

tunities, is not to be matched in the universe. If our readers can conceive the impressions of a quiet and respectable person, already possessed of some knowledge, and anxious for more, at the prospect of being eternally shut up in a room with six boys, and those boys midshipmen, they will probably cease to wonder at the fact, that there are few aspirants to so delightful a destiny.

The prayer of these ill-used officers is confined mainly to a request, that they may be treated, not only as gentlemen, but as adults, and that they may be admitted, in common with their equals, to seats at the ward-room mess. This is the one great concession which would at once mend their position by identifying them with the full-grown and responsible officers of the service, and by removing them from a sphere in which they are deprived both of the comforts and opportunities due to their standing and their avocation. It would, of course, be highly desirable that they should be indulged also with the convenience of a cabin, for those multifarious purposes which their daily duties suggest; but no discontent would be felt at the absence of this accommodation, in any case where it was clearly inconsistent with the expedient arrangements of the vessel. What is felt as a grievance by these officers is, not the inevitable inconvenience of sea-going practice, but the systematic refusal, in their cases alone, of that consideration which the nature of the service does permit, and which their rank and their duties fairly claim. All the alleviation of their discomforts, which they at present enjoy, is derived from the accidental and unauthorized civilities of any particular captain who may be good enough to connive at the assistant-surgeon's sleeping in the sick berth, and washing in the dispensary; and we have reason to believe, that even such slight and interrupted accommodations as these have been of no small avail in preventing a general abandonment of so needlessly uncomfortable a service.

It should be observed, that an acquiescence in these most reasonable requests would be attended with no kind of expense to the country. The pay of the assistant-surgeons—£127 15s. per annum, increasing after three years' service to £136—is already amply sufficient to support the cost of the ward-room mess; which, indeed, is open to officers of smaller professional emolument. They merely desire the privilege of suiting their daily life more appropriately to their daily pay and their daily duties. As a matter of fact, it is notorious that the provision of a private cabin would often be found really practicable, as was shown some time ago, when, upon the occasion of a third-lieutenant being added to certain vessels of inferior rates, no difficulty was ever experienced in putting up the extra cabin required for his accommodation. But this, as we have said, is not the main point of the petition, which prays only for a due recognition of rank and standing, for an admission to corresponding social advantages, and for such subsequent conveniences only as circumstances may be found to suggest or admit.

There are few occasions on which the duties of a public journalist can be discharged more opportunely or more satisfactorily than on such as this. The officers of the army and navy are deprived, by the restrictions inseparable from their position, of many of those resources to which, when aggrieved or annoyed, their fellow-subjects betake themselves. They cannot cabal, or combine, or remonstrate. They can form no clubs, or leagues, or confederations. They are circumscribed by the necessary discipline of the service, to distant and respectful representations of their desires, addressed, probably, to some functionary overwhelmed with weightier communications, and but little anxious to increase the work of his department by ever so small an innovation. Even such petitions as these, perhaps, are not despatched without some apprehensions of the sentiments excited by a troublesome interruption. There is, consequently, no resource open to them, except the influence of public opinion, and even to this they are not enabled to make a direct appeal. It is what this honourable and patriotic class are thus debarred from doing of themselves that we address ourselves on the present occasion to do for them, with the full conviction that so simple and inexpensive a remedy will not be long withheld from so palatable and serious an evil.

### Correspondence.

#### WHAT ARE THE REMEDIES FOR CHOLERA?

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—As the cholera is once more making its tour over the eastern continent, and will in all probability make that of

this continent also, and recollecting the horrors of its last visit to this country, there is a good deal of alarm in anticipation of that event. We naturally begin to look around us for proper means to combat it on its advent. We have looked in vain to the European journals, and most especially to *THE LANCET*, for information on the subject. From your proximity to the seat of its ravages, I presume you must have become acquainted with some of the remedies found to be most successful. I hope I do not presume too much in asking for such information on this subject as you may have been able to gather, and also as to the character of the present epidemic—its type—whether it is more or less mild—in short, whatever you may be able to impart concerning it.

And allow me to take this opportunity of expressing the gratification which I derive monthly from your valuable periodical. I rejoice to see the effort which pervades, as it were, each number to exalt the standard of our beloved profession. In no country is such an effort more loudly called for than in this—it is literally a matter of dollars and cents. This is certainly the age of nostrums. I sincerely trust you may be successful in opening the eyes of physicians to the true position which our profession ought to occupy, and prevail on them to insist on taking it, even at the risk of some pecuniary loss.—With the highest respect and esteem, I am, your obedient servant,

New Orleans, February 15th, 1848.

H. W. M.—R.

#### THE SURGEONS OF ESSEX: THEIR CIRCULAR AND PETITION TO PARLIAMENT.

(CIRCULAR.)

Witham, Essex, June 30th, 1848.

