

THE  
ULSTER MEDICAL PROTECTIVE  
ASSOCIATION

REPORTS OF THE PROCEEDINGS

1859 TO 1861

AND OTHER MATERIAL

EXTRACTED FROM NEWSPAPERS OF THE DAY

Any transcription can only approximate to the original. Errors not in the original are mine.

J I Logan  
Belfast  
27 February 2017

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

### INTRODUCTION

The Ulster Medical Protective Association was set up in 1859 to protect the interests of the profession. The original records are missing but many of its meetings (particularly the early ones) seem to have been fully reported in the newspapers of the day and these reports have been extracted and are placed below in chronological order. Most were taken from the *Belfast News-Letter* as its back issues are available to subscribers to [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) without extra charge but almost certainly they will also be available from other sources.

The newspaper reports of the Association's activities get briefer as time goes on and cease after the annual meeting on 9th May 1861. The reason for this is not apparent. The Association had been initiating legal proceedings against unqualified persons and perhaps this backfired, or perhaps the Association lost momentum or perhaps it no longer wanted the publicity (or was no longer deemed to be newsworthy). That it was not dissolved altogether is shown in the newspaper reports of Professor J C Ferguson's presidential address to the Ulster Medical Society in 1862 where it was acknowledged that the Ulster Medical Protective Association had joined with the Belfast Medical Society and the Belfast Clinical and Pathological Society to form the new Society.

A late report of it being appealed to in 1868 may not necessarily indicate that it was still in existence.

### TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION IN ULSTER.

*Dublin Medical Press July 20 1859*

Gentlemen and Brethren—The time has arrived when it becomes our imperative duty to wipe away a reproach that has long been attached to our profession, and to overcome that *vis inertia* which has rendered inoperative our inherent strength. This is to be done alone by union and hearty cooperation.

In Great Britain and several districts of Ireland, medical men have formed themselves into protective associations, and thus, already, have achieved considerable good, as every one who has watched the progress of medical reform must have observed. We might instance the amendments effected in the Medical Registration and Vaccination Acts, and the successful opposition given to several intended legislative measures, all of which would, more or less, have interfered with the rights of our profession. We

might also refer to the concessions recently granted to the medical officers of the army and navy, and the contemplated improvements in the English Poor-law Administration, as severally indicating the value of the determined, persevering, and united efforts in the attainment of any claim based upon undeniable rights, and carrying with it popular sympathy—a sympathy, we may remark, which is ever afforded to any cause which rests its demands upon unquestionable justice.

No reform can spontaneously take place; the aggrieved parties themselves must seek to have their grievances removed, hence the medical profession should not imagine that the disabilities under which they undoubtedly labour can be remedied, unless they take not only the first, but the most energetic steps, and act with unanimity and perseverance. Inasmuch as there are professional wrongs, and that hearty coöperation is absolutely necessary to have them redressed, and seeing, likewise, what has been done by united action in other places—so much to their honour and credit—surely, it is not only prudent, but our imperative duty, to join with and assist our brethren in other districts of Ireland and in England in prosecuting our just claims, and in protecting those rights which every member should earnestly prize, and with which the usefulness, the respectability, and the influence of the profession are so intimately connected. With these views, therefore, a society—'The Ulster Medical Protective Association'—has been formed; a provisional committee has been appointed; a code of rules has been framed. In its name, we earnestly solicit the hearty coöperation of the medical practitioners of the North of Ireland, and invite them to enrol themselves members of the Ulster Protective Association.

And here it may be necessary to explain, that, while this association is quite independent of the Belfast Medical and Pathological Societies, it cannot in any measure, be antagonistic to them. They are principally intended to foster and stimulate professional and scientific pursuits. The new association is entirely a protective one, desirous of enrolling in its ranks every registered practitioner of Ulster, and designed to act in concert with the Irish Medical Association in all matters affecting the general welfare of the profession. Such an association is urgently demanded. Disunion has caused our naturally inherent strength to be inoperative; apathy has allowed our rights to be disregarded, trampled on, or wrested from us. Jealousies have not only lessened our influence, otherwise powerful but have even injured us with the public, so deeply our debtor; for it is obvious that just in proportion as we act with harmony and maintain our position, so will our worth

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

and status be valued and recognised.

The beneficial operations of a Medical Protective Association are not confined to any branch or class of the profession—they alike extend to the highest and reach the humblest member. Every one is concerned, directly or indirectly, in all matters that affect the general interests of the body; and it is, therefore, the solemn duty of all members to see that nothing shall be done which can interfere with its usefulness, honour, or influence. The best interests of society, as well as our personal advantage, demand this individual watchfulness—this coöperation; for it may be justly assumed that, whatever elevates and improves our profession confers a benefit upon the community at large.

We trust we have said enough to induce every person whom we address to join our association; and, as we feel satisfied that it is his paramount duty to do so, we look forward with confidence to the time, not far distant, when the entire profession shall be united in the furtherance of our common cause—then, and not till then, shall we be able to contend successfully for our inalienable rights—then, when the honour and importance of our body are maintained by ourselves, the community must assign to us our proper status, and our usefulness and our services shall be duly estimated and adequately acknowledged.

J. C. FERGUSON, A.M., M.B., Chairman of Prov. Com.  
SAMUEL BROWNE, M.R.C.S.E., Secretary, Pro tem  
Belfast, June 30th, 1859.

### RULES OF THE ASSOCIATION.

*Dublin Medical Press July 20 1859*

1. That the society now embodied shall be named 'The Ulster Medical Protective Association,' to the membership of which all registered Practitioners shall be eligible.
2. That the objects of the Ulster Association shall be to protect the interests of the profession, in the admission of its members; to sustain the status of qualified Practitioners, and to watch over, and, if desirable, to promote such legislative measures as may seem generally beneficial.
3. That from and after the 1st of September, 1859, all admissions to membership shall be by ballot.
4. That the annual subscription of members shall be 5s., payable in advance, and shall be due on the first day of May in each year.
6. That the first general meeting of the association shall be held in Belfast, on the first Thursday in September next, when the office-bearers shall be elected. This meeting shall be called by a circular,

addressed to each member.

6. That the officers of the association shall be a resident chairman, central committee, consisting of twelve town members, an honorary secretary, and a treasurer, along with three representatives from each county in Ulster. The chairman and one-third of the members of committee shall vacate office each May, but shall be re-eligible at the annual election.
7. That the annual meeting of the association shall be held in Belfast early in May in each year, for the election of office-bearers, and the transaction of general business; such meetings to be called by public advertisement in the newspapers.
8. That at each annual meeting a report from the committee shall be presented to the association, detailing the proceedings of the committee and prospects of the society; the treasurer, likewise, shall submit to the meeting a statement of accounts, duly audited.

### EDITORIAL ON NON-QUALIFIED PRACTITIONERS

*Belfast Daily Mercury 26 July 1859*

A prosecution took place the other day, before a London Police-office, for the purpose of endeavouring to abate a nuisance which is very general, not only in England, but in this country.

By the 40th section of the Medical Practitioners Act, it is enacted, 'that any person who shall willfully and falsely pretend to be, or take, or use the name or title of a physician, or surgeon, or licentiate in medicine and surgery, bachelor of medicine, surgeon, or general practitioner, or apothecary, or any name, title, addition, or description, implying that he is registered under this Act, or that he is recognised by law as a physician, or surgeon, or licentiate in medicine or surgery, or a practitioner in medicine, or an apothecary, shall, upon a summary conviction for any such offence, pay a sum not exceeding £20.'

A Mr. Samuel Nunn, who carried on business in Lambeth as a chemist, druggist, and dentist, had also the word 'surgeon' painted artistically over the door, and also on a square of glass in the window. There was no doubt as to his having practised as a surgeon, and that he had no qualification whatever either as a surgeon, physician, or apothecary.

'Dr. Ladd, honorary secretary to the London Medical Association, said he examined the printed copy of the register of the properly qualified medical men he then produced, and could not find the name of the defendant in it, and the absence of the name from it was deemed by the act itself a proof of

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

disqualification. He had been to the house of the defendant, and over the door was the number "8," with the word "Surgeon" in large letters; then the name "S. Nunn, Dentist." There was painted on a square of glass in the window the word "Surgeons," the letter "s" being a very small one; and where it could be scarcely perceived, "Prescriptions carefully made up."

"The inscription was such as to lead any ordinary person to suppose that Mr. Nunn was a surgeon, and made up prescriptions.

'John Owen, a carpenter, residing in Kennington-lane, said that a short time ago he met with an accident and cut his hand, and was induced to go to the shop of the defendant for advice, from seeing the word "surgeon" on the door. He also asked the defendant if he was a surgeon, when he nodded his head in such a way as to lead witness to believe he was. He then examined his hand and arm, and made him up a bottle of lotion, for which he charged him a shilling.

'Mr. Humble, a surgeon in the London-road, with whom the defendant had lived as an assistant, was called, and proved that he had no qualification beyond that of a chemist.'

On such a state of facts, the London Medical Association instituted proceedings, as they were bound to do, for the protection of the public, and the Magistrate convicted the defendant in the very slight penalty of 40s, and 28s costs—a most inadequate carrying out of the Act.

Now, we are credibly informed that in Belfast, indeed throughout the province, there are a great number of unauthorised practitioners, who drive a profitable trade by butchering, and poisoning, and drugging to death the unfortunate people who are imposed upon by their pretensions. What is our local Medical Society about, that it is not watchful over the interests of the profession and of the public, by instituting proceedings against such persons? The leading bodies in Dublin have been proverbially neglectful of their duties in this respect; and the local societies have now under the new act ample power in their own hands.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*Belfast Daily Mercury 27 July 1859*

Sir,—In reference to some remarks which appear in a leader of to-day's *Mercury*, relative to the 'great number of unauthorised practitioners'—'in Belfast and throughout the province'—'who drive a thriving trade by butchering, and poisoning, and drugging to death

the unfortunate people who are imposed upon by their pretensions'—I am happy to inform you that a Medical Protection [sic] Association for Ulster has been organised, and will soon be in a position to deal with the gentry in question, and to watch 'over the interests of the profession and the public, by instituting proceedings against such persons.'

Thanking you for having drawn public attention to this matter, I have the honour to be your obedient servant,

Samuel Browne, R.N., M.R.C.S.E.,

Secretary to the Ulster Medical Protection Association, *pro tem*. Belfast, 26th July, 1859.'

