

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

March, is well calculated to excite these reflections; such insolence of place and assumption of power have rarely been exhibited with equal effrontery, and I cannot but think the worthy Editor has, in his efforts to perpetuate agitation, and thereby increase the sale of his publication, been led beyond the bounds of his usual sagacity. I should gladly learn on what grounds these self-elected potentates, Bottomley, Wakley, and Co., assure themselves of the undoubted support of 1300 Members and Fellows of the College of Surgeons, and I venture to predict that when they call their muster-roll, they will be astonished at the thinness of their ranks. The lover of novelty, the seeker of place, and those who, having nothing to lose, hope to gain something in the scramble, may be there; but depend on it, Sir, there are very many who would prefer to be door-keepers in the College of the immortal Hunter, to the possession of the highest honors in that of Bottomley and Co.

I am, Mr. Editor,

ONE OF THE THIRTEEN THOUSAND.

March 12, 1850.

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

GENTLEMEN.—I cordially agree with the principle avowed in the concluding paragraph of your leading article of the 6th instant, for the guidance of our Association in the present crisis of medical affairs, and though little disposed to take part in any controversy, I esteem it a duty to record my *non placet* against the lately published offer of the Council of the College of Surgeons to the older members of that corporation.

As no honour can result from the possession of the Fellowship obtained in the way proposed, the privilege of an elective voice would appear to be the sole good in prospect, to acquire which, the invidious inconvenience of a certificate of character (humourously treated by a correspondent in your last number) and the palpable injustice of paying ten guineas, are proposed. To the first of these, it is true, that I, as a member of a public service, am not exposed; but I contend for the principle—others are. To the second a vast number of my contemporaries and juniors were not subjected, on their election at the will of the Council. Now, if even-handed justice is to be awarded, this must not be. No fee should be demanded. To those gentlemen who have acquired the Fellowship by voluntary examination and purchase, the honour, with its attendant profit, may, it is possible, prove a sufficient reward for the outlay. Their case, however, I humbly opine, can in no way operate as a precedent against those, who, while they fully prize the corporate right of election, are not disposed to meet the pecuniary mulct required in exchange. Perhaps the simplest remedy, as the case now stands (for complicated indeed it is) would be to confer the elective franchise, without alteration of title, on all members whose standing on the College list is anterior to the Charter of 1843; but I am by no means certain that this concession would meet the evil. One thing is clear, that ere long, the onward progress of reform must claim the privilege for every member along with his diploma. The present anomaly will not be

tolerated by educated men surrounded by free institutions.

As to the formation of a College of General Practitioners, I confess that I am somewhat at issue with the opinions so often put forth in your leaders on this subject, though by no means a thick and thin advocate for that measure in the face of a better arrangement. Virtually, the profession is, to all intents and purposes, as palpably and definitely divided into three estates as it could possibly become by any ulterior legislation; moreover, in the present state of the negotiations, each licentiate of the projected new college must be a member of the College of Surgeons. There could not, then, occur any loss of *status*; on the other hand, increase of respectability must result from *enlarged education*—the avowed object of the Council of the National Institute; and as the representations of that body stoutly contend for the control of their curriculum in all its requirements, there can be no room for suspicion that its details would be disproportioned.

I might, and perhaps ought, to extend these short remarks to various other points, quite as salient as those selected; but as brevity is desirable, where so many, probably, will adopt the same mode of appeal, I shall conclude by reminding you, that many and serious objections exist against the ready solution of the difficulty, beyond the mere exclusion of obstetrics and pharmacy from the Council at Lincoln's Inn Fields; and further, that although it be most desirable that all surgeons should be incorporated and *emfranchised* in the College of Surgeons, this must be regarded solely as a step towards a vital reform and comprehensive remodeling of the whole machinery of our profession.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your humble servant,

G. E. FORMAN,

Surgeon, R.N., M.R.C.S., 1819.

Teignmouth, March 13, 1850.

## Medical Intelligence.

### TESTIMONIAL TO WILLIAM BUSH, ESQ.

We have much pleasure in stating that a very handsome silver library inkstand has been presented to the above gentleman, in the presence of the parochial Clergy, and a large number of the inhabitants of the parish of Weston, bearing the following inscription:—"Presented to William Bush, Esq., one of the medical officers of the Bath Union, by 456 contributors, consisting chiefly of the poor of Weston, with whom the subscription originated, in grateful testimony of the kindness, skill, and unwearied attention, with which he devoted himself to the service of the sick in that parish, during the prevalence of cholera in the year 1849." It is gratifying to remark, that the idea of presenting a testimonial to Mr. Bush emanated, in this instance, from the poor, many of whom experienced his valuable and zealous attention during the time of the late epidemic; but the subscription was by no means confined to this class, and we have reason to know that the same feelings of respect and gratitude towards