becoming a member—should have a hall of meeting—and should to all intents and purposes be the apothecaries' corporation. As an appendage to this the associated company of apothecaries' hall might be of much advantage, as being a national emporium for drugs of assured excellence—as affording a standard of reference in all cases wherein the quality of drugs in private shops might come

to be questioned—as being an unquestionable source of supply for the army and navy,—and as furnishing an opportunity for giving practical knowledge in pharmacy to surgeons and physicians. A little regulation of its present constitution would enable it to answer all these purposes, and would provide against any fatal diminution of its numbers, without infringing on the individual interests of any. The subscribers to the hall establishment, should be members of the apothecaries' corporation, but should not be eligible to the offices thereof—for as the corporation should possess a superintendance and control over the hall department, it would be most incongruous to make the subscribers thereof the censors of their own conduct, although this is actually and inevitably the case in the present arrangement of that company.—The new arrangement of an apothecaries' corporation—the simplification of its great leading objects—and the perfect adaptation of its several powers to the purposes of public utility appear to me as of most easy execution—and I trust I will yet live to witness in this as in every department of the medical profession, a radical and efficient reformation.

Having thus disposed in regular succession of each department, I will now recapitulate with all possible brevity the heads of that general constitution, by which according to my conception the general profession should be regulated—and as I proceed I request that the minds of my readers will occasionally revert to my former proofs and illustrations, whenever any measure proposed by me may appear of doubtful propriety.

The legislature should by their decree acknowledge four departments as composing the medical profession, viz:—Physic, surgery, midwifry, and pharmacy.—To each of these a simple and efficient constitution should be given, of which I shall now attempt an epitome or outline.

Physic should be committed exclusively to the Universities—of which a sufficient number should be constituted seminaries of medical education,—be empowered to examine into qualifications,—and to confer medical degrees.—Oxford and Cambridge universities for England, those of Edinburgh and Glasgow for Scotland, and the university of Dublin for Ireland, have been already shewn to be competent to this purpose.—These should, therefore, possess full and equal powers to execute this important trust; and no other medical schools should be acknowledged. Each university, so constituted, should possess the following professorships, as essential to the formation of a complete medical seminary—viz. a professorship of anatomy and surgery; a professorship of the institutes or theory of medicine, a course which comprises physiology, pathology, and therapeutics; a professorship of botany; a professorship of chemistry; a professorship of materia medica and pharmacy; and a professorship of the practice of physic. There should be an unappropriated professorship of clinical medicine. A professorship of natural history has been oftentimes suggested as necessary to a school of medicine; and certain acts of parliament, on the statute-book of this kingdom, actually establish it with this view. A professorship of midwifry, though hitherto, for reasons which are unexplained, utterly neglected in this kingdom, seems absolutely necessary.

Other professorships, though not essential, should yet have existence—both for the extension and diffusion of useful knowledge, and for the encouragement of such professors as evince superior talents or industry in their more appropriate professorships; such, for instance, are professorships of medical jurisprudence,—medical police, &c. As the courses of these are limited, they might be delivered by any of the *major professors*—and attendance on them should be optional, with medical students; or, what would be infinitely better, they might be made free to all such—sufficient compensation being secured, by public endowment, to the

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lecturer. Each school of medicine should be provided with a clinical hospital, a botanic garden, and a chemical laboratory. The course of education, in each university, should be equal and similar; and, with this view, the outline should be enjoined by the decree of the legislature. It should consist of a previous literary education,—this to be certified, either by a literary degree, or by a competent examination previous to the pupil being matriculated; and of three years attendance on the university schools of physic, reckoning from the period of matriculation, during which time the medical student should attend one course of each of the principal medical professors; one course of actual dissections; and two courses at least of clinical lectures and the hospital.—The course of examination too, should be uniform, throughout the medical universities; and the specific examinations, exercises and theses, should be enjoined, either from some approved model,—or they should be established by a deputation from the medical faculty of each university convened for the purpose.—A similar deputation, annually convened, might answer many valuable purposes, and contribute materially to the progressive improvement of the science of medicine.—The universities should be further required, to devise a modified form of examination, for such certified graduates of regular foreign universities, as might desire to reside and practise in Great-Britain, these not being natives thereof.—Every principle of justice and expediency, points out the propriety of a perfect mutuality of privileges and indulgences, among the schools of medicine, to the several pupils thereof—and of a reciprocal recognition of all such previously concerted procedures as shall coincide with the letter and spirit of the fundamental constitution. The medical degrees of the universities thus obtained, should be full and sufficient qualification to their several possessors, for authorising their practice in any part of the British dominions.—Nor should they be subject to any control by the minor corporations, except that of being required to enter these bodies—for which admission it should be

be sufficient that they prove their degrees, and pay the regular fees—these to be so limited, as never to operate to the exclusion of any otherwise qualified physician.

