

PROPOSAL FOR A MIDLAND UNIVERSITY.

*Union of the Queen's Faculty of Medicine with Mason College.**Speeches by Mr. Chamberlain, M.P., and by Mr. Ernest Hart.*

FOUNDER'S day at Mason College, Birmingham, was celebrated on February 23rd by a dinner, presided over by the Right Honourable J. Chamberlain, M.P. There was a very large attendance of all the leading medical men and citizens of Birmingham, including the professors of the faculty and the medical officers of the hospitals, and the occasion was one of much importance and of great future promise.

The CHAIRMAN, in proposing the toast of the evening, "The College," said he was entitled to congratulate all those who took part in the proceedings which led to the establishment in their midst of that great institution, whether as teachers or administrators, upon the most unexampled and continuous success which had attended their efforts.

THE HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE.

The College had been in existence for little more than twelve years, which was a very short period in the history of such an undertaking. And yet what a change had taken place in the course of even that short time. The College began with seven teachers and 95 students, and to-day it had a teaching staff of 58 and the students numbered about 600. That day being the birthday of the founder, it would be improper that they should pass it over without some reference to him and to his work. The service which Sir Josiah Mason rendered could hardly have been rendered to them in any other way; and if it had not been done, it was quite certain that Birmingham, for this generation, and perhaps for many generations, would have gone without that great and important institution. In supplying that want, Sir Josiah Mason deserved their gratitude to more than an ordinary extent. It was not merely the money he gave for which they had to be grateful, it was also the idea to which he gave shape and form. As regards the money, the buildings of the College, and by far the larger part of the endowment, were all due to his munificence; altogether, during his lifetime and by his will, he gave a sum which amounted to nearly £230,000. And besides that, they had at present only a limited endowment, created by private subscription, of about £11,000, and they had a grant from the State of £1,400 a year. They ought on that occasion and on every succeeding anniversary to recognise in the founder one of the greatest benefactors that Birmingham had ever had.

THE STATE SUBSIDY.

He had said they received a subsidy of £1,400 from the State; that was part of the paltry pittance of £15,000 a year which was all that this great country, which gave something like seven millions sterling to primary instruction, could afford for the higher education of its people. But England and the University Colleges of England, although their claim had been again and again fully recognised, were met by a statement that the Exchequer was in such a condition that it could not even afford to provide them with the extra £15,000 for which they asked. He very much regretted it, because it hampered their operations, and also the operations of sister colleges in more than one way. In the first place it made it difficult to provide themselves continuously with all the latest appliances and apparatus which were absolutely necessary in order that a college should carry out its work efficiently. In the second place (and this was the greater fault) it deterred the managers of the institution from devoting their funds and their attention to those branches of knowledge which were unremunerative by the necessity of the case, although they were of the greatest importance to the welfare of the nation. Without more liberal assistance it was difficult already to make both ends meet. Although he should be very sorry to see that noble profession converted into a money-making industry, and although it was as true now as it was in the time of the classics that literature must be cultivated upon a little oatmeal, still he did think that it was to be regretted that the highest literary and scientific attainments were the worst paid, and that men were unable to devote themselves either to the teaching of this knowledge or to the study of it without

incurring at least the liability of personal privation. He hoped, however, they would not be discouraged by any previous failure, and that, confident in the strength of their cause, they would continue to knock at the doors of the Treasury until they were opened to them, and until, at all events, what they asked for was given them.

A MIDLAND UNIVERSITY.

But a college for Birmingham, however efficient, would not satisfy them; they must keep in view the importance of ultimately securing for that Midland metropolis a university worthy of its wealth and intelligence. He did not wish that the matter should be prematurely pressed to a conclusion. Whenever the work was seriously undertaken the people of Birmingham and the neighbourhood must be prepared to make considerable sacrifices to start the new institution generously as well as wisely, and he did not doubt, when the proper time came, they might appeal to their fellow citizens for this object with as much confidence and as good results as they had on previous occasions. It would not do for them to establish such an institution and then have it starved. They must provide a sufficient and adequate endowment, which was, in his opinion, the only remaining condition for the success of that which was already the ideal of everyone interested in education in Birmingham.

PROFESSOR HEATH, the Principal of the College, responded.

