LONDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE.

SECOND PUBLIC MEETING

OF THE

SUPPORTERS OF THIS INSTITUTION,

*At the Crown and Anchor, Strand,
Wednesday, May 4, 1831.*

SAMUEL PROCTOR, Esq., in the Chair.

THIS important and interesting meeting of the members of the medical profession, and friends of the New College of Medicine, was held in accordance with the arrangements which were made at the meeting of the 16th of March, for receiving the report of the Committee then appointed to prepare such regulations for the establishment and government of the College, as should be in strict accordance with its spirit and object. The Committee had invited Mr. HUME (now a second time elected as the representative of the county in Parliament) again to take the Chair, and had obtained that gentleman's ready consent, his acceptance of the office being made subject to the result of a prior engagement, as explained in our last Number.

After a reasonable period of time had elapsed in expectation of Mr. HUME's arrival, it was proposed that SAMUEL PROCTOR, Esq., surgeon, should take the chair in trust for Mr. HUME, or permanently, in case of the latter gentleman's absence throughout the evening. The motion having been carried unanimously, and the office accepted,

The CHAIRMAN opened the business of the meeting, trusting that the unexpected call upon him, as he had not previously been connected with the institution, would prove a sufficient apology for any imperfections which might occur in the provisional execution of the duties of the office.

Mr. C. WALLER then came forward and said,—It will be recollected, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, that at the last meeting five gentlemen were nominated to form a Committee, with power to add to their number, for the purpose of drawing up certain rules and regulations for the establishment of the New London College of Medicine. The resolution which I have to move is,

“That the report of the Committee appointed at the general meeting of English medical practitioners, held at the Crown and Anchor, Strand, on Wednesday, March 16, Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P., in the Chair, be now read.”

You will thus, Gentlemen, be enabled to judge of what has been done, and I trust

you will find that the Committee have acted, at any rate have attempted to act, in strict accordance with the spirit which regulated the proceedings of the last Meeting. They have endeavoured to render the regulations in every respect unexceptionable. You will observe, that by them no members of the profession are prevented from joining the new institution; that none are excluded from participating in its highest honours; thus affording a wide contrast to all our present Colleges, especially to that which is situated in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and the members of which are excluded from all privileges, but that of first of all paying the entrance fee of twenty-one pounds, and afterwards being turned out of their own theatre by a police constable, whenever the twenty-one receivers of the fees think that the members are going to interfere with them. (*Loud Cheers.*) I have only to add, that the Committee will be happy to hear any observations that may be offered relative to the details of the report; and if it is thought that they may be improved, any suggestions to that effect will, I am sure, be received with very great pleasure. Before I sit down, permit me to add, that if anything were wanting to stimulate us in the cause in which we have embarked, it is the report which you have probably seen in the papers of to-day (*hear, hear, hear*), that a criminal information is attempted to be filed against certain members of the London College of Surgeons, for speaking their own sentiments in their own institution. (*Much cheering.*) If this be the law, it is high time that we had a new college, in which we may meet whenever we please, and not just for whatever purposes, and whenever, the self-elected twenty-one members of the Council choose. (*Hear, hear, hear.*)

Mr. G. D. DERMOTT seconded the resolution. He considered it an important duty to come forward at this crisis in the cause of any sort of reform, and more particularly in the reform of a profession which was distinguished, by every kind of abuse, and organised on the worst possible principles. (*Hear, hear.*) He came forward on the present occasion to support the general principle of reform in the medical profession upon the same ground as he had lately done in the Royal College of Surgeons—when he certainly said little and did little (*laughter*). He came forward then, and now, exactly upon one and the same principle; he believed it to be right to vindicate to the utmost the rights of his medical brethren. (*Cheers.*) I hold in my hand (continued Mr. Dermott) a paper which was given to me a short time ago, indicating that there are legal proceedings instituted against certain persons in the medical profession, in consequence of their having asserted the

rights of their medical brethren of the navy a short time since in the Royal College of Surgeons. Why, I would ask, if the Royal College of Surgeons was not a place to assert those rights, where is the place in which they could be advocated? (*Much cheering.*) I would ask if his most gracious Majesty—and a better King England has not had for a long time (*Hear, hear, hear*)—could take cognizance of the address which the surgeons presented on behalf of their naval medical brethren, why should not the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons condescend to do so? (*Hear, hear, hear.*) Yet the principle upon which they refused to act, is a part of that system which is said “to work well!” (*Cheers.*) Gentlemen, in the earnest hope that the time will speedily arrive, when the system that “works well” will work a great deal better, I beg leave to second the resolution.

Carried unanimously.

Dr. O'SHAUGHNESSY then rose to read the report, and said—“The duty that devolves on me is extremely simple. It embraces, in the first place, a detail of the steps which have been taken by the committee which you appointed at the last meeting, and in the next place, the reading of the report which has been prepared. With regard, Sir, to the former, I have to state that the first step was to add to the number of the committee originally appointed, seven other gentlemen, making in the whole twelve. (The names of the Committee were given in our last.) Before the Committee was completed as it now stands, two gentlemen were elected whom I should now mention—Dr. James Johnson, and the ever-to-be-lamented professor of anatomy at the London University—Mr. Bennett—who are not now upon the Committee. I beg to read to you the letters I have received from these gentlemen. The following is the answer which I received from Dr. Johnson, in reply to my letter informing him of his election:—

“Suffolk Place, Pall Mall,

“April 5, 1831.

“SIR,—I beg that you will express my best thanks to the Committee of the London College of Medicine, for the honour which they have done me in electing me one of the Committee; and to assure them that although, for reasons which need not be explained, I have determined to decline all personal interference in medical politics, I shall nevertheless do my best, in a literary point of view, to promote the cause of medical reform—a course which I have always pursued, though with little effect.

