

conservative branch of medicine, or that of prevention of disease, has never yet been called into sufficient exercise in our fleets and armies; yet it is on the perfection of the civil establishments belonging to them that the safety and efficiency of our sea and land forces entirely depend.

We find in reference to this subject, that in his comprehensive plan, sanctioned and carried out by the then Governor-General of India, Sir CHARLES METCALFE, for collecting sanitary reports from all districts, stations, and cantonments in the three presidencies of India, dated so far back as November 25, 1835, Mr. J. R. MARTIN has the following preliminary clause—namely, that

“The topographical reports, when forwarded to each presidency by the superintending surgeons, shall then be collated by a committee of three medical officers, nominated by the medical boards, and that such as are approved of shall be printed and formed into a memoir, a copy of which shall be furnished to all staff-surgeons and officers of the Quartermaster-General's Department.”

By such a regulation Mr. MARTIN evidently intended that information should be imparted to the officers of the Quartermaster-General's Department, which they could not acquire of themselves.

In relation to this subject, we publish the following letter, taken from *The Times* of Wednesday last:—

“HINTS FOR THE ARMY IN TURKEY.

“To the Editor of the *Times*.

“SIR,—If it be true that ‘*fas est ab hoste doceri*,’ I may, perhaps, be pardoned for intruding on your valuable columns; but as the army destined to co-operate with the Turks will have to encounter more deadly foes than the Russians with whom they will have to cope—namely, fever and dysentery, I may be permitted to offer a few remarks thereon, which, as a humble gleaner in the field, I noted down during a residence of several years in the East, especially among Cossacks, Tartars, and Circassians.

“I am not, however, so sanguine as one of the sages of old, who says, ‘*Cur moritur homo, cui salvia crescit in horto*?’ but as prevention is better than cure, and in all probability quinine, from its high price, will be confined solely to hospital practice, or to the dressing-case of the officers, it may be advisable to let the soldiers know on disembarking at Gallipoli, &c., that in the marshes and on the borders of the numerous lakes there grows a herb which, *cæteris paribus*, will prove their Ægis or sheet anchor, being both a preventive and cure of diseases arising from marsh miasmata.

“It is the sweet-scented flag (*calamus aromaticus*), of the roots of which every man should have a handful in his knapsack, chewing it daily *ad libitum*, or, what is still better, powdering it and taking a teaspoonful two or three times a day in a little water; if a teaspoonful or two of the wodka or brandy of the country be added to it, the better. It is often substituted for tea and coffee by the Russians, and makes a very agreeable beverage; in fact, having myself used it extensively in practice, I can safely pronounce it one of the most valuable and cheap drugs in the whole *Pharmacopœia*.

“Presuming that this hint will not be lost sight of by the medical department, which, no doubt, has issued its instructions for the preservation of the health and valuable lives of our ‘raw recruits’ (thereby preventing a repetition of the awful mortality of Walcheren, of which I was an eye-witness), I will conclude by stating that, unless due care be taken to supply the troops with beef from England, or rather from Tunis, Oran, and other places on the coast of Barbary, where it is abundant (the Dobrudscha, whence the Turks have hitherto been supplied with it, being in the possession of the Russian), dysentery with all its horrors will commence its ravages, for no British soldier can escape it if confined to a diet of goat's flesh, sour wine, and fruits, on which he will have to subsist.

“I may add, that among the Don Cossacks an excellent substitute for quinine or Peruvian bark is composed of equal parts oak bark, quassia, sweet-scented flag, and black pepper.

In Circassia gentian is used in lieu of quassia, where it grows in great abundance on the hills, and when in bloom nothing can be more beautiful.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,

“Your most obedient servant,

“J. W. GRAVES,

“Late Physician to the Governor-General during the War in Poland.

“London, April 24.”

