

enactment, would be more likely to benefit the profession ultimately, than a temporizing acceptance of the smallest possible concession to well-considered demands.—I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,
Gloucester, March 4, 1841. H. W. RUMSEY.

THE MEDICAL CONFERENCE.

LETTER FROM DR. MACARTNEY.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—The delegates of the different medical associations, who lately met in London, having done me the honour of appointing me their chairman, I feel particularly called upon to account for my secession from their meetings; for which purpose, it may perhaps be sufficient to send you the following copy of my letter to the secretary of the Conference:—

“February 11, 1841.

“SIR,—I beg leave to inform you, that I do not propose to attend the future meetings of the delegates, now sitting for the consideration of medical reform, as I do not think the delegates at present assembled represent the great body of the profession, and as I do not approve of many parts of the plan of a bill submitted to their discussion.

“It has always appeared to me, that if the medical corporations admit the representative principle in the constitution of their governing boards or councils, there is no necessity for the creation of any new medical faculty.

“I have the honour to be,

“Your very obedient servant,

“JAMES MACARTNEY.”

I did not send in my resignation to the council of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, by whom I had been appointed, (subsequently to obtaining my consent to undertake the trust,) because I did not then know what steps the council of that association would take, or whether my services might not in some other way be still required.

I think it necessary to add, that I did not withdraw from the conference, under any disappointed or piqued feeling, having been uniformly treated with marked kindness and respect by the delegates, but altogether from a sense of what I considered to be my public duty.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

JAMES MACARTNEY.

Southampton, March 8, 1841.

THE MEDICAL CONFERENCE.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—As a member of the Conference on the all-important subject of Medical Reform, having been so delegated by the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, I feel called upon to state to your readers the exact circumstances under which that conference has been constituted, and the strict course by which its proceedings have been conducted. I am led to take this step, in consequence of the impression made by your leading articles of the last two weeks, which appear to stamp the Conference with a character that it ought not to bear. I am quite satisfied that those papers have been written upon false information—upon false data. I thus understand the Conference to have been formed of delegates from various societies, who were commissioned to inquire into the grievances under which the profession labours, and to frame such measures as might remedy those evils.

With this view members of the different associations were appointed in the following order:—

British Medical Association.....	6
Provincial “	8
North of England “	1

Irish “	3
Gloucester “	1
South Devon “	1
Cornwall “	1
East of Scotland “	1
Glasgow “	1

Thus it will be perceived that the original constitution of the Conference yields a large proportion to provincial delegates, and of the whole number (21) who attended the meetings, 13 were members of the Provincial Association. It might occasionally have happened in the Conference that a provincial member would be outvoted; and such has occurred to myself with one of my colleagues, but our votes and protest upon that particular point have been recorded and noticed. On these grounds, gentlemen, I feel that you are not rightly informed, when you represent the constitution of the Conference as unfair. But I now come to the second point, namely, “that its proceedings have been of such a character as to entitle it to the animadversion of the profession.” So far as the proceedings have hitherto gone they have been confined simply to the establishment of leading principles of reform—which principles having been agreed to by the Conference, have been submitted to the Colleges of Physicians, of Surgeons, and the Apothecaries’ Company. The principles were partly elicited by the reading of a scheme of reform adopted by the British Association, and indeed most ably drawn up, I believe by Dr. Webster; but no bill has been concocted as yet by the Conference, embodying the principles laid down.

I think the charge of secrecy in the business of the Conference is also unfairly stated. I was one who voted against the publication of the proceedings of the Conference until they could assume such a form as to be fitted for the eye of the profession, and thereby convey a correct idea of the actual opinions of the Conference; and I think I am still right in the vote I then gave. It was intended to prevent piecemeal publication in a garbled form. The principles on which the Conference would ground any legislative measures are now before the profession, and it is open to the profession at large, and it would be well if they did convey to the Conference their opinions on those leading principles of reform. I am quite sure that the Conference would freely listen and attend to such representations; for, as far as I have yet seen, there is an unanimous wish to benefit the profession and the public at large; and this spirit has pervaded their transactions throughout.—I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

W. J. WICKHAM.

Winchester, March 3, 1841.

NEWCASTLE SPRING ASSIZES.

Thursday, March 4.

TORBOCK v. LAING, SCOTT, AND HORN.

A CAUSE, of much interest to the profession, was decided in favour of a medical gentleman at this assizes. The circumstances of the case, which we abridge from the last number of the *Gateshead Observer*, are briefly as follows:—

Mr. Alexander stated the case. The plaintiff was Mr. Thomas Reddish Torbock, a highly respectable surgeon in Sunderland, and his claim arose out of the following circumstances:—In January, 1840, Jane Sparrow, an aged widow, was passing along Sunderland bridge, when the defendants were blasting stone, and a great piece of the stone was thrown over the railing, and shattered her arm a little above the wrist. She was conducted by a passer-by to the plaintiff’s surgery, where she received every proper attention. The plaintiff called in Mr. Mahin, a brother surgeon, to his assistance, and it was thought at first that amputation would be necessary. This, however, was avoided, and, through the attention and skill of the plaintiff, the poor woman was at length restored to nearly her former state. Within forty-eight hours of the accident,

