

in the shape of a prayer for an injunction against the *Medical Times*.

**THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PEREMPTORILY REFUSED THE APPLICATION.** We shall give in our next the report of this, the first in the series of our legal triumphs.

The *Medical Times* for 1847 will contain the following courses of lectures:—

1. A Short Course of Lectures on some important points of Surgery, by R. Fergusson, Esq., F.R.S.E., Professor of Surgery to King's College, and Surgeon to King's College Hospital.

2. A Course of Surgery, by S. Cooper, Esq., F.R.S., Professor of Surgery to University College, and the President of the College of Surgeons, &c.

3. A Course of Lectures, Chemical and General, by Dr. Corrigan, of Dublin.

The Lectures of Dr. Wright, Dumas, and Sir Benjamin Brodie will also be continued.

Other courses of lectures and papers are also in preparation, and will be speedily announced.

## MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE.

### OPERATIONS WITHOUT PAIN.

We have been informed that two operations were performed, by Mr. Liston, at University College Hospital, on Saturday last, while the patients were under the stupifying influence of vapour of ether. The one was amputation of the leg, the other, evulsion of the nail of the great toe. The vapour of ether was inhaled by means of a proper apparatus, and, when it had produced its full effect, the operation was speedily performed. Neither of the patients knew, when they recovered from their stupor, that the operation had been performed. Mr. Liston observed that the vapour of ether had been used for a similar purpose in America, but only in minor operations, such as the removal of tumours, &c. We hope to have further particulars on this very interesting subject.

### MEDICAL LEGISLATION.

[To the Editor of the *Medical Times*.]

"Sapere aude:  
Incipe. Vivendi rectè qui prorogat horam,  
Inutile expectat dum desinat annis; at ille  
Labitur et labitur in omne volubilis ævum."  
HORACE.

SIR,—The existence of a code of laws enacted with no other view than that of promoting the welfare of the subject, and, upon the whole, calculated to effect the object contemplated, shows in a most decided manner that both rulers and people have elevated themselves to a lofty station amongst civilized nations. We have only to consult the page of history to learn that the conduct of a government has an irresistible influence upon the moral and physical condition of a people. True it is that there is in general a reciprocal action between the two, when the multitude has acquired sufficient power to give utterance to their wants, the rulers listening with an attentive ear and lending a helping hand. The ancient nations who acquired political greatness in the days gone by, but whose influence is still felt in these modern times, were remarkable for the enlightened views they had of the science of government. As wise counsellors formed and directed the machinery of the state, so there was a prosperous and happy people—a courageous and invincible army; but, as unskilful and selfish men occupied their places, every order degenerated till they were involved in one common ruin. A knowledge of the past is useful to us, as it adds to our stock of experience, thus teaching us how to avoid, in the best manner, that which may hinder our welfare, or how to follow that which may promote it. Thus it becomes every true patriot to study

closely the political economy of those nations which have made a figure in the world, in order that he may learn from the best models, and imitate the most worthy examples.

These remarks will apply not only to national but corporate legislators. The latter, we know, occupy a position less elevated and responsible than the former, yet one in which they may exercise a powerful influence for good or evil. They are intrusted by the state with a stewardship, which, if exercised fraudulently or tyrannically, will, sooner or later, be visited with severe penalties. And yet corporate bodies oftentimes present to our notice the vices of government in their worst forms. These petty kings, invested with the purple of office, seem to forget that they have any other functions to discharge than those of taking care of themselves. In the cloisters of private life they walk circumspectly, exemplify, it may be, every social virtue; but, when, summoned by their brethren to the public duties of office, too frequently have they to lament that what they admire is left at home. But we write not in judgment upon corporations without the pale of our own profession. The learned legislators of the medical commonwealth we must weigh in the balances, not of their own opinion, but in those of inflexible justice, which will show they are sadly wanting.