AN important Conference, under the presidency of Mr. SCHOLEFIELD, M.P., took place, as will be seen by our columns elsewhere, at Birmingham a few days since, to consider the subject of the Adulteration of Food and Drugs. This Conference was called together not merely with the view of assisting in the exposure and denunciation of the practice of adulteration so disgracefully prevalent, but principally in order to devise means whereby it might be kept in check, or even entirely prevented in future. This, indeed, is what is now most wanted. It is not enough to show that the food and drink we consume and the medicine prescribed for us are subject to gross and often most injurious sophistications, but a remedy must be sought for, and it will doubtless be found, to meet the evil; and this, indeed, is the one great object and purpose of the exposures continually made in the pages of this journal. We have all along felt confident that as soon as a sufficient case had been made out, measures would be taken calculated to put a stop to these adulterations; and in the meeting at Birmingham, and in some other circumstances, we have evidence that the time when these measures will be had recourse to is not very distant. We hope that other influential towns will soon follow the example of Birmingham, and hold meetings on the subject. It is the large manufacturing towns that are more interested in the question than any others, for it is in these that the greatest amount of adulteration is practised.

The Conference recommends—

“That examiners, properly qualified, be appointed by Government, and stationed at the ports, to prevent the importation of all adulterated articles, and also of drugs, except of stated strength and purity.

“That public analyzers be appointed by town councils for cities and large towns, by county magistrates for the smaller places and districts, to examine and analyze suspected articles.

“That power be granted to the magistracy of inflicting fines, after hearing the evidence of the public analyzers.”

The expense attending the appointment of such public analyzers would be but trifling, and when compared with the benefits which must result, it would be altogether insignificant. These benefits are of such a nature that all classes would participate in them, and none more so than the poor: all would be gainers considerably, both in pocket and in health; and it is not less the interest of the State than of individuals to check adulteration by every possible means. Newspapers now supply us with almost daily evidence of the serious extent to which the revenue suffers from this cause. The thanks of the medical profession and the public are due to Mr. SCHOLEFIELD, M.P., Mr. MUNTZ, M.P., and Mr. POSTGATE, for the parts they have taken in this great and public question. We are gratified to perceive that our own labours in this matter are fairly acknowledged; indeed, it is *THE LANCET*, solely and entirely, to which the merit is due of having first shown the prevalence of adulteration, the nature of the articles and substances employed as adulterating ingre-

dients, and the methods by which they are most successfully detected. It is THE LANCET, indeed, that has furnished the materials which render legislation on this subject both practicable and necessary.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

THE College has presented the following petition to the House of Commons against the Medical Registration Bill:—

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

The humble petition of the President and College or Commonality of the Faculty of Physic in London, under their common seal,—Sheweth,

That a Bill now pending in your honourable House, entitled “A Bill for the Registration of Qualified Practitioners, and for Amending the Law relating to the Practice of Medicine in Great Britain and Ireland.”

That the Royal College of Physicians of London was incorporated by Royal Charter, confirmed by Act of Parliament, for the express purpose of examining and licensing persons proper to practise as physicians.

That your petitioners, seeking to discharge the duties confided to them by the legislature to the benefit of the profession and the public, have laboured to promote the good education, professional and general, of those whom they are required to examine and to license.

That by the proposed Bill persons who have obtained diplomas from various Universities, but whose education and qualifications fall short of the standard which has long been insisted upon by the College, and which ought, in the opinion of your petitioners, to be maintained as to physicians, will be allowed to register themselves as physicians in England, many of them being engaged in the practice of pharmacy, and in the sale of drugs.

That it has long been complained of as an evil, productive of confusion and of disparity in the qualifications of medical practitioners, that the bodies empowered to grant licences to practise are far too numerous.

Also that licences valid in one part of the United Kingdom are not so in another.

That these evils will not be abated in the least, but rather aggravated by the proposed Bill.

That the mode of registration to be established by this Bill, according to which all practitioners will be registered alphabetically, no regard being had to superior education, will, in the opinion of your petitioners, be a discouragement to science and learning.

Believing that for the foregoing reasons, amongst others, the proposed Bill, so far from being beneficial, will be injurious to the medical profession and the public, your petitioners most humbly pray that it may not pass into a law, but that your honourable House will be pleased to enact a more comprehensive measure of Medical Reform, whereby a better mode of registration may be established, and, whilst the evils above-mentioned are remedied, the sufficiency and uniformity of medical education, qualifications, and examinations, may be effectually secured.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

THE MEDICAL REFORM BILL.

SECOND REPORT OF THE REFORM COMMITTEE OF THE METROPOLITAN BRANCH OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

At a meeting held on the 15th instant, the attention of the Committee was first directed to the resolution adopted by the Metropolitan Branch of the Association, on the 13th day of December last.

