

assert is—and we are certain that every candid man who knows anything of the matter will agree with us—that by the present system a student may pass an examination in anatomy, in chemistry, materia medica, and the practice of physic and surgery, with very little knowledge of the sciences themselves, and with merely an acquaintance with the words which represent them; and that the prevailing system of examination fosters this mistaken direction of the pupil's industry. We rejoice to learn from our contemporary that the Colleges of Surgeons of Dublin and of London are at this moment engaged in considering this subject; and we trust that the result of their deliberations will be the needed reformation.

We are not of the number of those who love great and sudden changes. We have a strong conservative bias; and can fully sympathise with those who have been actually engaged as examiners for years, who have adopted many improvements themselves, and who daily see where other changes might be effected were it not for circumstances which they cannot singly control. But, on the other hand, like every one who watches the progress of our Anglo-Saxon institutions, we know that all of them require public supervision and public discussion. However annoying it may be to the actual workers to be overlooked and scrutinized, yet suggestions *ab extra* are useful, and often quicken into vigorous life much that might have remained dormant without such a stimulus. Our institutions demand *progress* as well as *stability*: two principles which must work together in our medical corporations, if they are to live and grow, to rise and not to fall. We would repeat then, that what we conceive to be imperatively wanted is, *an addition to the prevailing system*. Let the present plan of systematic examination in words be still carried out, but let there be likewise an examination of the practical knowledge of the candidates in the things themselves. Many of the present staff of examiners, who are highly capable from long experience and ripe acquirements of testing the general requisitions of young men, may neither be willing, nor able to act as demonstrators of anatomy or manipulating chemists. But surely there can be no insuperable difficulty in appointing for this purpose examiners who are engaged in the daily practice of anatomy, of chemistry, materia medica and botany; and who therefore bring up to the actual state of their sciences, would examine the candidates on the dead body, and with tests, retorts, drugs, and plants previously to their verbal trials. On the other hand, it is possible that none might be more fit than the present examiners to investigate, at the bedside of the patients, the actual acquaintance of the pupil with manipulations, diagnosis, and treatment.

THE MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE.

In our advertising pages of to-day appears the Sixth List of Contributors to the Funds of the Medical Benevolent College. It represents an addition of about £1450:0:0 to the £10,641:15:6 formerly advertised. We hope, and we believe, that the great popularity of this institution will command for it a career of much honour and usefulness. Subscriptions, already flowing with so good a stream into its treasury, are likely to receive a great accession at, and in connexion with, the First Festival, which is appointed to take place on the 4th of May, under the presidency of the Right Honourable the Earl Manvers.

It is gratifying to observe that, in many instances, the same names appear as donors to the "Medical Benevolent College", and to the "Benevolent Fund" of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association. We trust that a good and generous disposition towards both charities may continue and increase; and that each of us may lay to heart the great truth that, after providing for the wants of ourselves and those immediately dependent upon us, an obligation remains to assist our poor brethren to the extent of our ability,—ever bearing in mind that "it is more blessed to give than to receive".

ADULTERATIONS OF FOODS AND MEDICINES.

THE want of members of our profession, and indeed of almost any class of scientific men in Parliament, is undoubtedly a source of much evil to the community. Party questions absorb almost the whole of the time and energy of the representatives of the people, and subjects connected with the public health can scarcely gain a patient hearing; and when they are reluctantly entertained, the manner in which they are discussed seldom tends to any solid reform, simply because there are few members in either House sufficiently well-informed in the science and practice of hygienics to elucidate such subjects. Were it otherwise, the returns of "Inland Revenue" would no longer disgrace England by exhibiting, as items of income, some hundred thousand pounds as the nation's money profit on those death-dealing compounds called "patent medicines", or on the beastly and demoralizing advertisements by which many of them are obtruded upon society by some of the metropolitan and by almost all of the provincial newspapers. This is an evil to which it will be our duty to make constant reference so long as it remains unredressed.

We are glad, in the mean time, to observe that a correspondent of *The Times*, in Tuesday's paper, forcibly calls attention to the necessity of legislative interference for the purpose of suppressing the nefarious practice so prevalent of adulterating every species of food and condiment. He suggests as a remedy, the appointment of a body of scientific men to assay the food of all classes.

In the following remarks we entirely concur:—

"It seems to me that the powers of such an official body should be large, while the penalties it should be enabled to inflict should be small. The mere publication of the facts in the *Gazette* would be a very severe penalty to the fraudulent tradesman, and a great encouragement to the honest one. The men to fill such offices as these curators of the public food would have, might speedily be found; and what employment could fifteen or twenty of our scientific men be more wisely or profitably engaged on—especially as their services would be occasional—than in protecting their fellow-countrymen from the grievous mischief of adulterated food? And, were the work well done, would the country have the slightest objection to give a just remuneration for their services? I should also suggest that weights and measures might be placed under the control of the same board."

The health of the public certainly requires the appointment of such an official board of assayers; and we would propose that their duty should embrace the testing of medicines as well as of articles of food.