SIR,—A public meeting of the members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, residing in Essex, was held at Colchester, on the 9th of June, at which petitions to Parliament were agreed to. That to the House of Commons has subsequently been presented by Sir George Grey.

At the same meeting a resolution was passed to the effect, "That all the members of Parliament connected with this county should be requested to support the same."

With the view of carrying out this resolution, I forward you a copy of the petition, and venture to request your especial attention to it on behalf of the meeting, the more particularly as the matter most probably will very speedily come under your notice in the course of your parliamentary duties. You will, I trust, excuse me for urging the following points:—

Previously to the year 1843, the Royal College of Surgeons of England possessed the power, granted them by charter, to admit as members certain parties who complied with certain requisites. In that year the council of the college, (till then self-elected,) without any converse with its members, obtained a new charter, by which, first 300, afterwards 150, from nearly 10,000 members, were erected into an elective body, under the title of fellows, in a capricious manner, without any additional education or examination, or any reference whatever to superiority of acquirements. The members naturally look upon such charter, and its working, as the perpetration of injustice towards their whole body, since, previously to its existence, they were all upon equality.

Recently, a conclave, self-constituted, consisting of the presidents of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, the master of the Apothecaries' Company, and a gentleman, named Pennington, the president of a small body of practitioners of all descriptions, have agreed upon certain "Principles" upon which to found future medical legislation. By these, the Apothecaries' Company, who have hitherto been the licensing body for the mass of general practitioners throughout this country, as well as the only body who could afford them any protection from the competition of uneducated and unlicensed persons, is to relinquish its functions, and a new corporation is to be established, under the title of "Royal College of General Practitioners," to which the members of the College of Surgeons *must* belong, in order to enable them to recover remuneration for their services; by which act they *must* relinquish the title of surgeon, which they at present hold by law, or failing to join which, they entirely lose most of their present privileges.

The members of the Royal College of Surgeons in Essex repudiate all idea of any connexion with any new medical corporation whatever, more especially one by which they will be degraded in rank and title. They hold that the present existing bodies of that kind are fully equal to the wants of the profession, and that a multiplication of licensing bodies will be but a multiplication of the evils under which the profession of physic at present labours. If the Apothecaries' Company

is to resign its powers, they believe that the Royal College of Surgeons is the proper body to assume them, and that it can readily be made to accomplish this by the addition of certain subjects (mentioned in the petition) to its curriculum of study and to its examinations.

To these ends they consider it is needful—

That the charter of the Royal College of Surgeons of 1843 should be annulled.

That a new charter should be granted, making all who are members at the time of its issue an elective body for the purposes of the college; rendering the college the licensing body for this country with protective powers, and conferring upon it control over the medical education of the general practitioners.

That no new medical corporations whatever should be sanctioned by Parliament.

That medical education, (which now varies considerably in England, Scotland, and Ireland,) qualification, and privilege, should be rendered equal throughout the United Kingdom.

You will observe that very many of the leading medical practitioners in the county have signed this petition, and although there may be some who differ in opinion with us, yet I think I may venture to add, that a great majority coincide with the petitioners.

It remains for me further to solicit your attention to this subject, and to request your cordial support to the views of the petitioners.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS TOMKIN,  
Chairman of the Meeting.

(PETITION.)

*To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.*

The petition of members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, resident in the county of Essex, in public meeting at Colchester, assembled June 9th, 1848, sheweth,—

That by the charter last granted to the "Royal College of Surgeons of England," certain of its members were created "fellows" of that college, by which injustice was done towards the great body of members, inasmuch as all became members on equal terms, passing through the same course of study, undergoing the same examination, paying the same fees, and till then enjoying the same privileges.

That the establishment of any new medical corporation, such as that proposed, under the title of the "Royal College of General Practitioners," will be unjust towards the members of the Royal College of Surgeons, since by it they will be deprived of their present rights and titles, and compelled to belong to an inferior grade and rank in the profession, to be by it created.

That the "Company of Apothecaries" being willing to relinquish its position as an examining body, the "Royal College of Surgeons of England" is well fitted, by the learning of its council, its long establishment, great wealth, and extensive library and museum, to direct the affairs of the profession generally, and that the addition of medicine, midwifery, and pharmacy, to their present examinations, with an extended and liberal administration of its affairs, will render it efficient for the direction and protection of the interests and honour of the medical profession.

That the sentiments entertained by your petitioners are fully borne out and corroborated by Mr. George James Guthrie, who formerly occupied the honourable position of president of the Royal College of Surgeons, and have been fully detailed and explained by him in evidence before a committee of your honourable house, (in his replies to questions numbered respectively 194, 235, 251, 252, 253, 258, 259, 260, 261, 281, 284, 285, and 291, in the published minutes of evidence.)

Your petitioners therefore pray your honourable house:—

That it will withhold its sanction to the establishment of the Royal College of General Practitioners, or to any new medical corporation or licensing body whatever.

