ELIZABETH BLACKWELL AND THE "MEDICAL REGISTER" FROM 1858*

BY

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It was 100 years ago, in 1858, that Elizabeth Blackwell returned to this, her own country, as a qualified medical practitioner from the United States of America, and thereby fitted herself for inclusion in the first *Medical Register*, published in 1859, as a doctor of foreign qualification but practising in this country. It is true that no woman trained and qualified in Great Britain was to be registered for another eight years, but the influence in this country of that indomitable yet so gentle woman dates from the year 1858.

Her Family

Elizabeth Blackwell was the third of eight surviving children of Samuel and Hannah Blackwell, and was born in 1821 in Bristol. Her father was established there as a sugar refiner, though he was born and reared in Worcester, and a contemporary of our founder, Sir Charles Hastings. Hannah Blackwell, Elizabeth's mother, the daughter of a prosperous Bristol merchant, was an admirably stable wife and parent to her crusading husband and her adventurous children. As a middle-class mother she paid full attention to the social training and standing of her daughters throughout her long life. Her immediate reaction to the crises in her daughters' lives was to dispatch a new bonnet, and she was always concerned lest Elizabeth should neglect the advantages of fashion in her professional life.

Samuel Blackwell was a passionate reformer, a friend of the downtrodden and of the refugee, and a nonconformist. As an active slavery abolitionist he complicated his position in the sugar trade in this country, and ruined it in the United States of America. He believed in equality of education for sons and daughters, and reared his family with the best opportunities for both until he died. His belief in physical activity and independence for boys and girls alike was ahead of his time. He was a man of great moral and physical courage. During the notorious riots in 1830, which were particularly destructive in Bristol, he, with two friends, dissuaded the mob from burning down St. Mary Redcliffe. Probably as a result of his sympathies with the rioters, his own factory was one of the few that escaped destruction in that year, only to be burned down accidentally two years later. This financial disaster led Samuel Blackwell to emigrate, taking his entire family, hoping to establish his new vacuum process of sugar-refining in the New World. After an Atlantic crossing of seven and a half weeks they reached New York in the throes of a cholera epidemic.

Elizabeth retained vivid memories of England as it was when she left it at 11 years old, including her sight of William IV's coronation procession. She first saw

New York as a country town of Dutch brick and frame houses that were largely destroyed in the disastrous fire a few years later, which she witnessed. Washington Square was an open common, and Manhattan Island a quiet countrified town. New York was a city of violent extremes. Brawling and rioting at all hours existed alongside extreme Quakerism in belief and behaviour. Advanced fashions were seen in the same streets with peasant poverty and backwardness. Enlightened reformers lived alongside industrialists so reactionary as to be capable of violence as well as ostracism when their opinions were opposed.

A few years only served to show that Blackwell could not hope to prosper. He was not only opposed to slavery, but he concealed abolitionists and even escaped slaves from danger. He died in 1838, after moving on towards the west, leaving eight children, penniless and in debt. Elizabeth at 17, the child he valued most, was the dominant character among the older ones. The three elder sisters paid the debts and reared the young family by teaching, much of the time in a school established by themselves.

By 1844 Elizabeth felt that her young brothers and sisters were able to fend for themselves. She had meanwhile come to make friends with a cultivated and advanced-thinking group of people, including Dr. Warrington, of Philadelphia, the Beechers, and the Stowes; Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a lifelong friend. Harriet Martineau was a friend of her father's and of her own, and knew the Blackwells in both countries.

Urge towards Medicine

Many factors contributed to Elizabeth's decision, taken at this time, to train as a doctor of medicine. There was her upbringing and memories of her father's crusading life, her own need for some fully constructive outlet. It is recorded that a dying friend begged her to aim at the profession of medicine itself. She was, too, indignant that the title of "female physician" was a well-used euphemism for abortionist, and in particular for a notoriously dangerous and prosperous woman in that line of work in New York. There was also the necessity of supporting herself, and she did not wish to continue to follow the profession of school-teaching. Lastly, and perhaps most important,

Medical School at Geneva, N.Y., which graduated the first woman doctor in the United States—Elizabeth Blackwell.

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she seemed to feel an urge to do the most difficult things, whether great or small. Her brother Henry maintained that it was the apparent impossibility of entering the medical profession that set her to do it. During the years of struggle to achieve her training she herself wrote, "If the path of duty leads me to Hell I shall go there." And again, "The moral fight possessed an immense attraction for me."

