

and, moreover, how tough our hides are become by the rough riding of the guardians (the poor-law commissioners stirring up with a long pole behind), I think it unreasonable in Mr. Pinching to complain, seeing that the exception forms the *rule*, and within which he is brought. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant.

EX-MEDICUS CONSOCIATOR.

Stroud, May 7, 1844.

TO THE
MASTER, WARDEN, AND COURT OF ASSISTANTS
OF THE
WORSHIPFUL SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES
OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

GENTLEMEN,—I have perused, with very great satisfaction, your excellent statement on the subject of your administration of the "Apothecaries' Act," and, as an humble licentiate of your society, I tender my cordial concurrence in the views put forth in it. The pith and marrow of all medical reform is contained in the point you first insist on, namely, the expediency of allowing the education and examination of the general practitioner to remain under the control of his own grade. No men are better judges than a man's own compeers, of his acquirements or qualifications, either private or professional; the very schoolboys know *which* of their companions *ought* to obtain the prize, and through every gradation in life the principle holds its ground.

In your case it has been most triumphantly vindicated by the experience of the past twenty-five years, and the attainments and qualifications of the medical body practising under your licence have enabled them to perform the onerous duties that devolve on them with the highest skill and fidelity, securing thereby public patronage, and the respect and confidence of the most enlightened members of society. Past experience, the soundest and most practical test after all, having fully confirmed the truth of your maxim, I cordially hope you will abide by the principle you have laid down, and make every effort to have it firmly established and confirmed. But, gentlemen, you have much to do, and many powerful opponents to contend with, and forcible reformation will most assuredly come, unless you yourselves deprive our legislators of all pretext for interference by voluntarily and gracefully taking the initiative. You never have had a finer opportunity of achieving for yourselves a greatness far superior to any you have calculated upon, of arising, *phoenix-like*, almost from your own ashes, for the pile for your immolation is already laid, and soon will a rude hand apply the fatal brand.

But it is yet in your own power to prevent it; the dilatory proceedings in Parliament, the fatal blunders of the council of the College of Surgeons, and the anxiety of general practitioners throughout the kingdom to unite cordially in support of their just rights and privileges, afford you an opportunity, such as you may never possess again, to enlist the whole body under your banner, and give their best and warmest support to that medical institution, that, by common accord, with all its imperfections, has done more, during its brief existence, to elevate professional education, and to benefit society, by sending out skilful and efficient men to take care of it, than any other medical corporation whatever.

Gentlemen, you may accomplish the good work of professional union and self-respect, by only carrying out to the full your own admirable maxim, but you must open your gates wide, you must have no invidious distinctions between men of your own grade, you must confer the elective franchise upon all who possess your licence, and give them the privilege of voting for their council and examining body. Do this, and steadily pursue the honourable task of improving your curriculum to the utmost practicable extent, and you will, without ostentation or adventitious aid, and by a bright and noble example, compel other corporations to complete the noble edifice of medical science upon the broad and firmly-knit foundation that you have voluntarily laid down for them. Do this, and do it *instantly*, and you need be under no apprehension that the control of the education and examination of the general practitioner will ever

be removed from those of his own grade. I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen, your very obedient servant,

JAMES BIRD.

Orchard-street, Portman square, May 8, 1844.

STATEMENT RELATING TO THE CHARTER
OF THE
ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN ENGLAND.
(Received, for publication in THE LANCET, from Mr.
BELFOUR, Secretary to the College.)

THE council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England feel that the time is arrived when it is proper for them to offer some observations, in explanation of the principal changes which the charter, lately granted by her Majesty, has occasioned in the constitution of the college, and on the ultimate effect which these changes may be expected to produce in the condition of the surgical profession. They avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded to state the principles on which they have hitherto acted, and those on which they propose to act hereafter in the exercise of the new duties which this charter has imposed upon them.

The by-laws which may hereafter be made for the government of the college will not be valid until approved of by the Crown.

The members of the council will not be elected for life, but for a limited term of years.

When vacancies occur in the council they will be supplied, not by the council, but by the new body of fellows, who will elect the new members from among themselves.

Fellows of the college, who are not members of the council will be equally eligible to the court of examiners with those who are; and future examiners will hold their office only during the pleasure of the council.

One object of her Majesty's advisers, in establishing the class of fellows, was to create a sufficient constituency for the election of the council. The same end might have been attained by simpler means, such as giving the franchise to members of a certain standing in the college; but another and expressly avowed purpose was to promote a spirit of emulation among surgeons, to afford additional inducements to exertion in the cultivation of science, and thus to increase the utility and elevate the character of the surgical profession. After the expiration of one year from the date of the charter no one will be admitted into the rank of fellows until he has undergone a strict and lengthened examination, not only in practical surgery, but also in the collateral sciences. They who aspire to become fellows, without having been previously members of the college, will be required to have gone through an extended course of professional study in hospitals and schools, and to be at least twenty-five years of age. But the fellowship will not be limited to candidates of this description; and they who, not having had the same advantages of education, have been admitted as members at twenty-one years of age, may, after having been engaged in practice for a certain number of years, represent to the council that they have continued to study their profession as a science, and claim on these grounds to be examined for the fellowship. Thus, any individual, however limited his means of improvement may have been in early life, may raise himself by his own industry and talents to the same rank in the college with those who were in the first instance more fortunately situated. No one who desires to attain the fellowship can complain that it is not within his reach, or that he is prevented from becoming an elector, or a member of the council, or of the court of examiners.

Candidates for the fellowship, at twenty-five years of age, will have had the opportunity of obtaining a liberal general education, previously to entering on the studies peculiar to their profession; and it is reasonable to expect that the example of such well-educated persons will influence those, whose preliminary education has been imperfect, to supply the deficiency, by devoting to the acquirement of various knowledge and the general cultivation of the mind, a portion of the leisure which falls to the lot of every young practitioner.

The course to be pursued in the future admission of fellows is sufficiently obvious; but the new charter imposed upon the council another task of much greater difficulty, that of selecting, from among the many thousand members