

# ASSOCIATION MEDICAL JOURNAL.

EDITED BY JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D.

No. XXIX.

LONDON: FRIDAY EVENING, JULY 22, 1853.

NEW SERIES.

EDINBURGH MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY. In reply to several letters which we have received from Edinburgh, requesting us to add the Edinburgh Medico-Chirurgical to the societies of which we give regular reports, we beg to say that we shall be very glad to arrange with a competent and trustworthy reporter for the meetings of next session. Persons who will engage to furnish faithful and early reports, we are prepared to treat with. In mean time, we have obtained reports of the recent meetings of the session which has just concluded.

## PROPOSED SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF FRAUDULENT AND OBSCENE ADVERTISEMENTS.

ON the 17th of June, we presented to our readers some observations upon "Four Strongholds of Quackery in the Fourth Estate", in which we particularly directed attention to—

- I. NEWSPAPERS, especially those published in the Provinces and in the Colonies;
- II. RELIGIOUS (?) PERIODICALS;
- III. PSEUDO-MEDICAL PAPERS; and
- IV. MEDICAL JOURNALS.

Since the period referred to, we have been in correspondence, upon the subject of the suppression of fraudulent and obscene advertisements, with many influential persons; and the conclusion generally arrived at has been, that this object might be accomplished, to a great extent, by a judiciously managed society; but that, without the organization of such a body, little fruit could be expected from the isolated efforts of respectable editors and others. We expect very soon to be able to announce the actual establishment of this society—a society with which we shall always be rejoiced to co-operate, in endeavouring to redeem the better part of the periodical press from its present degraded position of hiring servitude to medical swindlers and obscene advertisers. The literature of Holywell Street, and the pseudo-medical papers, may be found to require special treatment.

If the attack on quackery in the fourth estate be wisely directed and well sustained, it cannot fail to be crowned with success. There are a few, we know, ready to maintain, that so essential is the money of the quacks to the very existence of most of the provincial newspapers, that such an attempt as that proposed can only be regarded as a well meant but hopeless crusade. A pretty extensive inquiry into the state of public feeling leads us to adopt a more cheering view of the case. We feel assured that there is an enormous power, slumbering at present, but quite ready, upon a proper signal being given, to march forward in united phalanx, and drive forth the quacks from their "strongholds in the fourth estate", which at present seem almost impregnable. The reformation required is fortunately keenly desired not only by the medical profession, but by large numbers of the nobility, clergy, and gentry.

The preliminary organisation must be extensive and careful; and the movement, when once commenced, must be ever onward, with unflinching hand and unfaltering step: but, if these conditions be complied with, victory is certain.

As some encouragement to deal faithfully and firmly with offenders in the fourth estate, let us recall attention to our former remarks upon the appearance of quack advertisements in periodicals aspiring to be considered the champions of religion. We particularly complained of the strange inconsistency of the *Edinburgh Christian Magazine*, which, in its number for April last, denounced quackery as a practical "denial of the wisdom of God's arrangements in the world", and yet sold a place upon its wrapper to the *soi-disant* Professor Holloway, for his "extraordinary cures". The publishers, to their honour be it proclaimed, have for the future resolved to keep their advertising columns free from Holloway's swindling notices; and we have no doubt that many other proprietors of papers which seek to be called religious and Christian, could be induced, by means of suitable representations, to make their conduct harmonize with their professions.

Dr. DOUGLAS MACLAGAN, of Edinburgh, on perusing our article of June 17th, to which we have already referred, forwarded it, with an expostulatory letter, to Messrs. PATON and RITCHIE, publishers of the *Christian Magazine*. The high character and respectability of these gentlemen may be inferred from their reply, which we subjoin:

To Dr. DOUGLAS MACLAGAN, }  
Heriot Row, Edinburgh. }

Edinburgh, June 20th, 1853.

DEAR SIR,—We have to thank you for drawing our attention to the article in the ASSOCIATION MEDICAL JOURNAL, anent quackery: but we had previously determined to withdraw the advertisement from the columns of our Magazine. We are

Very truly yours,  
PATON AND RITCHIE.

Most of the cheap serials are contaminated with fraudulent advertisements of various descriptions. There are, however, some honourable exceptions. The *Family Economist*, published by Groombridge and Sons, Paternoster Row, disdains all quack advertisements, and in this sets an honourable example to other publications which pretend to offer unexceptionable domestic reading.\* The *Scottish Guardian*, a Glasgow newspaper, excludes quack advertisements; and we believe that there exists a small and honourable self-denying minority who act in the same way. Generally speaking, the Scottish newspapers are much less offensive than the English provincial papers; and those printed in Edinburgh—though some of them are open to severe censure—are, as a group, decidedly the most respectable regarding which we have as yet had complete returns.

\* We recommend this modest publication to the notice of our readers. Volume Fifth, price One Shilling, containing 286 closely printed pages, is now before us. The *Family Economist* is written chiefly, we believe, for intelligent artisans.