ought to be prepared to prove that there are abuses existing in the Society, and that the present body have been guilty of some act which would render them unfit for the performance of the very important duties with which they are invested. It may also be required to prove that the present Court of Examiners at Apothecaries' Hall, are incompetent to fill the office to which they have been appointed. He will find some difficulty in discovering any one who would have moral courage enough to do this. If he will take the trouble to read the recent regulations of the Court of Examiners, he will then see the superior talents and high qualifications that are necessary and required for a candidate to possess, who wishes to obtain a certificate from the Apothecaries' Hall; and he would, I am sure, at once be struck with the numerous and varied acquirements they insist on, and must admire and approve of the anxiety and care evinced, on the part of the examiners, to admit none as members but those who, from their classical education and great attainments, are likely to become useful and scientific members of the profession, as well as valuable members of the community. I think it would give him some trouble to get Members of Parliament to vote for any measure that was intended to supersede these examiners, and to destroy the society to which they belong. He must first conceive, then, that the Apothecaries' Society is not fit for the purpose it was originally designed, and that they are not capable of being reformed. The general practitioner, before 1815, never dreamt of having the sole legal control over the medical profession. They at that time applied to the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons to assist them in improving the then state of the profession, and both these corporations declined to act with them. The associated apothecaries were, therefore, driven by circumstances, and the apathy and supineness of the medical and surgical colleges to undertake the important office, not only of superintending the education and regulating the practice of all future medical practitioners, but this office involves in it the whole interests of the medical profession, the welfare of the community at large, the care of the public health, and the advancement of medical science.

That such extraordinary powers should have been confided to what is considered to be the lowest grade of the medical profession, has always surprised and astonished the present race of practitioners. It is to be regretted that the Royal College of Physicians had not secured such powers to themselves. It is now near thirty years since the Society of Apothecaries were invested by the legislature with full powers to discharge the duties assigned them by the "Act for better regulating the Practice of Apothecaries throughout England and Wales;" and I should say that they have proved, to the satisfaction of the profession and the public, their competency to the responsible charge they have had conferred on them. They have faithfully, honourably, and meritoriously, discharged the duties entrusted to them in a manner which reflects on them the highest credit, and before they are deprived of the important trust delegated to them, I think the instigators of a measure for such purpose, or the parties who are now trying to supersede the Apothecaries' Society, are bound to prove that they have abused that trust, or rendered themselves unworthy of any longer retaining the important privileges and powers

which they have shown themselves, in my opinion, so capable of managing. They are raised much in the estimation of the members of the profession and the public, by the laudable desire they have exhibited to enhance the qualification, and of course to elevate the character, of those who are about to become Licentiates of their Society. Had the physicians, the consulting surgeon, and those who, by the voice of public opinion, have been raised a little above their brethren in the profession, done as much as the Society of Apothecaries have in keeping up its respectability, we should not have had so much to complain of, or to have opposed the present bill.

Sir James Graham will be doing a very great injury, and an act of injustice, to a most useful body of men, if he repeals the Apothecaries' Act. I do think the Society of Apothecaries have some claim to take part in any new governing medical body, they being at present the only legal authority for regulating the practice of medicine; and we have the testimony of Sir Henry Hallford, Dr. Seymour, Sir David Barry, Sir Astley Cooper, Mr. Guthrie, and others, as to how they have regulated it. I still think that the numerous meetings of the general practitioners, and the petitions to the House of Commons, may induce the Home Secretary to allow the Society of Apothecaries to have the privilege of sharing in the examining of candidates, and granting certificates in materia medica, chemistry, &c., and only deprive them of the *licensing and controlling power*. This he may transfer to the proposed "Council of Health and Medical Education." I had intended to have made some remarks on the new Council of Health and other parts of the bill, but this letter is already, I fear, too long. I therefore must reserve it for another letter.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

GEORGE KING.

Bath, September 30, 1844.

GROSS TREATMENT OF A UNION MEDICAL OFFICER. — EXTRAORDINARY CONDUCT OF THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,

I pray you to lend the aid of your Journal towards obtaining redress for some of the many grievances under which Union surgeons labour, and to draw your attention towards a gross case of injustice which has just happened to myself.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY C. DESHON, M.R.C.S.

Medical Officer, Sturminster Union.

Child Okeford, Blandford,

October 19, 1844.

