

of medical reform of the associations to which they respectively belong, thus bringing the whole matter before the club. Sir BENJAMIN BRODIE was of opinion that the scheme proposed by Sir JAMES GRAHAM was sufficient for their consideration, and he thought it would be unwise to go into any other, but he was without a single supporter in the meeting, and, ultimately, a resolution, to the effect above stated, was carried, without a dissentient voice. Students are not to be permitted to attend the next meeting, but members are to be allowed to introduce the ordinary number of visitors.

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

EXETER-HALL, Dec. 6.—MEETING OF COUNCIL.—Dr. A. B. GRANVILLE, having been called to the chair, said, that that being the first assembling of the new council, they had to elect the president, vice-presidents, and secretary, after which Dr. Geo. Webster, Dulwich, was unanimously re-elected president, and the following gentlemen were elected vice-presidents, for the ensuing year:—Dr. A. B. Granville, Dr. M. Hall, R. Davidson, Esq., Jos. Howell, Esq., R. D. Grainger, Esq., Geo. Bottomley, Esq. (Croydon). C. H. R. Harrison, Esq., was then unanimously re-elected secretary for the same period.

The Reform Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Benevolent-Purpose Committee were then re-elected. Two pounds were then voted from the benevolent fund to a distressed medical man, and one of the committee being appointed to see to its appropriation, the meeting was adjourned.

ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY.

THE TOPHAM-AND-WARD PAPER.

DEC. 13, 1842.—There was again a crowded meeting this evening, Dr. WILLIAMS, president, in the chair. Immediately after the reading of the minutes,

Dr. GREGORY begged to inquire if a party reading a paper before that society was justified in publishing it entire within forty-eight hours afterwards? He had understood that it was a rule for such a paper to be left with the council for their judgment upon it, with reference to its publication. (Hear, hear.) Yet the paper read at the last meeting was published within forty-eight hours of its discussion.

Dr. JOHNSON: Why, it was printed and published before it was read here. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Dr. COPLAND would, if it were worth while, move that the paper should not even

be mentioned in the minutes, that all trace of its having been read in the society should be obliterated from their records. It ought not to have been read there at all, one rule being that the papers read be on some branch of medicine, the paper in question not being one which could be called medical, or written by a medical man. Therefore it should not have been read. Besides, the subject could not be debated off-hand. It required consideration in a different way. Another circumstance had placed the authors out of court. They had broken faith with the society, and published the paper at once, as if under the society's sanction, in order to obtain for it an undue popularity. As for its merits, they amounted to nothing, for even if mesmerism could effect all that its disciples wished, he questioned if it would be serviceable for—

Mr. PERRY rose to order; the speaker must confine himself to the question whether all mention of the paper should be erased from the minute-book.

Dr. COPLAND surely must give his reasons for introducing his motion; he was saying that he questioned even if mesmerism were true, whether it would be useful as an agent, for pain was a valuable auxiliary in—

Mr. SYME rose to order on the same ground as Mr. Perry.

The PRESIDENT did not see how the society could canvass the merits of a paper for which they had already (at the last meeting) returned thanks to the author.

Dr. COPLAND would at once move that no part of the minutes which referred to the paper be confirmed. (Hear hear.)

Dr. EVANS seconded the motion.

Dr. MOORE regretted its necessity, supporting it with much pain on some grounds, but with much pleasure on others. It was painful, as a reprobation of the council for allowing a paper to be read, of which, being altogether unworthy of the society, all mention should be avoided in the minutes. But for raising discord in the society, he would at the last meeting have taken a vote on the propriety of reading it; putting its merits aside, however, the authors had directly violated the laws and usages of the society. Notwithstanding the dictum of the secretary that it was disorderly to discuss the merits, and the opinion of the president respecting the thanks, it was sometimes necessary that discussions should extend to second evenings. Yet, how would the character of that medical society be affected which would receive and discuss a subject like mesmerism when no shadow of proof existed as to its truth?

Mr. PERRY: My "dictum" was an appeal to the president. I do think that the discussion should be confined to the confirmation of the minutes.

