

this principle in view, we should not be betrayed into using it unnecessarily, or trusting too much to it. Some cases were related where its good effects were marked. In one instance the patient had been recommended to have perineal section performed; but he afterwards fell into the author's hands, and got great relief from the use of potassa fusa, aiding dilatation by bougies. The author, in conclusion, made some brief remarks on the employment of permanent and rapid dilatation. He considered that there were many cases of old callous strictures where the urinary organs were not irritable, which would be greatly benefited by these modes of treatment, whether carried on in the ordinary manner of retaining a catheter for twenty-four hours and changing the size from day to day, or by the instruments used by Mr. Thomas Wakley, which latter could undoubtedly produce most powerful and rapid dilatation. His own observation of their effects had extended to one case only, and here the result was unfavourable; but Mr. Wakley had informed him that he had used them extensively, and with excellent results, and there could be little doubt that if the cases were carefully selected, rapid dilatation would succeed well; but he should apprehend, where there was an irritable urethra, or tendency to constitutional sympathy, such a mode of treatment was injurious. The author concluded his paper by relating some cases in which he had resorted to permanent dilatation with excellent results.

## Editor's Letter Box.

### THE METROPOLITAN COUNTIES BRANCH OF THE PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION.

LETTER FROM T. OGIER WARD, M.D.

SIR,—Having seen with surprise in a recent "leader" of the *Medical Gazette*, that the Metropolitan Counties Branch is "extinguished", I think it my duty, as Secretary, to inform the Editor of the *Gazette*, and those of his readers whom it may concern, that the Metropolitan Counties Branch is neither extinguished nor extinct; and although, for reasons that I need not further allude to, it has not been so prominently before the public of late, yet it has not relaxed its exertions for the benefit of the profession, as is shewn by its support of Mr. Headlam's Bill, which, whatever may be the opinion of the *Medical Gazette*, will do the profession good service; by its encouragement of Mr. Griffin's attempt to unite the parish surgeons in resistance to the tyranny of the Poor-Law officials; and lastly, by its having been the great means of securing to the Provincial Association a Code of Laws based entirely upon the representative principle—a principle which it has also endeavoured to carry out for the government of the profession at large, in all its discussions upon the Medical Reform Bill, entirely unbiassed by any considerations of the interests, favour, or hostility, of the corporate bodies to which its members belong.

Believing, therefore, that a society like this has the highest claims to the support of the independent members of the profession, I regret to observe that the editor of a medical journal, bound in honour to uphold the general interests of the profession, should try to "extinguish" it by his sneers. That such attempts have failed, and will fail, will be evident from the fact that the Metropolitan Counties is the largest Branch of the rapidly growing Provincial Association, as it numbers nearly a hundred and forty members, among whom may be reckoned some of the brightest ornaments of the profession in the metropolis and surrounding district.

I am, etc.,  
T. OGIER WARD,

Hon. Sec. to the Metropolitan Counties Branch of the  
Provincial Medical and Surgical Association.

Kensington, April 10, 1856.

### LABOUR OBSTRUCTED BY A STONE IN THE BLADDER.

LETTER FROM J. THOMAS, ESQ.

SIR,—The following case has escaped Mr. Erichsen's notice: it appeared in the *Medical Gazette* for March 1829, p. 511.

"Report of a Case in which the Passage of the Fœtus was obstructed by a Stone in the Bladder. By James Therifall, one of the Surgeon-Accoucheurs to the Liverpool Ladies' Charity.

"The author was sent for to visit a patient in labour. The pains were frequent and forcing, but the delivery was prevented

by a tumour, which was pushed down before the head of the child. After sufficient time had elapsed to afford the efforts of nature an opportunity of overcoming the obstacle, the perforator was introduced, and the child extracted. The patient, however, rapidly sank. On examination, the tumour was found to have been formed by a stone in the bladder. It measured in length, 3½ inches; in breadth, 2½ inches; in thickness, 2½ inches; and weighed 6 oz., 5 drachms, 3¼ grains. It consisted chiefly of ammoniaco-magnesian phosphate, and phosphate of lime. It was ascertained that, though she had borne several children, considerable difficulty had been experienced at each accouchement."

I am, etc.,  
J. THOMAS.

Llanegwad, near Carmarthen, April 15, 1856.

### THE LONDON MEETING OF THE POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.

LETTER FROM RICHARD GRAVELY, ESQ.

