

McCLELLAND (M.A.)

TEACHING IN MEDICINE

— AND —

LICENSING TO PRACTICE.

Report on the Desirability and Practicability of
Separating the Work.

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TEACHING IN MEDICINE AND LICENSING TO PRACTICE:

Report on the Desirability and Practicability of Separating the Work.

BY M. A. McCLELLAND, M. D., KNOXVILLE, ILL.

In his "Advancement of Learning," Bacon remarks that "Medicine is a science which hath been more professed than laboured, and yet more laboured than advanced." The same remark is applicable to-day. The question upon which your committee is called to report is not a new one. In the United States, as early as 1835, the Faculty of the Medical College of Georgia recognizing that "through the rapid multiplication of medical schools, and the active rivalry for students to support them," many persons were sent forth but imperfectly prepared for their duties as physicians, issued a call for a convention, to be made up of delegates from the several colleges, to formulate a course of study, and to exact a higher degree of attainment, prior to graduation. What followed, is a matter of history,—the movement was suppressed through the neglect of the University of Pennsylvania, to set the time, and designate the place at which such convention should be held.

Four years later, the attention of the New York State Medical Society was called to the question of raising the standard of medical education by Dr. John McCall, of Utica, and by resolution a second convention was called, which, like the former one, failed mainly through the apathy, if not open hostility, of the schools of Philadelphia.

Some five years after the question was again discussed in the New York society, and referred to a committee, of which

Professor N. S. Davis, now an honored citizen of Illinois and a member of this society, was made chairman. Out of this grew the formation of the American Medical Association, through which it was hoped a higher standard of qualification would be enforced, and medicine, in the United States, raised from its downward course. To a considerable extent, the hopes of the profession have been realized, but much is yet left to be done.

What was true in 1835, in regard to the excess of medical schools, in respect to population, is more than true to-day, and it behooves the profession to examine the admission of members to the faculty, and if possible, suggest some remedy, which if not sufficient to cure the disease, may at least serve to mitigate its more serious sequelæ.

The part assigned me in this report of your committee, will be best shown, in my judgment, by a brief review of the status of medical practitioners, in the past few hundred years, and of the laws enacted to insure a higher standard of qualification, and the results flowing from such enactments, and attempts to insure a greater proficiency on the part of those holding themselves out as medical practitioners. To older members of this society, and to those who have given the subject some attention, this manner of treating the subject may be trite and common-place; to others I hope it may not be without interest.

The condition of medicine, prior to 1511, was so vague and uncertain, that when princes were sick, their privy council made choice of some one to attend them, "out of the many pretenders to the science of physick." In the third year of the reign of Henry VIII, the King and Parliament restrained the practice of both pretenders and council, by the following act, which, as it shows the standing of medicine at that time, and the means thought best calculated to raise the standard of proficiency. I beg permission to present it in full.

"Forasmuch as the science and cunning of physick *and surgery* (to the perfect knowledge whereof, be requisite, both great learning

and ripe experience), is daily within this realm exercised by a great multitude of ignorant persons, of whom the greater part have no manner of insight in the same, nor in any other kind of learning. Some, also, can no letters on the book so far forth, that common artificers, as smiths, weavers and women boldly, and accustomedly take upon them great cures, and things of great difficulty, in the which they partly use sorcery and witchcraft, partly apply such medicines unto the disease, as be very noious, and nothing meet therefor, to the high displeasure of God, great infamy of the faculty, and grievous hurt, damage and destruction of many of the King's liege people, most especially of *them that cannot discern the uncunning from the cunning.* Be it therefore, to the surety and comfort of all manner of people, by the authority of this present parliament enacted, that no person within the city of London, nor within seven miles of the same, take upon him to exercise or occupy as a physician or surgeon, except he be first examined, approved, and admitted by the bishop of London, or by the dean of St. Paul's for the time being, calling to him or them, four doctors of physick, and for surgery, other expert persons in that faculty; and for the first examination, such as they shall think convenient, and afterwards always four of them that have been so approved, upon the forfeiture, for every month that they do occupy as physicians or surgeons, not admitted or examined after the tenour of this act, of five pounds, etc., etc."

This, I believe, was the last alliance of medicine with the priesthood. Prior to this, by command of Pope Benedict the Ninth, and Urban the Second, prelates, archdeacons and the superior clergy generally, were forbidden to practice any part of medicine, but with the exception of surgical operations, especially the use of the cautery or the knife, "the lower clergy, whose ignorance and vice were at this time, especially notorious," could practice medicine, or any of the other sciences. So the statutes of Henry were an advance upon those of Benedict and Urban, and there is no doubt that the separating of the teaching from the licensing to practice, even if the examinations were supervised by a bishop, was attended by an advance in acquirement on the part of the proposed licentiate, especially if the bishop called to his assistance in such

examination three or four doctors in physic or other expert persons in that faculty.