### NOTICE TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

*Belfast News-Letter 22 August 1859*

The PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE of the ULSTER MEDICAL PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION beg to remind practitioners who have received the 'ADDRESS TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION OF ULSTER,' that they should send their names and subscriptions to the Acting Treasurer, Dr. PATTERSON, of DONEGALL SQUARE, BELFAST, before THURSDAY, the 1st of September on which day the first meeting of the Society will take place.

(By order)

WILLIAM M'GEE, M.D.,

Chairman, *pro tem*.

SAMUEL BROWNE, M.R.C.S.E.,

Honorary Secretary, *pro tem*

Belfast, 18th August, 1859.

### NOTICE TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

*Belfast News-Letter 30 August 1859*

The FIRST GENERAL MEETING of the ULSTER MEDICAL PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION will be held at the GENERAL HOSPITAL, Belfast, on THURSDAY, 1st Sept., at Twelve o'clock Noon.

Members of the Medical Profession are invited to attend.

(By order of the Provisional Committee)

WILLIAM M'GEE, M.D.,

Chairman, *pro tem*.

SAMUEL BROWNE, M.R.C.S.E.,

Hon. Secretary, *pro tem*

Belfast, August 29, 1859.

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

### FIRST GENERAL MEETING

*Belfast News-Letter* 2 September 1859

Yesterday [1st September 1859], the first general meeting of the Ulster Medical Protective Association was held in the Library of the General Hospital. There was a large attendance of the members of the medical profession.

Among those present were Dr. M'Gee, J.P.; Surgeon Browne, Dr. Patterson, J. Pirrie, M.D., Surgeon J. S. Dickson, Surgeon Wilberforce Arnold, Surgeon Wm. Hanna, Surgeon Wm. S. Kennedy (Comber), Staff Assistant-Surgeon R. M. Acton (Barracks), Surgeon Harman (Moneyslane), Dr. Rankin (Kirkcubbin), Dr. M. MacCormac, Dr. John Lavery (Maghralin), Surgeon James L. Connor (Moira), Surgeon William M'Gee, Surgeon Gribben, John H. Halliday, M.D., Robert Stewart M.D., H. Murney, M.D., Cunningham Mulholland, M.D., Alex. B. Filson, M.D. (Portaferry), J. Seaton Reid, M.D., Daniel Murray, M.D., Surgeon Henry Whitaker, Surgeon W. Warnick, William Aickin, M.D., J. C. Ferguson A.M., M.B., etc., F. Heaney, M.D., Henry M. Johnston, M.R.C.S.I., Archibald Dunlop, M.D. (Holywood), M. M'Gee, M.D., Thomas Charles S. Corry, M.D., Harrison Hanna, M.R.C.S., John S. Drennan, M.D., Christopher S. Black, M.D., J. W. S. Smith, M.D.

On the motion of Dr. M'Gee, J.P., seconded by Surgeon Browne, Dr. Stewart took the chair.

The Chairman said—Gentlemen, it is an unexpected honour conferred upon me to be called upon to preside over this highly-respectable, influential, and large meeting of our brethren generally. You are all aware, however, by printed circulars, of the object of this Medical Association for Ulster, which is now about to be formed; and this being its first general meeting, our respected secretary pro tem., Surgeon Browne, will explain to you more fully—he being better acquainted with all the details than I am—the objects of the association. I am sure one and all of us are only activated by the one feeling and desire, and that is to uphold the due independence, and status, and respectability of our common fellowship—and that every one amongst us will feel that any individual in any way harshly used by authorities or otherwise, that we will all feel it as affecting ourselves, and aid the association to the utmost of our power in seeing that justice shall be done to that individual. Ay, so acting, and by bringing ourselves together as one man, we will be doing an essential service, not only to ourselves as individuals, but to the public at large. I will now call upon Surgeon Browne to state the objects of the association.

Surgeon Browne stated that he had received letters of apology from the following persons, who

were unavoidably absent:— Dr. Thorpe, Letterkenny; Dr. Babbington. Londonderry; Mr. M'Greevey, Antrim; and Mr. Thelford, Portaferry,

Dr. Filson (Portaferry)—This is dispensary day with some of those gentlemen.

Surgeon Browne—In a very few words, I may introduce the association to your notice, and to the notice of the public, because I think it is well the public should know exactly what position this association intends to assume—not one at all aggressive to the public, as some people seem to think, but one protective of the public, as it is held to be protective of ourselves. You are aware, gentlemen, and I wish the public to be aware, that, for a long time, there has existed in England a Medical Association of Great Britain. In this country also we have had now, for six or seven years, an Irish Medical Association in existence, which numbers now somewhere about 200 members. The membership of that is obtained by paying a certain subscription, and two years back they asked us to join them by the paying of a certain sum. There are the Carrick-on-Shannon, the Cork Medical Protective Association, numbering about eighty members, the Fermanagh, the Limerick, the South-Eastern, and the Wexford Association. These are all in connexion with the Irish Medical Association. However, up till a recent date we have had no connexion with it even collaterally, and we may call this a collateral connexion, seeing that the Medical Association of Belfast was invited to join them, which we did. I was deputed last June to attend a meeting of the association as representing the Medical Society, and all the medical officers of the medical district about us. I had pleasure in attending that meeting in Dublin from the strong feeling they had towards the gentlemen in the North—that feeling which they expressed at the meeting and afterwards at the dinner in the warmest terms; and I cannot now refrain from mentioning the names of the President, Dr. Whitaker, and the admirable secretary of the Cork Medical Association, Dr. Armstrong. They all appeared most anxious that we in the North should fraternise more than we had hitherto done, and hold out the right hand of fellowship; that we should meet them half way, meaning that we should form an association in the North, and unite with them in Dublin, and with the other associations in the South and West. I promised, at that period, to bring the matter before my brethren in the North. I fulfilled that intention very shortly after I got into town here; and the details which I shall now lay before you will show what has been done. But before that, I wish for a few minutes to refer to the nature of the association. In the first place, as you will see by the prospectus, it has been

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

stated that our intention is to unite for our mutual protection—for the benefit of the profession, and for the extension of the benefits of the profession to the community. By protection I mean we are to look after parties, and we intend to interfere with the Council of Education which now exists, and see that there is a proper scale of preliminary education for the profession. Secondly—To see that parties of proper character be admitted into the profession. And thirdly—To see that parties who are practising in our profession, but who do not belong to it, shall be at once brought under the law, and made amenable to justice. I believe that this is not only protective of ourselves, but protective of the community, because it is quite clear if we prevent a large number of men from going on through the various districts around us practising in our profession, who have no right to assume the name of medical men, and who have no education for the claim, that we are not only protecting ourselves, but doing a vast amount of good to the community, who are suffering from the interference of these uneducated persons who assume to themselves the name and dignity of doctors. I think, now, that these few words will explain to the public our position—simply to protect ourselves, and also to protect the public. There is no doubt the public are our debtors, and we are debtors to the public in a large measure—we live by them, and while we expect that they will do what is right towards us, we are bound to do good towards the public and to protect them. There is but one other observation that I wish to make regarding the association, and it is this—one of our resolutions goes on to state that we shall be in connexion with the Irish Association. Now it will be, I think, for this meeting to determine on what would be the best way to amalgamate with the Irish Association. There is no doubt that union forms the basis of strength, and that if the Ulster Protective Association joins with the Irish it will be better and stronger than if we remained disunited. At the same time, the Provisional Committee have guarded themselves from that, and have resolved to act as an independent association, except, of course, when a matter affecting our independence arises—such as the introduction of a Bill to Parliament—when it would be necessary to co-operate; whereas many things might arise of a local nature in which we don't need the assistance of the Irish Association, and would require only to be brought under the cognisance of our own society. Hence, although we are united with the Irish Association, we should also see that we have ourselves so much of independence that we can act on our own behalf without consulting the Irish Association. I think there are no other remarks that I

need trouble you with. I will now read to you the various minutes that, from time to time, have taken place at the meetings of the Provisional Committee. Surgeon Browne then read the minutes of the various meetings of the Provisional Committee [not available], and the following address and rules [given above]:—

Dr. M'Gee, JP., in moving the adoption of the minutes, said—After the statement you have heard from Mr. Browne, I need scarcely detain you by bringing forward any argument—even if argument were necessary—for the formation of such an association. It is to me a matter of surprise that such an association has not long been established. If we had taken the example set us by other learned professions—such as the Bar—we would have done our duty to the public, and our duty to ourselves long ago. It is established for the benefit of us all, young and old; but I would have the youngsters to remember that it is especially for their benefit it has been established. When so many grey heads recommend the establishment of such a course, I think their advice is surely worth something. We have seen in England from day to day the advantages of such an association. We have heard of successful prosecutions, and of the benefit of them. And if we look at home, we see, on the other hand, what we may term the unjust persecution of our profession; and we feel that there should be some person or persons to stand forward and assist them—to defend their rights, and to defend the rights of the profession. With such examples before us we should no longer permit ourselves to be idle in this matter, and to have it said, instead of leading we have been led. It is our misfortune that in this matter we have been preceded by others. We should now set the example, but it is never too late to do well, and, under these circumstances, I think I can best consult the feelings of the meeting by, without any further observations, moving the resolution.

Dr. Filson (Portaferry)—I have very great pleasure in seconding the resolution. I only wonder that we have been so long coming into the field to form this association. I think it was rather discreditable to the medical gentlemen of Ulster not to have had such an association long since. We have seen the noble efforts which have been made on behalf of the profession by the Cork Medical Protective Association; but, as has been said, 'Better late than not all.' I trust and hope that the matter will now be entered upon with resolution and determination—(hear, hear)—and that the members of the profession throughout Ulster will give their support to the gentlemen who have undertaken the formation of the association, and who are exerting themselves in carrying out the object had in view; for the greater the number who join the

association the more powerful will be its influence. (Hear, hear.) I would be sorry there should be any member who would hold back from joining this association. All members of the profession will be benefitted by the steps which will be taken by the association; therefore, I trust all will feel it to be their duty to aid in the efforts put forth. (Hear, hear.) There will be great difficulty, I know, in some of the country members attending the meetings, but I trust they will come forward manfully and give the association their best support. (Hear, hear.) I have great pleasure in seconding the motion of Dr. M'Gee.

