

The last published edition of the Bill came out on the 10th November, 1852; but the Committee did not then pledge themselves to every detail of the Bill, though they expressed their conviction that its general principles commanded the assent of the great majority of the profession. On the contrary, they solicited comment upon it from the different corporate bodies, and from the different classes of practitioners; and they avowed their wish and their determination to bring it as much as possible into harmony with the general sense of the profession, whilst they kept steadily in view the three principles to which the ASSOCIATION has been so long pledged: viz.

I. UNIFORMITY OF QUALIFICATION.

II. EQUAL RIGHT TO PRACTISE THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM; AND

III. REPRESENTATIVE COUNCILS FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF THE PROFESSION.

The Reform Committee has been in friendly communication with the Scottish Colleges, and with the College of Physicians in London. They have also received hints and advice from several Branches of the ASSOCIATION. It is the result of all these negotiations and correspondences which is to be considered by the Committee on Monday next at Birmingham. At that meeting, we believe the draft of a Medical Reform Bill will be agreed to, and forwarded to us for immediate publication. We trust that the Committee may continue to receive general support, and that funds may not be wanting to enable them to make the coming campaign one of vigour and of victory. The donations already received are considerable, and the pecuniary assistance announced by Sir Charles Hastings as having been contributed by the Gloucestershire Association is a peculiarly encouraging sign of confidence and co-operation. We trust that all minor differences may be merged, and that a united and energetic demand may be made for such a measure as all will be ready to admit is at least a good instalment of Reform.

If the general sense of the meeting of the Metropolitan Counties Branch be in accordance with the feeling of the profession throughout the kingdom, two things are evident. FIRST, that the silence for some months past must not be taken as an indication of apathy on the part of medical men on the question of medical reform; and, SECONDLY, that the principle of representation, more or less extended, must be admitted in a reform bill calculated to satisfy the profession.

During the discussion, a collateral question of great interest and importance was incidentally, though plainly, referred to by Dr. Webster, Mr. Bowling, and Mr. Richardson, viz., the adoption of the representative principle in the constitution of the General Council of our own body. Two of these gentlemen, Dr. Webster and Mr. Bowling, are known and respected as veteran reformers and enlightened practitioners; while Mr. Richardson is a junior member of the ASSOCIATION, and more the man of science than the politician. It would be out of place here to enlarge upon this question; but it would be equally wrong to allow the observations of the gentlemen referred to to pass unnoticed, believing as we do that they refer to a question upon the judicious solution of which depends much of the life, usefulness, and future greatness of our ASSOCIATION.

We ought not to conclude this notice of the meeting of Tuesday, without again reminding our readers, that as the new edition of the Bill is not yet promulgated, the proposi-

tions discussed were of a general kind, and reflected merely the opinions of the gentlemen present upon abstract principles of medical reform. Those who wish for additional information as to the operations of the Committee, or who desire to make donations to its funds, ought to place themselves in communication with its Secretary, G. W. Hastings, Esq., 6, Paper Buildings, Temple.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CHOLERA. Letters postponed in consequence of the unexpected length of the Reports of the Edinburgh Medico-Chirurgical Society and Metropolitan Counties Branch.

MEDICAL STUDENTS. We have received a great many letters on this subject. They shall have our earliest possible attention.

NEWS AND TOPICS OF THE DAY.

THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS OF THE CHORLTON ON MEDLOCK UNION AND THE VACCINATION ACT. The following memorial to the Poor Law Board, and to the Board of Guardians of the Chorlton Union, was unanimously adopted at a meeting of the profession residing in the before named Union, held on Tuesday, December 6th; Dr. Bowman occupying the chair. The signatures are forty-three in number, constituting six-sevenths of the whole profession within the Union, exclusive of the present district vaccinators.