From the age of 23 until 26 she continued to teach; for, having tried and failed to borrow the money for her training, she worked to save it. After 29 colleges had refused her application, Geneva College, in New York State, agreed to accept her. The faculty of the small college was opposed to her entry, but the dean, Dr. Lee, pointed out the disadvantage of rejecting the request of her eminent sponsor, a distinguished physician of Philadelphia, and the possible advantages of the advertisement of her presence. He suggested referring the matter to the students, but stipulated that their decision must be unanimous. The students, perhaps with the hope of entertainment and notoriety, as well as the zeal of the young in a young country, voted in her favour, with one dissenter, who was set upon until he withdrew his No. Their chairman drew up a formal resolution, treasured by Elizabeth all her life, beginning, "That one of the radical principles of a Republican Government is the universal education of both sexes . . ."; and concluding, "In extending our unanimous invitation we pledge ourselves that no conduct of ours shall cause her to regret her attendance at this institution." They seem to have kept their word fairly successfully.

Graduation

She started work in November, 1847, five weeks late in the session, and graduated as best student in January, 1849. This startlingly short medical education was actually a few weeks longer than many American colleges provided at that

Elizabeth Blackwell at the age of 28, when she graduated from Geneva College in 1849.

date. For the graduation ceremony she dipped into her dwindled savings to buy a black brocaded gown with narrow lace at the neck and cuffs, and a black fringed cape. Her brother, who was present, recorded her refusal of the senior physician's invitation to walk in the academic procession "because it would not be ladylike."

It is interesting to try to visualize this woman. She was slight and short, 5 foot 1 inch tall, with small hands and feet, fair hair, with a general effect de-

scribed by her mother as "wispy," offset by the intensity of her large grey eyes, her broad brow, and the personal dignity recognized by all who saw her. It was a family joke that on occasion she could look 14 feet tall. She disliked references, as in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, to a "pretty little specimen of the feminine gender." She dressed more plainly than pleased her mother, but with feminine care. A little later Professor Rouyer wrote of her in *Clinique Européenne*, "She is the personification not of American Bloomerism, but of therapeutics in crinoline." From 1851 on she wore a loose-fitting tailored

jacket over her dress when at work, called by her her "doctoreal sack." Her manner was obviously well bred and skilled, even when most determined. She danced well and enjoyed it, but could immerse herself in a chosen programme for months or years at a time.

After graduation Elizabeth was well received, almost fêted, in New York and Philadelphia, but opportunities in that country for the experience she needed so badly after the brief training of the period were hard to come by. She had spent her summer vacation in the women's syphilitic department of Blockley Almhouse, and had no illusions about what lay ahead of her. She soon decided to come to Europe to work in Paris, where she understood that students of all types were welcomed. On the way she made a brief visit to Birmingham, and was shown over the General Hospital, then to London for parties, St. Thomas's Hospital, and a "pharmaceutical soirée." In Paris she called first upon Lamartine at the Elysée, then met Claude Bernard. There she was faced with disappointment, for her only opening to practical midwifery was to work as midwife in the hospital La Maternité. She worked there indefatigably, under very rough conditions, recognizing the opportunity for practical experience, until in November, 1849, she contracted gonococcal ophthalmia. This interrupted her work for nearly a year, and at one time even seemed likely to put an end to all her plans for the future. In June, 1850, however, she faced the need for excision of the affected eye, and therewith gave up all thought of the surgical career that she had intended to pursue.

Welcome in London

In August, 1850, she arrived in London to study, and began to make those friends who were to be of such importance in the year 1858. The governing body of St. Bartholomew's Hospital agreed to her working there for twelve months. Dr. James Paget gave her a special welcome, and supported her throughout her stay—and the students cheered her. She was given access to all departments except that of female diseases, a prohibition which provoked a sentence in a letter to her sister Emily, "A hundred years hence women will not be what they are now."

During the following months she made friends with Dr. Benjamin Brodie, who as Sir Benjamin was to be the first president of the General Medical Council; with Florence Nightingale, with whom she discussed preventive medicine, which was to be Elizabeth's principal work during the latter half of her life; with the advocates of the newly conceived Ling's gymnastic system. She renewed contact with Harriet Martineau. A sister reported, "She is visiting in learned and aristocratic circles everywhere." Friends who were to be important in the future were Bessie Rayner Parkes (later Madame Belloc, mother of the two authors) and Bessie Leigh Smith, who were already making women aware of their helpless position in the English social structure. Her capacity for loyal and lasting friendship with outstanding men and women had a great influence on events in the future, events which have affected the lives of so many of us.

