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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE EDITOR AND GENERAL SECRETARY TO  
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## PARAGRAPHS FROM OUR PORTFOLIO.

**XXIV. MEDICAL REFORM.** We are not champions of any of the existing Medical Corporations, and have much too painful recollections of the conduct of some of them to be under any dangerous bias in their favour. At the same time, we desire to be just to them; and we think that the Report of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, which we published a fortnight ago, has been treated with injustice by a versatile contemporary, who seems for the present to be under the guidance of an Edinburgh professor.

The Edinburgh College of Surgeons is fortunately under much better direction than it was last year, when the Conference was held in the Hall of the London Physicians; and, so far from condemning the conduct of the College in revising the Draft Bill of the Edinburgh University, we think the College would have deserved to lose its privileges if it had neglected so plain and obvious a duty: for, though the "Draft Bill" has been ushered into the world, or rather into the Home Office, in the specious guise of being a measure of medical reform, it is in reality a measure of monopoly for the benefit of the Universities of Great Britain and Ireland; and is calculated to make medical reform hopeless, by legalising the greatest possible departure from uniformity in conferring rights of practice. Had the Bill merely sought to confer on all the Universities the same privileges as to medicine *proper* which were last year conferred on the University of London, the duty of resisting it might not have been so obvious; though, even in this case, we think it would have been necessary to have insisted on some more important provisos and qualifications than any that are to be found in this Draft Bill. But when it is proposed that Universities, instead of seeking to be intrusted with the office of conferring the highest honours and qualifications in *physic*, shall compete with the ordinary boards in conferring rights of practice in surgery, midwifery, and pharmacy, in everything, in short, which constitutes the business of the great mass of the profession; and when this office is proposed to be undertaken by six or eight irremovable medical professors in some Universities, and by assemblages of theological, literary, and law professors in others, without any provision to enable the profession, or any part of the profession, to interfere directly or indirectly in what is surely its own affair, and not the affair of universities, it is high time for us to sound the alarm. It is, besides, a matter too notorious to be called in question, that degrees were sold in some of these Universities, not long since, for mere gain, and without examination. It is also certain that University degrees have often been awarded by men whom none of our "Colleges" would intrust with such functions—by superannuated professors;

and, worse still, by wrong-headed and wrong-hearted professors, the enemies of the profession, and the open patrons and protectors of quackery. Well does the *Medical Times* of last week ask:—"Would any body of the profession select as examiners of their candidates Professor Gregory, the President of the 'Mesmeric Curative Association', or Professor Henderson, the Coryphæus of Homœopathy? But these men must examine in the University of Edinburgh, because in it each professor claims the right in virtue of his office".

And this is what Scotch Professors dignify by the title of Medical Reform! May our profession be preserved from such Reform! Rather let us continue a little longer the ruining of *bad bills*; and whensoever the friends whose projects we are now opposing recognise the propriety of consulting the medical profession before devising plans for its improvement, we assure them that they shall not find us blind to their real merits and usefulness, or desirous to withhold from the Universities of Scotland such improvements in their condition as they have a right to expect.

The Draft Bill which has elicited these remarks will be found at p. 397 of this day's number of the ASSOCIATION MEDICAL JOURNAL. The Reports of the Edinburgh College and the Glasgow Faculty on its provisions, were published by us in our numbers for 13th April and 20th April.

**XXV. MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY AND NAVY.** Captain Boldero's motion—so nearly carried—will, we trust, be taken up by the same or some other gentleman in the House of Commons, so that a thorough examination into the Medical Departments of the Army and Navy may be made. If such a member as Mr. Layard would take up the question, it would be sure of being carried heartily through. To him we owe much for his exposure of the wrongs of our profession in the East, and the consequent injury to the army. If the criterion of merit cannot be applied to the medical profession, it will scarcely be applied to any other; and the *principle*, once fairly recognised and acted on—as in the French hospitals, for example—in the medical department, might more easily be extended to the other branches of the state service.

**XXVI. QUACKERY**, in its most palpable forms, still remains within the pale of the medical profession. At p. 407 of the present number, there is an account of a trial for malpractice of a legally qualified practitioner, who is also a homœopath—how far a true one, a perusal of the paragraph referred to will show. But how can purity be expected, when honourable members of the profession calmly meet such a person in consultation? Doubtless, a feeling of humanity towards the patient is the main obstacle to the adoption, on an emergency, of vigorous measures against hybrid practitioners. Again, in another paragraph, at p. 408, we are grieved to find the name of a highly respected member of our Association—our President-Elect—mixed up in a newspaper account of a row between some Mesmeric charlatans.