“I am, Sir, with great respect,

“Yours truly,

“JAMES JOHNSON.

“W. B. O'Shaughnessy, Esq.”

In reading to you the letter of Professor Bennett, I shall intrude upon you only one observation, and that is, that wherever anatomy is known, and wherever medical science is cultivated, the labours of Mr. Bennett must be appreciated. His memory must be held in reverence by every student of anatomy in the world:—

“Alfred Place, Bedford Square,

“April 14, 1831.

“SIR,—I have just received your letter, intimating the honour conferred upon me, of my being appointed a member of the London College of Medicine. I have been confined to my bed during the last week by severe illness, and am still suffering from it; I therefore find it impossible to join your proceedings; and as it is my intention to leave town immediately on my convalescence, I cannot anticipate being able to do so at any reasonable period. You will, therefore, take the trouble of erasing my name from the list of the Committee of the London College of Medicine. In declining the compliment conferred upon me, I assure you most sincerely, that I am as warm an advocate as ever for the correction of the gross abuses which disgrace the public medical bodies of this country. Ill health, and the consequent inability to take part in public proceedings, alone prevent my joining you. I am, Sir, yours truly,

“J. R. BENNETT.

“W. B. O'Shaughnessy, Esq., M.D.”

I have now only to read to you the report which the Committee have prepared, relative to the permanent establishment and future government of the new College. (The report will be found at page 178 of our last Number.) In putting this report into your hands, I have but one observation to make. I am a graduate of the University of Edinburgh. Circumstances induced me to remove from that capital to London, and the moment I arrive here, I find myself totally unable to practise my profession. I attempt to practise as a physician; I am met by the sneers and reflections of my fellow practitioners, that “I am not a licentiate of the London College.” I am not a surgeon, therefore I do not practise in that department of the profession. If I attempt to practise as an apothecary, I have the melancholy example of my friend Mr. Ryan before my eyes. (*Loud cheers.*) Under these circumstances, Sir, and when I see the hordes of unlicensed quacks that are allowed to stalk abroad and offer up their hecatombs every day, young as I may be, and inexperienced as I may be, I consider myself imperatively called on to come before the public and advocate as warmly as is in my power, the cause of medical reform. (*Great cheering.*)

Dr. Epps. I rise, Sir, to move the second resolution, which has been put into my hand.

"That this meeting, cordially concurring in the recommendations contained in the report, do resolve that it be received and adopted."

I am particularly desirous that we should come to a solid and firm determination upon the propriety of receiving this Report, for I believe that we shall find that we have many enemies to contend with in carrying it into execution. We do not, therefore, want men to come forward under feelings of feverish excitement, but with a full understanding of what they advocate. (*Hear, hear.*) In order, then, to enable this Meeting to come to such a determination, I shall endeavour to establish two propositions, which if I can succeed in fully substantiating them, will, I trust, afford the strongest inducements to every one to exert himself, and use his influence with others, to come forward heart and hand in this great undertaking. The propositions are,—First, that the present medical institutions of the country are not suited to the advanced state of medical science; and, Secondly, that no modification of them can ever adapt them to that state and to the wants of society. Let us first examine the constitution of the College of Physicians, with which I am more intimately connected. I do not wish to speak of this institution as composed of individuals, but of the system under which it is regulated. Well, then, who established this College? King Henry the Eighth. Every one knows the history of that monarch, and will any of us presume to say that he was omniscient enough to legislate for the medical profession as it exists in 1831? We see that our own excellent king has thought proper to send back the members of Parliament to their constituents, because they would not progress with the advanced state of society; and is it likely, that when all other things change, that medical science can be the same now that it was in Henry the Eighth's time? The College of Physicians might have done very well for that time, but surely that king had not so comprehensive a mind as to be able to make laws suitable to the condition of the profession, as it might be 300 years after his death. But, Sir, even in its origin there are the grossest abuses in the College of Physicians. Is it not almost beyond the bounds of credibility, that no man can become a Fellow of it, unless he swears that he believes in the 39 articles of the established church? Is it not abominable, when we find that we have got rid of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the Roman Catholic Restriction Act, that such a monstrous enactment as this should exist? (*Hear,*

hear, hear.) If a man be the most conscientious dissenter that ever lived, he cannot be received within the walls of the College in Pall Mall, unless he affirm his entire belief in the thirty-nine articles of the church of England; that is to say, he must take an oath to that effect the moment he matriculates at either of the Universities, and without which he cannot be admitted a member of the College of Physicians. (*Hear, hear.*) Suppose a person obtains a degree at Edinburgh, and comes to London to practise; he may possess genius of the brightest order—he may have talents equal to those of the late Dr. Armstrong, yet the instant he arrives within the seventh mile-stone of the metropolis, he is met by an outcry that he is not a fellow of the London College of Physicians, and that he must advance no farther. He may, indeed, by paying five pounds a month, as I believe Dr. Armstrong did for a considerable time (and the treatment he experienced in my opinion in no small degree hastened his death), practise his profession, or he may undergo an examination before the College at an expense of a fee of about 60*l.*, with the chance of rejection, if it so please them; but until he submit to one of these two things, he may starve within the circuit of seven miles of London. Now, Gentlemen, what are we to say to these things! How deeply calculated are they to excite our indignation! I have no doubt that whenever the subject is brought fully before a reformed Parliament, there will be a universal exclamation of astonishment at such a perversion of justice. (*Cheers.*) Gentlemen, one might at any rate suppose that the College would adapt their institution to the times in which they live, instead of maintaining the old constitution. But the very contrary is the fact; and I take my authority from a book which I have before me, entitled "The Royal College of Physicians established by Law." The College has actually become more contracted in its system than it even was in Henry the Eighth's time. At first consisting of a President and Fellows, it was afterwards composed of a President, Fellows, and Commonalty, and then they passed a law, that no one should become a Fellow, unless he was educated at Cambridge or Oxford, and swore to a belief in the thirty-nine articles of the church. No man then can say, that the present state of that institution is in accordance with the progress which medical science has made. This brings me to my second point. There are many who suppose, and I myself was of that opinion once, that it would be better to reform the old institutions than to attempt to establish a new one; but I have come to the conviction, that it is impossible to modify the old institutions, so as to render