That it will bestow such powers on the "Royal College of Surgeons of England" as shall enable it to remedy the injustice perpetrated on the great body of its members by the charter last granted, and likewise render it efficient for directing the examinations of the profession generally, as also such other powers as may enable it to afford protection to its various members in the exercise of their professional duties.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

*List of Names of those who signed the Petitions to the Houses of Lords and Commons.*

T. Tomkin, Witham; R. S. Nunn, Colchester; S. A. Philbrick, ditto; H. B. L. Brock, ditto; J. H. Partridge, ditto; T. Morgan, Woodford; E. Whitfield, Tolleshunt D'Arcy; J. Dawson, ditto; S. Rodick, Halsted; C. E. Blair, M.D., Colchester; G. B. Clark, ditto; Thos. Taylor, Colchester Hospital; J. Taylor, Earls Colne; T. M. Tomkin, Witham; W. B. Tomkin, ditto; H. Dixon, ditto; A. G. Procter, ditto; E. G. Varenne, Kelvedon; H. Bird, F.R.C.S., Chelmsford; C. J. Philbrick, Colchester; J. Coventry, Hatfield Broad Oak; F. Rawle, Saffron Walden; J. Graham, Rochford; R. Hodges, ditto; H. Carwardine, F.R.C.S.E., Earls Colne Priory; T. Colborne, Brentwood; G. A. Gepp, F.R.C.S., Chelmsford; J. T. Gilson, ditto; J. Thorpe, jun., Maldon; D. L. Manthorp, Thorpe; F. H. Green, Great Chesterford; G. R. Hilliard, Rayleigh; T. Hutchinson, L. Waltham; W. B. Rix, Harlow; G. H. Bore, Stanway; F. N. Fitch, Sible Hedingham; T. E. Osmond, Thorpe; A. Wells, Wickford; E. Thomas, Chigwell; J. P. Taylor, Earls Colne; G. Welch, Stansted Mountfichet; J. Rush, Southminster; J. Norman, West Mersea; J. Addison, Burnham; W. Carter, Billericay; F. Bell, Felstead; J. Green, Rochford; J. Grice, Dunmow; G. May, Maldon; J. H. Branfoot, Brentwood; R. Latten, St. Osyth; T. Salt, Dunmow; F. Lovell, Chelmsford; J. H. Parker, Great Clacton; W. Meadowcroft, Great Bentley; R. Cremer, Chelmsford; W. Thompson, Manningtree; T. Peat, ditto; W. Bidwell, Dedham; F. Manning, Bergholt; H. Bidwell, Dedham; J. N. Dixon, Manningtree; S. Clarence, Thaxted; F. Marsh, ditto; Dr. Bird, F.R.C.S., Chelmsford.

[LETTER FROM MR. OSWALD COPLAND.]

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—If Mr. Philbrick was much surprised at my letter, certainly I am at the contents of his. Some one must have most singularly misinformed him respecting what took place at the meeting of the Medical and Surgical Association, held at Chelmsford on the 18th of April last.

In his letter he informs your readers "that at this meeting four or five attended; but the majority differing from the secretary, all left but one, so nothing was done. This Mr. Copland knows to be correct." So far from knowing this to be correct, I have no hesitation in saying it is quite erroneous. Instead of nothing being done, resolutions were passed, and also a memorial agreed to for presentation to Sir G. Grey, in favour of the principles agreed to by the joint committees in London. No one left the room before the business was concluded, nor was there a difference in opinion.

I have not the slightest hesitation in admitting that the meeting was very small, owing to the committee having decided to call it by public advertisement in the *Chelmsford Chronicle*, instead of by circulars to each medical man in the county. Mr. Philbrick says he himself never knew of it,—doubtless many others were, like him, not readers of the county paper. What I intended to do by my former letter was, to state that the meeting held at Colchester was not to be taken as the expression of the opinion of all the surgeons of Essex. Mr. Philbrick's statement, that only about half have signed the petition against any new college for the general practitioners, emanating from the Colchester meeting, sufficiently confirms my statement. Where Mr. Philbrick finds that "I insinuated that my observation of the matter arose out of your notice of it, not from the circular by which I was invited to it," I am at a loss to discover. I never intended anything of the kind; the greater portion of his letter is therefore a work of supererogation.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

Chelmsford, July 4th, 1848.

OSWALD COPLAND.

DR. SHARPEY'S WORK ON ANATOMY.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Can you inform me whether Dr. Sharpey ever intends publishing the third part of his work on anatomy, (it has now been promised nearly three years,) for I and several other students are very anxious to get some information respecting it, and would be greatly obliged if you could in any way forward our wishes.—I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

H.M.S. "Dreadnought," off Deptford. CHARLES W. WHITBY.

\*\* It is not in our power to answer the question of our correspondent. We have received other notes on the same subject.—ED. L.