SIR,—I am pleased to find, by an advertisement in the last number of our JOURNAL, that there is likely soon to be a meeting of the Poor-Law Medical Officers held in London. I would suggest that the leading medical men in the metropolis be invited to attend. I am certain that they would most willingly assist in any movement, which would be likely to benefit so large a body of the profession as that of the union medical officers, their presence would tend to strengthen any measures which might be decided on at the meeting, and also give additional weight and importance to any future movement.

I am, etc., RICHARD GRAVELY.

Newick, April 15th, 1856.

### POWDERED CHARCOAL IN CHURCH VAULTS.

SIR,—I see by an order in Council, dated April 4th, that burials are, on and after a certain day, to be discontinued in the vaults beneath St. Stephen's Church, Westminster, with certain exceptions:—but that it is made a condition of the burial of such privileged parties, "That the bodies buried be embedded in a layer of powdered charcoal, six inches at least in thickness."

Can you or any of our associates inform me, if there is any peculiar mode or process of doing this?

I am, etc., A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION.

April 1856.

[The powdered charcoal merely absorbs the deleterious gases arising from the decaying body. There is no peculiar method of applying the charcoal, that we are aware of.—EDITOR.]

### MEDICAL LEGISLATION.

THE following letter has been addressed to Mr. Brady with respect to the subject which is at the present moment occupying almost exclusively the attention of the medical profession:—

"DEAR MR. BRADY,—As you have asked for my opinions on the general subject of medical reform, and the two Bills now before the House, I readily, but I feel imperfectly, strive to comply with your wish, knowing as I do that we all owe you a large debt of public gratitude for your steady and disinterested attention to a matter so interesting to all medical practitioners, but now happily in such a fair way of solution.

"Seeing, as I have done during the last eight or ten years, an immense deal of hospitals in London, and of hospital men—students and teachers—I must say there is the utmost confusion of ideas, even in the minds of some of the best men, on the subject of medical reform projected by Parliament, our elder hospitals not wishing for any change, as the surgical attendants are quite satisfied with the present constitution of the College of Surgeons, London, to which, in fact, the elder schools seem to be mere appendages, and not knowing, or seeming not to know, the state of chaos in the profession outside the walls of this College. I think it is necessary to keep this point steadily in view, as your chief source of opposition is in this College, and it may serve to show that the arguments of this body are generally without force, and are entirely selfish, and full of fallacies.

"I fear it will be unwise, as some members—Mr. Duncombe, Mr. Henley, Lord Robert Grosvenor—suggested, that we should have a Committee of the House to hear evidence, and thus indefinitely prolong the present evils of which everybody

complaints. It will afford a preponderance of authority to the one or two opinions of those opposed, from merely pecuniary motives, to any change at all, while the feelings of the profession generally—expressed already in seven hundred petitions from all parts of the provinces—would be disregarded. The essential question, I need not remind you, touches those thousands of surgeons thus thrown on the world, so to say, by the College, who have signed these seven hundred petitions, who are injured in their legitimate practice by men without diplomas, rather encouraged than otherwise by the College giving its highest diploma to men who have been mere chemists in 1815, not to speak of the myriads of practitioners without diplomas at all.

"The Bill introduced by Lord Elcho seems a little deficient in the essential features of every other measure calculated to prove at all useful. I mean, of course, registration, and more general representation in the Council; let the Government concede to us, at least, the protection they give quack pills, in other words, registration at a cheap rate, or all other enactments will be but a perpetuation, in a more stringent form, of existing abuses. I am quite aware restrictive legislation is very difficult, and very much opposed to the spirit of the times in which we live; but we see every day the evil effects of "unrestricted competition" in the sale of poisons; and anyone who goes about much amongst the sick poor must be horrified at the evil effects of unskilful treatment of the sick by unlicensed practitioners. Some persons urge, and urge, they conceive, with no little force, that we cannot interfere with the liberty of the subject, or prevent the sick from employing any medical man they please, qualified or not qualified; but it is done in other countries as wise, if not wiser than ours. A man even here cannot sell quack pills without a license; a man may not sell intoxicating liquors, or silver plate, or shoot game, also, without a license; there, in fact, and in a dozen other instances, the thing is recognised by the wisdom of Parliament, so that there is no new principle involved. Registration ought not, or will not interfere in the least with homeopaths, hydropaths, Coffinists, etc.; if the public wish for such licensed but noxious quacks, by all means let Parliament allow them to register on preferring their diplomas. I believe we would have none of those quacks but for the *laches* of our own colleges and college systems. We only entreat of the legislature—and I speak the feelings of the mass of the hard working and conscientious general practitioner and student class in London, we only claim as a right due to the public—that after years and years of toil, that after, with much labour, and it may be much love of a noble profession, we have come ourselves to discover—as discover every conscientious man not an idiot must—that the more deeply medicine and surgery are studied, the more truthful and valuable they become. We only entreat and beg of the legislature—we only seek it as a moral duty we owe to the furtherance of sanitary and social order in the community—that we shall not be mixed up with the swindler and betting shop keeper, or quack, who may open a shop and put chemist or 'surgeon' on their doors. We seek to be relieved by Parliament of a most grievous injustice, that though we may be ever so well qualified, we have no means of assuring the public of the fact, as any man, even without a diploma at all, may place any diploma he pleases before or after his name.