MR. ERNEST HART, in proposing "The Queen's Faculty of Medicine," said he felt it to be at once a privilege and a great pleasure to enjoy that evening the gracious hospitality of the College, and to take the part allotted to him in that very interesting and important gathering. It seemed to him to be not altogether without significance that that was the third occasion of a similar kind during the last three months in which he had had the privilege of taking part in great provincial centres.

THE MOVEMENT FOR PROVINCIAL TEACHING UNIVERSITIES.

Only a few weeks ago he had had the pleasure of being a guest at the ceremonials which marked the completion of the scientific side of the College of Liverpool, and of noting with what munificence enlightened local benefactors had erected magnificent hospital buildings, spacious laboratories, and had endowed a series of technical professorships at a total cost of upwards of a quarter of a million, collected within a very few years. Here the medical school had formed the nucleus around which the great educational institution had grown. A few weeks before he shared the public rejoicings at the consolidation of the Bristol Medical School with the University College, Bristol, where also a satisfactory union between the old and the new science had been effected, and the basis had been laid of a university system for the west and south-west of England. A similar movement was in prosperous course in Wales, and he had that day placed in his hands documents giving the sure promise of the foundation of a medical school in Cardiff in connection with the new University of Wales. Coming to Birmingham, the great centre of the Midlands, he could but feel how auspicious was the union which had now been effected between the Queen's Faculty of Medicine and the Mason College munificently founded by a distinguished citizen of Birmingham. We were showing in this—as in many other things—that we were determined to keep Birmingham in the van of social and scientific progress. That extensive and widespread decentralisation of literary, scientific, and medical institutions, that foundation in all the great provincial centres of teaching universities was one of the best signs of sound educational progress, and was of the happiest omen for the future. He ventured to think that the union which they were celebrating was equally auspicious^a and likely to be equally advantageous to the medical faculty itself, to the general cause of science, and to the benefit and glory of the town and its population. It was in the nature of things that Birmingham should be the seat of a great Midland university, and that was an important step towards it.

A SCIENCE COLLEGE THE TRUE HOME OF MEDICINE.

A college of science and of literature was the true home of a college of medicine, and both would be strengthened by the union. He trusted that the munificence of the citizens

of Birmingham and of the midland counties would supply the medical faculty now associated with Mason College with the endowments absolutely necessary in these days to supply a staff of professors in the sciences of anatomy, physiology, bacteriology, and pathology able to devote the whole of their time to the studies, the researches, and the laboratory teaching which were the essential conditions, not only of perfect efficiency in a medical college, but were also the necessary conditions of that progress of knowledge on which the welfare of the population and the greatness of nations so largely depended. It was still too much the fashion to think of a medical school as a machine for turning out gentlemen who should ride about in a "pill-box," and with a "pillbox," distributing drugs for the relief of various ailments. It was still too much the fashion to think of disease as something which came by Providence and went by drugs. That was not the conception of the whole duty of medicine, and it formed but small part of the efforts and teaching in Birmingham.

THE NEW SCIENCE OF MEDICINE.

The great conquests of medical science during the last half century had consisted in laying the foundations, by experiment, by research, and by exact physical and biological study, of a new science of medicine. By that science had been added three years of life to the existence of every man, and, with a distinction not devoid of gallantry, four years to the life of every woman in this country. The great science of preventive medicine, by the abolition of scurvy in our navy, had enabled our fleets to hold the sea for an indefinite time; had in India reduced the mortality from 90 per 1,000 to 13 per 1,000, effecting a saving of life among our soldiers; enabling our army to hold India at a reduced cost, of which statesmen, such as the distinguished chairman of that evening, well knew the Imperial importance. That science had enabled Pasteur, as the commercial result only of his bacteriological studies, to effect economies and improvements which it was stated on good authority were of sufficient money value to repay the milliards of the German war indemnity. That science had enabled, through the services of Parkes and Lister, our armies to traverse the world, free from those diseases and sufferings which in the Crimean war were far more fatal than the accidents of battle. That science had armed us against smallpox, with an effectual weapon such as Germany had known how to use so as to keep her population almost wholly free from that fatal pest which our neglect of vaccination was now suffering to rear its head in our midst. That science, too, had promised in the near future to rid us of the fear of cholera by doubly arming us first against its introduction into our water supply, which we had now proved to be the main agent and carrier of cholera infection; and, secondly, by providing what promised to be an effectual mode of procuring immunity for individuals in cholera-stricken districts, by the method of vaccine immunity discovered and worked out so brilliantly by M. Haffkine in the Pasteur laboratory.