them fit for the present state of society; and my first ground for arriving at this conclusion is, that all our medical colleges are decidedly opposed one to the other. The physicians say that no one has a right to prescribe but themselves; the surgeons say no one has a right to take off a limb but themselves; and the apothecaries say, they have a right to every thing. (*Laughter.*) In order to show you what the law affecting the College of Physicians is, I will read to you the opinions of a Lord Chief Justice. He says—

1. *There is no sufficient license without the College seal.*—2. *No surgeon, as a surgeon, may practice physic; no, not for any disease, though it be the great pox.*—3. *The authority of the College is strong, and sufficient to commit to prison.*—4. *The censure of the College rising from lesser mulcts to greater, is equal and reasonable.*—5. *It is fit to set to physician's bills the day of the month and the patient's name.*—6. *The Lord Chief Justice cannot bail or deliver the prisoner of the College, but is obliged by law to deliver him up to College censure.*—7. *A freeman of London may be lawfully imprisoned by the College.*—8. *No man, though never so learned a physician or doctor, may practise in London, or within seven miles, without the College licence.*

and for these excellent decisions, the President of the College of Physicians and the Fellows sent a letter of thanks to that Lord Chief Justice.* (*Hear, hear, and laughter.*) I have given them, Sir, verbatim, from Dr. Goodall's works,—a book which was authorised to be published by the College themselves. Such, then, is the position of our medical institutions, that the most acute and intelligent member of either of them cannot define what are its limits; and while, on the one hand, they throw every impediment in the way of learning and science, any person, on the other hand, without being a member of one or the other, may simply, by calling himself a chemist and druggist, dispense any quantity of medicine he chooses; and a man who can show that he has got a tolerable education, may practise as a surgeon, as was decided in the case of Mr. Van Butchell. This, I say, is a disgrace to the medical profession. (*Cheers.*) Gentlemen, we are now determined to get rid of all these anomalies. "Doctors" may perhaps feel,—and I myself having been educated at a University, might be supposed to feel,—a little jealousy at the equalisation of titles;

but we must sacrifice our feelings to the public good. (*Hear, hear.*) Suppose we were to bring the subject of medical reform before a reformed Parliament, and it was referred to a Committee of the house; and suppose amongst the witnesses Mr. Brodie was to be called; I am certain that gentleman would say, that he would have to give up half his practice if he gave up medical practice. The whole profession is, in fact, at variance; and as you cannot patch up a rotten building with safety, you must remove the foundation entirely, and build a new structure. It is on this ground that I would advocate the erection of the London College of Medicine. In order, however, to succeed in our plans, the greatest energy must be used. Many of my own friends, for instance, say, "How foolish you are to give up your time and attention in this way; why not go and pass the London College of Physicians." That is not the consideration. With me the question is,—Is this institution likely to be a public good or not? In my opinion it must effect great public good, therefore will I advocate it even to my own injury in a public and in a pecuniary point of view. (*Loud cheering.*) I beg to say, that the recommendations in the Report of the Committee are not final; they are only *recommendations*, and not inflexible rules; we do not, therefore, attempt to preclude gentlemen from making any observations whatever on them; but I may observe, that as the sub-committee have devoted much time and a great deal of attention to them, it is to be hoped that they will not be objected to without solid reason. I would say to you what Cæsar said on a memorable occasion to his soldiers, "We have crossed the Rubicon." The two occasions certainly are very different. He did it to destroy the liberties of his country; we cross the Rubicon to restore the liberties of our profession. (*Cheers.*) I would merely add, that we have a most glorious standard to surround, and a glorious atmosphere to raise it in—the standard of Freedom, erected in the atmosphere of Liberality (*hear, hear*); and though there is a banner reared and opposed to us—a banner, beneath which it may be lucrative to the friends of corruption to fight, yet if we are steady and united, we must be the victors; and it is on our firm and persevering exertions that the magna charter of our profession is intimately dependent. (*Continued cheers.*)

Mr. G. WALKER. It is with considerable diffidence I address you, Gentlemen, after the luminous speech just made to you by my friend Dr. Epps. He has exposed to you many of the errors which have crept into the profession, particularly into the College of Physicians; and you are well aware of the embarrassments occasioned by

* These decisions were given in the case of Jenkins and Read, who had been imprisoned by the College of Physicians, and who were, on the occasion in question, brought by a writ of *Hæreas Corpus* before Sir John Popham, the then Lord Chief Justice of England.