On the 3rd of August, I was summoned to attend Samuel Rogers, a pauper, of the parish of Shillingston, in the Sturminster Union. I attended him immediately, and found he had sustained an oblique fracture of the thigh. I put up the limb without loss of time, attended the patient for four consecutive days during the inflammatory stage; then, with the intervention of

one day, and finding him doing well, I allowed two days to intervene before my next visit. I now found, that by the forcible movements of the boy, my splint had been displaced, and I took extraordinary means to prevent the recurrence of such an accident, and promised to see him daily for some time. On the evening of the same day, I received an order from the overseer to discontinue my attendance, which I refused to do. The overseer acted upon a note which he had received from a Mr. Thompson Jacob,* *ex-officio* Guardian, in which he had stated, that the limb had been "*three times inefficiently set*," and desired him to call in "*a proper medical man*." I immediately requested two neighbouring surgeons to give their opinion on the case, and upon Mr. J. Goodridge, surgeon, R.N., presenting himself for this purpose the following day, he found the door barred against him by Mr. Jacob's orders. The mother of the boy, though not herself dissatisfied with me, was ordered to refuse admission to me, or to any other surgeon whose impartial opinion I might seek, and if necessary, to call in the aid of the parish constable. On the following Board-day, I laid a charge of unwarrantable interference against Mr. Jacob and others, but was informed that an *ex-parte* statement could not then be entertained, whereupon I placed the whole of the proceedings before the Poor-Law Commissioners, who ordered the local Board to investigate the case. Against the injustice of that investigation I felt bound to protest, since the Chairman, Mr. H. F. Yeatman, jun., before the case was entered into, publicly observed, that I should "never attend him if he broke his leg," and refused to hear me as a complainant, thereby placing me, the aggrieved and injured party, on the defence, with no specific charge to meet, and with no accusing person to contend against. The attendant surgeon, in his evidence, stated that he "found the fracture and everything very proper, with which nobody could find fault," although, not approving of my system, (which was the long straight splint of Liston,) he changed it on the following day for the double-inclined plane. The result of my protest was, that Mr. Tufnell, Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, was deputed to hear my complaint, which, after some demur, he did, previously examining witnesses against me. The sequel has been a letter from the Poor-Law Commissioners to the Sturminster Board, replying to a charge against me (never made) and requesting that Board "to admonish Mr. Deshon to be more attentive in cases of this description in future; since the Commissioners are advised that a fracture of the thigh requires, during the first fortnight, the daily attendance of the surgeon;" thus deciding, contrary to the evidence of Mr. H. Hancock, Surgeon to the Charing-Cross Hospital, and of Mr. J. Goodridge, surgeon, R.N., who both affirmed (one on oath) that "daily

attendance on a fracture of this kind is only necessary during the inflammatory stage." Thus the Poor-Law Commissioners, by a singular *coup de main*, have converted me from the complainant to the defendant, and have entirely passed over my appeal for protection against the unjust manner in which my professional character has been assailed, and the illegal suspension in my office of parish surgeon.

Copy of the evidence of H. Hancock, Esq., and of Mr. Good, taken before the Sturminster Board of Guardians, on Wednesday, August 28th, as forwarded to me by the Clerk. H. C. Deshon.

Mr. Henry Hancock.—I am surgeon to Charing Cross Hospital, and lecturer on surgery; I attend here to-day at the request of Mr. Deshon, with whom I am on a visit. Unless absolutely necessary I should use no other apparatus than that used by Mr. Deshon in the present instance; a bandage over the fracture might, if muscular spasm arose, lead to ulceration, and I am in the habit always of enforcing on my pupils the importance of putting up the leg with as little bandage as possible, and not to cover the seat of fracture, so that the bone may be examined without its being removed every time; you can also apply more readily cold lotions to the part; I do not think it was absolutely necessary to visit the patient more than four days consecutively; it would have been more prudent; after the inflammation had subsided I should not think it necessary to attend the patient daily; I have frequently found it necessary to alter my apparatus daily for a week.

Mr. John Good.—On Sunday I was called upon by the overseer to attend the pauper Samuel Rogers; I found that the boy had been suffering from a fractured thigh, and the treatment had been that of Liston's splint, with a bandage from the ankle to the upper part of the hip, with an outside splint; I found the boy tolerably comfortable; Mr. Deshon had just been there; I have no fault to find with the way in which I found the patient.

Examined by Mr. Deshon.—I was not satisfied with the splints, otherwise I should not have altered the bandages; I put on additional splints at once, and altered the whole system next morning; I did not think the leg was quite secure; every time he passed his water he had to be turned (!) The splints were not such as I would have used; I should have thought it necessary to attend a patient with a broken thigh for a week at least; I do not think four days enough.

Mr. Deshon re-examined.—I visited the patient on Sunday morning; I found a slight inversion of the toes; I altered the bandages, and made all comfortable.

(COPY.)

"Poor-Law Commission Office, Somerset House,
Oct. 14, 1844.

"Sir,—The Poor-Law Commissioners have received the report of the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Tufnell, respecting the investigation made by him into the complaints against Mr. Deshon, one of the medical officers of the Sturminster Union, in regard to his mode of treatment in the case of a boy who had his thigh fractured.

