

NOTICES of Births, Marriages, Deaths, and Appointments, intended for insertion in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, should arrive at the Office not later than 10 A.M. on Thursday.

#### THE CONJOINT SCHEME.

SIR,—In your leading article in the JOURNAL of the 19th June, on the English Conjoint Scheme, I carefully looked to see if I had not, up till the present time, been mistaken as to your opinions on the subject of medical reform. I do not find that I have been so. Still I am unable to understand of what good to the profession, or to the public, the carrying out of your levelling system can be; it may be a levelling up, but it seems to me to be much more like a levelling down; and as such, to be repudiated by every properly educated practitioner, and especially to be objected to by the public. The idea of a conjoint scheme for a minimum qualification to enable a person to become a legally qualified medical and surgical practitioner, entitled as such to be upon the Register as M.S.P. (Medical and Surgical Practitioner), is a good suggestion; but the idea of his being entitled to any of the honorary diplomas of colleges or universities, merely because he is a legally qualified practitioner, with the qualification of a conjoint board, however practical it may be, is a very levelling down proceeding. The minimum qualification should be sufficient to ensure the safety of the public from pretenders; and it should be sufficient to enable its possessor to take public medical and surgical appointments, such as can now be held by the M.R.C.S. and L.S.A. The M.S.P. should be the general practitioner—the old-fashioned apothecary, in fact, if it be desirable to save the Society of Apothecaries from extinction—with the right of dispensing medicines, and with all the rights and privileges of a licentiate of that Society—rights not to be conferred by the diploma, or degree, or licence of any other body. Thus qualified and registered, it seems to me to be absurd to suppose that the M.S.P. should have the right to appropriate by affiliation the degree, or licence, or diploma, according to his choice, of any College or Society, for which he might please to pay, without an additional examination; his power to do so would be so degrading to the Colleges selected, as to bring their diplomas into well deserved contempt. The M.S.P., or legally qualified practitioner, with his minimum qualification only, should not be allowed to call himself Doctor, or Surgeon, or Physician; he should first of all obtain the honorary degree, or diploma, or licence, of an University, College of Surgeons or Physicians, by undergoing such farther examination than that of the conjoint scheme as such corporation should require, before conferring its honorary distinction upon him. The only reform then required would be for a short Medical and Surgical Titles Bill to be passed by Parliament, prohibiting anybody from using or assuming a title to which he has no right, and fixing their titles by law to the different grades of practitioners, all being, before being allowed to practise at all on their own account, M.S.P.'s of the Conjoint Scheme. There must be, and ever will be, different grades in the profession; and the higher qualifications, with their honorary distinctions, should be open to all who have the patience, perseverance, and ability to obtain them legitimately, but not by affiliation. Let us not have a levelling down, but an elevating reform, if any.—I am, sir, yours truly,

Bewdley, June 23rd, 1880.

JOHN GABB.

P.S.—I have no doubt the honorary diploma of the College of Surgeons would be obtained by as many by choice as it is now by compulsion, for it would then be a greater distinction than it is now; and the same result would be seen in the desire to obtain physicians' diplomas and university degrees of real value as honorary distinctions, instead of mere legal qualifications to practise.

\* Our correspondent cannot have read the article on Conjoint Examinations with ordinary attention. Had he done so, he would have seen that the proposed arrangements amount to this: that the College of Physicians, the College of Surgeons, and the Apothecaries' Society, find that it will be for their convenience and advantage of themselves and the candidates seeking their several diplomas, that, in place of a person being examined three times, in three different places, and by three different sets of examiners—for example, in Anatomy—the several corporations can arrange that one and the same examination shall be made sufficient for all three. So, likewise, with all the other subjects of medical and surgical examination. The examinations can thus be rendered more thorough and complete, at the same time that the candidate is spared the worry of being examined over and over again in the same subject. The Colleges and Hall being satisfied with the result, will confer on the candidates the diploma and licence as at present. There will be no special separate examinations, such as was contemplated in some of the Bills that have been brought before Parliament. The title of "Medical and Surgical Practitioner", objected to by our correspondent, will be unnecessary, and was never thought of. There will be no levelling down; all persons will be thoroughly examined in every subject, and all will be justly entitled to the medical and surgical diploma which they will receive. The participation of the Universities in this system is an advantage to which it is needless to refer again.

#### HONOURS AT THE BRUSSELS UNIVERSITY.

SIR,—I have received a large number of letters containing inquiries as to the manner in which honours are obtained at the Brussels University. Not having the time to answer all individually, and as some misconception on the subject appears to exist even among graduates, may I trespass upon your valuable space to make a few brief remarks on a subject attracting a good deal of attention at the present moment.

I am frequently asked to name the subjects which are specially valuable in the eyes of the examiners. On this point, I cannot speak positively; but I am inclined to think that pathology, the physiological and therapeutical actions of drugs, surgical anatomy, operative surgery, and clinical medicine and surgery, are of the highest importance.

There are three tests or doctorates, and, at the conclusion of each, the examiners are always pleased to confer distinction on special merit in any subject or subjects, but no certificate is now given; and I am assured by one of the university professors that, even if one were given under such circumstances, it does not entitle the recipient to attach honours to his name. When the series of examinations are concluded, the entire court of examiners assemble on a given day, and, if, on a review of his marks in all three doctorates, the candidate be deemed worthy, they have inscribed on his degree "avec distinction", honours in all three doctorates being implied thereby. It will thus be evident to my correspondents that, although special knowledge in one or two departments will have great weight, the dead level of uniformity will have better chances of a grateful recompense.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

RICHARD CREAN.

26 Bury New Road, Manchester, July 1880.

#### RÜTHELN.

SIR,—It is so difficult to get rid of objectionable words when once they have been admitted into a language, that we ought to be very careful to oppose their first introduction. Just now, I see several papers in the JOURNAL treating of what the Germans call "rötheln". What a word for Englishmen unacquainted with the German language to pronounce! I dread to hear it. Surely it has a Latin equivalent. If not, the sooner one is devised the better. Meantime, why not stick to "German measles"?—Your obedient servant,

D.

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#### BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

Practical Lithotomy and Lithotrity. By Sir Henry Thompson. New Edition. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1880.  
The Dissector's Guide. By D. J. Cunningham, M.D. Edinburgh: MacLachlan and Stewart. 1880.  
Anatomy, Descriptive and Surgical. By Henry Gray. Ninth Edition, by T. Holmes, F.R.C.S. London: Longmans and Co. 1880.  
The Nature and Treatment of Syphilis. By C. R. Drysdale, M.D. London: Baillière, Tindall, and Cox. 1880.  
Report of the Third Congress of the Sanitary Institute of Great Britain, held at Croydon 1879; edited by C. H. Burdett and F. De Chaumont, M.D., F.R.S. London: 1880.  
Professional Book-Keeping. By W. J. Gordon. London: Wyman and Sons. 1880.  
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