those errors. I myself am in the habit of daily meeting with my medical brethren, Fellows of the College of Physicians, who, when speaking of the College of Surgeons, constantly say to me "This is wrong," or "That is wrong," but who, themselves, are the very last men who have courage enough to come forward to advocate the cause in public which they approve in their hearts, but rather oppose it. When I meet them they shake me cordially enough by the hand, though they are at the very same moment opposing the cause which I am now endeavouring to support. It was only yesterday that I met a member of the Council of the College of Surgeons, who shook me warmly by the hand, although at that very moment the Council were commencing criminal proceedings against myself and others of the medical profession. (*Cries of Shame, shame.*) I am aware that we are all human, and when interest presses very hard, we are apt to lean, little by little, towards that which is perhaps not quite honourable, and particularly so when united in a body. Take those men in their private characters, and there are many of them whom I highly respect, and with whom I feel happy in associating; but take them as a public body, and I believe they are corrupt to the very heart's core. (*Hear, hear, hear.*) I am situated in the midst of them at the west end of the town, and I believe they have no personal disrespect towards me; but they have a disrespect towards us as a liberal body, as a body which wants them to set forth, and proceed upon, liberal principles. (*Cheers.*) They will not, however, change their own selfish course; and it is for you, therefore, to compel them to do so. During the last few years you have gained very much. But now is the time at which you must put your shoulders to the wheel. (*Hear, hear, hear.*) You must literally pull down the whole fabric, and rebuild it afresh. You have now the best opportunity for doing so. We have on our side a most liberal Monarch, and are likely to have the countenance of a most liberal Government. (*Loud cheers.*) This then is the time to strike, and to expose the abuses of all these corporate bodies. I beg leave, Sir, to second the last resolution. (*Cheers.*)

Dr. JOHN BEAUMONT inquired if it was to be understood that the sense of the meeting was to be taken upon the resolutions contained in the report.

Dr. EPPS replied, that they were only, in point of fact, recommendations from the Committee, and that every gentleman enrolling himself as a candidate for the Fellowship of the College, would have an opportunity of expressing his sentiments at

the next convocation, whether they should or should not be passed into laws.

The CHAIRMAN said, it appeared to him that it would be very bad courtesy to the Committee not to pass the resolution which had just been moved and seconded.

Mr. WAKLEY begged to make an observation in explanation of the resolution. The meeting had heard it distinctly stated in the Report, that the Senate, Chancellor, and Vice-Chancellors, were to be elected annually by the Fellows in general convocation. This, it had been stated, was simply the recommendation of the Committee—a recommendation in reference to the leading principles, which should never be forgotten or lost sight of in governing the London College of Medicine. (*Hear, hear, hear.*) There was nothing final in the Report; it simply contained a recommendation for the adoption or rejection of the Senate. The power in all the elections was to be left entirely in the hands of the general body of Fellows; therefore in voting that this Report be received and adopted, the meeting could run no risk of conceding an improper power either to the Committee or to the Senate. The motion was then carried unanimously.

Mr. WALKER then moved the following resolution:—

"That in conformity with one of the recommendations of the Committee, Offices, to be denominated 'The London College of Medicine Chambers,' be immediately taken for the transaction of the business of the College."

It must be quite evident, he said, that the members of the College must have a place to resort to; and chambers were at present proposed as the least expensive mode of proceeding.

Mr. HODGES seconded the resolution. Carried unanimously.

Mr. KING. Not knowing, Gentlemen, whether or not I should be called upon to address you, I came here this evening, as I generally go to public meetings, without a prepared speech; and I should certainly hesitate to begin, were it not, that he who has to defend a good cause, needs no preparation. It is a common saying, that a beautiful woman when unadorned is adorned the most; and it may be said of the man of honest purpose, that when unprepared he is prepared the most. I have to propose,

"That those practitioners in medicine, who approve of the principles upon which this College is founded, be requested when convenient to attend at 'The London College of Medicine Chambers,' and inscribe their names as candidates for the diplomas."

Gentlemen, you are aware that we have acted hitherto, and shall act henceforward, only as your servants. We derive all our

authority from you, and all our strength from you. This is not our cause, but yours; and it is in obedience to your wishes that we shall continue to act, in carrying into effect, or rather in assisting you to carry into effect, the great object which first brought us together in this room. (*Cheers.*) We have carefully examined the machinery of medical Colleges and Universities in this country and throughout the world; and after the most deliberate consideration, we have taken the liberty to present to you as the result of our investigation, certain recommendations, which, according to the best of our judgment, ought to constitute the rules of the London College of Medicine. You have been pleased to adopt these recommendations, and they will be published as your work. (*Cheers.*) The purport of the resolution I have now the honour to propose is, that you be called upon to support by the sanction of your names, and by the aid of your friends, your own work. I feel grateful for the distinction you conferred upon me by electing me one of your Committee; but I should ill discharge my duty were I to conceal how necessary it is that every man should put his shoulders to the wheel. Neither will I deny that we are making some sacrifices. Not that we look for personal aggrandisement, or for any other reward than that which no power can confer upon him who does not deserve it, and which no power can take away from him who does deserve it—the conscientious satisfaction of having done his duty. But we expect, in addition to this reward, which is certain, the satisfaction of seeing our exertions crowned with success; and this result can be obtained only by your active and zealous co-operation. I would consent to lose all I possess, if that would ensure success; but without your most active support, all that we can do will effect nothing. Most willingly would I throw myself into the breach, thinking, as I do, “that one hour, one single hour of virtuous liberty, is worth a whole eternity of bondage,” if by any sacrifices of my own I could purchase success. I beg of you to recollect, that if you *do not* assist us, we *cannot* assist you; if you abandon us, of necessity we must part. I will stand by this cause to the last moment, while I can do it any good; that is, while you stand by me; but if you desert this cause, I can be of no service, and shall feel justified, not indeed in deserting it, but in ceasing to act with those who shall have neglected to discharge their duty. Therefore, Gentlemen, it will not be said of King as it has been said of Lawrence, that he has recanted and become an apostate. (*Hear, hear.*) I have acted, and always endeavoured to act, upon principle; I shall continue to do so; but I must be allowed to