The Chairman then put the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Surgeon Browne—Our Treasurer pro tem. Dr. Patterson, will now state to you the position of the association.

Dr. Patterson stated that 112 members had paid their subscriptions and joined the association, and he hoped many others would join it. The subscriptions amounted to £28. The number was made up as follows:— County Antrim, 65 members; County Down, 18; County Tyrone, 4; County Monaghan, 3; County Fermanagh, 1; County Derry, 8; County Armagh, 7; County Cavan, 1; County Donegal, 4; total, 112.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

Surgeon Browne suggested that the officers elected then should remain in office until May, '61, as it would hardly be worth while to have an election so soon as May next. They might override one of their rules in this instance.

Dr. J. C. Ferguson, Professor Queen's College, begged to move that Dr. M'Gee, J.P., be elected chairman of the committee.

Surgeon Browne begged to second the motion.

The proposition was put from the chair, and passed unanimously.

Surgeon Browne—Our next business is to elect twelve members of committee to represent Belfast; then to elect a secretary and treasurer, and then three members of committee from each county.

It was then arranged that the members for Belfast should be—Surgeon Browne, Dr. Seaton Reid, Dr. J. C. Ferguson, Dr. Stewart, Dr. Murray (Ballymacarrett), Surgeon Dickson, Dr. Heeney, Dr. C. Black, Dr. Murney, Dr. Wheeler, Surgeon Tring, and Dr. Halliday.

Dr. Michael M'Gee begged to move that the twelve gentlemen named be elected as members of the committee.

Dr. Johnston begged to second the motion, which was put and passed unanimously.

Dr. Seaton Reid begged to move that Surgeon Browne be elected as Honorary Secretary. They would all admit that it was not a very lucrative

appointment, but he hoped Surgeon Browne would be satisfied with the honour. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. Corry had great pleasure in seconding the motion.

The motion was put and unanimously agreed to.

Surgeon Browne—I am thankful to you all for the honour you have done me in electing me as Secretary. It is a troublesome post, but I will do my best to forward the interests of the association. (Hear, hear.) I will endeavour to advance the interests of the profession and the advantage of the public. I trust the younger members will not expect too much from the association. There are many persons who take up little grievances, and who might expect the association to interfere; but there is nothing more easy than for an association to burn their fingers. (Hear, hear.) It is better for members not to expect too much. The association will require to have the premises as clear as possible before they act. I wish the younger members to bear this in mind. As you have elected me as Honorary Secretary, it is now necessary that you fill up my place in the committee by another Belfast member. I beg to move that Surgeon Warwick be elected as a member of the committee.

Dr. Dickson begged leave to second the option, which was put and agreed to.

Surgeon Browne—When the association was temporarily formed, Dr. Patterson kindly consented to act as Treasurer, and I think we cannot do better than to vote him to that office now. (Hear, hear.) I know the great ability with which he discharges his duties, as he has been treasurer to another society. I have great pleasure therefore in moving that he be the treasurer of this Association.

Dr. Michael McGee—I beg to second the motion.

The proposition was then put and passed unanimously.

Dr. Patterson returned thanks in a few words, for the honour which had been done him.

The names of the three gentlemen from each county, from which three medical men had joined the association, were then nominated to be members of the committee. (The names will be found in our advertising columns.)

Surgeon Browne suggested that the committee have power to add the names of gentlemen for Cavan and Fermanagh when they might join.

It was agreed that the names of the first who became members of the association from these counties, should be added to the committee.

Dr. Pirrie begged to move that the gentlemen mentioned be appointed members of the committee to represent the different counties.

Dr. Rankin begged to second the motion, which

was put and agreed to unanimously.

Dr. Corry thought it was a matter for consideration whether they should not appoint a secretary for the country district. He merely threw it out as a suggestion.

Surgeon Browne remarked that each member of the committee for the counties was a kind of secretary. It would be the business of each of them to communicate upon local matters to the committee, for it was not to be expected that they could always attend from a distance.

#### THEY DUNMANWAY UNION CASE—DR. WALL

Surgeon Browne then read a communication from the secretary of the Cork Medical Protection Association with regard to the case of Dr. Wall, medical officer of Dunmanway Union, who was dismissed by sealed order of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and a medical gentleman sent down from Dublin to take his place, as none of the local medical gentlemen would accept of the position, believing, as they did, that Dr. Wall has been harshly treated. He (Surgeon Browne) thought the case had not been very clearly stated, even in the document which he had read, and he considered the best course for that association to pursue would be to refer the matter to the committee to do as they might think best after getting more detailed information on this subject.

Dr. M'Gee, J.P., in a few remarks, begged to move that it be referred to the committee.

Dr. Pirrie begged to second the motion. The statement which had just been read was very imperfect. He thought they should take no action on it at present.

After some remarks from Dr. Filson, Dr. Heeney, Dr. Dickson and others, the motion of Dr. M'Gee was put and agreed to.

#### REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES.

Surgeon Browne had to lay before them a copy of the Bill brought in last session of Parliament, by Lord [?] and the Attorney-General for Ireland for the registration of births, deaths, and marriages. There was one clause in the Bill which would affect the profession. He referred to the 15th clause which provided that if a medical man neglected to send to the registrar a certificate of a death within eight days, he should be liable to a penalty of 40s, while he was to receive nothing for doing it. That was a penal clause which they should not allow to pass without pointing out the hardship of it. He anxiously desired to see a registration Bill brought in and passed into law; the Bill for Ireland to be framed on the same principles as

the law of registration in England. The Board of Guardians had decided upon petitioning the government upon the matter, and when he brought it before the Board, he referred to some points in the Bill which appeared to him to be unconstitutional. But what touched upon their interests most was the fifteenth clause, and they should watch the passing of any law upon the subject, as the present government seems likely to bring in a Bill upon it, for he saw it named in the list to be brought in next session.

Dr. Pirrie moved that the Bill be referred to the Committee.

Dr. Kennedy—I beg to second the motion.

The Chairman then put the resolution, when it was passed unanimously.

Dr. Dickson moved that the Chairman vacate the chair, and that Dr. M'Gee, the newly-elected Chairman of the committee, be called thereto.

Dr. M'Gee, having taken the chair, said it became his duty to return them thanks for the honour which they had done him. He had been so often called upon to return thanks for honours done to him that he really did not know what to say without repeating what he had said on some previous occasion. He had not the slightest idea when he entered the meeting that he should be called to that office, for he naturally believed that it would have fallen upon one who occupied a higher position; but as they seemed to think that he could be of some service, he was willing to take the office, and do all in his power. (Hear, hear.) They had, however, lightened his duties considerably, by the appointment of such an invaluable honorary secretary as Surgeon Browne. (Hear, hear.) As to the formation of that association, he had long thought such was necessary. They had seen, time after time, how the public had made demands upon their time, which was their capital, and the public had again and again forgotten the services rendered to them. In Belfast they had some noble exceptions. The Board of Guardians, at a time when services had been rendered by the medical gentlemen, for which the Board of Guardians then had no power to pay, afterwards proposed to take steps to have them remunerated, and the medical gentlemen refused to accept of anything, and were satisfied with the thanks of the Guardians. He hoped such services would never be required again under such circumstances; but, if their services were required by the public, the latter should now know that these services must be paid for. Their association could do much to advance the interests of the profession. The Registration Act was one which they could use their influence in urging the Legislature to pass, and it would be of great benefit, not only to the entire public, but would materially serve the profession. Every death occurring

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

in the county would have to be certified, stating the disease which caused it, by a medical gentleman, and no certificate would be received from any but those properly registered; so that it would tend to put down quacks who were not members of the profession. Then, the association would look after having a change made in that clause which affected them personally. If they had had an Association at the time the Vaccination Act passed, they would have had such improvements made in it, and would not have left its provisions such a tax upon the time of medical officers without any commensurate reward. He did not know what the Registration Commissioners did for the protection of the registered members of the profession. They received heavy fees from the members of the profession, and he thought they should look after the interests of the profession better than they did. He would not detain them longer, but begged again to thank them for the honour done him. (Applause.)

Surgeon Browne wished to say that the Hospital Committee, having been applied to, had kindly granted the use of the library for the association to hold its meetings in it.

Dr. Dickson then moved that the best thanks of the meeting be given to Dr. Stewart for his conduct of the chair. No man deserved their thanks more than Dr. Stewart, for, although he had received an appointment which removed him from active practice, yet he never failed to lend his aid to forward the interests of the profession. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. Filson seconded the vote of thanks, which was put, and passed with acclamation.

Dr. Stewart having acknowledged the compliment, the meeting separated.

### MONTHLY MEETING

*Belfast News-Letter* 14 October 1859

The usual monthly meeting of the Ulster Medical Protective Association was held yesterday [13th October 1859], at their room in the Belfast General Hospital. There was a large attendance of members on the occasion. Dr. Heaney occupied the chair. The Honorary Secretary, Surgeon Browne, apologised for the absence of Dr. M'Gee, J.P. He then reported that he had put himself in communication with the Secretary of the London Medical Registration Society, and with the counsel of the Ulster Association, J. M. Thompson, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, with the view of carrying out the provisions of the Medical Act against unqualified practitioners.

The Treasurer (Dr. Patterson) reported that the

association now enrolled 124 members.

Dr. Hume, of Crumlin, was balloted for, and unanimously elected a member of the association.

The Secretary then brought the case of Dr. Harman, of Ballyward, under the notice of the committee, and he was directed to write to that gentleman, and to convey to him their warm sympathy. The committee, at the same time expressed it as their opinion, that the Poor-law Commissioners had not rendered Dr. Harman justice, in accordance with the evidence, as published in the newspapers.

The Secretary was directed to notify to all the members the propriety of their bringing under the notice of the committee the names of any unqualified persons practising medicine in their several districts, or assuming to be physicians or surgeons without any legal license, that the committee may take prompt measures for punishing such pretenders, as counsel may advise. The secretary was also directed to ask the opinion of their counsel whether medical men holding Government medical appointments, as in the Queen's Colleges, were not, according to law, compelled to register, and to inquire if any certificates granted by them could be held as valid until they had so registered? The last report of the Poor-law Commissioners having been brought under the notice of the meeting, the members unanimously expressed their strong disapprobation of the portion which refers to the appointment of non-professional men as inspectors for medical purposes, and they stated their determination to join with the other Protective Associations to prevent the fulfilment of an intention so opposed to justice, to the rights of the medical profession, and the welfare of the community. Surgeon Browne stated that he had already been in correspondence with Dr. Armstrong, the indefatigable Secretary of the Cork Association, on the subject. It was one which he regarded as of great moment, and which called especially for the notice of every Medical Protective Association; for the profession might rest assured that if the Commissioners' views were once carried out, the dispensary doctors would be in a much worse position than they now occupy, though that is, in many respects, a very unenviable one. The Secretary was then requested to watch the proceedings regarding this question very closely, and to bring up a special report on the subject for the next meeting of the committee.

