on account of the mischief which must result to the poorer classes and to children, that we are anxious to see some effective provision for the suppression of quackery, and for the prohibition of the administration of dangerous and powerful medicines by persons ignorant of their use. The uninformed amongst the wealthy may obtain information, if they are so disposed, and can at any rate take care of themselves, and if Members of Parliament, who are so ready to cheer the withdrawal of all check on the homicidal administration of medicine, are desirous of retaining the privilege of swallowing an indefinite quantity of Morison's pills or any other like nostrum, under the advice of a known empiric, by all means let them have it. Let it be made a privilege of Parliament, and replace the franking of letters if it so please them; but the public at large are entitled to receive protection, though perhaps too ignorant to look for it, as well against the empiric in medicine, as against the empiric in law,—from an illiterate and unauthorized traffic in health and life, as well as from any other species of swindling; and it is precisely because they are ignorant, and helplessly ignorant, that such protection is required.

LOCAL BENEVOLENT FUNDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

May I be permitted, through your Journal, to offer a few remarks upon one or two of the subjects that came before the meeting at Northampton, and instead of answering, as I once thought of doing, when the meeting had passed over, Dr. Conolly's letter of the 19th of July, I would rather propose a suggestion, whereby we may all agree in furthering the object which, I am sure, we all desire to obtain, although perhaps by different means.

At the meeting a very marked difference of opinion manifested itself regarding the comparative advantages of a general central fund, or, of a number of distinct local charities. Mr. Martin said, that in many counties there already existed medical benevolent societies; and Dr. Conolly replied that in many counties there were no such local charities, both of which statements were undoubtedly correct; but why should the latter statement remain longer a fact? Surely enough is known of the working of local charities to enable every district to have its own benevolent association; and although I must still consider that the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association would have greatly stepped out of its province by even attempting to form a compulsory benevolent fund, still I conceive that the council of this great body may be of much use, through its district branches, by suggesting to them the propriety of originating local charities in those counties where they do not at present exist; benevolent funds, which, like the present central fund, might be in connection with, although constitutionally distinct from, the Association. At, or after the branch meetings, the

affairs of their several associated charities might be arranged, and thus the inconvenience of having to attend two separate meetings would be prevented.

In reference to the suggestion of a grant from the funds of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association towards our benevolent fund, we know that there are already many of our members who do not subscribe either to the benevolent fund, or to local charities; if, however, the Association's funds were applied to the purposes of charity, would not this offer an excuse to these very men for still withholding their individual support, inasmuch as they may consider, and justly too, that the Association's funds do in part belong to them; and further, that such funds have been subscribed for the express purpose of benefitting the subscribers, by furnishing to them the greatest possible amount of medical and surgical knowledge at the least possible expence, and that through the medium of a weekly journal and an annual volume of transactions?

Respecting Dr. Budd's amendment upon my motion, I may be allowed to regret that I had it not in my power to remain to the termination of the second day's meeting; but as a pretty full account of the discussion thereon is given in the Journal, I think that my explanatory letter to Dr. Favell might also have appeared. I trust, however, that the Committee appointed may see it expedient to continue a weekly publication, and that as there is a surplus fund, they may recommend its application for the purposes of the extension of medical and surgical science.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES INGLIS.

Halifax, August 16, 1844.

SIR JAMES GRAHAM'S MEDICAL BILL.

On Thursday, the 22nd of August, 1844, the medical practitioners of the county of Surrey assembled at the Coffee House at Epsom, for the purpose of taking into consideration "A Bill for the better regulation of medical practice throughout the united kingdom," which the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Home Department had lately presented to the House of Commons: THOMAS MARTIN, Esq., OF REIGATE, IN THE CHAIR.

Whereupon, after mature deliberation, it was proposed by James Stedman, Esq., of Guilford, and seconded by William Chaldecott, Esq., of Dorking, and resolved unanimously,

That this meeting views with disapprobation the proposed constitution of the "Council of Health, and Medical Education," as not being likely to possess the confidence of the profession. And that this meeting cannot refrain from expressing its surprise and regret, that no general practitioner is, by this bill, proposed to be appointed on the Council of Health and Medical Education. Thereby withholding from that most important and numerous body a voice in the council, from which it is proposed should emanate all the laws and regulations which will have so important, so vital, an effect, on the future condition of the great body of the medical practitioners throughout the united kingdom.

Proposed by George Fletcher, Esq., of Croydon, and seconded by Peter Martin, Esq., of Reigate, and resolved unanimously,

That greatly prejudicial to the interests of the profession, and to the public welfare, would be the removal of all restrictions and penalties from unlicensed practitioners of medicine, which the repeal of the Act of the 55th of Geo. III. would effect.