“That in the opinion of this Branch, the Medical Reform Bill, to be introduced into Parliament by the Association, should recognise the necessity of the representative principle, generally extended, in the election of the licensing bodies of the Colleges, and of the superintending council; and that no Bill can give general satisfaction to the profession, which shall tend to the constitution of a council containing a preponderating influence of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, as at present constituted.”

As already stated in the first report of the Committee, the Bill, as it now stands, does not satisfy the requirements of that resolution; and, in the present aspect of the reform question, the Committee deem that they will best perform their duty to

the Branch, by making such suggestions for an amendment of the Bill, as well in reference to those clauses which relate to the constitution of the Medical Council and the Medical Congress, in both which the representative principle ought, in the opinion of the Committee, to be adopted, as to other clauses, which also, in the opinion of the Committee, are essential to render the bill generally acceptable to the profession.

The committee suggest that either of the following modifications of clause III., relating to the constitution of the Council, would meet the views of the Metropolitan Branch, and prove satisfactory to the profession at large:—

“The Medical Council for England to consist of ten physicians and ten surgeons, *videlicet*—one President of the College of Physicians, representing the governing body of the College nine physicians of ten years’ standing, elected by registered physicians; one President of the College of Surgeons, representing the governing body of the College; nine surgeons of twenty years’ standing, elected by registered surgeons.

“Or of ten physicians and ten surgeons, consisting of—one Regius Professor of the University of Oxford; one Regius Professor of the University of Cambridge; one President of the College of Physicians of London; one medical member from the Senate of the University of London; six physicians of ten years’ standing, elected by the registered physicians; one President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England; nine surgeons of twenty years’ standing, elected by the registered surgeons.

“Or a Council of twenty-one, as under the bill, but composed as follows—one Regius Professor of the University of Oxford; one Regius Professor of the University of Cambridge; one President of the College of Physicians of London; one medical member of the Senate of the University of London; one President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England; five physicians of ten years’ standing, elected by the registered physicians; five Fellows of the College of Surgeons, elected by the Fellows of that College; six members of the College of Surgeons, of twenty years’ standing, elected by the registered surgeons, not being Fellows.”

No physician on either of the plans to be eligible for election unless nominated by ten registered physicians. No surgeon to be eligible, unless nominated by twenty registered surgeons. In default of nomination by the bodies at large, the Council to nominate. Keeping open shop to disqualify both from holding seats on the Council, and voting for members of Council. If thought desirable by other parties, there would be no objection to a five years’ franchise in either case. The first Council to be formed as under the Bill, but for one year only; and the Secretaries of State to nominate six members of the College of Surgeons, in general practice, of twenty years’ standing, instead of six “medical practitioners,” as at present provided.

The Committee are further of opinion that in Clause XII., providing for the formation of a Triennial Medical Congress, for the purpose of determining a uniform curriculum of education, the three members delegated to that Congress should be, one physician, one surgeon, and one general practitioner.

They consider that the Examining Board provided for in Clause XV. should have the unrestricted power of examining in all branches of medical science.

That in Clause XVI., the words should be inserted, “That the candidate presenting himself for examination for the certificate of approval must have been engaged in professional studies at least five years, unless he shall have acquired a degree in medicine in some approved university, in which case he shall have been engaged in professional studies at least four years; and under this head they beg to recal the attention of the meeting to the following resolution adopted by the Branch on the 13th of December:—

“That, in the opinion of this Branch, the proposed Medical Reform Bill ought to contain a clause rendering imperative a preliminary examination in classics, mathematics, and general science, before the student commences his medical education”—a provision which, in the opinion of the Committee, ought to be introduced into this clause, with an exception in favour of those who may have previously obtained a degree in arts.”

The Committee are further of opinion that the provisions in Clauses XV. and XVI., conferring the right to register on the graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, should be expunged, and that a separate clause, preserving to these universities their present privileges, ought to be introduced.

That, in Clause XXIII., the words “not being physicians” be expunged, by which modification physicians will acquire the right of recovery for advice and attendance. The Committee make this recommendation in consequence of the information with which they have been furnished, that, should the clause