Work in the U.S.A.

Elizabeth Blackwell returned to New York in 1851 and remained there until her next visit to England in 1858. In 1852 she founded a small dispensary, and left it a flourishing infirmary, opened in 1857 on the birthday of her friend Florence Nightingale. This was an essential step for her, since her attempts to work in existing hospitals were rejected. She was greatly distressed by "a blank wall of social and professional antagonism which faces the woman physician, that forms a situation of singular and painful loneliness."

Her sister Emily (after working under Sir James Simpson in Edinburgh) and Dr. Marie Zakrewska joined her at the infirmary. Patients mounted to more than 3,000 individuals in the year 1857, together with considerable private practice. In addition, she started to lecture and to write on

hygiene, physical activity, and sex instruction for women and girls; this, a complete innovation for the period, provoked such enthusiasm as well as criticism that she observed, "I think my writings belong to the year 1998." Dr. Jacobs, an eminent American paediatrician, commented in 1900, "It has taken fifty years for us to bring even the head of the line up to her standard."

A Significant Event

In 1858, therefore, it was an experienced woman who arrived in London at the age of 37, just in time to qualify by residence and practice (though holding a foreign degree), for entry of her name on the first *Medical Register*.

Elizabeth Blackwell's name on the first *Medical Register* is seen to be something larger than the penetration of a woman into that one profession, or even the entry of women into professions generally. It was significant, not only for women, but as part of the far larger struggle of all those debarred by virtue of creed, as well as class and sex, from the franchise, from the Services, and from university education in England. Until the foundation of University College, London, in 1827, only those men who subscribed to the articles of the Established Church could graduate from a university in England, a disability removed in the senior universities in the latter half of the nineteenth century, in the teeth of opposition. This struggle for opportunity, in which so many men and women were involved, is the background of the wide support given to Elizabeth and to her immediate successors.

Elizabeth Blackwell seems never to have recorded her reasons for the long visit to England in 1858-9. She must have foreseen its value to herself and to posterity in enabling her to register under the wide conditions permitted to foreign graduates in that first year.

By 1858 the two young women, Bessie Rayner Parkes and Bessie Leigh Smith, Elizabeth's friends of seven years before, had organized the Langham Place Group to provide information, opportunities for discussion, and, wherever possible, work for women of gentle birth who needed it. They invited Elizabeth Blackwell to lecture on "Medicine, a profession for ladies." She had a large and influential audience, including William Cowper-Temple and Russell Gurney, who were to take such an active part in the House of Commons in the matter of medical registration of women in 1875. Here, too, she met a girl of 21, "that bright, intelligent young lady . . . Miss Elizabeth Garrett," whose interest she aroused and whom she almost directed into the profession of medicine.

Her sense of perspective in evaluating the trends of the present and the future were also apparent when she again came to England in 1869, this time to reside here until her death in 1910. 1869 was three years after Elizabeth Garrett's name had been placed on the *Medical Register*, and it marked the beginning of the years of opposition to any further entries. Between 1851 and 1858 Elizabeth Blackwell had founded the dispensary in New York and seen it transformed into an infirmary. Between 1859 and 1869 she had opened a medical school in that city with the astonishingly long curriculum of three years, and had seen her pupils establish schools in Boston and Philadelphia. Ten other medical schools had received women students. In addition, she had spent herself physically and spiritually in organizing a service of trained nurses for the American Civil War, the civil war based on the slavery issue, which ran back to her earliest memories. Her infirmary had cared for black and white patients alike, and had survived the fierce opposition this provoked. She was 48, and weary. She felt that others could carry on the work started in the United States by herself. "It is my nature to start anew; and what is done is done, I will leave it," were her own words at that time. She was well aware of the need for her mature personality and her experience back in England during the next decade, "to assist in the pioneer work so bravely commencing in London."