"To the Honourable the Commissioners of the Poor of England and Wales, the memorial of the undersigned medical practitioners, resident within the limits of the Chorlton Union, respectfully sheweth,—That experience has already demonstrated the Compulsory Vaccination Act to be an inefficient measure, since, whilst it requires medical practitioners to furnish duplicate certificates of successful vaccination, it contains no provision for their remuneration for the trouble such certificates must occasion. Neither has the Act any power to enforce the production of these duplicates; this object being only attainable by an indictment for misdemeanor. The adoption of this course would render the measure still more odious both to the profession and to the public, and would further tend to defeat the objects contemplated by its promoters. That, in the opinion of your memorialists, all the purposes of the Act would be attained by appointing each qualified practitioner a vaccinator, and by paying him for every duplicate certificate of successful vaccination. That, whilst the adoption of this plan would encourage the younger practitioners to vaccinate the children of the poor, it would, by its recognition of the just claim of the profession to remuneration for its labours, lead all classes of its members to co-operate heartily in giving effect to the Act, and thus make the practice of vaccination universal.—E. Tomlinson, William Skinner, Wm. Winn, Farquhar Milne, Thomas Mellor, A. T. Preston, J. W. Wainwright, John D. Ward, Thomas Wild, James Armstrong, Peter N. Roberts, Thomas J. Wilkinson, J. Robb, Robert Hislop, Samuel Whillow, Joseph M'Keund, Hector Helsham, W. C. Williamson, R. Trafford Whitehead, James Lowe, St. John Wells Lucas, John Dill, Geo. Pettinger, Geo. Wm. Pettinger, H. M. Williamson, J. Wilson, James E. Partington, Geo. Bellasis Masfen, Samuel Crompton, Joseph Peel Caslow, Joseph Murphy, Alex. Wilson, David Bowman, Wm. Lees, Charles James Rix, Wm. Bates, Joshua Barlow, Henry Swift, A. W. Dumville, James Braid, Thomas Wood, Wm. James Wilson, John Aikenhead."

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS:—PASS LIST. The following gentlemen, having undergone the necessary examinations for the diploma, were admitted members of the college at the meeting of the Court of Examiners, on the 25th November:—Messrs. Philip Vincent, Camborne, Cornwall; Samuel Delpratt, Hon. East India Company's Service, Bengal; William Mason, Ashby-de-la-Zouch; William Roberts, Manchester; Henry Wm. Freer Lomas, Derby; Henry Morris Simmonds, Lindfield, Sussex; John Thomson, Belfast; Alfred Stevens, Hammer-smith; John Joseph Coghlan, Old Cavendish Street; and Edward Dowson, Whitby, Yorkshire.

been greatly invaded by this measure. We have been fighting a battle with the Insurance Companies; and by perseverance, and firmness, we have brought at least half the London Insurance Offices to pay fees, which were not paid before, to professional men; and if a proper stand were made in the present instance, we should also do good. Many people say that the medical profession is a benevolent profession. It ought to be so; and God forbid that the time should ever come when it shall cease to be so. He was quite sure that many of us have an amount of benevolence forced upon us from circumstances; but he did contend, that we ought not to have onerous duties cast upon us by the legislature. With respect to giving a certificate of the cause of death, it is for the sake of science, and is a great public benefit. Really our good nature ought not to be carried further; and he thought that the time was come when a stand ought to be made. The second point is the miserably low remuneration for the services that are paid for. The minimum of eighteen-pence, which is the general amount of fee paid, looking at the duties which will be exacted from those who contract for Unions, is really a sum which is discreditable to the country to give, and almost so to professional men to receive. Eighteen-pence is the sum which is put down even for paupers. The public very quickly lay hold of these matters; and there is nothing whatever to prevent a person in good circumstances going to contractors. Dr. Webster believed that now a great many do go. Many of his patients had their children vaccinated at the different stations in London, without giving any sort of remuneration whatever. People in really excellent condition in life attend the gratuitous stations, such as Rowland Hill's Chapel, in the south part of the metropolis. He considered eighteen-pence a miserable recompense for the duty to be performed. It was really not estimating either the benefit conferred, or the time and science of the medical man. He thought it altogether inadequate to the occasion. The third point was, that the working effect of the measure will be, that the contracts generally will be made with the Union medical officers, and not with the profession at large. Amongst the guardians there is naturally a bias in favour of the medical men who are employed by the parish. The remuneration itself cannot be an object to any one, apart from the collateral circumstances, such as the introduction to practice, and the publication of the vaccinator's name in the document which the Deputy Registrar hands to the parents of all children born within the parish. Dr. Webster thought the Act calculated to have an injurious effect upon private interests: at all events, it is calculated to create and foster jealousies and heartburnings between medical men. He should like to see union and fraternal feeling existing amongst members of the same profession; therefore, he looked unfavourably upon the new Vaccination Act. It is very crudely put together, and not at all such a measure as a little more time might have produced.

The President. Who has the nomination of the vaccinator?

