

College, he must forfeit his right to recover for professional services. While the surgeon is pulled down, the apothecary is not raised; both are placed under the ban of proscription, while the surgeon loses everything—name, position in society, *locus standi* in the profession, rights, character. The apothecary gains nothing. Both are Pariahs, and must have no alliance or communion with Brahmins.

The apothecary must not retain his title of "surgeon," or if he register as "surgeon" he loses his fee. This is done to hedge round the pures and the physicians with a kind of divinity—to constitute an artificial aristocracy—by Sir James Graham, who seems to shape his measures in obedience to some influence that is most inimical to the general practitioner. This painful truth proclaims itself in every sentence.

At twenty-two years of age, the future candidate may practise all branches of his art. At twenty-six, only the more restricted and special departments of medicine and surgery. This clause creates an aristocracy, spurious, it is true, but on that account the more galling. It will have the certain evil effect of confirming the popular delusion, that the pures possess the greater stock of knowledge. Yet there is, in reality, but one degree and one grade in medicine. All others are anomalies, frauds upon the public, outrages on truth, and impediments to science. The means and the ends are the same. The study and the pursuits are similar. All medical men ought to be known by one common denomination. Yet under the new Bill more odious distinctions are to be created. The line of demarcation is to be made wider and more irritating. It will lessen the income of the general practitioner; it will lower him in public estimation. All claim to equality, and to uniformity of education, must be for another century abandoned. All the maxims of the masters of our art, which our own experience confirms, are subverted; all our petitions and remonstrances are disregarded. The boy-fellow takes legal precedence over the practitioner of fifty years' experience. We are to become more skilful by a clause in an Act of Parliament. We are to be the attorneys to those beardless barristers of the profession. We must retrograde. Our present position, anomalous and indefinite as it may be, is infinitely preferable to the plan propounded.

There is another remarkable injustice and absurdity in this measure: the physician may practise as a general practitioner, but the general practitioner must not practise as a physician. The physician may practise midwifery, surgery, and pharmacy, although he may never have studied them, and recover for such attendance, but the surgeon who has specially studied, if he practise as a surgeon cannot recover.

The heads of the charter are fettered with the most debasing restrictions. Do the charters granted to the chemists and the veterinary surgeons contain any such ignominious exclusions? The cause assigned is as absurd as false. The reason is this: the jealousy and fears of the corporations will not allow the general practitioners to be dignified with the privilege of self-government. They withhold the attributes of freemen, in order to habituate us to subserviency. Is there any other associated body in the kingdom which a Secretary of State would dare to refuse this simple, this just, this constitutional right? The monopolists having the ear of the Secretary of State, the profession is forgotten. The Council are everything, the members are nothing. The ordinary rule of legislation is reversed; the Council alone are allowed *rights*, whereas as a Council they have only *duties*. A man may be a member of Parliament at twenty-one, a lord chancellor at twenty-two, but not a councillor of a petty College of Apothecaries until he is thirty-seven.

The great triumphs of genius were accomplished ere the meridian of life. Berthollet, Bichat, and Newton, all made their great discoveries at an early age. The destinies of England were entrusted to Pitt at twenty-three. Intellect is to be honoured in its decadence, not in its maturity, in medical legislation.

I have referred cursorily to a few of the evils of the new Bill and the treachery of the Committee, who, blinded by the prospect of personal advantage which a new charter presents, insult our judgment by strongly recommending it for adoption. They see in the distance power, place, patronage, emoluments, gowns, maces. They become indifferent to the means of acquirement. They exhibit an obstreperous activity in the pursuit, that would be amusing were it not disastrous. I speak of them entirely as a public body. They must be judged by their acts; criticism is the tax they must pay for pushing themselves into a conspicuous position. The many seem to be the dupes of an intriguing few, who diplomatize to obtain places in the new College, never having had tact enough to obtain a respectable practice. The majority of the Committee are west-end apothecaries, the least spirited and independent of all medical men,—content to play the part of jackals to the physicians. Many have previously opposed every

species of reform, and always calumniated those who struggled for it. Some of the Committee have no legal qualification; yet they have become legislators. The "associated apothecaries" bought their seats there.