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

### COMMITTEE MEETING

*Belfast News-Letter* 11 November 1859

Thursday [10th November 1859], at twelve o'clock, a meeting of the committee of this association was held in the Library of the General Hospital, Dr. M'Gee in the chair.

The following were balloted for and admitted members of the association:—Surgeon Shaw, Greyabbey; Dr. White, Downpatrick; Surgeon Harrison, Ardglass; Dr. Wm Browne, Derry; Surgeon Phillips, Ballygawley.

A question arose as to the admission to membership of a gentleman who was known to be duly qualified, but did not appear on the list as registered, and after some discussion, it was resolved to let the matter remain over until the gentleman could be again communicated with.

Dr. Patterson announced that the association now comprised 130 paid members, besides some who had not yet paid their subscriptions.

Surgeon Browne said they numbered nearly 140 altogether.

Dr. Patterson said he had been requested to ask if the degree of M.B. from the University of Aberdeen entitled the holder to assume the title of Doctor. It was objected that some gentlemen had 'Doctor' upon their doors, when they were only M.B.'s

Surgeon Browne said the title of 'Doctor' had always been given to them by courtesy.

The Chairman thought that this was a case in which they should not interfere. They had in Belfast three or four gentlemen of high standing who were M.B.'s, and it would be preposterous to interfere. When any of them were asked about it, they should direct the applicant to apply to the Council for Ireland. The title of Doctor was given to M.B.'s by courtesy just as that of 'lord' was given to the sons of peers; but, if they went into a court of law, they would not get that title.

Dr. Murney said that in Trinity College there was an examination for M.B., and a year after the degree of M.D. was given, upon the payment of the fees, and without any second examination.

Surgeon Browne read a letter from a gentleman who wished to be enrolled if possible. He stated that his name was not on the register of this year owing to his passing after it was made out. He observed that their association was about to give quackery a death-blow. He suggested that the Association should send persons throughout Ulster to find out unqualified persons and have them brought to Justice immediately. (Laughter.) He submitted the names of four persons without any qualification, who styled themselves 'doctors and general practitioners,' and

were practising in his neighbourhood. Surgeon Browne went on to say that he believed the writer of this letter was registered.

It was agreed that his election be adjourned until the certificate of registration be forwarded.

The general and bye-laws of the London Medical Registration Society were laid on the table, and were ordered to be referred to a subcommittee, to consider whether any of them should be incorporated in the rules of the Ulster Medical Protective Association.

Surgeon Browne said that he, as secretary, had received two letters from their honorary counsel. One was relative to professors in Queen's Colleges, &c., and the other called the attention of the association to the fact that, in a county of Ulster, two members of the medical profession had applied for spirit licenses at a late Quarter Sessions. The Chairman of the county on that occasion felt it his duty to represent the matter to the honorary counsel of the association, and desired him to bring it before the secretary, thinking that it was really a great hardship upon the profession that such a thing should occur. Perhaps the best course would be to refer the matter to the sub-committee.

The Chairman said that when such a report was going before the public, they should understand that men of high rank in Belfast, wine merchants and others, were obliged, for the purposes of trade, and in order to keep their stock correct, to have a retail license. It might just happen that these men, being druggists, wished to be licensed for the sale of spirits of wine, and it would be hard to stamp them as the keepers of dram shops, although they did deal in drachms, until they saw exactly what were the facts of the case.

Dr. Murney—Are they both members of our association?

Surgeon Browne—No; but they are both registered.

Dr. Patterson—It is very disgraceful to the profession.

Surgeon Browne said they had applied to members to send in the names of parties who were practising illegally. He had got some names, and would lay them before a sub-committee; but it would be well for the public to understand that since the association had been established a good many of them had taken to flight from Belfast, and others were trying through subterfuge to escape the observation of the society. He might inform those parties that so sure as the society existed they would be hauled up in a very short time before the public. He understood that one of these men had partly obliterated the name on his premises so that it could not be read, but was still practising and receiving fees.

He intended to submit a case to counsel to know how far they could go under the 40th clause. He was quite sure that a man acting, in the capacity of a general practitioner could be taken up and brought before the magistrates, although he might not assume the title of doctor, surgeon, or anything else.

The Chairman said he had heard of a case lately in England, where the man did not style himself a doctor, but the conviction seemed to have been founded upon his having administered medicine and received money. The 40th clause provided that 'if any person should willingly and falsely pretend to be,' or take or use the name or title of physician, &c., he should, upon summary conviction, pay a sum not exceeding £20. Now, the first line, he thought, included such cases as were referred to by Mr. Browne. The question was, whether prescribing and giving medicine, and taking payment therefor, would not be pretending to be a practitioner in medicine.

Dr. Wheeler said that sometimes the unqualified man was partner with a qualified.

Surgeon Browne said that in that case the unqualified man was not protected by the qualification of the qualified man, and he would find it to his advantage either to leave off practising or take a qualification.

Mr. Warwick, mentioned a case in which an unqualified practitioner sent in a bill for 30s, and when it was objected to as excessive the payment of it could not be enforced.

Surgeon Browne said the public should understand clearly that in all cases they were protected against quackery, for, if they did not like to pay the money, the quack could not recover it.

The matter then dropped.

Surgeon Browne said he had been requested to bring up a report on a subject of much interest to the profession. In the year 1857 a Bill for the amendment of the Medical Charities Act was introduced into the House of Commons by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. H. Herbert, having been prepared upon the recommendation of the Poor-law Commissioners, and by the 14th section it was proposed to empower the inspector appointed under the Poor-law Act to discharge the duties of inspectors under the Medical Charities Act, notwithstanding that they might not possess the medical qualification required by this latter Act. That was of course opposed at the time, but in the report of the Commissioners for 1859 they recommended that their inspectors be empowered to act as medical inspectors, and that the medical inspectors should be empowered to act under the Poor-laws, adding that one inspector with medical qualification would appear to be sufficient for the whole of Ireland, except in special cases when others

would be employed. He asserted that it was totally impossible for a non-medical man to exercise proper inspection over dispensaries, but the medical inspectors could discharge efficiently all the duties of inspectors under the Poor-law Acts, and if the Commissioners required them all to be medical men, he was sure the profession would not object; but if they brought forward any such provision again, he, if still a Poor-law Guardian, would give it his most strenuous opposition.

The Chairman said the Commissioners themselves had frequently found it necessary to employ medical men to report on cases requiring professional knowledge; and, in fact, a layman could not perform the duties of inspector under the Medical Charities Act. He was only surprised that they had been so economical as to employ only four or five medical Inspectors for all Ireland. They should have one for each county, and then, let them diminish the number of ordinary Poor-law Inspectors if they pleased.

Surgeon Browne read a letter from the Secretary of the Southern Association, Dr. Armstrong, stating that they intended to make some move in the matter.

The Chairman said that if the Poor-law Commissioners saw there was going to be opposition, they would not press it forward.

It was agreed, on the motion of Dr. Stewart, that a memorial be presented to the Poor-law Commissioners, and to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Cardwell, praying that in any proposed Poor-law Amendment Act, the provision for setting aside medical inspectors be not inserted.

#### THE CASE OF DR. WALL

Surgeon Browne said he had received from the Secretary of the Irish Medical Association copies of the memorial presented from that body to the Poor-law Commissioners, in reference to the case of Dr. Wall, late medical officer of Dunmanway Union, together with the reply thereto. In the memorial, the Council of the Medical Association of Ireland begged to submit for the consideration of the Poor-Law Commissioners some observations on the circumstances connected with the inquiry relative to the death of Jeremiah M'Carthy in the Dunmanway Workhouse Hospital. The Council had been struck with deficiency in the conducting of the inquiry by the Poor-Law Inspector, as shown in the omission to take either the evidence of the deceased's relatives, or that of the porter of the house, which, as circumstances had since shown, might have altered the views of the Poor Law Commissioners. The Council then referred to the inquest held on the body, and proceeded to comment upon the letter of the

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

Commissioners to the Board of Guardians. Having noticed the state of deceased on admission to the hospital, after the lapse of twenty hours from he received the injury, the Council remarks that under such circumstances, although a surgeon might suggest an operation as the only means of giving any chance of life, yet he might feel reluctant to press it on the patient or his friends, when they so strongly expressed their opposition to such a proceedings; this reluctance would be increased by the conviction that the chances of saving the man's life had been reduced by the delay in bringing him to the hospital. The Council, while they would not deny that blame might be attributable to Dr. Wall in some points; still it appeared to them that the punishment with which his errors had been visited, had been out of proportion to the offence. In conclusion, the Council respectfully ask a withdrawal of the sealed order against Dr. Wall, or a re-opening of the case to admit further investigation.

The following reply was returned: –

'Poor-Law Commission Office, Dublin, 14th Oct., 1859

'Sir—The Commissioners for Administering the Laws for Relief of the Poor in Ireland have received the statement relating to the case of Dr. Wall, addressed to them, and signed by you, as Chairman of the Council of the Medical Association of Ireland.

'In reply, I am to state that the Commissioners do not feel called upon to enter into correspondence with the Council of the Medical Association, as to the manner in which they discharged their duty in the case of Dr. Wall.

'The Commissioners must, at the same time, observe to you, in your capacity of medical officer of the Bray Dispensary district of the Rathdownen Union, that you have addressed to them language which, in their opinion, is not befitting your position as an officer performing a public duty, under the superintendence of the Commissioners. In a matter which no way regards the discharge of your own duties, or the administration of the same in your own district, you state that there has been a great deficiency in the conduct of the late inquiry in Dr. Wall's case on the part of the Poor-law Inspector; you advert, also, to defects in certain documents addressed by the Commissioners to the Board of Guardians, and to their Inspectors in the subject of this case; and you give it as your opinion, that, although blame is attributed to Dr. Wall in some points, the punishment with which his errors have been visited has been out of proportion to the offence.

