

The CHAIRMAN announced that the great business of the evening would be the constitution, so to speak, of the society, by the election of a President and other officers to form, with the representative members, a Council, and that the ballot would be open for half an hour for that purpose. He gave his cordial support to the Association, which he believed would effect much good, and referred to the difference between the days when individual men like Abernethy or Astley Cooper collected pupils around them, and the present time, when able teachers were associated together to instruct the students of the several hospitals.

Dr. REYNOLDS and Mr. CARTWRIGHT, the scrutineers, reported the unanimous election of the following officers:—President: Mr. John Simon. Vice-Presidents: Dr. William Jenner, and Mr. Campbell De Morgan. Treasurer: Dr. Francis Sibson. Secretaries: Messrs. Robert Bentley and Bernard Edward Brodhurst. Elective Members of Council: Dr. Francis E. Anstie, Mr. Richard Barwell, Dr. William Allen Miller, and Dr. Alexander W. Williamson.

Sir WM. FERGUSSON now put it to the meeting whether the Association would proceed with further business, and, being answered in the affirmative, gracefully yielded the chair to Dr. Jenner, the senior vice-president, who, on taking it, proposed a vote of thanks to Sir Wm. Fergusson, which he briefly acknowledged.

Dr. BARCLAY then proposed that, as the election of Mr. De Morgan, Dr. Sibson, and Professor Bentley, made vacancies among the representative members, the deans of their respective schools should be requested to appoint other gentlemen in their places.

Mr. HART then moved the 1st resolution—viz., “That in the opinion of the Association the registration of the metropolitan students of medicine should be performed at one office only.” At present, three registrations of the same facts were incumbent upon every student, and this was most inconvenient and unnecessary. Besides, it was almost insulting to the professors who signed certificates of attendance to require the bodily presence of the student at certain intervals.

Professor BENTLEY seconded the resolution, cordially agreeing with all that the proposer had said.

Mr. PARTRIDGE supposed that the General Council would be suggested as the registering body, but considered it imperfect, since it only certified that students had passed a preliminary examination. Some discretion would be needed, and the registering body should exercise a surveillance on the teachers.

Mr. HOLMES thought this a small matter. So long as there were three examining bodies, so long, he thought, three registrations would be required.

Dr. JENNER asked Mr. Partridge if there were any advantages besides those mentioned in registration.

Mr. PARTRIDGE replied in the negative, and said he thought there would be no difficulty in the proposed alteration if the schools took efficient means to secure attendance. The motion was then carried.

Mr. DE MORGAN was very glad to hear the last remark of Mr. Partridge. He supposed that attendance in the classroom was already noted in most schools, and that unless a fair attendance was given certificates were withheld. The schools must be demoralised by any opposite system, which no doubt at one time existed. With regard to the wards, there was greater difficulty, and no doubt certificates of attendance were signed without proper investigation. The object of the lecturer was to educate good practitioners. Now, attendance means nothing; but one is at present bound to sign solely for attendance, not attention. He thought a little more trust should be put in teachers, who should certify that pupils have learnt rather than attended. A plan of marking by the medical officer in the wards was very simple, and had been adopted in St. Mary's and Middlesex Hospitals. He then moved the 2nd resolution, “That it is desirable that the lecturers and teachers constituting this Association should agree upon a uniform method of marking attendance upon lectures, and in the wards; and should settle the minimum which should justify the signature of schedules; and that a Committee be appointed to report thereon to the next meeting of this Association.”

Dr. SIBSON, in the absence of Dr. Andrew Clark, seconded the resolution. He agreed entirely with the proposer, and found that the practice of marking attendance in the wards of St. Mary's was not only easy, but pleasant. Although less might thus be actually taught, it would be taught to the many rather than to the few.

Dr. OGLE supported the resolution, and would prefer periodical examinations.

Mr. HOLMES thought that periodical examinations would be invidious. He thought that the examinations by licensing bodies should be practical rather than literary. If marking in the wards was to bring large numbers of men into the wards, it was objectionable; and marking of attendance of that kind was useless. If personal instruction was intended, a division of students must be made so that each medical officer might have a limited class.

Mr. SOELBERG WELLS said that, with regard to the possibility of teaching large numbers of men, he would refer to Dr. Hughes Bennett, Professors Opolzer and Hebra, and others, as instances of teachers who taught large classes successfully. He believed that the learning of the student depended mostly on the teacher.

Mr. HART thought Mr. Holmes was going beyond the terms of the resolution.

Dr. WILSON FOX doubted whether the resolution could be dealt with unless the whole question of clinical teaching were investigated, and the subject of the signing of schedules considered; and proposed an amendment, as a rider, to the effect that the proposed committee should consider the whole question of certificated attendance on specified courses of lectures. Attendance alone was allowed to be unsatisfactory. What was wanted was a test of the knowledge of the student by the examining boards. A certain set of students never will learn, and those who wish to learn will do so. Good teachers would always obtain a class; and it was a great hardship to force students to attend lectures unwillingly.

Sir DUNCAN GIBB seconded Dr. Fox's amendment.

Mr. VASEY made some remarks in support of the original proposition.

Dr. ANSTIE sympathised with Dr. Fox, and thought that the whole question of schedules should be investigated.

A discussion now ensued on a point of order as to whether Dr. Fox's amendment could be put, and the chairman decided that it could not.

Mr. BARWELL, returning to the original question, said he thought that a uniform system of signing certificates was most desirable.

Prof. BENTLEY thought the resolution was satisfactory as showing the determination of the schools to carry out the present system honestly. It was an anomaly that lecturers should certify to what they had no knowledge of.

The resolution was then carried.

The committee was nominated as follows:—Mr. Holmes, Prof. Bentley, Mr. Hart, Mr. De Morgan, Mr. Barwell, Dr. Reynolds, and Dr. Andrew Clark.

Correspondence.

“Audi alteram partem.”

TORSION VERSUS LIGATURE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As you have thought proper to notice my disuse of ligatures, I beg to say that by reference to THE LANCET of July 6th the reasons for this alteration of procedure will be found fully explained. But lest any of your readers should not be able to do this conveniently, I may state, for their information, that it was the entirely original principles and practice introduced by Mr. Lister, in accordance with his antiseptic views, which led me to employ torsion for general use, instead of only on particular occasions. While the blood retained in a wound was liable to decomposition, I regarded the presence of threads as useful, by providing drains for its discharge; but now, when means have happily been devised for preventing the putrefactive process, there is no longer any objection to the method of suppressing hæmorrhage by simply twisting the vessels, without leaving any foreign substance in the cavity. Therefore, although Mr. Lister has shown that under his treatment ligatures do not interfere with primary adhesion, I have ceased to use them except for the great arterial trunks. I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Edinburgh, Nov. 18th, 1867.

JAMES SYME.

ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR INCURABLES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your impression of the 9th instant I find a short article referring to an investigation recently made by Mr.