Conditions in Great Britain

The second Elizabeth had emulated the first, but in an older country, where both tradition and prejudice were more firmly established. Enough time, too, had elapsed since the first Elizabeth's graduation for its full significance to be apparent. For Elizabeth Garrett, and for her immediate successors, the difficulties were how and where to obtain medical teaching recognized by examining bodies, and then to persuade examining bodies approved by the General Medical Council to examine them. The story of Elizabeth Garrett's piecemeal training in London and in Scotland, and her acceptance as candidate by the Society of Apothecaries because she could not be refused as a "person," are well known, as is the change in the Society's charter after examining her, so that the inlet was closed to future aspirants.

Less well known is the result of her application to enter London University based on its original liberal charter that it was available "to all classes and to all denominations." Professor Grote, the Vice-Chancellor, led the party in her favour in the senate. The voting was 10-9 for it, but reversed to 10-11 against by the Chancellor, Lord Granville, using his vote and his casting vote. The opponents maintained that a woman could be neither a "class" nor a "denomination."

Equally well known is the unhappy story of those women who attempted to graduate in medicine at Edinburgh University between 1870 and 1873. The opposition led by Professor Christison has often been recounted. The enormous amount of support given to these women by the *Scotsman*, by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, by several members of the medical faculty, and by many other members of the University, as was shown by the close voting in the senatus at the time of the lawsuit and appeal, is often forgotten. Then, too, it is overlooked that in spite of the struggle seven women did obtain full medical training in a recognized medical school, and, though denied graduation in the north, they were able to graduate elsewhere in due course without additional delay.

A Courageous Group

In August, 1874, the need for a recognized school of medicine admitting women students led Sophia Jex-Blake, with three well-known medical men, to call a meeting of those interested with a view to founding such a place of training.

Sophia Jex-Blake at the age of 25; founder of the London School of Medicine for Women. (Painted by Samuel Lawrence.)

As the result of this meeting the London School of Medicine was opened two months later, with 17 students. The original expenditure had been met by 14 friends contributing £100 each. A distinguished teaching staff was easily secured, including Dr. Burdon Sanderson and Mr. Anderson Critchett, but recognition was refused by all 19 examining bodies. All hospitals in the neighbourhood, including the Royal Free Hospital, refused admission to the students for clinical teaching, so that non-recognition was scarcely surprising. The foundation was a magnificent, almost an absurd, gesture of faith in the future.

Sophia Jex-Blake had been working in America, when she met Dr. Lucy Sewall, a pupil of Elizabeth Blackwell's, who diverted her interest from education to medicine. Of the three medical men who had formed her first committee, two, Dr. T. R. Chambers and Mr. A. T. Norton, were on the staff of St. Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, where Richard Martineau was active at the foundation of the hospital some few years before, and remained a member of the board. Richard Martineau, great admirer and confidant of Harriet, his cousin, herself an old friend through two generations of the Blackwell family in two countries, must have been well aware of Elizabeth Blackwell's qualities.

The third supporter, Dr. F. E. Anstie, of the Westminster Hospital, was an outstanding personality. He had already spent himself in trying unsuccessfully to persuade his own hospital to admit women students. He was said to be a sound clinician and a vigorous teacher, but above all an enthusiast for preventive medicine. He died tragically at the age of 40 from fulminating septicaemia contracted at a post-mortem examination, only a month before the opening of the new school of which he was to have been dean. "His humanity was enthusiastic, passionate, and urgent. . . he threw himself warmly into the political and social movements of his profession, and always on the side of the weakest, always in support of liberty and progress." These words are from his obituary notice in the *British Medical Journal*, and indicate some of the impetus in launching the school. Elizabeth Blackwell, after brief hesitation, was a member of the board from the outset, and must have given heart to this courageous group as well as contributing her practical experience and her reputation.

The Issue of Registration

In 1875 matters began to move rapidly as the result of untiring work by some of the women and their supporters. William Cowper-Temple (later Lord Mount Temple) promoted a bill "To remove doubts as to the powers of Universities of Scotland to admit women as students and to grant degrees to women"; this was withdrawn, ostensibly to enable the universities concerned to discuss the matter. A little later he promoted another to enable medical women with foreign degrees to be registered in this country, as in the first year, 1858. This matter obviously came within the purview of the General Medical Council, and was referred to them by the Duke of Richmond, Lord President of the Privy Council, together with the whole issue of the future registration of women doctors.