'You are, doubtless, at liberty to form your own opinion of the merits of the case in question from such information as you may possess regarding it; but as the Commissioners cannot consistently with their position enter into explanation with you in defence of their proceedings they submit to your consideration the propriety of not addressing

them in future on the subject of their official conduct in any matter which does not concern the administration of the law in your own district. There is a part, however, of your communication of which the Commissioners feel constrained to take more serious notice; they allude to the opinion which you have voluntarily conveyed to them regarding Dr. Wall's conduct in taking active steps to effect the removal of a man, with a compound commiserated [sic] fracture of the leg, extending into the knee joint, from Dunmanway Workhouse to an Infirmary at Cork, a distance of forty miles, for amputation; such being the desire of his friends, under circumstances which you describe as making amputation (even in the workhouse) a hopeless expedient. Regarding this part of Dr. Wall's conduct, you observe—"One can readily understand that in such a case from which no favourable issue was then to be expected, the practitioner might be induced to assent to almost any course which appeared grateful to the patient's friends."

'The expression of such views by the medical officer of a dispensary district makes it incumbent on the Commissioners to warn him that, if in any similar case to that of Jeremiah M'Carthy he should put in practice, under a dispensary ticket, a course analogous to that pursued by Dr. Wall, the consequences would be very serious to himself, as the Commissioners would, without hesitation, adopt the same measures in his case as those which they adopted in the case of Dr. Wall.

'(By order of the Commissioners,)

'To Dr. Whistler, Bray'

Surgeon Browne, in continuation, said that that letter was characteristic of the Board from which it came. It was an exhibition, he would not say of petty tyranny, but of the course which the Commissioners pursued towards those over whom they thought they had some power. The memorial was not the act of Dr. Whistler, but of the council of which he was the chairman. A single word disrespectful to the Commissioners was not used. There was an admission made which he (Surgeon Browne) would not have made—that Dr. Wall might have been somewhat to blame; but the memorial did not call for the severe language made use of by the Commissioners in their reply. It was not to Dr. Whistler they addressed that language, but to the whole Irish Association; and he trusted the Irish Association would know how to reply to them.

Dr. Stewart said that so far as he knew the facts of the case, Dr. Wall was not to blame in any way whatever,

The Chairman said he regretted that the Commissioners should have seen fit to write such a letter. They had now been told for the second time that their sealed order, when contrary to law, could not be carried out. When they called on Dr. Wall to

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

resign, and when he did resign, that should have been a settlement of the question, and they should not have punished twice by dismissing him under sealed order, after he had been unanimously elected by the Guardians. He was sorry the Guardians did not take their stand on that point and try the question with them.

It was moved by Surgeon Browne, seconded by Dr. Patterson, and agreed to. 'That, having heard the address from the Council of the Irish Medical Association and the reply of the Poor-law Commissioners, this meeting cannot but regret that the Commissioners should so far have forgotten the relative position of themselves and Dr Whistler as to have written in the incourteous terms addressed to him.'

An adjournment then took place.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Belfast News-Letter 9 December 1859*

Yesterday [8th December 1859], the Executive Committee of the Ulster Medical Protective Association met in the Library of the General Hospital, the President. Dr. M'Gee, J.P.. in the chair. The other members present were—Professor Ferguson, Dr. O'Connor, Ballycastle; Drs. Murney, J.P.; R. Stewart, Hospital for the Insane; Patterson, Halliday, Dickson, Heaney, Warwick, and Surgeon Browne.

After the transaction of the ordinary business, and the election of Dr. Bernard, of Dungannon, and Surgeon Patrick, of Carrickfergus, as members,

The Secretary brought under the notice of the Committee the meeting of the profession in Ireland, which had been summoned by the President of the Irish Medical Association, to take up certain questions of great interest to the entire medical body of this country. These questions embraced the consideration of the amendments required in the Medical Charities (Ireland) Act: the Poor-law proceedings relative to Doctor Wall's case at the Dunmanway Union: the manner in which Medical Poor-law inquiries are conducted; the letter addressed by the Poor-Law Commissioners to the Chairman of the Council of the Irish Medical Association, &c., &c. Of course these were very important matters for the consideration of the profession, and he quite concurred with the views put forward in the letters he had just read from Dr. Babington, Londonderry, and Dr. Thorpe, Letterkenny, relative to the necessity of sending representatives on behalf of the Ulster Association to the general meeting, called for the 15th inst.

The Chairman and several other members expressed similar views—the Chairman and Dr. Stewart referring specially to Dr. Wall's case, which they considered was one of very great hardship.

Professor Ferguson moved, and Dr. O'Connor seconded, that 'The Chairman of the Society, Dr. M'Gee, J.P.; and the Honorary-Secretary, Surgeon Browne, be appointed a deputation to the meeting of the profession at the Limerick Junction, on the 15th instant, and that these gentlemen shall then appear in the name and on behalf of the Ulster Medical Protective Association.'

The motion was put and passed unanimously.

The Secretary was directed to put himself in communication with the President and Secretary of the Irish Medical Association, and to lay the replies before a sub-committee to meet on the evening of Tuesday, the 13th inst.

The committee then adjourned.

### IRISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AGGREGATE MEETING AT THE LIMERICK JUNCTION HOTEL

*Belfast News-Letter 19 December 1859*

An aggregate meeting of the members of the medical profession in Ireland, convened by Dr. Mackessy, of Waterford, President of the Irish Medical Association, was held at the Limerick Junction Hotel, on Thursday night, at half-past seven o'clock. The principal object of the meeting of the meeting was to consider the case of Dr. Wall, late dispensary doctor in the Dunmanway Union, and the course which had been adopted by the Poor-law Commissioners in the case

At half-past seven o'clock Dr. Mackessy took the chair. The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, said that he felt greatly pleased to see present so many gentlemen holding a high rank in the profession. There was one circumstance to which he felt called upon to allude, and which he himself thought of with much pleasure—he meant the attendance at that meeting of a deputation from the Ulster Medical Protective Association, a society which was doing much to advance the position and maintain the high character of the medical profession. They were deeply indebted to those gentlemen for their attendance that night, for, if it had no other good result, it would make it plain that, they were all united and determined not to relinquish their rights without a struggle. The spirit of union was what they most stood in need of, and as long as they were animated by it they might rest assured that nothing could injure their position. It was incumbent upon them to endeavour to preserve

this feeling, and they might rest satisfied that as long as they remained united they had nothing to fear from the attacks of any board, no matter how powerful. (Hear, and applause.)

Dr. Harvey, of Cork, moved the first resolution, which referred to the conduct of the Poor-law Commissioners in the case of Dr. Wall as an arbitrary exercise of power, and said that before alluding to the terms of the resolution which he felt honored by having been called upon to propose, he felt bound to express his opinion that the meeting which had assembled that night could not be said to be called together by uncreated motives so much as by a sense of public justice. The large number of medical men who had attended, and many of whom were wholly unconnected with the Poor-law Commissioners, could not be said to be influenced by self-interest, or by resentment. They were there to affirm a principle, and to complain of what they conceived to be an injustice. Their object was to maintain their independence, and to protect their rights. In this view alone were any observations necessary. They had to complain of undue and improper interference, and of a desire to trample upon the profession; and standing in the position which they occupied, he felt that they would not yield to oppression or injustice. The gentlemen who uttered that document of which they complained—and he would not mention their names, which he wished he did not know—were well aware of the injury which they were attempting to do to the medical profession; and specially to those who were to a great extent under their authority, and unfortunately held office merely during their pleasure. All the members of the profession who for the present filled the position of dispensary doctors or doctors of workhouses were persons of education and principle; and, except in respect of pay, were in no way inferior to those under whose power they were placed. (Hear, and applause.) He did not feel warranted in making further remarks, as he had only taken the opportunity of expressing an individual opinion, and he was anxious to listen to what would be said. (Applause.)

Dr. Jacob, of Maryborough, seconded the resolution, which he felt to be a very important one. As had been said, the question was not merely a medical one; it was a subject upon which every right-minded man would entertain but one opinion. The complaint of that meeting rested upon the broad grounds that an attempt had been made to dictate and to overbear. He had no personal feeling or no animosity to gratify, but he came forward believing that the letter of the Commissioners was a pitiable exhibition of intemperate official feeling. They made an effort to crush and injure a gentleman who,

unfortunately for himself, was in their power. But the public would not stand their conduct, nor would the medical profession in Ireland suffer it to pass unnoticed. Too temperate an appeal had been made to their good sense and love of justice, and therefore the Commissioners turned round and acted with unwarrantable severity in a particular case. The medical profession were, therefore, compelled to come forward at that meeting and assert their rights, and were perfectly determined that the public should be made acquainted with the circumstances of the particular case of which they complained. He spoke in the presence of many gentlemen who were employees of the Poor-law Commissioners, and he asserted that the rules of the Commissioners, by which they intended that every dispensary doctor should act, were impracticable and could not be carried out. The Commissioners knew this to be the case; but whenever any gentleman was obliged to transgress these impracticable rules, or became obnoxious to them in any way, they had only to crush him with their sealed order, which they made out while sitting in their easy chairs by their council table. (Hear, hear.) These were facts, as every person present knew, and he appealed to public opinion. They knew the rules to be bad, though they did not set about remedying them in the best manner, but perpetuated the injustice, which they had lately practised in the case under consideration that night. At Cootehill they visited a gentleman with their displeasure, simply because the severity of his duties and the demand upon his time, made it perfectly impossible for him to visit the hospital before twelve o'clock. This was only another case to add to the number of the acts of injustice which the Poor-law Commissioners had committed. He thought they ought to be given some advice and shown their mistake. They had not good medical advice at present; for he believed that if their medical advisors were bold and fearless, and determined to maintain the rights of the profession, there would be less cause of complaint against the Board. He (Dr. Jacob) believed that the different districts in Ireland should send a committee, consisting of delegates from each, to point out to the Commissioners the mistakes which they were so frequently committing. Could any man of common sense, who understood anything whatever of the duties of a physician, say that he deserved reproof or censure because he did not attend an hospital before twelve o'clock, when he lived in a large district, and might on any occasion be called away to attend a case of childbirth, or some patient in the agonies of death? But the Commissioners need not care for the justice or injustice of their rules. They made regulations, and

they seemed determined to carry them into effect regardless of consequences, for they possessed an irresponsible power which enabled them to crush every person who became disagreeable to them. What was the course which, under the circumstances, should be adopted? They should battle for their rights at all hazards. He, as an Irishman, was afraid of no man, and would not be deprived of his privileges or submit to insult. The case of Dr. Wall would, he was sure, be spoken of and explained by some of the speakers to follow him. He had only to deal with the principle that medical men would not stand to see their body attacked by unfair means. He had great pleasure in seconding the resolution. (Applause.)