state, that if the profession do not come forward, nobly and manfully to support us, we shall be justified in withdrawing our advocacy from this cause, as it is now pending before the public. I have said this, not from any doubt I entertain either of your support or of the success of your institution, but to urge you to the most strenuous and active exertions. As far as my own observation extends, I can say I have met with promises of the most cordial adherence, and expressions of the warmest approbation, both in and out of the profession; and in less than six months I feel convinced there will be a vast number of members of the New College of Medicine. Many have certainly desired to wait, saying, “Our friends do not like it;” but ought this to deter any man from the discharge of his duty? We, too, have many friends who do not like it; but we will never deviate from what we consider to be our duty on that account. The London College of Medicine has my best wishes, and all the support it is in the power of a humble individual like myself to give it, because it is connected with the interests of society, deeply connected with the interests of science, and the prosperity of England, and because it is inseparably connected with the best interests of humanity. If you think proper you can have a hospital that shall offer clinical instruction to the pupils, of which you will examine and elect the surgeons, and where the pupils may have an opportunity of performing operations themselves. They can be assisted by those whom you may consider most competent to help and direct them. (*Hisses and applause.*) Gentlemen, it is my firm opinion that here, as in some other countries, every student should operate before taking his diploma; and I for one (and I am sure I can speak also for those more competent than myself) should be happy and ready to assist any student in an operation, who should prove himself sufficiently acquainted with his profession to undertake it. This is my opinion; and however painful your disapprobation, unless you can convince me that I am wrong, I shall maintain it. I shall not sacrifice it to your applause, however pleasurable that may be to my feelings. This is a suggestion which you can either adopt or reject; at the same time I admit it is not immediately connected with the business now before us. But the hospital monopoly must be abolished; it is the great nurse of the enemies of all liberal medical institutions. I would say one word with regard to these enemies. There appears to be a most extraordinary degree of jealousy as well as malice pervading the Council of the College of Surgeons. For, if they have any objections to make to our plan of amending the state of our profession, why do they not

come forward to make them; we shall be happy and ready to meet them at all times. But I am told they threaten to undermine by indirect means the London College of Medicine. Let them, however, beware; so long as they pursue a fair and honest course of opposition we will not go out of the way to attack them; but if their conduct be such that we as gentlemen and professional men cannot submit to, on them be the penalty, as we shall then be bound to answer aggression by aggression. Let us tell those gentlemen who are now proceeding against us in a court of law for having done our duty towards our colleagues in the navy, that if we can forgive we can never forget that ungentlemanly and unprofessional, not to say treacherous, act by which, whatever may have been their intentions, our lives were put in jeopardy to satisfy their peevish and dogmatical humour. The success of the new College will enable us to forgive that act, but the profession can never forget it. (*Cheers.*)

MR. PAUL seconded the resolution. Carried unanimously.

DR. BEAUMONT. I rise, Sir, to move the next resolution. I appear here with some satisfaction to support the new institution, because it presents advantages both of purpose and intention which I do not recognise as appertaining to any other. It holds out to all those who may become members of it, unfettered privileges,—such as do not belong to any of our corporate bodies, unless, indeed, it be the Edinburgh Society; and it affords an equality of competition to all men for the display of genius and talent where it is hidden and depressed by the workings of the present system. What an illustration of my subject does the case of the late John Hunter afford, who, if he had not had a brother in London from whom he could have obtained assistance, might, instead of being a hero in surgery, have remained a journeyman carpenter to his dying day. (*Hear, hear.*) But in this institution men of science will be found standing rank and file, and no man can be elected in it over his fellow except he displays superiority of talent. Such a college as this is well calculated to cure most of the existing evils of the profession; for often when corrupt institutions fail to cure their own evils, another institution, when raised up by its side, will purify the old one, and the two tend to throw a splendour upon each other. Permit me to refer for a moment to the College of Physicians. What could I gain by being a member of that College? What would the Fellows do for me? Why they would constitute me a sort of exciseman; they would give me a pen with a little ink and a bit of paper to write upon. No more. To that would they confine me. They

would say, “You shall never be a supervisor, for you can *never* become a Fellow.” (*Laughter.*) The present institution, however, gives a unanimity of character and pursuit to those who are connected with it, which the College of Physicians can never establish. Allow me to make one or two observations on what has appeared in print with regard to this institution. [The intention of Dr. Beaumont, however, was immediately checked, on the ground that the course was irrelevant to the object of the evening, and the meeting coincided with this view of the case.] Dr. Beaumont concluded by saying that he bowed with great pleasure to the decision of the chair, and would now move,—

“That the present Committee be empowered, until the general convocation to be held in September next, to receive the INSCRIPTIONS of Candidates, and regulate the admission to the Fellowships.”

MR. RYAN seconded the resolution. Carried unanimously.

MR. WAKLEY came forward, and was received with loud cheers. Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—Although I was requested by the members of the Committee to move or second a resolution at an early period of the evening, I abstained from doing so in consequence of what has been maliciously said of the motives of the supporters of this great, this truly national undertaking, and also of the parties who are endeavouring to obtain for it a permanent foundation. It is asserted sneeringly that it is “a concern of Wakley’s getting up”—that it has been brought forward by *his party*, and that there are no men of respectability, no men of talent in the profession, who are anxious to give it their support. Gentlemen, the evidence furnished by the proceedings of this evening gives the falsehood to the base, unmanly slanderers of such a cause. (*Loud cheers.*) I rise not to move or to second any resolution with respect to the report of the Committee, but simply to move that we return thanks to our excellent Chairman for the impartial and very able manner in which he has discharged his duties. (*Hear, hear.*) Before, however, I sit down, you will perhaps permit me to say one or two words in relation to the College, and to the absence of Mr. Hume. Gentlemen, I should deeply regret, even to the last hour of my life, if you were to suppose for a moment that the remotest attempt at deception had been practised upon you on this occasion. (*Hear, hear.*) I applied to Mr. Hume myself, and I fear some accident must have prevented his attendance. I saw Mr. Hume on Thursday last, when he stated that he had an engagement at Staines, which he was afraid might prevent his attendance to-day, but