Colleges of physicians should next be appointed by law, for making the necessary inquiries into the legal qualifications of men publicly professing the practice of physic,—and for licensing them when such qualifications are demonstrated. For this simple purpose, no extensive or complicated powers are requisite;—for it, no accumulation of funds can be required; and, therefore, no power should be given to any such body, of levying taxes off its members, save a trifling fee on first admission; and even this with the view only of defraying such inconsiderable expences as the necessary business of the college may require, without intruding such insignificant claims on the public at large. These colleges should possess regular and appropriate halls of meeting; should establish libraries, and found museums; for all which purposes, as being more for national than individual advantage, the national purse should consequently provide.

I may here observe, that such an association would answer many useful purposes to the state, beyond that of its original destination. It should be the great national board of health, to which to apply in all cases where the extension of disease, or the progress of contagion, may be such as to call for national measures of resistance;—and it should also be the great medical council of the state, for giving judgment in all cases wherein medical truth is the issue by which litigation is to be tried, or the necessity for legislative coercion ascertained; as in cases of offensive or injurious manufactures requiring removal; of quarantines, &c.—A college of physicians, so constituted, would be useful, respectable, and perennial.

Surgery should be committed to the care of distinct colleges, which should have power both to direct its education,

and to regulate its practice—one to be established in each capital of the empire.—To these all the foregoing general principles equally apply. It is necessary that the several rights and powers conferred on these, should be equal and similar—to enjoin equal and similar courses of education—and also of examination—and to ordain, that they shall mutually admit and recognize the lectures, apprenticeships, and diplomas of each other.

The course of education should require, that the literary attainments of the student be proved by competent examination, previous to his being apprenticed, or registered as a pupil of the college; and it would be unquestionably right, that this examination should not be by the college, whose members may be biassed by their own interest, this being closely connected with the apprenticeship of pupils—but by the same deputation of examiners, which the Universities may appoint for inquiring into the literary qualifications of medical pupils; a literary degree, however, in all cases where such may be possessed, to stand in lieu of such examination.—These regulations would render the possession of sufficient literary attainments more certain—and, by giving the assurance of general information being possessed both by physicians and surgeons, would do away that injurious uncertainty which at present prevails on the subject.

This arrangement too, would have the additional advantage of so assimilating the studies of these branches, in their early stages, that the pupils of each, by certain simple precautions, might be enabled to forego, at any time, the object of their first choice, and adopt the other, should predilection or other casualty render such a change desirable. And this facility should, undoubtedly, be encouraged; inasmuch as it directly tends to promote the extension of professional knowledge, and to incorporate more closely the studies of these sister professions.—Surgical education should afterwards consist of a five years apprenticeship; a certified attendance

tendance on one course of each of the University medical professors, the professor of anatomy excepted; of two courses of the anatomical and surgical professor of the surgical college, and two courses of actual dissections. The course of examination should be more extended than at present, and should include an inquiry into the principles of physic as well as of surgery. On passing such examination, the approved candidate should receive a license to practise in any part of the British dominions; nor should he, in the event of removal within the sphere of any other surgical college, be required to shew any other qualification than his surgical degree, which should give him a general right to admission, on proving the reality of his right to possess this, and paying the usual limited fee. A modified course of education too, should be provided by these colleges, for qualifying surgeons for the army and navy; such as, without omitting essentials, might proportion the time and money necessary to accomplishing it, to that remuneration which the state may allow to this class of its servants. In arranging this course it should also be borne in mind, that these practitioners are not to devote their entire lives to these services, but that choice or necessity may cause them to become candidates for general practice; in either of which cases justice requires, that a regular introduction thereto should be provided for them.—An arrangement of this kind is founded on the same just principles on which an enlightened statesman so lately founded his system of military reform.—By it, young men will be induced to enter these services, so repulsive to the habits and inclinations of those, who devote themselves to learned or contemplative professions; for they will find their free agency secured, by this assurance of honorable retreat, whenever their wishes lead them to prefer this:—they will feel the conviction, that their first choice is not virtually a life enlistment; and the result will be, not a secedence from the service, but a closer attachment—an inference which, however it may incur the ridicule of the older tacticians, is unquestionably founded in truth,

truth, and a just conception of human nature. Other inducements, for engaging and continuing in these services, should not, either in justice or policy, be neglected—such as a proportional increase of pay being made progressive with the servitude—of proportional annuities on retiring or being dismissed—of proportional collegiate privileges to such as remain a given time in these services, &c. These would decidedly influence the minds of the light and wavering;—such additions to the system would be most valuable, as providing varied and proportional rewards for merit and perseverance; and these results of national justice and gratitude, so amiable in principle, and so beneficial in application, would meet the zealous approbation of every liberal mind.—It would be right that these colleges should have power to examine such foreign surgeons as may possess certain qualifications, and who may be desirous of practising in Great Britain.