The discussion that took place in the Council was reported in the *British Medical Journal* with astonishing fullness. Six pages report the proceedings of committee, and no fewer than sixteen the discussion in Council, which occupied the greater part of three days. All present were agreed that registration of foreign degrees could not be allowed, either for men or women, since there could be no control of training abroad by the Council. It was on the larger issue of registration of women medical practitioners that the speakers were divided so strongly. The main supporters were led by Professor George Rolleston, F.R.S., and he spoke on the widest aspects of the subject: "It is either a great thing or a small thing. If it be a great thing, you should not oppose it, if it have a root of goodness in it . . . if it be a small thing, why make all the fuss about it? . . . Let them try, because many of them will succeed." And Sir William Gull, the Queen's Physician in Ordinary, said: "I consider there are some parts of the medical profession that a highly trained woman could do better than a man." The final compromise resolution was skilfully worded, after a gloomy preamble concerning the women's prospects, ". . . the Council are not prepared to say that women ought to be excluded from the profession." The *Dublin Medical Press* commented, "A clear stage and no favour."

Meanwhile, early in 1876 Sophia Jex-Blake had found, as she thought, an open door, though a back door, to registration. The Royal College of Surgeons had a rarely used

Diploma of Midwifery, which, with a few wider questions in the *viva voce* examination, was a registrable qualification. Counsel's opinion taken by the Royal College confirmed that it had no power to refuse the women's applications. Certificates of study were submitted and accepted, and candidates were informed of their acceptance for examination. Immediately following this, the Chairman of the examining board and both the other examiners resigned, and no others had been appointed a year later.

This lowest point of indignity and absurdity proved to be critical. Sir James Paget, that long-standing friend of Elizabeth Blackwell's, was President of the Royal College of Surgeons at this time. He obtained an interview with the Duke of Richmond in May, and stated that he "desired to vindicate the College from any wish to break faith with the women whom they had promised to admit. . ." to examination. Almost at the same time a deputation from the new London School of Medicine, led by Lord Aberdare, ex-Lord President of the Privy Council, also waited on the Duke of Richmond.

In June, Cowper-Temple withdrew his Foreign Degrees Bill and Russell Gurney, Recorder of London, promoted an Enabling Bill, giving all 19 examining bodies the power to examine women candidates. The Act received the Royal Assent in August.

Testing the Act

Without further delay the women put the Act to the test. It seemed fruitless to make a further attempt in Scotland. London had taken no steps to secure a new charter implementing its recent agreement in principle to the admission of women to all faculties. It was to Ireland that the women turned, sending over in September two of their number trained in Edinburgh. Sophia Jex-Blake recorded that "two of our ablest and most popular fellow students, Miss Pechey and Miss Shove, started for Dublin to see what help we could get from Irish chivalry," and added that Edith Pechey had "poise and a natural ease of address which made her difficult to resist."

The Queen's University, with its streak of the austere north perhaps, interposed a veto owing to the opposition of one man. The Irish College of Physicians, however, did not resist Miss Pechey. It rose to the occasion and agreed to admit women to examination and diplomas. A further important step was obtained by the recognition by the Irish College of the London School of Medicine as a teaching body. That step was only possible since the treasurer of the school, James Stansfeld, who had held office under Gladstone, was just concluding personal negotiations with the governors of the Royal Free Hospital for clinical teaching facilities, reversing the earlier decision to exclude women students.

Next it fell to Edith Shove, now a registered medical practitioner, to apply to London University, in December, 1876. In February, 1877, it was moved in the Senate that her request be granted. The voting was 14—7 in her favour, and this time the Lord Chancellor, still Lord Granville, supported her. Those who voted in her favour included the two staunch friends of the women, Sir James Paget and Sir William Gull, the Master of the Rolls, and Dr. Archibald Billings, F.R.S., known as the Father of the Medical Profession, since he had qualified in 1811 and was still actively at work.

It is interesting to remember that when nine women's names were on the *Register* they formed themselves in 1879 into a professional society. The name is significant—"The Association of Registered Medical Women." It was registration above all that mattered to them. Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell was the first chairman, and all nine women were members. It was a body of vital importance to this small group and their immediate successors, for no other central professional association was available for them to join at that time. This Association survived until 1917, when it merged with other units to form the Medical Women's Federation.