that, if possible, he would be here. Mr. Hume had another engagement of some importance in the city, and I believe it was expected that he would dine with the reformers of the Borough at the city of London Tavern; but so late as six o'clock *this evening*, he sent his secretary here to me to state most distinctly that if I would name the precise time at which it would be necessary for him to be here, we might depend on his punctuality. I named eight o'clock, but he has not come. Mr. Hume's character stands, I am sure, too high in our estimation, to suffer from his absence after his promise to be here, and I hope the explanation I have given will satisfy you most fully, that I have had no desire to deceive this meeting. (*Hear, hear, hear.*) I should say further with respect to Mr. Hume, that when the proposal for founding this new College was first opened to him, he said that he entertained some doubts of its final success; but when I saw him on Thursday last, Mr. Hume held a very different opinion, and he now thinks that the LONDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE *must succeed*. (*Loud Cheers.*) Such an opinion, coming from so intelligent, influential, and cautious a man, is calculated to produce a powerful impression in favour of the College, and to obtain general support for such a noble undertaking. (*Hear, hear, hear.*) But, Gentlemen, I differ very much from some of my friends who have spoken to-night concerning the importance that ought to be attributed to the exertions of particular individuals. This institution is founded on such principles that it will *make* great men. Exalted characters would not improve the principles of this institution, because they are unexceptionable. (*Cheers.*) They defy calumny—they court scrutiny. Corruption, intrigue, nepotism, can find no place here. Every man of industry, every man of talent, who deserves well of his profession and the public, will meet with the due reward of his labours. He will never experience the mortifying defeat and discouragement which individuals now experience from the existing medical colleges of this country. You have heard to-night much of the state of the profession, and a great many of its anomalies were explained the last time we met, but still not a thousandth part is known; and if I were to occupy your time until to-morrow night at this hour, still I should leave more than nine-tenths unexplained. But what ask we for this College—what require we from the Legislature? Simply this; that candidates who are examined publicly by an independent body of scrutators, and before a disinterested medical jury, shall enjoy the privilege of practising any branch of the profession in any part of the United King-

dom. We ask no more. We seek not to disfranchise the members of any other institution—we desire not to deprive them of one of their rights and privileges—we require not the formation of a monopoly, but we simply say, Give us a fair chance with others. (*Hear, hear.*) If the candidates whom we bring forward, if the gentlemen whom we examine, be competent to practise in their profession for the benefit of the public, and with honour to medical science, give them the opportunity of doing so, but deprive no other institution of any privilege it enjoys. (*Cheers.*) Have the other colleges said or done as much? (*Hear, hear.*) Look at the College of Physicians—the Royal College of Surgeons—at the Apothecaries' Company;—or direct your attention to the Scotch or Irish institutions. This is a College of *Medicine*—it is not an institution founded for the benefit of a particular class of practitioners, but it is a college founded for the cultivation of a noble science (*hear, hear;*) and those men will obtain honours in it who may distinguish themselves in this exalted department of human knowledge. The other colleges have all of them been founded on a very different principle; public interest has been entirely disregarded; and there is an influence in those institutions which completely changes the characters of men—at least so it is said, though I am myself of opinion, that a man who would act dishonestly in a public capacity, would act dishonestly in a private one. (*Loud cheers.*) I have completely lost all respect for monopolists. For that man cannot be honest who would sanction in his corporate capacity an act which he would be ashamed to acknowledge in his private capacity. Thus we find that dishonest men acting in a body, attempt to shield themselves from reproaches against their villany, by an appeal to their numbers. (*Loud cheers.*) Gentlemen, as we ought on such an occasion as this, in referring to the unjust deeds of medical corporations, to derive a little amusement from their follies, pray let me read to you a document which I have received from the agents of *my* college—an institution quite celebrated for the care which it bestows upon the interests of its members. (*Laughter.*) You all know the gentlemanly treatment we received in the theatre of the College on the 8th of March, which has been followed up by an application to the Court of King's Bench, and that a "notice," similar to the one I hold in my hand, I believe, has been served on some of my friends. As they are rather unaccustomed to such visitations, I believe they were somewhat astonished on receiving it; but I am not at all surprised; on the contrary, I am rather amused. It is the first time that I have ever been placed

in agreeable company under such circumstances. I have always stood alone before. (*Hear, hear, and laughter.*) Hearing accidentally yesterday morning that proceedings were instituted in the Court of King's Bench, I stopped for a moment in Piccadilly, as I was going out of town, to give Mr. Walker a relish for his dinner. (*Laughter.*) I stopped and asked him if he had heard the news? "No," he said; "What news?" "Why," said I, "the Council have commenced proceedings against you in the King's Bench!" "God bless me!" he exclaimed, and he certainly was rather astonished. (*Laughter.*) But if Mr. Walker will only reflect on the desperate corruption and the acts of iniquity which are carried on in our College, he will say that those members deserve not to be regarded as cherishing the feelings of men who are not now firmly resolved to fight at all hazards for the public good. (*Loud cheers.*) They threaten to "ruin me by law expenses." It is possible they might ultimately consign me to a dungeon by the weight of law expenses, but I will defy them to prevent me even then from exerting myself in the cause of medical reform; and never whilst I have life and health will I relax in this great struggle. (*Much cheering.*) I thank them for this piece of paper; it is a very proper stimulus for me. If I had not, occasionally, a stimulant from John Doe and Richard Roe, perhaps I should, like the Council, sleep on the bed of indolence, and be regardless of my public character, be unmindful of that character which I have acquired by unceasing labour in the cause of medical reform. (*Hear, hear, hear.*) And, Gentlemen, in speaking of my own character I hope you will excuse me—self is at all times a most disagreeable theme, but as my character is a never-ceasing subject of discussion with my enemies, I hope you will excuse me for adverting to it, a gentleman having alluded to a publication which I shall not name, in which calumnies directed against my character are not uncommon. I am not in the habit of reading that work because I detest all mock representations; nor should I have adverted to it at this time, if the individual who manages it had not had the opportunity of speaking at this meeting. Now if that person be here—and he *was* here at the last meeting—I call upon him, unless he consent to be represented as the most corrupt, and malignant, and falsifying knave that ever assumed the form of man, I call upon him to stand here, and state in my presence any one circumstance, known to him, at all prejudicial either to my public or private character (*immense cheering*), as a surgical reformer, as a friend, as a father, as a husband. (*Hear, hear, hear.*) I call upon him, unless he consent to be known by the basest of all names, I call upon that man to