It is a melancholy reflection that, in the nineteenth century, men of science should be accused of ignorance and selfishness in the matter of professional legislation; that grave doctors, whom universities have nourished, and pure surgeons, whom kings have delighted to honour, should apparently forget that, as professional senators, they are to rule for the people's good—the thousands whose professional welfare and happiness are placed under their superintending care; that they should set at naught all past experience furnished them through the page of history, with which they ought to be as familiar as the schoolboy with his books, and send forth such a code of medical enactments as makes the physicians of the poor, with regard to corporate rights, wanderers upon the face of the earth. It is this of which they so justly and so frequently complain. The wealth and power of the colleges emanate from them; and to their mortification they see the most valuable gifts employed to repress their energies, while they promote the ambitious feelings of a chosen few. Selfishness has shortened the moral vision and blunted the moral sense of these collegial legislators, that they cannot see any interests worthy of regard but their own, or room for the exercise of any virtue but towards themselves. They have never yet learned the first truth of the Aristotelean philosophy, or, if they have, they have put upon it an interpretation which the illustrious teacher never contemplated. And can we wonder when we look at the evil constitution through which they have obtained the supremacy? Self-elected as some are, and enveloped in their own greatness, more impregnable than triple brass, as others are, the lofty motives of patriotism and benevolence could hardly be expected to find a place amongst them. It is high time for men to be enlightened in the science of medical legislation, and to bring into action those energies which, wisely employed, will make our profession what humanity requires it should be—truthful, liberal, and benign. It is, indeed, no enviable work to bring the faults of public bodies before the public eye; even those whose benefit is intended, too frequently misjudge the motives, while the sinners, pricked in conscience, and fearful lest a righteous sentence should be pronounced upon them, would, if possible, send to the lowest depths of Tartarus the daring accuser. We crave, then, most high and mighty counsellors, your forgiveness, while we are compelled to speak of your delinquencies, and we will make allowance for your feelings when, finding your craft of unwholesome lawmaking in danger, you cry with one heart and one voice—"Great is Diana of the Ephesians," like Demetrius and his fellow-workmen.

In taking up a subject like the one now in hand, the great difficulty appears to be to tell where to begin. The collegiate senators have been transgressors from their youth upward until now; and every year which they can count in their existence

has added to the number of their sins. Divines tell us that we enter the world with a bias to that which is evil—that our nature is so depraved that we may as well expect to gather grapes from thorns and figs from thistles, as virtuous actions from an undisciplined mind. It is just so with our collegiate bodies: they are depraved in constitution, and their volitions mark infallibly, as much as corrupt streams a polluted fountain, this humbling truth. We will not, however, disturb the musty records of our corporations, but leave them to their quiet repose in "the old oak chests" where we wish them to remain till, time-worn and worm-eaten, the only vestiges of their former existence shall be dust. One specimen of lawmaking within the last two years is enough for our purpose—a baby which was begotten by the worthy Solons of the Corporation of Surgeons, Lincoln's-Inn Fields, and ditto of Physicians of Pall-mall, but fathered upon the Right Hon. the Secretary of State, Home Department, Whitehall, and which said baby, after a very tedious passage into this world, was strangled at the birth. This is such a capital specimen, Mr. Editor, that every general practitioner throughout the kingdom should get a cast, and give it a very prominent place in his museum, and carefully label it underneath with the old quotation from Virgil, "Ex uno disce omnes," which for the benefit of the unlearned he may translate, "A chip off the old block." As there has been a false conception since the above interesting event, it is no work of supererogation to keep our medical brethren wide awake, and to direct their attention to certain parties, whom they have good reasons to suspect, for who knows but that there may be another *παῖς ἐν γαστρὶ*, which will deserve the same fate as its predecessor. Things look rather ominous when we hear of Sir B. Brodie and Mr. Guthrie having interviews with Sir G. Grey, at the Home-office, and you may well ask, Mr. Editor, "What is coming?"

Let us look, then, particularly, at medical legislation as exhibited in the precious bill sent up to the Imperial Parliament, in order that it might become law; and what do we see? Why, the grossest ignorance manifested—ignorance of the condition, the wants, and the feelings of the thousands in our profession. This is but a specimen of what had been done before; the rulers had whipped, spurred, and goaded the general practitioner till they thought he had not an atom of pluck left, and then, merciful gentlemen, by one more effort, they made sure of finishing him. Only think of the red gowns and the black gowns popping forward the Home Secretary as spokesman, and telling us medical plebeians that the Apothecaries' Act was a very silly thing—that protection was mere fudge—that quackery was only a bugbear—and that, in order for to attain a right status, we should register as licentiates of surgery—exercise such an expansive benevolence as to admit as competitors all the unlawful practitioners, from the mountebank in sock and buskin, who vends his nostrums in the market-place, up to the black-coated charlatan, who is admitted into the mansions of the great, and makes no bones of turning "old women into young." It is evident from the bill that the framers of it imagined the general practitioners a community of snobs; but they were ignorant, wilfully ignorant, of the wonder-working power of the Act of 1815, which, in its administration, had brought glory to "the company" and salvation to the profession. Young intellect had grown strong under their fostering care, unseen by the great ones in high places, when a daring effort for its destruction was attempted. It rose in the greatness of injured majesty, and showed that, though it had been long insulted, it could yet assert and maintain its rights. The ignorance manifested about the masses of the medical profession, by certain parties, was doubtless assumed, but it suited their purpose to legislate as if "they only were the people, and that wisdom would die with them"; and, taking this for granted, they urged the supreme Executive to pass such a bill as would make the objects of their envy "bite the dust." But while these lawmakers would not see the real condition of the profession, they could not see the feelings which would be brought into exercise. The bill struck home to the hearts of the