

State of the Medical Profession in Dublin. By
UNUS QUORUM.

As you have taken so much interest in fearlessly exposing the abuses and defects of our profession, and more than once alluded to the state of matters in Ireland, I enclose you a few remarks on the state of the profession in Dublin. We had been led to think that our Royal College of Surgeons would have acted liberally on receiving their new charter; but I need scarcely observe, that their new regulations are as narrow and as selfish as before. It was rumoured that the College would have been thrown open to all who presented themselves for examination, and a woe-ful drawback would be made from the coffers of the junta at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, by giving Irish students in general an opportunity to qualify at home, but no such thing was meditated. The college, ever true to narrow-minded principles, and extremely sensitive of personal aggrandizement.

have virtually closed their portals against all, save their own apprentices. They effected this by requiring a much longer, and more expensive course of study, a double fee for their licence, and more severe examination from those who are deprived of the means of paying the exorbitant fees required of apprentices. They forsooth offer an examination on such conditions, and in the true Stock Exchange method, require the sum of £.60, to be deposited in the national bank, the sum from apprentices being £.30, and the fee in London £.22. Thus it is that wealth is a passport to medical science in Dublin; and talent is neglected and degraded. But no candidate will apply for examination, as he is certain of rejection, unless he has apprenticed himself to some one of the examiners. The only resource he has to adopt is, to present himself at the London College, where he is sure to be treated in a gentlemanly manner, and have a fair and impartial examination. But on his return home, he is treated with contempt by the scions of the Dublin corporation, he cannot be surgeon to a county hospital, and he will not be met in consultation. He is a regular surgeon, and according to your excellent article in your last number, has an undoubted right to practise in any part of his Majesty's dominions. But as he has not condescended to be one of the "forty apprentices," which some of the college party possess, he is a fit and proper object for contumely and scorn. In vain he exhibits his diploma, and points to the illustrious names of Astley Cooper and John Abernethy, they procure him no respect, and his document is only ridiculed. He meets a fellow student of the apprentice tribe, who heard the same lectures with himself, and whom he often assisted in his studies; and from him too, he experiences coldness and disrespect. And this monstrous system is to continue, because half a dozen Hospital surgeons and censors of the college glut on apprentice fees. If there be not a fatality attending every measure in which the college are concerned, By what excess of folly has it happened, in an age like the present, that these ungracious regulations which have ever distinguished their administration, should carry with them a strong appearance of personal interest, where no such interest ought to exist, to the injury of the largest portion of the profession, and to the highest dishonour of themselves. These principles and proceedings, odious and contemptible as they are, in effect are no less injudicious. An enlightened profession are roused by every appearance of monopoly and oppression; and will one day or other make common cause in opposing them.

As Ireland has been always doomed to play the "Comedy of Errors," in every thing, the reform promised by Lord Gower, in pharmaceutical matters, will of course be forgotten. His lordship is no longer connected with this country, and peace be with him, say I,—and consequently will forget his solemn promise to amend the apothecaries act. The Dublin company of drug venders, are much of the same stamp as their fellow labourers at your side of the water. They are not quite so impertinent as yet, and they want courage to interfere with the rights of the physicians and surgeons. But no doubt they will imitate the glorious example of their seniors in London, and by and by, proceed to stultify the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, as the London company have so ably accomplished. Our "old hags of Rhubarb Hall," do not examine in physic or surgery, and for a good reason, they dare not attempt it. But they are more alive to their own proper calling than the Londoners, for they threaten to fine all irregulars, and have frightened these interlopers out of their senses. I have often laughed heartily at the threats of the worshipful company, being aware that it would cost them £.200, to enforce a fine of £.20. They are cunning enough, however, to succeed, by sending an inspector through the provinces, who, informer like, takes cognizance of those unfortunate apprentices and assistants, who open shops without a licence, or, in modern phrase, a diploma, threaten them with the vengeance of the Hall, but promise the required licence on the payment of the mulct—the druggists and grocers are left unmolested, but the profession alone must suffer.

I was happy to peruse your extracts from Dr. Grattan's essays on the state of the profession here, and I should be still happier if you noticed Mr. Donovan's more recent publication on the subject. This gentleman is governor of the Hall, and has dealt destruction among the pharmacopolists. He had the manliness and independence to preside at the radical meeting; and was literally turned out of the establishment of which he is the legal head. This was truly Hibernian, you will say. However, he has received the commendations of every independent man in the profession.

We are now preparing for the winter campaign of lectures, and our forces have mustered in great numbers. We have many rival schools, and a wonderful change in the demeanour of the monopolists. It would surprize you, to observe the affability and communicativeness of our great lecturers and hospital surgeons, their former pride and insolent muteness no longer exist. Such are the good effects of

opposition. The last regulations of the English college, which liberally recognized all our hospitals, have largely contributed to the marvellous improvement in the manners of our surgeons and teachers. I assure you, that a poor green-horn of a student, is no longer sneered at for asking a question, and that aphonia, which was wont to seize the surgeons when visiting their patients, unless when apprentices were present, is no longer prevalent; loquacity, bordering on garrulity, is now the order of the day.

Another great improvement has been recently effected, by the establishment of a few rival obstetric institutions. Instruction is now afforded at half the expense, and the monopoly of the once famous Lying-in Hospital, is nearly destroyed. Thanks to Dr. Montgomery, Dr. Gregory, and Dr. Cusack, for this improvement. As I have refrained from censuring individuals in this letter, I shall not begin towards its close, though the conduct of some of the persons connected with obstetric establishments, loudly calls for exposure. But on another occasion I shall trouble you with a brief sketch of some of the crying abuses of our hospitals and schools. I have passed by our college physicians, and have merely to observe that they proceed in the old humdrum manner, and are as insensible to the interests of science and the public as any of their fraternity. They have lately done one laudable act, in appointing the talented and experienced Dr. Lahy Professor of the Practice of Medicine.

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