Following this, the care and control of medicine, in all its branches, passed from the care of the Church to that of the Royal College of Physicians, the foundation of which was laid in 1518. To it was intrusted the care and obligations to enforce the existing statutes, and further by increased powers and privileges to not only suppress quackery, but to unite in one indissoluble body, all the faculty of medicine, *i. e.*, medicine, surgery and pharmacy.

These powers and privileges were confirmed and extended by other acts of parliament, particularly those of 14 and 15 Henry VIII, C. 5, and 32 Henry VIII, C. 40, by which it was intrusted the future government of the profession of medicine "in all and every *his* members and parts."

By this surgery was made an important part of medicine, which was never denied, except by the Church. By it, the barber or the most ignorant of the clergy were surgery's most proper practitioners. What course did the College of Physicians take? The precedents of the Church, and that of 1 Edward IV, were re-echoed, and surgery was relegated to the Company of Barbers. This re-erection of the barrier between medicine and surgery, whereby it should be lawful to every person—

"As well women as men, being the King's subjects, having knowledge and experience of the nature of herbs, roots, and waters, or the operations of the same by speculation or practice, within any part of England, or within any other of the King's dominions, to practice, use and minister in and to any outward sore, uncome, wound, apostemation, outward swelling or disease, any herb or herbs, ointments, baths, pultess and emplaisters, according to their cunning, experience and knowledge in any of the diseases, or sores and maladies, beforesaid, and all others like to the same, or drinks for the stone, strangury or agues, without suit, vexation, trouble, penalty or loss of goods, statutes or ordinances to the contrary heretofore made in any wise, notwithstanding,"

was a retrograde movement that retarded the advancement of medicine in all "his" parts till 1745, in which year it fell to the oversight and government of the Corporation of Surgeons, and in 1800 to the Royal College of Surgeons. Had the Royal College of Physicians been true to its trust, medicine would have been advanced, as it doubtless was by the statutes of Henry.

In 1703, apothecaries presuming to visit and prescribe for patients, the College of Physicians attempted to restrain such practice. *C. S. Rose v. College of Physicians*. The case being argued three times in the court of Queen's Bench, the judges were unanimously of opinion that the College of Physicians had such power. A writ of error to Parliament was brought to reverse this judgment, and it was reversed. It was argued, among other things, "that the physicians, by straining an act made so long ago, endeavored to monopolize all manner of physic solely to themselves, and if they should succeed in this attempt, it would be attended with many mischievous consequences; namely, it would be a heavy tax on the nobility and gentry, and would be a great oppression upon poor families, who, not being able to bear the charge of a fee, would be deprived of all kinds of assistance in their necessities." This argument, as it relates at least to the poor, had no foundation in fact, as the several orders of the college were required to give their advice to the poor gratis; nevertheless, Parliament held that apothecaries had the right to visit and prescribe, as well as to compound and sell the medicines they had prescribed. Thus a third body was formed, empowered to teach, examine and license. This resulting badly, an attempt was made to unite the corporations of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons and Society of Apothecaries, by Act of Parliament, but the mutual jealousies of the several corporations defeated this. An act, regulating the practice of apothecaries, was passed, however, by which this corporation was authorized to examine and license one and the same individual to practice both medicine and pharmacy.

Under such an arrangement as this there could not help but be an invasion of the physician's office by some ignorant and uneducated persons. At present, I believe none of these corporations are authorized to examine in all branches of medicine, and yet for the most part medical practitioners must be *general practitioners*, and in the United States the teaching of medicine, surgery and pharmacy is very generally combined in a greater or less degree, and a diploma to practice one confers the right to practice the others, at least ; I believe none of our state laws forbid physicians manufacturing and compounding drugs.

Herein I have tried to show some of the evils arising from power delegated to too many examining and licensing bodies, not the least among which was the falling of the office of the physician in the estimation of the public. What was and is true in Great Britain is still more true in the United States and Canada, in which there are some one hundred and twenty (including Bellevue College, Massachusetts, the sapiency of the courts having declared that it has done nothing but what the State had authorized it to do) bodies incorporated to teach, examine and license often the most illiterate and immoral. Who of this society does not know of persons filling the office of physician "legally," whose notoriety is simply that of the abortionist. Individual members are powerless to prevent this. So long as legislators grant, with facility, charters, just so long will we be told, "the state has authorized this corporation to issue degrees, and it has been done according to legal right. It cannot be argued that the issue is fraudulent, any more than an 'allopath' can claim that a homœopathic college issues degrees fraudulently. The law makes the faculty of the college the sole judges of the eligibility of applicants for diplomas. There is no legal restriction, no legal requirement. If the faculty choose to issue degrees to incompetent persons, the laws of this state authorize it. This is not, therefore, a scheme to defraud under the statute." Possibly it may not be "under the statute," but it is a fraud, nevertheless, and none

know it better than the courts which give such opinions ; yet such things are allowed to continue.

