lice propugnet?"* The idea of a republic is here excellent.

When I addressed you, on the subject of the Colleges of Henry VIII. and Charles II., in *THE LANCET*, Vol. XI. page 615. I was only correct in fact. I was quite correct in asserting that the existing College is *not* the College of Henry VIII.; but in admitting, by implication, that it is the College of Charles II., I fell into the error but too common to medical men, and especially to medical colleges, of taking things for granted which have no foundation in truth. It is, as I now find, upon a closer scrutiny, neither the one nor the other, but a corporation exercising powers wholly assumed. It may seem extraordinary, Sir, that matters of fact of this kind should have so long eluded the vigilance, not only of professional adversaries, but of a number of able lawyers, employed at various periods to resist the usurpations of the College, and even of the College themselves. Such, however, is undoubtedly the case.

The following short statement, for the accuracy of which I pledge myself, will command general conviction of the truth of what I assert, *soi disant*. The incorporation of the present day, according to their annual list, consist of "a president, fellows, candidates, inceptor-candidates, licentiates, and extra-licentiates." They call themselves "The President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians in London;" the incorporation of Henry VIII. were called "The President and College, or Commonalty of the Faculty of Physic in London;" that of Charles II. was called "The President, Fellows, and Commonalty of the King's College of Physicians in the City of London." Now each of these bodies is entirely different from the others, both in fact and in name, and the one cannot take the place of the other. The College of the present day cannot represent that of Henry VIII. or of Charles II., any more than either of these can represent the other, or that of the present day. By what authority, then, if I may be allowed to inquire, does that body act, which consists of "a president, fellows, candidates, inceptor-candidates, licentiates, and extra-licentiates," and styles itself "The President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians in London." If this question cannot be satisfactorily answered, what becomes of the power of the College? That it cannot be so answered, I am fully persuaded; and in truth I am of opinion, that there is no authorised College of Physicians in London. I hereby promise to give an honorary pre-

mium to any gentleman of the bar, who will discover and state from what other source than their own by-laws, they derive any of their supposed privileges.

Their nullity, their non-existence, in fact, being proved, many important consequences will immediately ensue. The different branches of the medical profession will adapt themselves to the public demand. A great obstruction to the progress of medical science will be removed. The healths and the purses of the people, especially the inhabitants of London, will be considerably benefited. Sickness will be less prolonged, and the expenditure incidental to it, in various ways diminished. By the seasonable lapse of the College Charters from disuse, the present enlightened government will be enabled, without the pain of suppressing an ancient establishment, to institute legislative measures *de novo*, (no small advantage,) on the important and very interesting subject of the public health. The energies of the Fellows of this College, now paralysed by a reliance on support from their supposed exclusive privileges, will be exerted in competition with their independent brother physicians, greatly to the benefit of the people. And here I would beg to be distinctly understood as not wishing to depreciate the merits of the fellows individually, whilst I maintain the unquestionably injurious effects of their body in its corporate capacity. Into the merits of the questions pending between Dr. Harrison and them, this is not the proper moment to enter at large. I shall, however, not fail to revert in due season to the subject.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

MEDICO-CHIRURGUS.

London, 16 July, 1827.

MESSRS. RANDALL'S EXTRACTUM CONII.

To the Editor of *THE LANCET*.

SIR,—We shall be obliged by your giving a place to the following observations, in reply to a letter which appears on page 410 of your 12th Volume, "On the natural method of inspissating the juices of plants."

We can warrant our Extractum Conii to be purely the inspissated juice of the Wild Conium Maculatum, and most positively assert, that it does not contain one grain of the powdered herb, or any other ingredient whatever.

The colour is entirely preserved by the method of evaporation, and by taking the precaution to collect the herb before it flowers, or becomes stalky. We invite the inspection of any medical gentleman who may happen to be in this part of the coun-

* Exposition of the State of the Medical Profession, &c., p. 166.

try at the proper season, and shall feel most happy then to afford ocular proof of the truth of our assertion.

We certainly think that the writer of the letter referred to should be more cautious in future, and not lay before the public, to the injury of any individual's character, what he merely "believes," without sufficient evidence to the fact.

We are, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

WM. RANDALL AND SON.

Southampton, July 12, 1827.

THE RESPECTABILITY OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, AND ITS USEFULNESS IN THE SUPPRESSION OF QUACKERY.

It has been often observed, that visitors can readily detect abuses, when those who are living within the sphere of their operations are blind to their turpitude. It would appear, from the indifference manifested by some, that the march of improvement in the legislation of corporate bodies, had been so rapid as to leave little to reform; and that our College of Surgeons had really accomplished all that it was designed to do; that it had become the sole protector of "sound chirurgical knowledge;" and that it discountenanced and suppressed every thing which had a "contrary tendency."

On looking over a work recently written by a German physician, (Dr. Casper,) describing the state of medicine in England and France, we felt, as we have no doubt others will feel, ashamed of the testimony he has given to his countrymen; but at the same time, being convicted of its truth, we were ashamed that we belonged to a body permitting such dissolute and unrestrained quackery. Having spoken of the excessive disproportion of practitioners to the requirements of the population, he says,

"I was shown an address-book of about the thickness of my two fingers, containing the names of those only who were inscribed as Members of the 'Royal College of Surgeons!' It was by no means rare to find on the house-doors, the names of two or

more surgeons, with the appendix of a Co., as 'Philips, Sumpton, and Company, surgeons, &c.' My readers will probably not be less surprised than myself at these ostentatious displays, and will be disposed to inquire, as I did, what they could mean; whether the gentlemen treated their patients conjointly; whether it was so contrived that one of the Co. should always be at home, in case of accidents, and so forth? At length the riddle was solved. The whole concern was only a branch of the London quackery. Among the common sort of English, in whom a commercial spirit is not less innate than that of 'Freedom,' the word 'Company' is considered a good assurance for the solidity of a firm; and, by analogy of reasoning, two or more surgeons are supposed to possess more skill when practising in 'Company,' than if alone.

"In London, as in Paris, the punctum saliens of medical quackery is *syphilis*, and here again we find 'Consultation Houses,' and the usual nostrums. But it would of the vision of the modest and bashful Englishman if such things should be announced on hand-bills at the corner of the streets; the quacks in London have therefore invented a different plan to disseminate their boasted skill among the multitude: they employ men to distribute little advertisements to the foot passengers, who at their leisure may read the disgusting contents. Some of them have some enticing motto prefixed, as 'Speedy cure on moderate terms!' others are said to be 'For the benefit of the army, navy, and the public in general!!' I was informed that there were certain 'Medical establishments where men are rescued from perilous diseases without the use of mercury, which has proved the death of thousands, in the hands of ignorant quacks!'

"Just in the same style hundreds of similar bureaux are announced, and a hundred other forms of deceiving the public practised in the capital of a country, which may be proud to call a Hunter, an Abernethy, a Lawrence, a Bell, and a Cooper, her sons. According to the pretensions of the advertisers, what wonders are not 'Leake's justly famous pill' capable of accomplishing! Prepared and sold, as the dirty paper announces, by the Taylors, in a street leading to Blackfriars-bridge, who say that they are Members of the 'Royal College of Surgeons!'" Dr. Casper then goes on to sneer at the contents of the papers, detailing the marvellous efficacy of these pills of "immortal and universal fame," and concludes his remarks by congratulating his countrymen on their being free from such disgrace. "Luckily," says he, "Germany can look down upon and laugh at these disgraceful fooleries of her enlightened neighbours!!"