Dr. Rawdoon Macnamara supported the resolution. He felt it impossible to sit quiet and not assert what he felt to be the privilege of every medical man. He believed that they had just cause for complaint in the fact that the Poor-Law Commissioners had refused to listen to their fair and temperate appeal. They had asked for an investigation upon the same principle as those which were held in courts of law, where no decision was arrived at except on legal evidence. The Poor-Law Board was not, surely, superior in authority to the Courts of Queen's Bench or Chancery, but they assumed a more arbitrary authority; and they had been written to and asked to suspend their judgment in the case of Doctor Wall until they had learned the additional evidence which could be offered, but they replied, stating that they would not hold any communication with the members of the Irish Medical Association. If, however, they had merely contented themselves with this, and had gone no further, he ventured to say that the meeting at which they were that evening assembled would never have been held, and that nothing farther would have been done than remonstrate with them upon their injustice. But they treated the chairman of that association as if he were merely representing his own opinions, and not those of the great number of medical men who formed that, useful and influential society. They sent him a message to the effect which he had stated. It was true that some gentlemen had told him some days ago that it was not the intention of the Poor-law Board to convey such an impression; but, however, their words remained, and it was impossible to weaken their meaning. (Hear, hear.) He confessed that he was more pleased to see that a number of the gentlemen present were under the control of the Poor-law unions than he was to notice that his friend Dr. Jacob, and many others who were wholly independent of the Poor-law Board, were in attendance. He felt sure that the Ægis of the British Constitution would be thrown over those gentlemen; and, in any event, they had shown more wisdom in

coming forward to confront injustice in a manly way than they would have done by shrinking back from avowing their rights. There was more hope for the confident and self-reliant than for those who crouched under the whip. He felt that these complaints would not that night be made in vain; but that they would find their way to responsive hearts all through Ireland, and would awaken popular indignation and sympathy, that the cry would not be uttered in vain by any British subject—"Civis Romanus sum" (Loud applause.)

The resolution was then put and carried.

Surgeon Browne, of Belfast, moved the next resolution, which was to the effect;—"That a petition should be prepared and presented to Parliament," He begged to thank the meeting for the kind manner in which he had been received, and to assure the chairman, who had alluded in terms of congratulation to the union between the medical men of the North and South of Ireland, that on the part of the members of the medical profession in Ulster, and the society they had recently established, everything would be done to keep up the feelings of good-will and sympathy. He was ashamed at a former meeting to be obliged to put himself forward as the representative of the profession in Ulster; but now a society had been formed, numbering one hundred and forty good men and true, and he felt honored at being made the instrument of conveying to the gentlemen of the Southern districts that night the sentiments of reciprocity and kindness to them which animated the Ulster Medical Protective Association. (Hear, hear, and applause.) He was sure from what had been said they were all determined to maintain their privileges and immunities—not as members of the medical profession only, but as British subjects, and as guardians of the sick poor; for if they were injured or their influence shaken, what would become of the poor? They had inalienable rights, and they would not give them up hastily, without some attempt to defend them. He did not wish to detain the meeting with any views of his own, as he believed that the whole question would be ably argued. He merely put forward the broad principle on which they should act, and he hoped to see their struggle for their privileges terminate successfully. (Applause )

Dr. Ryan, of Tipperary, seconded the resolution, and referred in a few observations to Dr. Wall's case. He thought Cork should take the lead.

Dr. Harvey suggested that on the committee to prepare the petition should be one gentleman from every deputation who attended that meeting (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was put and carried.

Dr. M'Gee, President of the Ulster Medical

Protective Association, felt great pleasure in having the opportunity afforded him of speaking at so influential a meeting in defence of the rights of his brethren of the medical profession in Ireland. He hoped that upon such a subject as they were considering, the union between the medical men of the North and South of Ireland would last long; and he might tell them that the members of the association over which he presided had some time ago determined upon a separate petition of their own. (Hear, hear.) Upon Sir John Arnott having made certain representations to the Poor-law Board some time ago, an inspector was sent down, to make inquiry into the matter. This was the course which upon such occasions the Commissioner uniformly adopted; but it should be remembered that the men upon whom, as inspectors, this arduous duty devolved, were wholly ignorant of the subjects with which they had to deal, and the manner in which they should be handled. He was thoroughly conversant with the workings of the Poor-law and the Medical Charities Act, having been connected with the Poor-law system for many years, and he saw the errors into which they ran by mistaking the manner in which the duties of medical inspectors could be discharged. It was surely to be supposed that to discharge these duties a man required some professional knowledge; but the Commissioners acted as if they believed this was unnecessary in gentlemen who had to deal with the most important matters. Their mistakes arose, partly from the desire to economise, and also to a very great extent from ignorance. He spoke of the Poor-law Commissioners with all due respect, and he had no desire to say anything which might not appear to be founded strictly upon fact; but he did think that, as an almost irresponsible body with unlimited power, and a great field for its exercise, they were sometimes led into errors which it would be as well for themselves and the public they could avoid. They had now a locus penitentiae offered them, and they ought to come forward to remove the slur which had been cast upon their character, and begin a new and better system of administration. (Applause.)

Dr. Johnson, of Kilkenny, briefly seconded the resolution, which was put and carried.

Dr. Howlet moved the next resolution. He regretted that the resolution which conveyed the sentiments of the meeting with respect to the conduct of the Poor-law Commissioners was one which required to be put at that meeting. It was to be lamented that their conduct exposed them to the censure of all right-thinking men both in and outside the profession.

Dr. Martin, of Portlaw, seconded the resolution,

which was carried.

Dr. Armstrong, of Cork, said he had a paper which was drawn up very kindly by Dr. Johnson, of Kilkenny, and which stated fully the whole case. He would read it by the permission of the meeting. Dr. Armstrong then proceeded to read the paper, which stated that in Dunmanway, in January last, a young man received a severe fracture in the leg. He was brought to the workhouse hospital and placed under the care of Dr. Wall; but though the fracture was very severe, he would not consent to amputation; Accordingly, he remained there without having the limb amputated, owing to his constant refusal to submit to the operation. After some time his friends asked that he should be sent to Cork, and he himself was anxious to go, and he went against the desire of Dr. Wall. The Commissioners complained of Dr. Wall's conduct in not having the leg amputated, and in permitting the patient to go up to Cork to die as he did from the effects of the injuries he received, and they sent a letter to the union calling upon Dr. Wall to resign. He did so and a new election took place, at which, as no other gentleman offered himself, he was re-elected. Some time afterwards another letter arrived from the Commissioners, calling upon him to give up the situation to which he was re-elected. He did so, but at the request of the guardians attended to the health of the inmates temporarily. Again came a note threatening a sealed order, and stating that the Commissioners would send up some gentleman from Dublin to take the office. In the meantime patients died, but not withstanding the frequent letters of the Guardians the Commissioners seemed determined not to permit Dr. Wall to be re-elected, and in this matter they acted against the commonly permitted practice of re-electing certain officers of a union.

The Chairman stated that he had had an interview with Mr. Cardwell, and complained of the great injustice done Dr. Wall in inflicting three separate punishments upon him. The Chief-Secretary received him courteously, and listened to him with attention. He also remarked upon the strange circumstance, that though the Commissioners deemed Dr. Wall incompetent, they permitted him to discharge the duties of medical officer for five months after the circumstance complained of occurred. He also alluded to the case of Dr. Whistler. He (the Chairman) thought he might state at this point, that he had received upwards of a hundred letters of apology from gentlemen who were not able to attend.

After some further discussion, Dr Meade said that it seemed hard that a gentleman who, even if he had been wrong, had only committed a slight error, should be dealt with so harshly. It appeared that the guardians had commenced a subscription for Dr. Wall,

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

and it would be well, perhaps, if others would follow their example, He thought the whole subject should be taken up and attended to by the College of Surgeons.

Dr. O'Brien, of Ennis, moved the next resolution, also referring to the case of Dr. Wall. The principle of the resolution he believed to be one which was embodied in the Parliament of Great Britain, and which was the safeguard of the accused, protecting them from any conviction not founded upon evidence. He would like to know why, with respect to the members of the medical profession, the Poor-law Commissioners do not act upon this principle? Why were medical men punished in an arbitrary manner before it was established that they had made any mistake? The Poor-law Board often constituted itself into a Star Chamber to put down and to ruin a person who had done no real harm; but whom, perhaps, they believed guilty of a trifling indiscretion. As a person who was connected with the Poor-law Commissioners in the capacity of a medical officer, he had believed it his duty to come forward on such an occasion to express the opinions which he held. He believed the Board had an arbitrary and excessive power which should not be intrusted to them in a free country, and which enabled them to crush every one in their employ who happened to offend. (Hear.)

Dr. Bennett seconded the resolution, though a servant of the Commissioners.

Dr. Quinan moved the next resolution, appointing a committee to carry out the objects of the meeting.

Dr. Hanrahan seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Dr. Brown said that, as the business which related to Dr. Wall's case had been transacted, this was the place to allude to some matters in connection with the profession which ought to receive the attention of such a meeting. He was very well pleased to hear Dr. Bennett declare that the medical profession were the guardians of the children of the poor. If they would look to facts they would see that from persons having such a duty to discharge it was necessary some petition in favour of making vaccination compulsory should issue, for something should be done to prevent the spread of a loathsome and most dangerous disease, which was now becoming more general than formerly. There should be a compulsory registration of births, in order to make it possible to have compulsory vaccination. (Hear, hear.) The person who was not vaccinated was a focus of contagion, and injured not only himself but his fellow-men. Again, the sale of poisons should be considered carefully, and something should be done to prevent people selling injurious and poisonous drugs, who understand nothing about them or their fatal effect. Dr. Brown

concluded by moving a resolution to the effect that a committee be appointed to consider these various subjects, and to prepare a petition to Parliament, praying for an amendment in the existing law. (Hear hear.)