come forward and stand here at my side—I have only heard his name insinuated, or I would mention it. (*Cries of "Name," "Name."*) No, that's not fair; but I call upon him to come forward and answer my question. If he be here, what are now his feelings? I ask you, Gentlemen, to imagine what his feelings must be. (*Hear, hear.*) He knows that for hire—for base hire, week after week he is in the habit of printing against me the foulest, the falsest, the most villanous insinuations. (*Cries of "Shame."*) With regard to this College I defy him, or any living creature, to impute to me the shadow of a personal motive. (*Hear, hear.*) On the contrary, I was most reluctant to become a member even of the Committee, and I have resolved, when your senate is formed in September next, not to be one of that senate; even if the whole profession should demand the appointment in a voice of thunder; because I will not give my enemies even a *chance* of calumniating me with any show of justice. (*Bravo, and great cheering.*) What have I to obtain in seeking and requiring that medical men shall be rewarded for their labours? I have forsworn medical practice—I use only the lancet, and that instrument merely in the form of a quill. (*Hear, hear, and laughter.*) What then do I solicit? Only a due reward for those men who have heretofore been shamefully deprived of professional honours, rights, and emoluments. (*Hear, hear.*) I have seen that corruption has flourished, while men of genius throughout the empire have been in a state of degradation and poverty. Having witnessed these deplorable calamities, I have exerted myself against them, and so far, thank God, have succeeded in my labours. If then there be a man—if there be a creature so base as to calumniate me in private, while he shrinks from the opportunity of appearing before a body of intelligent and honourable men, and of stating his objections not only to me but to the scheme of the Committee, is the language of such a man deserving of one moment's consideration? (*Cries of No, no.*) Had it not been adverted to by Dr. Beaumont, I should not have troubled you on this subject; but I hope you will not deem my demand and denunciation either uncalled for or misplaced.

[A gentleman in the body of the room here called out, "that if there was such a 'thing with human pretensions' in the room, he ought to come forward."]

Mr. WAKLEY having paused for a time, continued. Then as such a "thing" does not come forward, I shall proceed. (*Cheers.*) The document which I hold in my hand includes the names of four of the "turbulent" members who appeared at the College on the 8th of March, and, curiously enough,

the whole of those selected, are members of your Committee. The Council, as I learn by Sir James Scarlett's speech, disclaim feelings of revenge, but you know it is a common thing to suspect a lady's chastity the moment she begins to talk of her virtue. (*Laughter.*) This is the paper, and I really think it must have been written in the Royal College of Surgeons, though it purports to come from the King's Bench. (*Mr. Wakley here read the notice inserted at page 183 of last week's LANCET.*) "In the King's Bench, *Middlesex.*—Upon reading the several affidavits of Edmund Belfour, Gentleman,"—who that can be I know not, (*laughter*), "And nine paper writings thereto annexed;" (*roars of laughter*); "Edward Scott and a printed paper,"—I read it exactly as it is written,—"and a paper partly written and partly printed, thereto annexed;" (*continued laughter*); Robert Keate, Esquire, and others, James Laidlaw, Samuel Wallace, James John Smith, George Frederick Langston, William Stone, and William Oliver, and a paper writing thereto annexed (*renewed laughter*), it is ordered," &c. Such is the document which has been furnished to me; indeed this is the original document. Now I believe you are all aware of what passed in the College on the 8th of March, as to the exclusion of naval surgeons from His Majesty's levees;—that certain members feeling this to be a stigma which ought not to attach to the character of these gentlemen, or, rather, perhaps I ought to say, should not be "thereto annexed" (*laughter*)—thought it right to attend at the College and take the subject into consideration, proposing simply to lay some proposal before the Council;—a recommendation for the guidance of the Council and nothing more. The doors were opened at three o'clock; there was a very numerous attendance of members; two resolutions were moved, seconded, and carried; they were discussed without the slightest violence or clamour. Previously to the Council entering, it was suggested that the President should be put in possession of those resolutions, and that the communication should be made by Mr. King immediately on their coming into the theatre, for it was feared that if not made then, the President and Council might leave without affording the opportunity of doing so. The President and the majority of the Council were present. Now, be kind enough, Gentlemen, to bear this in mind. It was not for one moment disputed by the Council that we had a right to discuss the grievance in the theatre. On the contrary, Sir Astley Cooper and Mr. Thomas, members of the Council, joined in the discussion, and Sir Astley Cooper recommended that the members then and there should form a deputation