The presidents and vice-presidents of districts thus elected themselves:—They called three or four friends to their own houses, and were made officers; and then called public meetings, and installed themselves, without permitting their brethren to select them. Plutarch enumerates the various occasions on which a man, without offence, may praise his own excellence. In the city they have not studied ethics, or they would remember that self-praise is an ill-favoured solecism in good manners. They forgot the old Latin precept, "*Propria laus sordet in ore*," when the Committee wrote laudatory articles on their labours. The chairmen and secretaries, ex-officio members of the same Committee, composed extravagant self-eulogies in the shape of resolutions. This flattering portrait, painted by themselves, was a fiction, not a reality. Nothing but overweening vanity and stupidity could have disposed them to be pleased with this manœuvre, which was both a deception and a reproach. Mr. Secretary Smith thanked those present at the meeting in the city, from the bottom of his heart, for the too flattering manner in which a resolution that he had himself drawn up referred to his very humble exertions. His dupes applauded his modesty! He poured forth panegyrics on the Committee, and attributed to them qualities which nothing but self-conceit could have suggested, and abused all who differed from him, most intemperately. The provinces will be a little astonished at the exposure of metropolitan practices.

The tide has now turned. The surgeons are in commotion. They repudiate with scorn the contemplated Bill and its provisions. Poor Dr. Webster, like Actæon, was nearly devoured by his own hounds,—disowned, denounced, for having given the countenance of the British Medical Association to the unjust proceedings of the Committee. The provincial surgeons,—men of education, of high standing, of operative skill, who shed a lustre on their profession, who have written and done much for its improvement, cannot, or will not, recognise such men as Nussey and Fuller for their *representatives*. There is a libel in the very supposition.

If the Committee had understood the character and perceptive acuteness of medical men, they must have known that their motives would be penetrated and resisted, and that reason, aided by ridicule, would defeat a selfish combination which had not justice or intellect to sustain it.

It will be your great honour to have contributed most to stem, to defeat, this delusion. The profession has recovered from its surprise, and will gratefully acknowledge your manly and most disinterested resistance of the imposition sought to be inflicted upon it. The benefit will be ours; the glory, yours.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JORDAN ROCHE LYNCH.

Farringdon-street, May 26th, 1845.

## THE REGISTRATION OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Many years have I watched your conduct as the first and last medical reformer of the day. Your sole end and aim seems to have been, and to be, the enhancement of the respectability of the medical profession, and through it to benefit the public at large. Let me entreat you, then, as a man possessing more knowledge of the intricate state of medical law than any other person in the empire, not to relax your powerful efforts at this critical juncture of medical affairs.

The Committee of seventy-two have committed a grievous error in not confiding our case to your care. Mr. Hawes, although a clever, respectable, well-meaning man, knows but little of the wants and wishes, and, I may add, of the deserts, of the great body of surgeons of this country. You are the only person who can thoroughly comprehend and grapple with the difficulties of our case in the House of Commons; persevere, then, I pray you, and you will, at least, ere long, enjoy that well-earned fame which you so richly deserve as a reward of your untiring labour.

By clause 31 of the "amended" Bill, we shall be allowed to register as surgeons, and thus *retain* our title as M.R.C.S., but, as if in mockery, we are deprived in the Act of recovering from our debtors, of which many thousands of our *kind friends* will take immediate advantage; or we *may* have the alternative of demanding our fees at each visit, which the people would object to, because it has not been the practice; besides this, many who are willing to remunerate us have it not in their power at the time of attendance to do so: to these difficulties may be added,

that patients requiring continued care would often be deprived of the assistance of their medical attendants. In either case we should lose a *very large* portion of our practice.

On the other hand, if we register as "licentiates," we retain the power of recovery, but lose *caste*, degenerate into the old apothecary, and be lightly esteemed as medical practitioners. What a pleasant prospect for us! This is not all; although clause 32 provides that we may become medical "attendants" at public places, yet we must not call ourselves surgeons, (clause 38,) nor, I suppose, attach M.R.C.S. to our names. Under such degrading circumstances, do you, Sir, think it in the least degree probable, that any one of us would be elected as surgeon to a public hospital, or even to a union or a workhouse, if a practitioner only nominally of a *higher* grade was to be had? I say, certainly not. What, then, is to be done? Can this bungling piece of legislation be really "amended," or will it be necessary to throw it out of the House of Commons? Why may we not be at liberty to register as members of the College of Surgeons, and also as licentiates of the College of General Practitioners, if we *must* have a new College? And why not retain the power of recovering debts?

There are many other absurdities in the Bill, which require close attention, and which I at present pass by, leaving them and the important questions I have put to be solved by the fostering care of all those, with yourself, who have the ability and will to serve the good cause at this important crisis of medical affairs.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

St. James' Barton, Bristol, May 27th, 1845.

JAMES PROWSE.

### BLACKSTONE ON THE POWER OF DISSOLVING CORPORATIONS.

It has been publicly and repeatedly alleged, that Parliament cannot abrogate a Charter of Incorporation without the consent of the Council or governing body. It is a weak and silly "invention of the enemy." The statement has just been repeated, in print, by the lawless Committee,—*law-less*, apparently, in all respects,—for the obvious purpose of diverting the members of the College of Surgeons from the bold, resolute, and combined efforts which they are now making to obtain their enfranchisement in that institution. The following is the daringly ignorant assertion of the Committee of the National Association, in page 8 of the "TRANSACTIONS," which they published on Monday last.