a gentleman called from the Ayre's Quay Bottle Company, and requested Mr. Torbock to spare no pains for her recovery, and they would bear all expenses. The attendance of the plaintiff was required for about four months; and some time after her restoration to health, he made out his bill. At the professional rate of charges, the amount exceeded 50*l.*; but the plaintiff, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the case, struck off 10*l.*, and sent in a bill for 40*l.* 5*s.* The defendants, however, objected to the sum charged, and proposed a reference. The plaintiff at once acceded to the proposal, and referees were appointed; but they could not come to an agreement, and the plaintiff was compelled to seek redress in a court of law. The defendants seemed to think, that the plaintiff ought to have sent them such a bill as he would have presented to the poor woman herself, had the payment of the charge devolved upon her. This was obviously absurd. The injury was caused by the defendants, and it was only fair that the bill should be made out according to their station in life, and not with reference to the poverty of the aged widow. The plaintiff, with a commendable spirit, had made a very handsome deduction, in consideration of the sacrifice which the defendants were called upon to make; but with this they were not satisfied, and he had very properly resisted their attempt to deprive him of the fair remuneration of his skill and attention.

The particulars of the case, as stated by the learned counsel, having been established by several witnesses, Mr. John Croudace and Mr. Edward Malin proved that the charge was a reasonable one, and that the medicines and attendances were all required.

The defence set up by Mr. Dundas for Messrs. Laing & Co. was, that the charge was exorbitant, and that the surgeon's bill should have been made out with reference to the humble condition of the poor patient, and not to that of the defendants.

In support of this theory, Mr. George Green, of Sunderland, Mr. William Green, of Durham, Mr. W. J. Dodd, of Monkwearmouth, and Mr. William Mordey, of Sunderland, were called to demonstrate the exorbitant nature of the charge; these gentlemen would have thought from ten to twenty pounds amply sufficient remuneration.

The learned judge, (Baron Rolfe,) in his address to the jury, observed, that there existed an anomalous state of things in the medical profession—a system of charging different rates to the rich and the poor, the rich making some atonement to medical gentlemen for the sacrifice which they made in their attendance on the poor. This was, in many respects, a beneficial state of things; and it raised a question for the jury in this case, viz. whether the bill of the plaintiff ought to be regulated by the high or the low scale of charges. The defendants had requested the plaintiff to attend upon the poor woman—and to bestow every possible attention upon the case. They had made themselves liable to payment of the bill; and the jury were to decide whether the charge ought to be regulated by the circumstances of the defendants or the patient. If the former, the weight of evidence, he thought, went to show that the sum paid into court was not sufficient; if the latter, then it seemed to him that it ought to suffice.

Verdict for the plaintiff for 40*l.* 5*s.*

SIR ASTLEY COOPER, BART. F.R.S.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—Many inquiries having been made as to the appearance of a "Life of Sir Astley Cooper," I beg to inform you, for the information of the profession, that this distinguished surgeon has left ample materials for a most interesting biography, now in the hands of his nephew, Bransby Cooper, Esq. by whom the whole will be arranged and prepared for speedy publication.

A new edition of his beautifully illustrated work on the

"Testis," which received the author's final additions, has passed through the press. The plates are now in process of colouring, and the volume will be issued during the present month.

His work on "Dislocations" I am now preparing to publish on an octavo size, with the plates re-drawn, engraved on wood in the best style, and printed with the text, carefully edited, with additions, by B. Cooper, Esq. This practical work will be offered at a price to make it available to every student of surgery.—I am, your obedient servant,

JOHN CHURCHILL.

Prince's-street, Solo, March 1st, 1841.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 8.

NEW POOR-LAW BILL.

MR. WAKLEY, after some observations on the proposed alterations of Lord John Russell, asked the noble lord whether it was his intention to make any change with respect to the medical department under the bill. He was aware that several deputations of medical men had waited on the noble lord, and that several very important suggestions as to the best mode of medical attendance and treatment in unions had been made, and he hoped that as he was then about to remodel the bill, he would introduce and give his sanction to some of those salutary medical improvements which had been suggested.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL replied, that it had been found that great improvements had been already made in the medical department, under the authority and inspection of the guardians; and he thought it would be much better to leave it under such *improving care*, than to make it the subject of special legislative enactment.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN LONDON.

AT a meeting of the council, on Wednesday, the 3d instant, Benjamin Travers, Esq. was elected an examiner, and John Flint South, Esq., (both of St. Thomas's Hospital,) a member of the council, in the vacancies occasioned by the lamented decease of Sir Astley Paston Cooper, Bart.

LIST OF GENTLEMEN ADMITTED MEMBERS,

On Friday, March 5, 1841.

John Wheatley Hiron, Smith Hobson, George Thomas Vicary, Raymond Levi Haynes, John Spencer, Charles Colville Turner, Henry James Penny, Frederick Wright, William Todd White, John Buck Stedman, John Gray, Walter Rice Howell Barker, Edward Bunker Thring, Richard Yaul.

PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL, Edited by Dr. HENNIS GREEN (London), and Dr. STREETEN (Worcester).

At a late branch-meeting of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association at Bridgewater, it was unanimously resolved, "That the meeting take this opportunity of strongly stating their satisfaction that the PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL has been established, and pledge themselves to give their cordial support to the Editors in their laudable undertaking."

The chief objects of the JOURNAL are—1st, To represent in an adequate manner, Medical Science in the Provinces. 2d, To serve as an organ of communication between the members of the different Associations throughout the Kingdom. The JOURNAL (being stamped) can be forwarded by post to any part of the British dominions.

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