"With respect to the supervision of examinations at colleges, as suggested by Mr. Headlam's Bill, as well as that of Lord Elcho, I fear the machinery would be too complex. I would strongly recommend, however, as a self-acting check on examining bodies, that all examinations, as in Dublin, be open to the medical public. This arrangement, after the first year, when the novelty of the affair had worn off, would not in the least impede examinations, as not a half dozen persons would trouble themselves to be present, while a most effectual check on the present system, better than Mr. Headlam's would be secured.

"As to the *minimum* standard of qualification, suggested by Lord Elcho's measure, I believe it a most useful feature in all recent movements towards medical reform. The *minimum* at present in the College of Surgeons, London, is so infinitesimally small—such an uncertain and stereotyped quantity towards that vanishing point of no education at all—that it would require to be raised considerably, and the three Colleges of Surgeons made EQUAL as to fees, schedules, etc.; without something of this kind, it is painfully evident we shall never have an end of the underbidding in colleges and cheap diplomas. It is manifestly unfair to Dublin that she bids, as in a Dutch auction, for a high standard of education for what ought to be really the true *minimum* of surgical education, while Lincoln's Inn Fields offers her honours to mere chemists in practice

before 1815, simply for a lower standard, or, in the case of fellowships, for no standard—for money; let us have no sale of diplomas for mere money; let us have a well marked *minimum* of surgical and general medical education, of at least four years, the examination extended to two days, and of a more practical nature; let us have registration, and I am almost certain many, if not all of the other evils of the profession will cure themselves. It is not at all desirable there should be any abrupt changes in the present *curricula*, or in the schedules; it should be rather a fitting or adapting of Dublin to London, and London again to Edinburgh, but all to one standard.

"It is not at all desirable that any restrictions either should be placed on the public as to their adopting any principle of treatment they please; the fullest liberty in this particular should be permitted and encouraged. The innocent amongst the community should only not suffer for the guilty; like as in the adulteration of coffee with chicory, we may easily separate those practising and receiving fees under false pretences from the legitimate men, by some simple and cheap mode of registration; let it only have the sanction of Government, as in Lord Elcho's Bill. The registration at present projected is too expensive; and in many periodicals favourable to the profession, *Punch*, for instance, it has been likened to a plan of pains and penalties on good men, while the illegitimate practitioners are proportionally protected, and may go free; there is a good deal of force and truth in this objection; the principle which should regulate the fee for registration should not be that of a tax on industry and merit, but merely a simple pecuniary charge to defray the expense of keeping the registry. If the Government continue the tax on quack pills, they ought to give it for the expenses of the registrar.

"If the feeling of the profession itself be adverse to the 'Medical Council', projected by Mr. Headlam's Bill, a subject on which, it is much to be regretted, there has been no expression of professional feeling at a public meeting in London; if we are not to have what has been very fairly called a parliament of the profession itself to govern itself, like a similar body in the legal profession, and even in various trades and guilds, we may, perhaps, in consideration of the inevitable tendency of all such corporate bodies to sink into abuses—and in none more than in surgery and medicine—we may console ourselves for the difference of opinion as to a good Medical Council by having no Council at all, or the best thing of all, the Council projected by Mr. Cowper, in connexion with the Board of Health.