from their own body to wait on the Council, and make known to them what had passed on the subject. After having advised us to this course,—after having joined us in the discussion in the College, they go to the Court of King's Bench and there state that we have rendered ourselves liable to the penalties of a criminal prosecution. (*Hear, hear.*) And why? Because we attempted to vindicate the rights of the commonalty!—quite enough, no doubt, to render us criminal in the eyes of the Council! (*Hear, hear, hear.*) Now, what is their view—what is their ultimate object? Why it is to terrify us into acquiescence, and to deprive us of the opportunity of carrying on this splendid undertaking, which they know must ultimately prove fatal to every medical monopoly in the United Kingdom. There is not a medical monopoly in the British dominions which can continue to flourish after three years have passed, should this College succeed, and I say that succeed it must, should all the powers of corruption be combined against it. The public voice is in its favour;—it receives the enthusiastic support of the profession. If you were to direct your attention to the Royal College of Surgeons, you would see, in the government of that institution alone, more than sufficient grounds for urging every medical reformer to strenuous but deliberate exertions in aid of this undertaking. We require the deliberate exertions, I say, of the friends of such a cause. Consider the subject for yourselves, and if you find it to be unexceptionable, come forward deliberately, but decidedly, in its support. The members of the committee for themselves require no reward. They have undertaken these duties disinterestedly, and are determined to persevere to the last; at least so long as they receive the slightest support from the profession at large. In looking at the principles to be adopted in the London College of Medicine, if there be any thing objectionable, it is to be hoped that those who disapprove of them will have the manliness to come forward and give us the benefit of their advice and assistance. Our enemies content themselves by saying, "It cannot succeed; it is a very good undertaking, we dare say, but it cannot succeed!" A more ridiculous exclamation it is impossible to conceive. *We* say that it *must* triumph, for there is not one of the principles upon which it is founded that does not court the most searching scrutiny. (*Hear, hear.*) Having said thus much with regard to the College, I shall merely offer one word with respect to the last resolution, which some persons may perhaps deem objectionable—I mean on the ground that the committee have retained the power which you conferred at the first meeting. You must be aware that a self-elected body cannot be

sanctioned ; the object of this resolution then is to obviate a practice which has long been tolerated in our medical institutions. If the committee had elected themselves into this office, they would have incurred the disgrace which belongs to other self-elected bodies. Gentlemen, I shall not detain you longer, but now merely hope you will return your thanks to the chairman for the manner in which he has discharged the duties of his office—a gentleman who, before he entered this room at the first meeting, was, I believe, adverse to its objects, but who, I hope, now feels that he must become the friend of the institution. (*Loud cheering.*)

The CHAIRMAN having vacated his seat, the vote of thanks was seconded and carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN, having resumed his place, said—Gentlemen, I feel proud that my services have elicited your approbation, as I am not connected with these proceedings otherwise than as your chairman on this occasion, which office I was induced to accept at your request, that the time of the meeting might not be wasted. I sincerely thank you for the resolution that has been last carried. (*Applause.*)

The business of the evening having concluded, the meeting now separated.

APPEAL CASE.

IRISH PHYSICIANS AND APOTHECARIES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—With no small degree of indignation I take up my pen to acquaint you on a matter which I (in common with many others present) considered at the time to be both uncalled for and unwarrantable, as well as most unfeeling and impertinent, on the part of the learned body concerned. It relates to an examination held on an appeal from Apothecaries' Hall at the College of Physicians, who I must premise are empowered, in this country (a super-extraordinary power no doubt) to give an examination to such candidates as have been rejected on three successive times (six months intervening between each) at the Hall, and granting a diploma to practise if to such the party so appealing be deemed entitled. The case now under notice occurred a few days ago. The appellant received an uncommonly simple and fair examination, during the progress of which he betrayed (it must in candour be allowed) very great deficiency in many most essential points of the ordinary routine of professional knowledge; the consequence of course was the affirming of the judgment of Apothecaries' Hall. However, in declaring this, the unanimous deci-

sion of the College, the President (a gentleman of great learning and much worth) observed from the chair, to the unfortunate candidate, in the presence of a great number of apothecaries, and others who were privileged to attend, that he was "desired, by the assembled college, to express *great surprise*, that any person *like him* should think of seeking admission into the profession of Pharmacy." The young man undoubtedly did not bear in his exterior much (if any) resemblance to the patrician class; neither was his manner of speaking the most elegant (and this I say of him without meaning any kind of disrespect to him—far otherwise). Yet, nevertheless, I appeal to you, Mr. Editor, if such an observation, and one made in so public a manner, was not only uncalled for but insolent in the extreme—one which outraged all the kindlier feelings of the human breast, and derogated from the dignity of the body whence it emanated. Why, Sir, is not this aristocratic College of Physicians equally fastidious as regards the admission of members into its own corporation. If the Physicians looked with a jealous eye to the personal embellishments of those who have become part and parcel of their institution (more particularly some one of the members who has been admitted within the last two years, or thereabouts, whose *moral attainments* are at a par with the *beauty of the outer man*), perhaps many of these *pure M.D.'s*, now luxuriating in the idea of being *licentiates* or *fellows* of the "King and Queen's College of Physicians in Ireland," would have been cast aside with a scornful hand as well as supercilious look, and told by a high and mighty President to depart the precincts of their college, and eke out a livelihood in a more humble sphere of life. Apologising for consuming so much of your time (not, however, without reason,) I hope, I remain, Sir, your very faithful servant,

S.

Dublin, April 1, 1831.

THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I observe that you compute the number of members of the College to be 6000; allow me to remark that you are 2000 short of the real amount, as the following statement will, I think, prove. There are 7186 members in the list published, July 1829. From that time to July 1830, the published supplement gives 455, producing an increase of 95551. *to the College income for that single year.* Taking the average number for nine months—that is, from July