Proposed by George Harcourt, Esq., of Chertsey, and seconded by George Bottomley, Esq., of Croydon, and resolved unanimously,

That so satisfactorily and efficiently have the court of examiners of the Society of Apothecaries exercised their powers under the Act of 1815, in gradually raising the scale of required attainment on the part of candidates for examination, and of which the good effects on the great body of general practitioners are manifest to the whole world; that the present meeting is of opinion, that an Act to amend the Act of 1815, by which the power of examining and licensing the general practitioner should be retained to members of his own grade, with protection to the public, and the profession, from evils and mischiefs to be apprehended from the intrusion of unqualified practitioners, might be so constructed as to meet every present difficulty, and attain all the objects sought for by the profession, in general, in a wise and prudent law on the subject.

Proposed by John Allan, Esq., of Epsom, and seconded by Henry Taylor, Esq., of Guildford, and resolved unanimously,

That in the opinion of this meeting the aforesaid bill is of so injurious a tendency towards the medical profession, as well as to the whole population of the country, that every legitimate means should be used to oppose its farther progress through parliament.

Proposed by Edward Wallace, Esq., of Carshalton, and seconded by George Stilwell, Esq., of Epsom, and resolved unanimously,

That under present circumstances, every member of the profession, here present, pledges himself to endeavour to impress the minds of members of both houses of parliament, with whom they may come into communication, with a correct knowledge of the erroneous and dangerous nature of this bill, and to solicit their opposition to it.

Proposed by W. Chaldecott, Esq. of Dorking, seconded by John Allan, Esq., of Epsom, and unanimously resolved,

That this meeting, feeling assured that the time has arrived when it behoves every professional—every general practitioner more especially—to enter upon a serious examination of his present position, and of the dangers which await him if the projected measure of the Right Hon. Secretary should become a law, earnestly requests the attention of their professional brethren to the following observations.

“It is well known to many, perhaps forgotten by some, and little thought of by others, that before the year 1815, the medical profession was in a very unsatisfactory state, as to education and attainment. With the greater number of its then practitioners, it was more or less of the nature of a trade. Much ignorance prevailed, although some acute, able, and talented men, supported the credit, and maintained the science, and usefulness of the profession.

To a proper sense of these great defects, the increas-

ing knowledge, and necessities of the times, aroused the profession, and led to the Act of 1815.

If we contrast the present state of medicine as a science, with its practical results—the knowledge and acquirements of practitioners—the safety and curative advantages on the score of health, relieved suffering, and prolongation of life, now enjoyed by the public, with the general state of the profession previously; the beneficial changes and improvement which have ensued, must be manifest to all, who are old enough to remember the former state of the profession, and capable of appreciating the change.

These great improvements, there can be no doubt, have been in a great measure effected by the Act of Parliament, which, with all its acknowledged imperfections, has been brought to bear most usefully, on the previously imperfect qualifications of medical men, and on the less apparent, but more important interests of the public.

Who then are the parties that have through good report, and evil report, from 1815, to the present time, carried out the provisions of that important and beneficial act in so gradual, but judicious and effectual, a manner? These parties are the Society of Apothecaries. To them we are bound in honour, and good feeling, and from a sense of justice, to accord the meed of praise, and to acknowledge our deep and lasting obligations.

To the efficient working of that act by their court of examiners, the medical men, now in practice, owe their superiority to their predecessors—their improved and more extensive education, and professional acquirement—and their increased estimation in public opinion and regard.

The contemplated measure therefore, denoting ignorance of the past, as well as present, state of the profession; and its author apparently also unqualified to judge of the future; must certainly be viewed with alarm. It is a measure which coolly throws overboard, as it is termed, the respectable, conscientious, and successful executive of a difficult and important trust; unsought by, be it remembered, but enforced upon it, by Act of Parliament, and so effectively and ably executed, and carried out, as equally to astonish by its results, the public bodies to whose superintendence it was first offered, and by whom it was declined; and the Government who left it in their charge.

To repeal, therefore, an Act of Parliament, which, with all its imperfections, has such acknowledged merits—which affords the only protection, and that very small, at present enjoyed by the legally recognized general practitioner, and by the public, appears to be absurd, as well as mischievous.

Gentlemen having obeyed the law, undergone an expensive and laborious education, are to have their only safeguard rudely swept away; and unprincipled untested men, are to be admitted to free and unpimped competition with them, as candidates for public confidence. The public in general, ignorant of medical affairs, and incapable of a correct judgment as to professional qualification, yields credence and confidence to the ignorant, unscrupulous, and artful pretender.

In the “Statement” lately published by the Society of Apothecaries, upwards of fifteen hundred individuals are reported to have been rejected by the court

of examiners on the score of incompetency. In other words, those persons were considered to be unworthy and unfit to be entrusted with the care of the public health. But for this act of 1815, therefore, fifteen hundred incompetent practitioners would have been let loose among the community from amongst the regular aspirants to medical practice, to say nothing of the nostrum-mongers and quacks who would immediately have made their appearance.