Dr. WEBSTER. The guardians of the parish. He almost considered that there was a breach of faith with the Vaccination Committee of this Branch. They had had an interview with Lord Palmerston, and he seemed to promise that the measure should not pass last session; but it was passed through the House of Commons, perhaps against the minister's wish, and carried through the House of Lords in a very sudden manner, so that the profession could not be roused to oppose it. This showed at once the want of a representative Council, to which we could apply at any time to bring forward our grievances. This great Association ought to be a centre of union where advice and counsel might be had, and where great things might be done as regarded subjects of importance in medical polity, medical ethics, and scientific questions; but he felt that, in the present constitution of the Association, we had not the benefit which he trusted before long we should have, of a better internal regulation. The Council at present is so scattered abroad, and so irregularly distributed, that it is unworkable; therefore it falls far short of what it might do, if it were put in a more efficient state. He was almost at a loss to know what course to take with this measure. One does not like to fly in the face of an Act of Parliament; but, unless a firm stand be made, we shall have other grievances put upon us. He had therefore drawn up these resolutions, which he would now read:—

"1. That while the Metropolitan Counties Branch of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association recognises the propriety of a compulsory vaccination Act, which shall be salutary to the public and just to the profession, it cannot but highly disapprove of the Act passed in the late Session of Parliament.

"2. That the amount of compulsory gratuitous medical service

inflicted by this measure, is vexatious, onerous, and unjust; and while the benevolent and unrequited labours of the medical profession will bear ample comparison with those of any other profession, this Branch believes that the time has arrived, when a firm and united stand must be made for the protection of its members and their medical brethren against the late and similar encroachments on their just rights.

"3. That the Vaccination Act being contrary to the political rights of the subject, by requiring important services without remuneration, this Branch considers that the law in its present state will be found impracticable, and recommends the adoption of the most energetic measures for its amendment or repeal.

"4. That a Committee be appointed to wait on Her Majesty's Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, and to adopt such other proceedings with reference to the Vaccination Act as may appear necessary."

It might be a question whether counsel's opinion should not be taken upon the working of this Act, as to how far the government, by putting it into the hands of the Registrar General, have made themselves liable for the expenses which may be incurred. Another thing to be considered, was, whether a case before a county court should not be tried, by way of ascertaining exactly how the matter stands. This might seem a paltry matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. He did not care for any obloquy which might be cast upon him: he brought the matter forward chiefly for the sake of his younger brethren, and on public grounds.

Mr. RICHARDSON in seconding the foregoing resolution, said that he quite agreed in the remarks which had been made by Dr. Webster. He (Mr. Richardson) found the operation of the Act very mischievous. Small tradesmen's wives expected their children to be vaccinated free; and if the medical man refused, they took the children to the public vaccinator, who was paid by the parish, and in many cases he retained them as patients. In his view, the Act was quite unconstitutional, and the parish had no more right to ask for these certificates gratis, than they would have to ask a carpenter to repair the church. It might happen that a child required to be vaccinated six or seven times; and one thing required was impracticable, namely, a certificate that a child was not susceptible of the vaccine disease. Let the meeting imagine how many times a child must be vaccinated, without fee or reward, to prove insusceptibility. He thought there was a very great necessity for appointing a deputation to the Home Secretary upon the subject.

The resolutions were carried unanimously.

It was moved, seconded, and carried unanimously

"That the Committee consist of the following gentlemen: The President, the President-Elect, the Secretary, Dr. Cormack, Dr. Fraser, Dr. Semple, Dr. Webster, and B. W. Richardson, Esq.; with power to add to their number."

PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS. The Law of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association is as follows:—

"Each Member of the Association shall pay One Guinea annually: the Subscription to commence from the 1st of January in each year, and to be considered as due, unless notice of its being withdrawn be given to the Secretary or Secretaries antecedently to the year for which it would be payable; for such Subscription each Member shall receive a copy of all publications issued for the general use of the Members of the Association."

ADVERTISEMENTS.

Three lines and under	-	-	-	£0 2 6
Every additional line	-	-	-	0 0 6
Half-a-column	-	-	-	1 10 0
A whole column	-	-	-	2 15 0
A page	-	-	-	5 5 0

A line contains ten words.

Advertisements ought to be delivered and paid for at the office on the Wednesday preceding publication.

Post-Office orders are to be made payable to THOMAS JOHN HONEYMAN 37, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.