It was in 1875 that Sir Robert Christison, the same who had led the opposition in Edinburgh, was president of the British Medical Association. Both women on the *Medical Register* were members, and both had been admitted through the Metropolitan Counties Branch, a step stoutly defended by the Honorary Secretary of the Branch in a letter to the *British Medical Journal*. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson was invited to give a paper in the section on obstetrics, and this Sir Robert firmly opposed. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson stood her ground, saying that she would withdraw only if her paper was considered unworthy to be delivered. It is well to know that not only was she allowed to give her paper but when, later in the year, the referendum vote proved to be 3—1 against the admission of women to membership, the final decision was not made retrospective. Elizabeth Blackwell seems to have resigned, but Elizabeth Garrett Anderson remained an isolated figure in the Association for almost 20 years.

In 1894, with speeches of superb gallantry, the B.M.A. welcomed "female members" once more, after the resolution rescinding the veto of 1875 had been passed with almost no opposition. The loyalty and the professional unity resulting need no reference.

Conclusion

I have tried to show that the presence of this isolated middle-aged woman, Elizabeth Blackwell, in this country in the years from 1858 to 1879 had a considerable influence on events. Her family tradition and training, her wealth of

Elizabeth Blackwell at the age of 84.

professional administrative experience, were always behind the younger women. She had great personal courage, stability, and far-sightedness. She was essentially a product of the first half of the nineteenth century in the scale of her ideals and achievements and the width of her contacts. She personally selected Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, and one of her first pupils advised Sophia Jex-Blake to become a doctor. Her friends, and friends of friends on both sides of the Atlantic, were untiring and active supporters of the movement to secure medical training and registration for women. Above all, her qualities of mind, her personality, and the innovations of her work in New York and this country must have been effective in steering this group of women and those who helped them through these years.

"It is my nature to start anew; and what is done is done, I will leave it"—strange words, and a big legacy.

Professor JOHN BRUCE, president of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, on November 14 opened an extension to Duncan, Flockhart & Co.'s research laboratories in Edinburgh, consisting of additional development and biological laboratories. The former are in the chemical laboratory building, which also houses the analytical control department and the library. The new biological laboratories form part of a quadrangle of buildings where biological research and assay are carried out.

THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE AND THE COURTS

BY

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The Disciplinary Committee of the G.M.C. sitting in the Council Chamber looks rather like a court of law; so much so that people are apt to suppose that it must be exactly like a court of law and that its rules and procedures will therefore be practically identical with those which a court would apply. There is, of course, a good deal of substance in the analogy. In general the Committee does model its proceedings on the pattern set by the courts, and when difficulties arise the Legal Assessor naturally advises the Committee in the light of his own experience as a practising lawyer. None the less, there are quite a number of instances in which the analogy breaks down, and the result is sometimes surprising to those who are inclined to regard the Committee as just another sort of court.

In the first place, most people, when they think of a court of law in this connexion, have not made up their minds whether they are thinking of a civil court trying actions or of a criminal court trying prisoners. Looking at the end-result, which may be a sentence of erasure, one is put in mind at once of a criminal court sentencing a convicted man. But even here the analogy is not apt; for the Committee, unlike the judge, has only one sentence that it can pronounce. It is true that it can postpone its sentence for a year or two in order to see how the practitioner behaves in the meanwhile, but in the end decision can only be: to erase or not to erase. Moreover, the Committee is always studious to remind itself that its function is not to punish the delinquent practitioner but simply to determine with high-minded objectivity whether the public interest requires that he be erased from the *Register*. In a case, therefore, where the practitioner has already been convicted and sentenced by a court of law—for example, for indecent assault—and is now before the Committee as a consequence of that conviction, it is injudicious for his advocate to plead that he has already been punished enough without the added penalty of erasure. What he ought to say is that the sentence which the practitioner has already served (or is serving) has brought home to his mind the enormity of his misconduct and is thus itself a guarantee that he will never offend again. (It is merely a question of putting the point tactfully.)

But the nature of the charge made against the practitioner often suggests a different line of thought. A canvassing case, for instance, is seldom in the least like a criminal prosecution. As often as not, it is a quarrel between two practitioners who were recently in partnership, and closely resembles civil litigation.

Some Difficulties

It is more fruitful to examine the differences than the analogies between the Committee and the courts. Let us look first at the Committee's members. They come from all over Great Britain and both parts of Ireland. Most of them are either in general practice as doctors or hold teaching, clinical, or administrative appointments. They assemble at 44, Hallam Street twice a year and are always, and understandably, anxious to finish their business by the end