

outside. Now that it is instituted we find students forced to spend at least a year at preliminary subjects, and the same old want of real experience facing the newly-fledged licentiate, though he has spent more time and more money in getting qualified than his father did (for all the hospitals have raised their fees).

May the memory that unlike his father he spent much time and energy in hunting for the ovaries of earthworms and the lymphatic hearts of frogs console him in his trouble over failure to put his first good private patient on a satisfactory diet. Is this elaborate training in elementary science really advisable? It is possible to give students too much of a good thing.—I am, etc.,

July 2nd

MEDICUS ET PATER.

A DEGREE FOR LONDON DIPLOMATES.

SIR,—I have read with much interest the communications which you have published from diplomates of the London Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and I venture to express the hope that they will continue to press their cause until they have obtained redress for their undoubted grievance. Their position is altogether anomalous, and places them, in the public estimation, at a disadvantage with graduates of provincial and Scottish universities who possess no higher social, educational, or professional qualifications. More than a generation has passed since the public were indifferent as to whether the general practitioner of medicine and surgery were a graduate. There is now a widespread feeling, which has been growing, that the diplomate belongs to an inferior order of practitioners, and it is against the increasing disabilities which that opinion involves that the diplomates of the London Colleges are rightly protesting. A large proportion are *alumni* of the London medical schools, and, owing to the anomaly that London has been endowed with no teaching university or faculty of medicine in which a man could take a pass degree, they have been placed in the position of having to choose one of two alternatives. Either they had to forego the inestimable advantage of receiving their education in one or other of the finest medical schools in the world, and in so doing turn their backs on such teachers as Paget, Holden, Wilkes, Bryant, Jenner, Wilson Fox, Erichsen, Murchison, Bristowe, Broadbent, Douglas Powell, Playfair, and others too numerous to mention, and betake themselves to some provincial town and hospital for at least two years of their medical curriculum, at the same time severing themselves from the home and associations which they had made for themselves in London; or, on the other hand, to abandon the hope of securing what is now coming to be regarded as an indispensable academic distinction. To a great extent the London diplomates are, therefore, paying the penalty of faithfulness to their educational advantages and associations in London, and of the apathy, in past generations, of those who allowed the great medical schools of London to grow and develop without providing for their students such academic advantages as are freely offered in the provinces.

The letter which appears in your issue of June 22nd under the heading, "Where are the Undergraduates?" adds point to the considerations to which I have adverted, and it would be difficult for anyone to come forward with an answer to your correspondent's inquiry: "Who are the recognised learners of the newly-constituted London University proceeding to its medical degrees?" Practically there is as yet no answer to that question, and therein lies the injustice to which present and past *alumni* of the London medical schools are subjected. I trust that the suggestion of a "Recognised Teacher" may commend itself to the Senate of the University, and that that body will accept, as the first undergraduates of the University, the present body of admitted students of medicine. But I hope that they will see the justice and expediency of going a step further and of admitting London diplomates who have been for, say, five years in actual practice to an examination similar to that which qualifies registered practitioners, who have attained the age of forty years, to the Membership of the College of Physicians, or to some such written and *viva voce* examination as is held by the University of Durham, and was annually held at St. Andrews until the latter was unjustly deprived of the right to confer degrees on diplomates of fifteen years'

standing. I cannot doubt that the Royal Colleges of London would lend their weight to an appeal on behalf of their diplomates for such an act of justice in view of the position of increasing disparity and disparagement under which they will otherwise labour. Practitioners who have qualified in medicine and surgery to the satisfaction of their teachers, the Royal Colleges, the Apothecaries' Company, and the General Medical Council, are entitled to ask for reasonable opportunities of obtaining a degree in the reconstituted University which bears the name of the great city in which they prosecuted their collegiate studies.—I am, etc.,

Upper Brook Street, July 1st.

W. BEZLY THORNE.

LONDON UNIVERSITY AND MEDICAL DEGREES.

SIR,—It is with interest that I have read the recent articles in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL anent the London University. When the new charter was granted to it one of the chief objections was that there was a danger of lowering the value of the London degree. The articles in the JOURNAL above referred to seem to point in the direction of that lowering with considerable clearness, especially when one reads about all students at the hospitals in London being regarded as undergraduates of the University irrespective of their entrance examination. The conclusions one is forced to by reading these and other articles that have from time to time appeared on the same subject are:

1. That the present London student has not sufficient brains to pass the examinations for the London degree. Such a view of looking at the question does not seem a very complimentary one to the London student. May I, as a London student, venture to call this in question? The average London student is perfectly capable of passing all the examinations for the degree of M.B.Lond., including the London matriculation, if he works. If he does not work, well, he can only blame himself, not the London University; or,

2. That the present agitation is got up with a view of attracting more students to the London schools, and that the bait held out is a London degree, a degree lowered in value so as to be obtainable without trouble, but yet living on the past reputation of a university which I may say is regarded not only in England, but also in the Colonies, as a model of fairness in all its requirements. The medical profession as a learned profession has to hold its own with not only the Church, but also Law and Arts.

May I ask whether the medical man feels himself so well equipped in general education that he can afford to lower the standard of general knowledge that is required by one at least of the examining bodies for degrees in medicine.

In conclusion may I say that it seems to me:

1. That medical education in London and elsewhere will not be benefited by lowering the standard of examinations till they ultimately reach the level of those held by certain examining bodies in the United States and on the Continent, where the requirements from a candidate seem to be determined more by the length of his purse than of his knowledge.

2. That a stop should be at once put to the proposed tinkering with the London degrees, a tinkering which when once started no one knows when it may end; a tinkering that under a war cry of a degree for the average student advocates a policy which will certainly in the long run prove detrimental both to London University and to London students, as the latter will not enter for the University degrees in medicine, as not being in their lowered value worth getting compared with those of the older universities—for example, Oxford and Cambridge; and though men will still come to London as heretofore on account of its unrivalled field for clinical material, yet when they want a degree it will not be that of the London University they will take.—I am, etc.,

June 27th.

LONDON GRADUATE AND DIPLOMATE.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THE MIDWIVES QUESTION.

SIR,—I have carefully followed the correspondence about the midwives question, and as a general practitioner to whom midwifery practice is of importance, with your permission should like to make a few remarks on the subject.

The chief object of the Midwives Registration Bill is, I take