Dr. MOORE would bow to the chair, and to that only; but surely reasons might be offered for supporting a motion.

Dr. WILLIAMS: Leave the merits of the paper. The authors should not have published it.

Mr. DREW: Will the non-confirmation of the minutes abate the truth of the record?

Mr. QUAIN: Is there any law to punish those who publish papers read before the society? Are the minutes a statement of facts?

Mr. DAVIES: The council should be left to decide on the publication. Elsewhere, when papers are published by their authors, they are refused admission into the volume of "Transactions."

Mr. SYME: May not a paper be withdrawn from the society when its author is not a "Fellow."

Dr. MERRIMAN: A man's common sense should tell him that such paper ought not to be thus published. For my part, I consider the present publication was a gross insult to the society. (Hear, hear.) I support Dr. Copland's motion.

Mr. QUAIN: Can you abolish the fact that the paper has been read here?

The PRESIDENT: In all assemblies it is competent to expunge minutes before confirmation.

Mr. PERRY vindicated the council. Many papers in the "Transactions" were not by medical men: he reprobated the authors of the paper for withdrawing it, under the plea that they did not wish it published, when, in fact, it was already published. As a member of council, had he known it was in the press, he would have voted against its perusal in the society.

Dr. WEBSTER: As they withdrew the paper, let us erase all record of it from the minutes.

Dr. ROOTS: Shall the minutes be confirmed or not?

Dr. COPLAND was not hostile to the council, whose members he much respected, but he acted now upon principle. Would the society pocket the affront offered by the authors of the paper?

Mr. WOOD, as their ~~read~~, would state that in its publication they a ~~re-~~ ignorance of the laws.

Mr. B. COOPER thought the society should be grateful to the council for allowing the paper to be read; it could not have come before a better tribunal to be battered to pieces. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Dr. ADDISON would not vote a censure upon its authors, but would vote for the non-confirmation.

Mr. C. HAWKINS supported Dr. Copland.

Dr. GREGORY: The minutes should remain out of respect to the council, but the society should express its regret respecting the publication, and publish the resolution in the morning papers.

While Dr. Copland's motion was being supported by Dr. Mayo, who added some remarks against mesmerism, the cry of

"question" arose, whereupon the motion was put, and "a forest" of hands held up for it. On the contrary, apparently *five*. Much cheering ensued, after which a paper was read on lithotomy, followed by an interesting discussion, which we may be able to publish next week.

DR. DEHANE'S HISTORY OF THE ELECTION FOR CORONER IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In defence of my own character I am reluctantly obliged to answer certain statements contained in last week's number of your periodical. Those statements being anonymous, I should not have thought them worthy of any rejoinder, were it not that they appear to have had sufficient influence to possess you with a highly unfavourable view of my conduct and motives in the late contested election for the coronership of the county of Stafford. Anonymous attacks on the character of an individual are, under all circumstances, unmanly and dishonourable, and bear on their face a conscious want of rectitude in the aggressor. I must add, that your three correspondents who have assailed me in THE LANCET, have not only been guilty of an anonymous and unfounded accusation, but, under existing circumstances, have laid themselves open to the suspicion of assuming the insignia of a profession to which they do not belong. What if they should turn out not to be medical men at all, but pettifogging attorneys, or attorney's clerks? If such suspicion be ill-founded, the best way of clearing up all doubts will be by the parties publishing their names and addresses.*

But now, Sir, for the facts of the case. I entered on a contest for the place of coroner of the county of Stafford, in opposition to certain members of the legal profession, thereby asserting the principle that a coroner ought, *cæteris paribus*, to be of the medical rather than of the legal profession. At an advanced stage of the contest I found, unexpectedly, opposed to me an almost universal coalition of the lawyers, resolved at all events, and at whatever expense, to prevent my election; in illustration of which fact I may mention that one of their number is understood to have contributed five hundred pounds towards the expenses of the election, and that all were expected to give their professional services gratuitously. On my own side of the question, though my warmest thanks were due to many of my brethren for their individual exertions, I perceived not

* Dr. Dehane might like the parties to publish their names, but the writers were certainly members of his own profession.—*L.*