

ASSOCIATION MEDICAL JOURNAL.

EDITED BY JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D.

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NEW SERIES.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LETTERS RECEIVED. In type, and unavoidably delayed, are letters from Dr. Burnett, Mr. Hey, and Mr. Haviland. A great many other letters are under consideration. Numerous replies have been received to the letter of "A GUARDIAN EX-OFFICIO", published at p. 562 of last number, some of which we hope to be able to give wholly or in substance next week.

THE METROPOLITAN COUNTIES BRANCH COMMITTEES AND DR. O'CONNOR. We have been requested by gentlemen who did not tender their resignations of the Committees, to publish letters intimating their strong disapprobation of the conduct of Dr. O'Connor, and to explain the causes of their resignations not having been tendered. This we hardly think necessary; some of those who did not resign the Committees expressed their opinions quite as strongly as any of those who resigned (as will be seen by referring to the report); and some of those who did not resign had never attended the meetings, and were actually ignorant of the fact of their belonging to the Committees, till they learned it from last week's JOURNAL. As more than enough of space has already been occupied with this case of reckless slander, we hope that this general explanation will suffice.

THE SUPPRESSED INQUEST. This inquiry is not yet completed.

LETTERS, ETC., FOR THE EDITOR, may be addressed to 21, EDWARDS STREET, PORTMAN SQUARE; where members may see the Editor, on *Wednesdays*, between 12 and 1 o'clock.

MEDICAL REFORM FROM WITHIN.

LORD PALMERSTON spoke as any sagacious statesman would speak, when he characterised the organisation of the medical profession as a medley of incongruities. So deeply and widely is this felt, that we are in danger of being more distracted by the multiplicity and diversities of the proposed remedies, than by the original incongruities themselves. This is sufficiently discouraging. But there is another—an internal reform—even more imperatively needed than that regarding which Parliament is called upon to adjudicate. The tribunal before which this latter must be brought is the *forum conscientiae* of the profession: and as its accomplishment rests entirely with medical men, there is no reason why it should not at once be proceeded with.

To have correct views of our calling, of its high aims, its moral obligations, its duties to society, its laws of professional intercourse, and its just rewards, is a desideratum of more value than the best project of Parliamentary medical reform that has yet been promulgated. Little comparatively has been done to illustrate this important subject since the days of the late Dr. Percival of Manchester, who laid a fair foundation, on which by this time we might have hoped to have seen a building, not of "wood, hay, and

stubble", but of "gold, silver, and precious stones". Can any one doubt that, if internal medical reform had been more sedulously cultivated, the technical external reformation would have been much nearer its completion? Can any one further doubt that, as the result of more sedulous cultivation of the subject, our profession would have received more justice from the public, and have afforded to unprincipled persons less scope for the mischievous exercise of empiricism?

These thoughts arose as we perused a pamphlet from the pen of Mr. HENRY DAYMAN, on *The Effects of Civilisation on the Fortunes of the Medical Profession*,* published under the auspices of the Medical Society of Southampton. It is a challenge to the profession to discuss the entire subject, parts of which the author has touched with a masterly hand. We hope that the challenge may be accepted.

"Every change in the condition of society", Mr. Dayman truly tells us, "has been invariably preceded by a change in the intellectual and moral convictions of its members". If this be true of society in general, it holds equally so of the medical profession. And we cannot but infer from indications such as those to which we have adverted, and especially from such "a sign of the times" as the issue of this pamphlet by a Medical Society, that a golden age of internal medical reform will, at no very distant period, secure an efficient legislative reform in the constitution of the profession.

Having stated his agreement with M. Guizot in connecting the progress of civilisation with the development of Christianity, and having asserted the Reformation to be the highest form of it, "by developing the resources of free inquiry, and knocking off the chains that had linked the human mind for centuries to the dogmatic teaching of spiritual authority," Mr. Dayman remarks, that "It remains now to be seen how these two social facts, *medical science* and *civilisation*, have acted and reacted upon each other." We much admire the fearless way in which Mr. Dayman speaks of religion as an element of civilisation and an ornament of a liberal and scientific profession. "I cannot but hold," he continues, "the great motive power of our own age to derive its immediate force from the liberty of ungovernable thought, which the Reformation set free. The human reason ran mad in the first century succeeding to its great revolt, and proclaimed itself a god; but when the paroxysm subsided after the French Revolution, then it was that the hand of the Divine Master began to direct the energies of man into the lawful channels of free inquiry;

* London: Highley, 1854.