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH THE BASIS OF PROGRESS IN MEDICINE.

To our great reproach, and much to the scandal of our nation, we had no such fully equipped laboratories of bacteriological research as the Pasteur Institute in France, as the Koch Institute in Berlin, and other great bacteriological laboratories situate in all the great capitals in Europe. Those who were interested in the creation of the British Institute of Preventive Medicine, destined, he hoped, ere long, to wipe away that reproach, saw with pleasure how warm a reception Birmingham gave recently to Professor Horsley and Dr. Ruffer when they came to the city to lay before the people the claims of that institute for their support. He hoped and believed that that cordial sympathy with those departments of medicine in which lay the best hopes for the progress of preventive medicine and the welfare of mankind, was of good omen for the effectual cultivation in the Birmingham College of Science and of Medicine of those higher branches of exact medical research and the higher medical study, and he trusted that the institution would have its laboratories, its professorships devoted to these high objects. He felt sure that the intelligence and the munificence of the citizens of

Birmingham would not be wanting any more than it had been wanting in Liverpool and in Manchester to accomplish these ends. The medical faculty of Birmingham had glorious traditions and famous names upon its roll, and from the union effected we might reasonably hope to see those high traditions maintained and strengthened; and many a name would, he hoped, be added to the roll of the benefactors of mankind from among the students who would be trained and sent out from the walls of Mason College.

The DEAN (Professor Windle), who was cordially welcomed, returned thanks on behalf of the Faculty to Mr. Ernest Hart for coming so far to take part in the proceedings, and to those present for their warm reception of what had been said. The occasion of that evening, he said, was one full of happy auguries for the future of the Queen's Faculty of Medicine. With regard to the transference which had recently taken place, it had been forced upon the Faculty by circumstances of which they had no reason to be ashamed, because they were at once the index and the measure of the success of their efforts in teaching the medical students. When the college contained no more than an average of 100 medical students the building was not so glaringly inadequate as when the number began to rise. The council, however, faced the difficulty; but the number of students rose to 200, and finally approached nearly 300, and it became evident that some fundamental change must be made. The right step, he thought, was taken when the council decided to approach the authorities of Mason College with a view to uniting the teaching of medical students in that city with the teaching of science and arts. In connection with the medical charities, he found that one-half of the medical men had been educated in the local school, and that, he thought, was a striking example of the confidence reposed by the governors of local institutions in the medical teaching afforded in the city.

Mr. OLIVER PEMBERTON, in proposing "The Health of the Chairman," traced the history of the Birmingham School of Medicine down to the Act of Parliament which gave it the name of Queen's College.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN replied.

GRIEVANCES OF POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.

DEPUTATION TO SIR WALTER FOSTER.

ON Tuesday last a deputation from the Council of the Poor-law Medical Officers' Association attended at the Local Government Board Offices, before Sir Walter Foster, with the following objects:—(1) To urge the extension of the dispensary system to large towns; (2) the compulsory superannuation of Poor-law medical officers after long service; (3) the abolition of pauper nursing in all Poor-law institutions, and the appointment of properly paid nurses; and (4) the necessity for providing better facilities for the administration of anaesthetics in Poor-law practice.

Dr. D. B. BALDING (President of the Poor-law Medical Officers' Association) introduced the deputation, which also consisted of Messrs. J. Wickham Barnes and Frost, Drs. J. B. Gidley Moore, Nelson Hardy, Hugh Woods and Walter Smith.

Dr. BALDING said that in the opinion of the Association he represented the subjects they wished to bring before him were ripe for legislation or alteration. It was very desirable that the dispensary system should be extended to all large towns, although there might be some difficulties in extending it to the rural districts of England. It was generally admitted that the system of giving a salary to Poor-law medical officers, and making it include medicine, was highly objectionable, and they desired that arrangements should be made so that in the future a certain specific sum should be stated for salary and a certain sum for medicines. As to superannuation, the present system was most unsatisfactory. If a man worked night and day for 20, 30, or 40 years, at the end of that long period of service he was entirely at the mercy of his local board. With regard to pauper nursing, he thought it must be generally admitted that such nursing must of necessity be inefficient for several reasons—first, because of the ignorance of the nurses, and also because the great majority of them were not able-bodied women. Provision should be made by the Local Government Board for the administration