"With reference to this case, the facts appear to relate solely to the mode of treatment, and the neces-

* Mr. Thomson Jacob, who is a Magistrate of the county, and was for several years Chairman of the Sturminster Board of Guardians, threatened shortly previous, to report me to the Board for refusing to attend to the illegal orders of an insolent Guardian!!! Mr. Thompson Jacob presided over the Board on the issuing, by the Poor-Law Commissioners, of the order to pay extra for surgical cases, to meet the expenses of which boon, the sum of £20 annually, was deducted from the salaries of the surgeons. And lastly, although two investigations have taken place before the Board, yet on neither occasion did Mr. Thompson Jacob appear.

sity of the close attendance of the medical officer upon the case, and the Commissioners are advised that the question of the preference of the long straight splint, (Liston's system,) or the double inclined plane in the treatment of a fractured thigh, has been differently viewed by different surgeons, and that probably at the present time the majority of surgeons are in favour of the long straight splint, and therefore that the adoption of it in the case in question was not incorrect practice.

"The Commissioners are further advised, that because the case proceeded unfavourably, it is not to be inferred that the straight splint was unsuited to it, and that the unfavourable progress may have been the consequence of the bandages not being properly adjusted. If, however, with the straight splint, and a proper adjustment of the bandages, the case did not proceed favourably, the straight splint ought then to have been changed for the double inclined plane.

"With respect to the frequency of the attendances of the medical officer on the case, the Commissioners are advised, that a fracture of a thigh requires during the first fortnight the daily attendance of the surgeon, as the bandages are almost sure to want some daily re-adjustment for the maintenance of the limb in its proper position, and that, accordingly, the intervals between the Tuesday and Thursday, and Thursday and Sunday, in Mr. Deshon's attendance, ought not to have occurred.

"The Commissioners request that Mr. Deshon may be admonished to be more attentive in cases of this description in future.

"I am, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Signed) "E. CHADWICK,
Secretary."

"S. W. Long, Esq.,
Clerk to the Guardians, Sturminster Union."

SIR JAMES GRAHAM'S MEDICAL BILL. NORTHERN COUNTIES MEETING.

At a general meeting of the Medical Profession in the Northern Counties, convened by the Council of the North of England Association, to consider the proposed Medical Bill of Sir James Graham, and held in the Lecture Room of the Literary and Philosophical Society, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on Wednesday, the 23d of October, 1844, Dr. Headlam in the Chair, Dr. Charlton, the Secretary, read the following Report:—

"The Council of the North of England Association having attentively considered the Bill of Sir James Graham, beg to present the following Report of those provisions which seem to them objectionable, and also of such portions of the bill as appear worthy of the strenuous support of the profession. The provisions of which the Council approve are the following:—

"1. The establishment of a General Council of Health and Medical Education, which places the whole profession under the superintendence of one presiding body, which shall control the Universities and Colleges, and which if judiciously constituted and worked, would in every way benefit the public and the medical profession.

"2. The connection established for the first time

between the Government of this country and the medical profession, by means of the above executive of health and medical education.

"3. The complete education that by the bill is provided for the general practitioner, and the uniformity of qualification to practice which it confers upon all duly educated medical men, by abolishing all local restrictions, and yielding reciprocity of privilege throughout the kingdom.

"4. The fixing a more suitable age for the admission of physicians and surgeons to practice.

"5. The prohibiting of all foreign degrees attainable by purchase.

"6. The releasing of the profession from its connection with a trading company.

"7. The general registration of all duly-qualified practitioners.

"8. The giving to none but registered practitioners the right to recover charges for attendance.

"9. The provisions against the assumption of medical titles by unregistered practitioners.

"The portions of the bill which the Council consider as defective, are the following:—

"1. The mode of formation of the Executive Council; which, as proposed, does not recognize the representative principle in the election of its members, and allows an undue preponderance in favour of the Government.

"2. The registration of all qualified practitioners not being made compulsory.

"3. The total absence of all protection against quackery and illegal practitioners, even to the removal of the present existing restriction, and which, in the opinion of the Council, constitutes one of the grand points in which this measure is defective.

"4. The omission of any summary and inexpensive mode of enforcing penalties against those persons assuming medical titles, or falsely pretending to be upon the register."

The following resolutions were unanimously carried: Moved by Dr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Brumell:—"That this meeting views with pleasure the attention bestowed by Government upon the subject of Medical Reform, and that it regards with peculiar satisfaction the circumstance that the present Medical Bill has been introduced into Parliament by one of her Majesty's Ministers."

Moved by Sir John Fife, and seconded by Dr. Knott:—"That this meeting, having duly considered the details of the bill, does approve of many of the principles therein contained, and regards certain of the provisions of the said bill as worthy of the strenuous support of the profession; but it is further of opinion, that, if allowed to pass into a law without important modifications, it would on the whole be more injurious than profitable to the cause of medical legislation."

Moved by Mr. Greenhow, and seconded by Mr. Dixon:—"That this meeting cordially approves of the formation of the Council of Health and Medical Education; but that it most earnestly deprecates the proposed method of forming the said Executive Council, whereby two-thirds of the members would be nominated by the Government, and the representation of the interests of the Profession, especially in the provinces, would be entirely neglected."

Moved by Dr. G. Fife, and seconded by Dr. De