of dissertations on subjects of legal medicine, which are given three or six months in advance, in the performance of a judicial autopsy, according to the usual forms, in recognising spurious drugs; and, finally, in an examination on all the sciences which have reference to public hygiene.

The examination takes place at Berlin before the "Superior Medical Board," or in the provinces, before a jury specially named by the minister. The board sits at Berlin, but in order to spare the expense of travelling to poor candidates, the minister names special juries in the following towns: Coblenz, Breslau, Königsberg, and Greifswald.

MEDICAL REFORM.

TO THE MASTER, WARDENS, AND COURT OF ASSISTANTS OF THE WORSHIPFUL SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

GENTLEMEN,—Under the impression that one faculty of medicine, with equality of rank and title, is a condition unattainable under existing circumstances, and equally impossible to retain, if chance for the moment annihilated all existing grades, and afforded an opportunity for trying the experiment; and believing also (admitting such a chimera to be practicable) that neither the public or the profession would be benefited by such an arrangement, I take the liberty of offering for your consideration the following suggestions, with the sincere hope that by a free and unreserved interchange of opinion, some plan or other may be devised for harmonising the three branches of the profession, so that they might work honourably and satisfactorily together. As a preliminary step, however, I must premise that the Apothecaries' Society should immediately take the lead, and detach their scientific and professional department from that which properly should never have been combined with it, namely, their trading establishment at Apothecaries' Hall. They should, in point of fact, never have held their examinations for licences to practise medicine at their shop in the city! It detracted from the credit and dignity of the profession, and has constituted, at all times, the most fertile source of opprobrium and dissatisfaction. This separation is, I conceive, the first step that the society should take, for by this means the title of apothecary, which has become so objectionable to professional men that they seldom, if ever, designate themselves by it, might altogether cease as an appellation for them, and be retained only to describe the members of the trading society of apothecaries—one of the city corporations.

The council should then invite the profession to unite with them in a petition to the legislature for a charter of incorporation, as a college of general practitioners; the whole medical body now practising under the licence of the Apothecaries' Company being considered *members* of the proposed college, and the present list of the corporation of apothecaries, as well as all existing or future licentiates of ten years' standing, being constituted into a constituency with the title of *fellows*, and who shall be eligible for, and privileged to vote for, the council, court of examiners, and governing body of the college.

That the college have the power of framing its own curriculum; that the education and examination for its diploma be under the control of its own governing body, and that it should confer the right to practise as a general practitioner in all parts of her Majesty's dominions. That the education of the general practitioner should be in every respect sufficient for all ordinary practice, and should be in no degree inferior to that required by the Society of Apothecaries as at present constituted. To avoid interfering with existing institutions, and to afford the means for those who desire to cultivate a more extended knowledge of any particular branch of medical science, the diplomas of the Colleges of Physicians and

Surgeons respectively may be required of all candidates for army, navy, Indian, hospital, or parochial appointments. The College of Surgeons requiring a knowledge of morbid, microscopic, and comparative anatomy, as well as greater practical skill in surgical operations. The College of Physicians conferring degrees of bachelor and doctor of medicine only, granting no licences to practise whatever, and requiring ample testimony that all on whom the honour of a degree is conferred are by education fitted to uphold its dignity and ensure its respect.

By these means the three great subdivisions of the medical profession may be made to work harmoniously together; each gradation having its own college, with the arrangement of its curriculum, and the management of its affairs under the control and regulation of its own governing body.

To these suggestions it may be replied, that on the passing of the Apothecaries' Act in 1815, an application was made to the legislature for a charter of incorporation and refused, on the ground that it was inexpedient to grant such charter without some experience of the working of the new Act of Parliament, a plea which, however reasonable at the time, is now clearly inadmissible after nearly thirty years' experience, and with a retrospect so highly creditable to the parties to whom the administration of the Apothecaries' Act was deputed. Surely a refusal under such circumstances should in no degree intimidate or dismay the Society of Apothecaries at the present moment. What was then a matter of doubt, namely, the effect of their administration of the rules and regulations for conducting the education of the apothecary on the acquirements of the future practitioner, is now a matter of triumphant congratulation. The rank, talents, and professional reputation, with the hold they have on society, fully entitle the present body of general practitioners to this mark of consideration. I have been induced to address these observations to the Court of Assistants of the Society of Apothecaries, because I consider both the public and the profession as deeply indebted to them for the great benefits conferred on the former, and for the honourable position into which they have elevated the latter, and still more from an anxious desire to identify more completely the interests of the society and its licentiates. I have the honour to remain, gentlemen, your very obedient servant,

JAMES BIRD.

Orchard-street, June 11th, 1844.

ON THE NECESSITY OF PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE OPERATIONS OF SURGERY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Now that medical reform is being so much agitated, and discussions on the Anatomy Act taking place, I have thought it a suitable opportunity to take the liberty of addressing a few lines to you relative to the supply of subjects at the metropolitan schools, in the sincere hope that through the powerful medium of your widely-circulated Journal something may be done to ensure a much greater abundance of subjects than has hitherto been the case.

I perceive that in a former number of THE LANCET a correspondent has stated the exorbitant charges demanded at the schools for subjects, varying from 3*l.* 10*s.* to 4*l.* 10*s.* each, and showing the great disadvantages which result to gentlemen and students desirous of dissecting, from the present working of the Anatomy Act; but, Sir, this is not all, for where, allow me to ask, is a student seen purchasing a subject for performing the various operations of surgery on? I have now a book before me called a "Guide to the Hospitals in Paris," in which it is stated that courses of operative surgery are delivered during the summer months in that city, for which the fee generally charged is 25 francs, or 1*l.* For this sum a pupil not only witnesses the *procédés* of the lecturers, but is provided with a sufficient number of subjects to enable him to repeat every operation two or three times under the immediate superintendence of the lecturer, who furnishes him with every surgical instrument he may require, and affords him every facility to become *tout à fait au fait* in the operative branch of surgery. How sincerely must