In a town of less than three thousand inhabitants, in Central Illinois, is an establishment, whether chartered or not, I do not know, that proposed, after August, 1882, to annex a medical department, "which," in the language of its circular, "will sustain every 'special department' ordinarily sustained in medical colleges, except that of the dissecting of human bodies. The whole of the modern science of medicine has been brought 'onto' the ground of a two years' course of study. The *special* action and uses of the different medicines are *most practically* and carefully studied. Surgery and diseases of women are not of so much importance. Special attention is given to obstetrics. Any one wishing to make a SPECIALTY OF ANY BRANCH, will be accommodated." So the announcement informs us. This is rather a large promise for so small a town. The State Board of Health has probably not as yet been presented any of its "deplomys," but why should it not? Pennsylvania and Massachusetts have had such schools, why should not Illinois? Our legislators are quite as capable of judging of the country's needs as were those of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.

Whatever the idea of the early medical colleges of this country was in regard to supplementing the teachings of the private instructor, the colleges now, in a great measure, assume to supersede such instruction, and for this purpose hold out grand inducements in the way of clinical study, connection with vast hospitals, etc. That this instruction is of no value, I do not desire to assert ; but as to its value, the testimony of the majority of the profession will bear me out in the assertion that it is greatly over-rated, and that the facilities for it are paraded merely for the purpose of attracting students, many of whom imagine, before having experience of it, that it is the "Royal road to learning" medical. What well defined ideas can nine-tenths of the audience in an amphitheatre, fix in their minds, and bring away with them as a

part of their acquisitions, in respect to the different physical characteristics of cutaneous diseases, of the chancre of the chancreoid, of the minutia of difficult and delicate surgical and obstetrical operations? None whatever, so far as the clinical case is a factor, and this statement challenges denial. It is not one of the requirements of these clinical schools, that their students shall carry field glasses, and if they did the body of either surgeon, assistant or private student (for an additional fee to the advertised one), would form an insuperable obstruction to a view of the nice details of the operation or diagnosis. Then the "tactus eruditus," the "bruit de diable," and those other "bruits" "de claquement, de craquement, de frottement, ascending and descending, de pot fele," etc., etc., the names of which sound so sonorously from the depths of the operating arena.

A return to the normal function of the Medical College is of prime importance. The single oral examination, which is all, as a rule, that is exacted, is not sufficient to test the knowledge of those aspiring to the honors of the doctorate, but if it continues to be accepted as the test, then certainly an examination conducted by a board that has no interest in the result, except the best interests of the profession, will be attended by many good results. With the rapid multiplication of medical schools, with the very lax and partial examinations now in vogue in many of them, the profession is made a by-word throughout the land. The most eminent in the profession, as witness a late historical case, are made the sport and object of criticism of all the medical ignorance of the world. Because a gun-shot wound, the necessary fatal character of which could only be told by a post-mortem examination, was not followed by a cure, their services were rated at but a trifle more than that of a simple nurse, and the entire profession subjected to insult. The degradation of the profession in its alliance, in former times, with the priest, with the barber and the corner grocery-man is more than paralleled to-day in its alliance, forced upon it *nolens volens*, with the patent and proprietary

medicine vendor, whose wares are recommended in advertisements in our medical journals, through the certificates of men, high in some of our better medical schools, whereby it has come to be thought by the public, and by many men pretending to be physicians, that the chief duty of the doctor is now to find the patient for the medicine, rather than by careful and conscientious examination into the condition of the patient to found a rational treatment in medicines best adapted to restore the patient to health. While "Rational medicine, based on experience and pathological research, demands absolute freedom in the selection and method of administration from the materia medica, and there is nothing in the Code of Ethics of the American Medical Association, prohibiting the use by its members of any known and honorable means of combating disease, it does not permit the use of maltine, bromo-chloralum, viburnum compound, bromidia, iodia, hydroleine, listerine, healing ointments, liver pads, bilious pills and other like traps," so largely used by many of our practicing physicians, under, it is to be regretted, the recommendation of some of the professors in our medical schools. Our licentiates should cease to be examined by such teachers. If it was not departing from the text, our medical journals, teachers also, for good or for evil, might come in for some richly merited criticism for their advertisements and endorsements through editorial puffs of these for the most part worthless wares. The extent to which self-prescribing is carried on at the present day, can only be realized by one much in a large retail drug store. How seldom are we called in to see a patient, who has not from a few hours to several days been taking some panacea warranted in the so-called "Medical" almanacs, the columns of the secular and religious paper, to cure. Too often these lies have the apparent endorsement of the medical profession, through the endorsement of the half educated, or no educated "doctors," whose only title to respect is in the diploma our horde of medical colleges are scattering over the land. Let the examination then of those seeking the honors of the doc-

torate be removed from the functions of those who teach, and who receive the financial benefit of such *successful* examination. Whether this is yet feasible, and how it may be accomplished, I leave to the consideration of the other gentlemen of your committee.

