

To the Editors of the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*.

GENTLEMEN,—Your leading article in the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal* of Feb. 20th, has excited much attention amongst many members of the Association in this district,—gentlemen who have long been endeavouring to recover their rights, as members of the Royal College of Surgeons, consequently coequals of those gentlemen of the Council of that College, who, somewhat surreptitiously, usurped the power of electing themselves to a higher grade in the profession, and thereby diminishing the public confidence in those members who had been passed over in the selection.

Many of my professional brethren in this neighbourhood joined the National Institute of Medicine, Surgery, and Midwifery, in the hope that, by united exertion, they might be enabled to secure for the general mass of the profession the respectable position to which they are entitled, and, more especially, that the public might be assured that, under any emergency, they may for the future have the advantage of having duly qualified medical attendants.

As a member of the Institute, I can assure you that the proposal for a new College has not arisen from a desire on the part of the Institute to increase the number of Colleges, but from the circumstance of the Council of the College of Surgeons resisting every proposition for their College being the head and home of the general Practitioner; and, from the Council of the Institute feeling the necessity of the professional, as well as the public mind being set at rest upon the long agitated question of the education and respectability of position of the future general medical practitioners.

Your remarks on the proposed new, or *repaired*, charter of the College of Surgeons, will, I apprehend, be the subject of animadversion at the next meeting of the South Eastern Branch of the Association, to be holden at this place, and for which meeting I have the honour to be named as President-Elect.

You say, in the *Journal* of the 6th instant, "That, if the Council of the College of Surgeons had refused all concessions, &c., &c." What does the concession amount to? Does it in any way bear upon the 5th paragraph of the principal objects to which the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association is directed?

It may remove a barrier to collegiate distinction, but does it in any way tend to promote the respectability of the profession at large, or to secure more efficient medical aid for the community.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Very obediently yours,

JAMES STEDMAN.

Guildford, March 9, 1850.

To the Editors of the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*.

GENTLEMEN,—You invited the members of our Association to express their thoughts on the reform question; but though an old member of nearly forty years' professional experience I kept back, believing that the spirit of agitation was at length yielding to the force of calm inquiry and sober reason, nor should

I now obtrude myself but that I deeply sympathize with you under the attack of Mr. Bottomley, as reported in the last number of the *Journal*,—a work which, with liberal tendencies, has ever been judiciously conducted through the storms of faction, so as to maintain a high and independent character amongst medical periodicals, and impart a tone of professional dignity and gentlemanly feeling to a thousand readers. I am but an echo of many a subscriber when I say, that, were Mr. Bottomley's views to become your text-book, my membership would cease. An extensive knowledge of my brethren convinces me that a very large body would instantly secede from you.

Believe me, gentlemen, the "sound and fury" of "little men out in all weathers," whether in the *soi-disant* character of delegates, or representatives, or council, find feeble response among provincial surgeons; indeed, the majority of these repudiate the agitators. It is untrue that *insult* has been cast upon "the mass of the profession." I sustain no damage as a non-elect, and though my advancing years preclude the hope of witnessing the ultimate benefits of the Charter, I can fancy before me a new order of surgeons, with educational advantages secured by its provisions, elevated in social and scientific relations! I pity those selfish individuals who, writhing under disappointed vanity, would madly abrogate a scheme for which future generations will be thankful.

If some ardent readers ask,—"Who is the individual that thus denounces the present movement?" I reply, one who has laboured hard in the field of general practice, respects established order, and, "from the loop-hole of retreat," takes a calm survey of conflicting parties; who sees not the *degradation* implied by your correspondent, but only that which individuals have brought upon themselves; who deems it inexpedient to disturb existing institutions, believing that, if left unfettered, they will do all that can be done to promote the welfare of "the mass of the profession."

I remain, gentlemen, with great respect,

Your faithful servant,

A SURGEON APOTHECARY.

March 12, 1850.

To the Editor of the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*.

SIR,—The present aspect of medical affairs is such as to occasion serious alarm for the welfare of the profession. The fair and just spirit of reform is no more allied to the revolutionary principles displayed by the leaders of the Bottomley faction, than is the cautious pruning of horticulture to the devastation of the uprooting storm.

It behoves every one not yet so far advanced in the evil spirit of the times as to repudiate all respect and regard for time-hallowed institutions, identified with such men as Sir Benjamin Brodie, Mr. Green, and other living ornaments to our profession, to arouse themselves from their torpor, and at least avow themselves distinct in their views and wishes from those who seek, by the establishment of a new College, to raise themselves on the ruins of the old one.

The leading article of the *Lancet*, on the 9th of