Dr. Magee seconded the resolution, which was carried.

Dr. Brown was then moved to the second chair, and the thanks of the meeting voted to Dr. Mackessy for his kindness in presiding, after which the proceedings terminated.

### MANAGING COMMITTEE

*Belfast News-Letter* 13 January 1860 &

*Belfast Daily Mercury* 13 January 1860

Yesterday [12th January 1860], a meeting of the Managing Committee of the Ulster Medical Protective Association was held in the library of the General Hospital, when the President, Dr. M'Gee, J.P., occupied the chair. There were present—Dr. Patterson, Surgeon Browne, R.N.; Dr. Heaney, Dr. Halliday, Dr. Stewart, Dr. Black, and Dr. Murney, J.P.

Dr. Browne then read the minutes of the ordinary and special meeting of the association, and afterwards moved that they should be confirmed.

That motion was agreed to.

A ballot was then taken, and Surgeon Jeffers, of Cloughmills, was unanimously elected a member of the association. The Chairman remarked that that name made 134 paid members.

Dr. Browne asked had Dr. Patterson any report to make to the meeting?

Dr. Patterson—I may say that we have expended about £21, and that there are still £13 or £14 in hands.

Dr. Browne said it might be remarked that one of their rules was, that no gentleman could be elected a member unless he were a registered member of the profession.

Dr. Heaney—Is that one of the rules?

Dr. Browne replied in the affirmative, and said that the society was not only a protective but was also a registration association.

The Chairman explained the law in reference to the case of a man whose name might not appear on the register, and who might have occasion to go to law for the recovery of any claim for professional services which he might here rendered. All he would have to do would be to register, and he would get a printed certificate signed by the registrar, showing that he was registered, and that certificate would be a legal document. He would get the certificate without fee or reward. On the other hand, suppose a man's

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

name was upon the register, it might be objected that the register was not legal evidence in itself; and in that case, he could get the certificate by applying for it and it would be legal evidence of his qualification.

Dr. Brown said that if a medical man wished to correct the register, it was only necessary for him to send his name and address to the registrar, Dr. Maunsell.

Dr. Halliday—And will the book not be received in evidence in a court of justice?

Dr. Patterson—It will not.

Dr. Browne—A case occurred the other day in England.

The Chairman—Some barristers admit the book, and others may not; but when you have the certificate signed by Dr. Maunsell, Dr. Browne or I can prove the handwriting.

Dr. Browne said they would recollect that, at the meeting of the association on the 8th of December, Dr. M'Gee and himself were appointed as a deputation to proceed to the Limerick Junction meeting. They were instructed by a sub-committee as to what course they were to pursue, and what views to advocate. They had seen by the local papers that the report of that meeting at the Limerick Junction had been very kindly copied from those papers that had reporters there, and gentlemen could see that the proceedings were of a very satisfactory character, and that the interests of the profession, and especially those of the public, were advocated by the deputation, for they took care that the public should see that the profession were not only fighting for themselves but also for the public. They found that the public were the parties who suffered most when medical men were assailed; and, consequently, the meeting passed a resolution which had been published, and to which he need not again refer. The deputation was kindly received, and the kindest feeling was expressed by the members of the profession in the South and West towards the profession in the North, and a determination evinced to co-operate with them in every possible way. The next matter he had to bring before them was that he had forwarded to the General Council of Medical Education, and also to the Branch Council, copies of the memorial which had been prepared as directed, and he would read that memorial. He might, however, say that he had received letters from Dr. Hawkins and Dr. Maunsell, acknowledging the receipt of the copies, and also from Dr. Armstrong, Secretary of the Cork Association, to whom he sent a copy of it also. The memorial was as follows:—

'To the General Council of Medical Education and Registration in the United Kingdom.

'Gentlemen—I have the honor to state that I am directed by the Ulster Medical Protective Association most respectfully to represent to you the propriety of having a separate medical register for Ireland, issued in 1860, as they believe that such a step would be a great boon to the profession in this country, as it would enable each member to have in his possession a copy in a cheap form, and of easy reference.

'They consider that such a course is essential for the successful working of the Medical Act; and I may state that this was the decided opinion of the aggregate meeting of the medical profession of Ireland, held on the 15th instant, and before which I had the honor of submitting this important question.

'Trusting that your honorable Board will give this subject your most favorable consideration. I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your very obedient servant.

'Samuel Browne, Honorary Secretary.

'Belfast. 28th Dec., 1859

P.S.—This association numbers 140 members, and represents about 400 practitioners. The meeting of the profession referred to represented all of the medical associations and the entire profession of Ireland.'

The next matter to be brought under the notice of the meeting was, that the memorial to the Chief-Secretary for Ireland had been forwarded, and a copy of it sent to the Poor-Law Commissioners; the latter had acknowledged the receipt of it, but there had been no reply yet from Mr. Cardwell. The following is a copy of the memorial:—

'To the Right Hon. Edward Cardwell, M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland, &c.

'Sir—The Ulster Medical Protective Association having observed in the last report submitted to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, by the Poor-Law Commissioners, that a suggestion formerly made relative to dispensing with the services of medical inspectors, under the Medical Charities Act, has again been set prominently forth, beg, through us, most respectfully to state that such a course, if adopted, would prove most detrimental to the welfare of the sick poor, as, from experience, they are decidedly of opinion that the provisions of the Medical Charities Act can be efficiently carried out, alone, under the superintendence of medical inspectors. They would, therefore, humbly and earnestly request that any Bill which may be introduced into Parliament for amending the Poor-law and Medical Charities Acts, shall not contain the objectionable clauses suggested by the Poor-law Commissioners.

'We have the honor to be Sir, your obedient, humble servants,

'Wm. M'Gee, M.D., Chairman.

'Samuel Browne, Hon. Secretary.

'Belfast, 4th Jan., 1860.'

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

It would be seen from this memorial that the annotation was more anxious for the good of the public than for the benefit of the profession. There was just another memorial to the Branch Medical Council, on the question of vaccination which he would read:

‘To the Branch Medical Council for Ireland.

‘The humble Memorial of the Ulster Medical Protective Association

‘Respectfully Sheweth—That memorialists, having had nearly two years’ experience of the working of the Vaccination Act in this country, believe that, though it has effected much good, it has failed in accomplishing its intended measure of usefulness, in consequence mainly of its not containing any compulsory powers; they believe, therefore, that no measure for promoting vaccination, especially among the poorer classes, could prove effectual, unless it contained some compulsory provisions to meet the apathy and carelessness of many persons in this country.

‘Memorialists consequently believe that for this purpose the legislature should, in the first instance, pass an Act for the registration of births and deaths in Ireland, without which any law for compulsory vaccination, it is evident, could not be duly enforced.

‘That, viewing the question of vaccination as one of very great importance to the community, and believing that to the medical profession properly belongs the duty of pointing out to Government the necessity there is for a more comprehensive measure for promoting vaccination than now exists, memorialists call, most respectfully, but earnestly, upon the Branch Medical Council, as the legal representatives of the medical profession in Ireland, to urge upon the Government that a measure for compulsory vaccination, founded on an Act for registering births and deaths in Ireland, be introduced into the ensuing session of the Imperial Parliament.

‘Wm. M’Gee, M.D., Chairman.

‘Samuel Browne, Secretary.’

The Chairman thought the question of the sale of medicines by unqualified parties was highly injurious to the well-being of the public, and he had just prepared a short memorial to the Company of Apothecaries’ Hall, Dublin, as he believed they had power, at least to some extent, to put a stop to the evil. The memorial was as follows:—

‘To the Governor, Deputy-Governor and Directors of the Company of Apothecaries Hall of the City of Dublin.

‘The Memorial of the Ulster Medical Protective Association

‘Respectfully Sheweth—That, from the Act 31st Geo. III., cap. 34. as manifested in its preamble, and in sections 16, 18, 22, and 26, it was intended that your Corporation should

take measures for preventing unqualified persons from preparing or vending medicines, or opening a shop or ware-room for the retail of medicines; that, having heard and believing that it has become a practice for grocers and other such dealers in various towns and villages in Ulster, to retail to any applicant laudanum and other medicines dangerous in the hands of the ignorant or ill-disposed, your memorialists now respectfully request Your Corporation to put in force the power vested in you by law, so that practices so dangerous to health or to life may be discontinued.

‘Wm. M’Gee, M.D., Chairman.

‘Samuel Browne, Secretary.’

The Chairman, after referring to the law on the subject contained in the memorial, said that the powers of the Apothecaries Hall as regarded the sale of poisons were limited. but that the committee had not thought it necessary in the memorial to go into the question of poisons.

Dr. Browne—In case we get a reply from the Apothecaries Company, stating that they have no powers in the case, what are we to do? Are we to petition the Government or memorial the Branch Council for Ireland?

Chairman—I think, then, that you should memorial the Medical Council, and petition Parliament too.

Dr. Stewart then moved the adoption of the memorial, and that it should be transmitted to the proper quarter.

Dr. Halliday seconded the motion, which was carried.

Dr. Heaney moved that a memorial should be prepared and forwarded to the General Council, to take steps for regulating and restraining the sale of poisons.

Dr. Patterson seconded the motion.

Dr. Browne then moved that the thanks of the meeting be given to the president, committee, and secretary of the Hull Medical Association for their kindness in forwarding to them the report of their association for the last year.

Dr. Black seconded the motion.

The proceedings then terminated.

### PUBLIC MEETING

*Northern Whig, Belfast 10 February 1860*

Yesterday [9 February 1860], a public meeting of this important association was held in the library of the General Hospital—William M’Gee, Esq., M.D., J.P., President of the Association, in the chair. There was a good attendance of members.

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

The Secretary (Surgeon Browne, R.N.) read the minutes of the previous meeting, which were confirmed.

### NEW MEMBERS

The following gentlemen were unanimously elected members of the association Dr. M'Conkey, Downpatrick; Dr. M'Clintock, Raphoe; Surgeon Otterson, Magherafelt; Surgeon Frame, Comber.

The Secretary remarked that the strength of the association was pleasantly increasing. He hoped it would soon number 150 or 200 members.

He said that, in reference to the memorial sent by the association to the Dublin Council, regarding the separate publication of a medical register for Ireland, he had received the following reply:—

'Branch Medical Council (Ireland),  
35, Dawson Street, Dublin,  
20th January, 1860.

