

the official letters to the General Medical Council, which are signed "J. R. Upton, Clerk to the Society."

Now for the main issue.

On the strength of a letter written by Mr. Upton to the General Medical Council, in which he stated that a practitioner whose name had been erased from the *Register* and from the list of licentiates of the Apothecaries' Society "still held the qualification of L.S.A.," the legal advisers of the General Medical Council advised the members of the Executive Committee that they should recommend the Council to restore the name of the practitioner to the *Medical Register*. When the matter came before the Council I drew attention to the claim that this involved on the part of Mr. Upton writing on behalf of the Apothecaries' Society (*vide* my full paper published in the *Lancet*, January 1st, 1898), and I am most agreeably surprised to find from Mr. Upton's letter that my objection is actually in his view correct. My whole contention was that a diploma, such as that of the Society of Apothecaries, was only of value when the person holding it was registered, and when his name was on the list of diplomates, and that it has no value in the absence of registration. Mr. Upton now says distinctly that the Society "never meant or intended to assert that their diploma, without registration, enables the holder to practise medicine, surgery, and midwifery." If that is so, then that is exactly what I stated, and I am gratified to find that I have Mr. Upton, the solicitor of the Apothecaries' Society, on my side, so strongly against Mr. Brudenell Carter, the representative of the Apothecaries' Society.

We now come back to Mr. Upton's use of the word "qualification." As regards this very essential matter, it is distressing to find that although, as we have just seen, in one paragraph he states satisfactorily enough that a diploma without registration is no use, and does not "enable the holder to practise," he nevertheless says in an earlier paragraph that if a person who has once been granted a diploma has been struck off both the *Medical Register* and the list of licentiates of the Apothecaries' Society, he yet "cannot be successfully proceeded against for unqualified practice." In other words, he asserts that such a person's practice is qualified—that is, legal—that is, registered—which thing is an absurdity, because the case considered is that of a person whose name has been erased from the *Register*.

Thus, Mr. Upton's fifth paragraph is diametrically opposed to his ninth. It is plain that both the profession and the subject are worthy of a somewhat fuller and less contradictory explanation from Mr. Upton.—I am, etc.,

Cavendish Square, W., Jan. 22nd.

VICTOR HORSLEY.

SIR,—On reading your report of Mr. Carter's answer to Mr. Horsley's strictures at the meeting of the South-West London Medical Society, I was disappointed to find that his final sentence was omitted. He said: "As for what the direct representatives might do, the Council cares very little about it."

Although this was undoubtedly said in a moment of irritation at finding his views were not acceptable to the meeting, the statement is very significant. Nothing could more clearly show what is the real position taken up by the representatives of the corporations, and Mr. Carter in particular, in their attitude to the whole body of general practitioners. Mr. Carter's position may be summed up in his own words: "Parliament will not take one step in suppressing quackery or protecting the medical profession unless such step benefits the public." "As a political force the profession is powerless."

Does the profession re-echo this statement? Do we believe that Parliament will necessarily take a hostile attitude to all medical reform, that members of the House of Commons will take quacks under their special care, and that the General Medical Council is incapable of being made to work harder, or of being made more representative? If so, we must make it our business to influence Parliament through its individual members. It is not tenable that we are impotent as a political force. If, as Mr. Carter naively put it, we are only one in so many hundreds, it is true we can have little expectation of influencing elections directly, but

Carter must know that we can do much (in my opinion

all) by organising deputations of medical men to wait upon members of and candidates for Parliament.

Mr. Carter's one remedy for our political powerlessness is to educate the public, and he suggested that that should be done by the distribution of tracts upon medical reform to our patients. This is, of course, as Mr. Horsley said at the meeting, a matter of taste.

An organised, determined effort to interview and obtain pledges from all parliamentary candidates is more likely to prove the fallacy of Mr. Carter's pronouncement that the General Medical Council "cares very little what the direct representatives may do."—I am, etc.,

Catford, S.E., Jan. 24th.

ROBERT J. COLLIE.

SIR,—Mr. Brudenell Carter is reported to have said at the meeting of the South-West London Medical Society on January 12th: "And that Mr. Horsley assailed the action of the President (Sir Richard Quain) in a manner which induced decent people to leave the room rather than remain to listen to him."

May I say that I was present (in my official capacity as the Honorary Secretary of the Ethical Section) during the whole of the sitting, and that to my own knowledge the audience became much larger when Mr. Horsley commenced to read his paper? I am not prepared to assert that no one left the room whilst the paper was being read, but I can assert without fear of contradiction that no section of the audience did so. If Mr. Carter's secondhand statement is correct, then I fear there must be a considerable number of—I will not say indecent but non-decent—persons in the profession. I would ask Mr. Carter whether he would include Dr. Glover (another direct representative) among the non-decent community?—I am, etc.,

Cardiff, Jan. 24th.

T. GARRETT HORDER.

#### THE WANTS OF THE GENERAL MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.

SIR,—Contrary to prognostication, the interest taken by the general practitioner in the present work of the General Medical Council shows a healthy tendency and one that would recognise the potentiality of that body. Not long ago such subjects as preliminary medical education, increase of the curriculum to five years, coverings, etc., were spoken of or passed over as if they were outside the domain of the profession altogether; the only topic being discussed with any enthusiasm was the medical aid and club question. The outcome of the "battle of the clubs" has on the whole been effective though not ideal, and there has arisen more than one modified hero who explains to the patients that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and that the treatment and management of certain cases can not reasonably be expected by club patients whose doctor is to live by club fees alone.

The friction between the public and the profession has of late been serious, whereby offences have been given and taken and the spirit of loyalty injured. But the total extinction of the unqualified assistant has been the cause of much wonder and comment, especially as many are of opinion that the Council's decision is conspicuous by its absence of mercy and compensation which are proverbial and time-honoured characteristics of the medical profession.

Some practitioners allege that the decision will prove more of a disadvantage than an advantage to them personally, since they will be obliged to accept, at the present position of fees, a poor qualified instead of a good unqualified assistant who has, they say, hitherto satisfactorily answered their purpose. Others maintain that it will be more of a cross than a loss; while others—the majority, no doubt—view, though not without some regret, the issue as highly beneficial, hoping that step will be a necessary preliminary to the dislodging of the unqualified quack.

The introduction of the pupil after the exit of the unqualified assistant would appear to show that some kind of unqualified practice was almost necessary in the profession, and indeed it is difficult to see how such could be totally avoided if practice is to make perfect. But it is nevertheless difficult to imagine in what way the pupil-assistant could in these days be of much value, unless perhaps he were a final