Midwifry should be open to the members of both colleges—and it should be sufficient qualification to any member, to certify to his college his having attended a course of lectures by the midwifry professor of the university, and his having assisted in actual labours, for a given time, in some midwifry hospital, *subsequent to his professional graduation*. On which he should receive a diploma from his appropriate college, without examination, paying a further inconsiderable fee.—Examination is utterly unnecessary, under the regulations here stated—for the possession of general medical knowledge is fully certified by the original degree—and the adaptation thereof, to the subject of midwifry, cannot fail of being adequately made by the mind of every man who enters on the study of midwifry so qualified;—and hence the propriety of enjoining, that his midwifry studies shall be subsequent to the possession of general medical information—hence, too, the inutility of subjecting a man, so qualified, to the examination of men not versed in this department. And here it may not be amiss to mention, that

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a sense of this absurdity had the effect of causing the London College of Physicians to desist from a practice, which they had for some years adopted, of examining and licensing practitioners in midwifry. The fellows of this college, being prohibited from this practice, soon felt their own incompetency to ascertain the abilities of others therein. But in avoiding one evil they fell into a greater—and from reluctance to constitute practitioners, who might be imperfectly qualified, they ceased to constitute any.—Thus, when a few licentiates in midwifry, who now practise in that city, decline, the profession will then be utterly without regulation; and will, of course, lapse into the hands of diversified practitioners, who will too often prove to be insufficient pretenders.—This would, confessedly, be an evil of considerable magnitude.—To avert it, and to place the profession of midwifry on a just and solid basis, it is merely necessary to give it, by law, that constitution which I have just detailed.

It has already been shewn, that one department of pharmacy can have no place in a medical constitution, but that it must be considered as exclusively a mercantile speculation.—The other department, or that of practical pharmacy, has been so recently and so fully descanted on, that it is merely necessary here to repeat, that it should be the sole and undivided object of care and attention to a corporation established for the purpose; and that literary attainments, an apprenticeship, and attendance on certain lectures, should precede examination; that a hall, for the sale of drugs, would answer many useful purposes, as a distinct, subordinate, and dependant association—and that the prohibitory powers of the corporation should extend, in a certain degree only, to surgeons and physicians, who should be at perfect liberty to conjoin pharmacy with their respective professions, wherever public necessities should require this, provided they had previously attended Apothecaries hall, and there actually dispensed medicines for six months, or such

such longer or shorter period as might be deemed necessary. Surgeons retiring from the army or navy, who may have passed a certain number of years in these services, might be allowed to dispense with this attendance at the Hall; as the medicines, used in these services, are now very generally prepared by the surgeons, who must, therefore, be abundantly qualified, without undergoing further probation.

I have thus at length completed the object of my original design; and have given a full and comprehensive view, both of the present state of the medical profession, and of that in which, according to my sense of right, it ought to be placed. The realization of such a system would leave us little to desire, on the subject of medical reform; for by it we should have better qualified practitioners, in every department of medicine; and we should, of course, provide better for the health of our soldiers and sailors,—of our poor,—and of the general community.—The coincidence too, whereby the interests of the practitioner appear identified with those of the public, would, as far as human means can have such effect, give perpetuity to the system.—To render its utility complete, it would, assuredly, behove the legislature to prohibit the avowed practice of irregulars, who might dare to assume unauthorised titles, for the purpose of deceiving the public:—and it would certainly be a triumph of reason over weakness and credulity, if the advertisement of secret remedies, by which such myriads are daily cheated of their health and properties, if not their lives,—was interdicted.—Individual liberty need not, in either case, be trenched on. It is enough, if the legislature interposes to prevent deception being actively practised on the public; and this it has every right to do. But if these will, nevertheless, afterwards penetrate to the recesses of the empiric, and will persist in swallowing the noxious or inert potions of the nostrum-monger, we have no right whatever further to interfere:—*si populus vult decipi, decipiatur.*

In submitting to the public the foregoing observations, I attempt not to deprecate their censure from any errors I may have fallen into.—Imperfect information, and a judgment fallible, because human, may have given rise to many errors;—but they are errors of the head only; and no one will derive higher gratification from their developement and exposure than I shall.

I court investigation of my proposed system of reform; and as both my pride and my judgment forbid me to regard it as insignificant,—while my humility whispers to me, that it may prove to be both erroneous and imperfect, I trust that my hopes of a dispassionate but scrutinising inquiry into its merits and defects, will not be disappointed.—Here, then, I at length conclude, and take my final leave in the apposite though hacknied words of the poet,

Si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.

FINIS.

Houses of the Oireachtas