"But even the *Parliament of Great Britain cannot cancel the existing Charter of the College of Surgeons without the consent of the governing body*; and those individuals who hold out that it would do so, on representations coming from any quarter whatever, know better. It is an *ignis fatuus* purposely held out to allure the general practitioners from the goal which they have so nearly reached."

Allure the general practitioners from the goal the Committee is erecting for them! This is an original idea.

But where is the Committee "lawyer?" Where is Mr. HAWES? Let us cite the authority of BLACKSTONE. We quote, verbatim, from Chapter VIII. "ON CORPORATIONS:"—

"We come now, in the last place, to consider *how corporations may be dissolved*. A corporation may be dissolved,

"1st. *By act of Parliament*, which is *boundless* in its operations.

"2ndly. *By the natural death of all its members*, in case of an aggregate corporation.

"3rdly. *By surrender of its franchise into the hands of the king*, which is a kind of suicide.

"4thly. *By forfeiture of its Charter, through negligence, or ABUSE of its franchise*, in which case the law judges that the body politic has *broken* the condition upon which it was incorporated, and thereupon the corporation is void."

Will the stupid assertion of the Committee be repeated?

### COUNTY MEDICAL MEETINGS.

The first has been held in Shropshire.

The resolutions and plan of operations are printed at page 662 of this week's LANCET.

The AGGREGATE MEETING IN LONDON is appointed for TUESDAY, the 26th inst.

The PUBLIC BREAKFAST, to which Mr. GUTHRIE is to be invited, and at which twelve members of the House of Commons have already promised to be present, will be held on the preceding day, MONDAY, the 25th. Places are to be reserved for the REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONFERENCE.

Meetings in the counties, cities, and boroughs should be held as quickly as possible. There is no time for parley or delay. The enemy is at the gate, and there is treachery in the camp. The COMMITTEE in Hanover-square are so far lost to every feeling of professional independence and dignity, that in the concluding paragraph of their "Transactions," just published, unblushingly is it stated, that "they trust that the general practitioners will CORDIALLY SUPPORT THE BILL AND CHARTER. Thus they have surrendered the rights of the SURGEONS of England, and placed them at the feet of a contemptible body of scheming APOTHECARIES. But the wicked manœuvre *will fail*. The SURGEONS will *not* submit to be degraded. They are up and stirring, and their enemies, of all classes and degrees, will be defeated, and overwhelmed with disgrace. Had not the Committee in Hanover-square entirely abandoned the principle of representation,—had they allowed their medical brethren generally to have returned DELEGATES from all parts of the kingdom, the profession would not have been subjected to the annoyances, the injustice, the dangers, to which it is now exposed. Country practitioners are still excluded from the Committee; still denied the right of sending into that body a single representative. The provincial members are to be at liberty to *return names*, but the powers of *selection, election, and exclusion*, are vested *entirely with the Committee*, a body consisting, to this very hour, of seventy-two gentlemen, all of whom, excepting *one*, reside within ten miles of the metropolis. Had the members of the profession continued their support to such a Committee, and had they been a thousand times betrayed, the blame would have attached, almost exclusively, to their own conduct. It is impossible that any SURGEON who *understands* the provisions of the Bill and Charter, can fail to discover that they must inflict *permanent* degradation on the character of the general practitioners of this country, and brand them for ever as the LOWEST CLASS of medical men. The PURES approve of the scheme; so do the mere APOTHECARIES. What further evidence is wanted by surgeons as to the character and tendency of the whole plan?

A list of "ADDITIONAL DONATIONS" is furnished in the last "TRANSACTIONS" of the Committee; but there is not a *date* to any one of them; and several of the gentlemen whose names are down as subscribers have actually withdrawn from the Association. For example, the name of Mr. HUGHES, one of the Hon. Secretaries to the Committee, of Management for the Aggregate Meeting, is on the list. How infatuated are the members of the Committee, to suppose that such contemptible manœuvres can be followed by any other prominent result than their own final and complete exposure and discomfiture!

### CONSEQUENCES OF THE BILL AND CHARTER.

A WRITER, adopting the signature of "A GENERAL PRACTITIONER," has published a letter in the *Bristol Mirror*, in which he observes that the committee of the National Association must be "*morally blind* not to perceive the consequences of the Bill and Charter." They certainly do not appear to possess a very keen *intellectual* vision. But the BETSEY PRIG and SAIREY GAMP of the ARTFUL DODGE fancy they have discovered a "*locus stundi*." Alas! The scene grows dim.