"The necessity of 'all properly qualified practitioners practising in any part of the United Kingdom', as urged by Lord Elcho, is so manifestly equitable, and in accordance with the feelings of the public, now that electric-telegraph messages and railways have almost joined Europe and India, not to say England and Scotland, that any opposition to an equality of the *curriculum* in Dublin, London, and Edinburgh, or any opposition to an equality of privileges, must only arise from a wish, too obvious, that Parliament should not put it down, to retain the system of underselling in London, which has already nearly ruined the profession.

"I believe too much emphasis is laid on the functions of universities, and the interest they have in questions of medical legislation. I happen to know the University of Dublin, Oxford, and Edinburgh, pretty well. At Oxford University, medical education is, unfortunately, as completely unknown as on the top of Mont Blanc. In Dublin University, things are better; but I have seen and now know men who found this most admirable diploma their chief obstacle and cause of ruin on coming to England, for want of registration, and trusting to competition with the unlicensed quacks abounding all over England, under the supposed license of the College of Surgeons. Edinburgh and Cambridge speak for themselves; and at either of these universities we should look for the *minimum* of education for the M.D. diploma, and at Dublin for the *minimum* of surgical education for that diploma. Any of these bodies, except Cambridge and Edinburgh, or any such corporations as those of Glasgow, Aberdeen, the Archbishop of Canterbury, or Apothecaries' Hall, swelling as they do the immense number of twenty-one corporate bodies, all with conflicting interests in the sale of diplomas, should rather be legislated for than allowed to legislate for others. Lord John Russell, in his late speech, not unaptly compared some obstacles to education in England to the obstacles opposed to improvement in Ireland by encumbered estates in that country. A time always occurs, he well remarked, when it is necessary, in order to save life, that a diseased limb should be taken away. Oxford University has undergone this process recently, and it is doing good already. Ireland has also been benefited by the harsh but

conservative process of lopping off excrescences. If Apothecaries' Hall be lopped off, and sent back to her proper duty of examining apothecaries and chemists, not flaunting in the false drapery of a sort of superfluous M.D. diploma, it will be a benefit to the profession of the most useful and signal kind. If Oxford and the London College of Surgeons did their duty—if, in fact, Lincoln's Inn Fields, like the rod of the prophet, did not swallow up all Colleges, we should not want the medical diploma of Apothecaries' Hall. It is very deplorable that a man who may not know one fact in chemistry or materia medica, or even how to spell or write, may still by grinding obtain, for money, this diploma of Lincoln's Inn Fields. In any *minimum* of surgical education about to be established, it would, accordingly, be very desirable that graduation in arts should reckon in surgical examinations, and some education in classics or modern languages should always be required. Infinite benefit would arise if the first year's study at the College of Surgeons were confined to chemistry, botany, and classics, in any of the universities, or in any of the chief towns of the three kingdoms. Chemistry and botany, for instance, and classics, are going to waste at Oxford and Cambridge; yet the candidate at Lincoln's Inn Fields is asked not a single question in these most essential studies. All our sanitary science, for want of chemistry, must be a farce; all our botany and materia medica is a bungle; hence adulterations and uncertainty in prescriptions. All our M.R.C.S. men are ashamed of the title, as denoting ignorance, if not something approaching vulgarity and meanness.

"Of the Medical Council suggested by Lord Elcho, I believe it may be said, that it does not sufficiently recognise the wants or claims of the general practitioner; but against this defect I would place the vast and paramount advantage of having the Council in immediate relationship with the Board of Health, and the President, *ex officio*, a perpetual member of both boards. The fixing of the qualifications for practice on the part of the Council, and the determining the course of study and amount of examination, all fall within the province of such a body; and for the first time we may hope to have order educed out of the present chaos. 'Any two corporations uniting in the examinations' is a most admirable new principle, and eagerly looked for at Oxford and Cambridge, where those valuable preliminaries, chemistry, botany, classics, and elementary mathematics, now go to waste as regards the medical faculty, though such professorships be well endowed by Parliament. The first of the three seasons at present wasted in London by the student might with vast advantage to himself, and equally economically, be passed at Oxford or Cambridge, where he should limit himself to the subjects just mentioned; which subjects, for instance, at Oxford—chemistry by Dr. Daubeny, and now by Mr. Brodie; physiology by Dr. Acland; classics, botany, etc., in the various schools—though now the merest 'cipher of a function' to the professors, should fit the student for his new life and course of more advanced study in London. This, in fact, would be far superior to the idleness of the first year's men in the puzzling mazes of their studies on first reaching London, and be of infinite benefit to these two magnificent universities, only now a couple of hours distance from the metropolis. In this point of view, the clause in Lord Elcho's measure, that 'any two corporations may unite in examinations', is very satisfactory. This clause would also, of course, take in the other universities, for Scotland or Ireland. This 'uniting for examination' should be sedulously guarded, however, as meaning one corporate body to teach and examine in the preliminary; the other corporate body, in the more advanced stages of the student's career; not both to proceed over the same ground.