In resisting the contemplated measure, therefore, we are endeavouring to vindicate the best interests of the public, as well as those of the profession.

That the medical polity of the country is susceptible of great improvement, we are well assured, and that many highly beneficial measures might be adopted, as well as pernicious regulations done away. Such changes constitute a legitimate reform, which would meet with our earnest and cordial support. Such reforms would elevate still more the legitimate practitioner; would render him still more useful and able in the exercise of his profession; and would mitigate, if they could not do more, the evils of empiricism.

Believing as we do, that such advantageous results might fairly be expected from an amendment of the act of 1815, by an extension of the powers of the court of examiners, and such other improvements as might be suggested, we would on this important occasion support the Society of Apothecaries, and offer them our strenuous aid, in resistance to the measure now in contemplation, and in furtherance of all improvements, of which the present act might be susceptible.

We would therefore strongly recommend immediate co-operation with that Society, on the grounds of prudence and good policy, as well as from the higher principle of gratitude for past services; until lately, too little appreciated, and too grudgingly acknowledged.

The members of the profession should therefore endeavour to impress on the minds of members of both houses of Parliament, the important bearings of this medical question, on the best interests of the whole people—to instruct them on the danger and impolicy of tampering, injudiciously, with the education and the interests of the great body of medical practitioners—to show them on what principles medical legislation should proceed, so as to be advantageous to the public, as well as to the profession—and earnestly to entreat them to beware how they open the door to dangerous and unprincipled empirics; whose unopposed entrance would be so injurious to the true interests of the legitimate and well qualified practitioner, and so incalculably dangerous to the health and well being of the public."

ALBERT NAPPER, of Guildford,
Secretary.

SIR JAMES GRAHAM'S MEDICAL BILL.

At a meeting of the medical profession of Leamington, Warwick, and the surrounding districts, convened for the purpose of taking into consideration the injury which would accrue to the profession, by the passing of the above bill in its present form, and held

at the Warneford Hospital, Leamington, August 22d, Dr. MIDDLETON in the Chair;

The following resolutions were unanimously agreed to:—

1st. Proposed by Dr. Luard, seconded by Mr. Prichard—

That this meeting, having had their attention called to the provisions of a Bill which has been submitted to the House of Commons, by Sir James Graham, on the subject of Medical Reform; is of opinion that the unconditioned Repeal of the Apothecaries' Act of 1815, would be productive of great evil, both to the medical profession and the public, by throwing open the practice of medicine and surgery to unqualified persons.

2nd. Proposed by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Rice—

That, therefore, this meeting do agree that a petition shall be presented to the House of Commons, signed by members of the medical profession of Leamington, Warwick, and the immediate neighbourhood, praying that, if it be deemed expedient in the proposed Bill to repeal the Act of 1815, such legislative enactments may be introduced as shall prevent all unqualified persons from engaging in the practice of medicine and surgery.

3rd. Proposed by Mr. Prichard, seconded by Dr. Homer.

That it is expedient that every member of the profession should exert all the influence he may have with any Members of Parliament, for the furtherance of the prayer of this petition.

4th. Proposed by Dr. Bourne, seconded by Dr. Jephson—

That the county members be respectfully requested to take charge of this petition, and to use their best exertions for its success.

5th. Proposed by Mr. Boulton, seconded by Dr. Burman—

That this meeting is desirous of expressing to the Editor of the Times newspaper, their sense of the powerful advocacy of the interests of the medical profession, which has been exhibited in several leading articles of that paper.

6th. Proposed by Mr. H. L. Smith, seconded Mr. Watson—

That the proceedings of this meeting be published in the *Times* newspaper, the *Lancet*, and *Medical Gazette*, the *Journal of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association*, the *Birmingham Herald*, and the *Leamington Spa Courier*.

7th. Proposed Dr. Jephson, seconded by Mr. Prichard—

That the best thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his efficient conduct in the chair.

The meeting was attended by between forty and fifty medical gentlemen of the place and neighbourhood, whose signatures were appended to the subjoined petition, among whom were—Dr. Middleton, Dr. Jephson, Dr. Luard, and fifteen other resident practitioners, of Leamington; Dr. Bourne, Mr. Bury, Mr. Smith, Mr. Overton, and Mr. Barton, from Coventry; Dr. Thomson, and Mr. Rice, from Stratford; Dr. Burman, from Henley; Mr. H. L. Smith and Mr. Welchman, from Southam; Messrs. Kimble, from Knowle; Mr. England, from Wellesbourne; Dr. Montgomery, from Southam, &c. &c.