"As to the proposed constitution of the Medical Council in Mr. Headlam's Bill—one person from each of the universities, to the number of twelve, and eight from the general mass of the profession—I believe nothing could be fairer; and that when some Bill is passed like Lord Elcho's, settling what Parliament must almost consider a nuisance, namely, the subject of medical colleges and medical education, the very men who might be now most useful and most benefited as relates to the former Council, will be those most sorry for opposing it. The friends of the profession, the real, and devoted, and disinterested friends of legitimate practice, like yourself, should take care that, in losing the Council of Mr. Headlam, we do not lose the Registrar. This would be a loss indeed.

"One *Pharmacopœia* is necessary, and loudly called for: but while fraud and adulteration in drugs continue the normal rule under the present system of surgical education, no trouble should be taken in the matter. If Sir George Grey will have no

Council, like that indicated by Mr. Headlam, we can have no *Pharmacopœia*, but we may as well have a perpetual standing Committee on Adulterations, like that presided over by Mr. Scholefield.

"A quack company 'limited liabilities' is spoken of, and they rather glory in the fact that there are at present in London 1200 grocers and shoemakers, and other quacks, selling, at the lowest figure, £3000 worth of quack medicines annually; and Mr. Jacob Bell endorses the statement in his evidence before Mr. Scholefield's Committee, that any man may be a shoemaker to-day, and a prescribing chemist, if he is so minded, to-morrow. With such 'transmutations of species' in the genus quack going on every day before us, especially at the east end of London, and in fashionable bathing towns on the coast, and in the low parts of the large manufacturing towns, amongst the working classes, to the great detriment of the health of the community, it is high time that Government should step in and complete the task which you and Mr. Headlam and the Provincial Association have already commenced, and so ably prosecuted up to the present.

"Believe me, faithfully yours, etc.,

K.

"London, April 14th, 1856."

[We do not by any means concur in many of the statements in the above letter, especially those which refer with satisfaction to Lord Elcho's Bill, which we think infinitely inferior to that of the Association. Nevertheless, many of the writer's views will be acceptable to our readers. EDITOR.]

## Parliamentary Intelligence.

House of Commons, Thursday, April 10th.

### MEDICAL PROFESSION BILL.

This Bill was referred to a Select Committee, after a few words in opposition to that course from Dr. Michell.

Friday, April 9th.

### ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.

Mr. KINNAIRD asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to grant a new Charter of Incorporation and Act to the Royal College of Physicians of London; and, if so, whether they were likely to be granted during the present Session of Parliament?

Sir G. GREY said that, as the Medical Profession Bill, which had been referred to a Select Committee, contained provisions affecting the Royal College of Physicians, the Government could not come to any final decision respecting the granting of a new Charter to that body until the Select Committee had reported.

Monday, April 14th.

### VACCINATION.

On the vote of £2,000 for the National Vaccine Establishment—

Mr. STAFFORD wished to know why a long and violent pamphlet, written with great spirit and ability, but directed against the Compulsory Vaccination Act, bearing the signature of "John Gibbs", had been printed at the public expense? The production of the pamphlet or letter had been moved by the hon. member for Salford (Mr. Brotherton); and the writer described vaccination as "a great sham, a wicked delusion, which could have emanated only from the 'father of lies', [laughter]; and to advocate which is at best but to preach, 'Let us do evil that good may come.'" [Renewed laughter.] As there was a great outcry against the expenditure for printing returns, he thought the House should be informed why this letter had been printed at the expense of the House, and not at that of the gentleman by whom it was written.

Mr. COWPER said, that the letter referred to was of a very amusing character; but the Government had nothing to do with printing it. [A laugh.] The hon. members for Salford and Finsbury were the parties responsible for affording hon.