'Dear Sir,—I have laid your letter and the resolution of the Ulster Medical Protective Association, stating the opinion of that body that the medical register of Ireland should be published separately from the general register, before this council; and I am directed to state that this branch council will bring the subject before the general Council; and, also, that the following resolution was passed by this branch council on the 23d February, 1859, viz.:—

'Unanimously resolved—"That it is the opinion of this council that there should be a separate register, in alphabetical order, for England and Wales, for Scotland and for Ireland, respectively; as, in such form, the register will be more easy of reference, more correct, and more saleable, than if there be only one continuous alphabetical register for all; and that such registers may be bound together, or sold in separate parts, as required."

'I am also to inform you that this branch council recognises the importance of the subject of the memorial of the Ulster Protective Association, in reference to a measure for compulsory vaccination, and will bring it under the consideration of the general council.—I am, yours, truly,

'H. Maunsell, Registrar.

'S. Browne, Esq.'

Secretary—The next communication I have is from the Chief Secretary, touching the appointment of medical inspectors, and is as follows:—

'Dublin Castle, 18th January, 1860.

'SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of a letter signed by you as chairman of the Ulster Medical Protective Association, and dated the 6th instant; and I am to acquaint you, in reply, that the question of medical inspection will receive full consideration in any Bill which may be introduced to Parliament on the subject.—I am, sir,

your obedient servant,

'Thomas Larcom.

'William M'Gee, Esq., M.D., 1, Adelaide Place, Belfast.'

Secretary—The next is a reply from the Poor Law Commissioners respecting the same memorial to that which I sent to the Chief Secretary:—

'Poor Law Commission Office,  
Dublin, Jan. 7. 1860.

'Sir—The Commissioners for Administering the Laws for Relief of the Poor in Ireland acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your communication, dated the 6th inst., transmitting a copy of a letter which has been addressed by the Ulster Medical Protective Association to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, on the subject of the proposed Poor Law Amendment Bill.—(By order of the Commissioners,

'B. Banks, Chief Clerk.

'To Samuel Browne, Esq., M.D., Belfast.'

The Secretary also read the following communication, which explains itself:—

'Apothecaries' Hall, Dublin, Jan. 20, 1860.

'Gentlemen,—I am instructed by the governor and court of directors of this hall to acknowledge the receipt of the memorial which has been forwarded, in your name, on behalf of "the Ulster Medical Protective Association," requesting of the hall to exercise the powers entrusted to it for preventing unqualified persons from preparing and vending medicines, and retailing poisonous drugs.

'The governor and court, in reply, beg to inform the association that their Act of Incorporation, "31st Geo. III., chap. 34," limits their control to unqualified persons "who open shop or practice as *apothecaries*" but leaves the retail of drugs and poisons, with the single exception of arsenic, entirely unrestricted.

'In reference to the evils referred to in the memorial, the governor and court are anxiously alive to their enormity, and have been exerting their influence with the Government to introduce a Bill into Parliament to restrict the sale of drugs and poisons to persons who shall be duly qualified and licensed for the purpose. — I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

'C. H. Leet, Sec.

'To W. M'Gee, Esq., M.D., &c.; and S. Browne, Esq.'

The Chairman said, all the association asked the directors to do was to exercise powers, which, it now appeared, they had not. However, they could reasonably go to Government with this document as evidence.

Dr. Filson (Portaferry)—The Apothecaries' Company tried the question, and were defeated.

Dr. Patterson—When did they try it?

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

Dr. Filson—Twenty or thirty years ago; and they never could succeed unless they could prove that the defaulters prescribed and compounded medicine as apothecaries.

Surgeon Browne—There is one thing certain, that we will have to take further steps; and, as the Apothecaries' Company is anxious to have it settled, application should be made at once to have a Bill brought in on the subject.

Dr. Dickson—If you mean a Bill to give the apothecaries further powers, I, for one, will oppose it.

Chairman—But it is not to give them further powers; it is merely to restrain unqualified persons from practising.

After some further discussion,

It was moved by Dr. Browne, and seconded by Dr. Filson:—'That, in consequence of the reply of the Apothecaries' Company, a petition be drawn up praying the Government to restrict the retail sale of poisons and drugs to duly qualified persons.'

Chairman—We can then petition the Government with regard to the nature of the Bill.

### THE MEDICAL CHARITIES' ACT.

The Secretary submitted forms of petitions sent from the Irish Medical Association, and the Cork Association, praying the Government for a more liberal policy towards the medical workhouse officers in Ireland

The Chairman said the power of the Poor Law Commissioners would have to be renewed this year, so that a very suitable opportunity would be afforded for asking Government to take the matter into consideration

Dr. Stewart moved that the petition of the Irish Medical Association, with such alterations as a sub-committee to be appointed should devise, be sent to Parliament, and that copies be sent to the members for the borough, with the request that they will support the prayer of the memorial.

Surgeon Warwick seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The following were appointed a committee to draw up the memorial—Dr. M'Gee, Surgeon Browne, Dr. Patterson, Dr. Stewart, and Dr. Dickson,

An application was received from the Newry Chirurgical Society requesting that they might be admitted into the Ulster Medical Association on the condition that they would be allowed to preserve their distinctive character.

Dr. Michael Magee thought the matter could not be settled except at the annual meeting, and the secretary was requested to write to the Newry Chirurgical Society for a copy of the rules and objects of the society.

Dr. Patterson—They can only be admitted individually.

The matter was postponed.

### UNQUALIFIED PRACTITIONERS

Surgeon Browne read a communication from a member of the association, requesting the body to take into their consideration the fact that a person is practising in Belfast, as a physician, who is not qualified.

Neither the name of the writer of the letter nor the person referred to were made public.

Dr. Patterson knew the person very well, and if he had prescribed, it was most improper. He had no right to prescribe, he was uneducated, professionally speaking, and should know as much. The object of the association was the punishment of such people, and little quarter should be shewn them. He would move that the secretary be instructed to write to the person in question that, if he continues to prescribe, action will be taken.

This course was agreed to.

The Secretary brought under the notice of the Society a similar case, the offender being in the county Donegal. This was also communicated to the Association.

It was agreed that the person referred to should be communicated with, and that he be requested to send a reply, in which his qualification to dispense medicine will be set forth.

The meeting then terminated.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*Dublin Medical Press* 28 March 1860

### THE MEDICAL ACT

Sir,—As the London Medical Registration Association have made a movement for the purpose of having an amended Medical Act, and as the Provincial and other Medical Societies have been applied to for their views on the subject, perhaps you will allow me to lay before the profession, through the medium of the 'Press,' the suggestions which the Ulster Protective Association have made to their London brethren, permitting me, also, at the same time, to express the views I entertain regarding the Medical Act—views which I believe are held by nearly every one who has observed the inoperative nature of that measure.

Whatever the good intentions of the Legislature were in framing the 'Medical Act,' it is quite evident that these intentions have not been fulfilled. For if we believe that the promoters of that measure wished to benefit and protect our profession, to elevate and

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

improve its status, we must admit that, for so far, their kind wishes have most signally failed. To what then can we ascribe that failure? Mainly, I believe, to the fact that the Legislature, after many fruitless attempts to reconcile contending colleges and conflicting interests, passed a measure, the machinery of which is altogether too cumbrous and too expensive to work satisfactorily; or it may be that they to whom the working of that machinery was entrusted, do not comprehend it; hence the Councils, in despair I presume, instead of applying themselves to the reorganization of the profession, by the improvement of preliminary, and the equalization of medical education, so as, in time, to render our body uniform and its position more elevated, have frittered away their meetings—few and far between—in unseemly wranglings about paltry rights and the privileges of opposing colleges. The whole procedure of the Councils, I contend, has been the very opposite of beneficial to those whom they represent and whom they were bound to protect. Their method of applying themselves to business proves that, in business matters, they are not practical men, and hence, after a very large expenditure of money, they have not only not benefited the public, or the profession, to the value of fifty pounds, but have made, I fear, an impression on the public mind that our body does not possess within it the element of self-government.

It is not, however, too late to mend: if the Councils will, with calmness and firmness, set to work continuously, and not at long intervals and by spasmodic fits; if they will remember that they are legislating for the profession of which they are the legalised head, but which they are bound to honour and advance—if they will regard a seat at the council board as one of the highest honour, and not a source merely of emolument—if they will take a delight in serving and consulting the interests of their own profession—and if they will permit the presence of the public press at their discussions; I say, if they will do all these things they may make the existing Act, even with its admitted defects, effect a vast deal of good; but if, on the contrary, they pursue the course they have hitherto followed, I, for one, must believe that any measure so worked can secure little more than a mockery and a snare.

The following are the amendments for the Medical Act, suggested by the Ulster Medical Protective Association:—

‘That the General Council be required to insist upon the degree of B.A. or A.M., as preliminary education, or the subjection of the candidate to an examination embracing a course of instruction equivalent to the aforesaid degrees. And that they shall take steps to equalise and render uniform

medical education and examinations.

‘That the Councils shall appoint an Inspector, at a suitable salary, for each portion of the united kingdom, for the purpose of examining all establishments where drugs are compounded or sold by retail, and with power to destroy all impure articles.

‘That the Councils shall restrain all unqualified persons from retailing or compounding drugs, and that they shall establish regulations for the safe retail of all poisonous matters, or drugs.

‘That there should be clear evidence of identity, as well as of qualification, of all persons applying to be registered under the Act.

‘That the law should be so framed that the simple act of prescribing medically or surgically, with or without a fee, shall be considered an infringement of the statute, as being an assumption of a medical status, position, or title.

‘That upon any unqualified person having been proved to have prescribed, or pretended to be qualified, the onus of proving his title to practice shall be put upon him, as every registered practitioner can have a certificate of his registration by applying for it.

‘That the production of the Registrar’s certificate shall be deemed sufficient evidence of a medical practitioner being duly registered.

‘That there should be greater facility for prosecuting and punishing offenders against the provisions of this Act than at present exist.

‘That, in addition to the general Register, there shall be published a separate Register for each part of the united kingdom at a cheap rate, so as to be procurable by every person desirous of having a copy.

‘That the 23rd Clause should be struck out of the Medical Act, as it countenances quackery in its worst forms, for it seems anomalous that an act which appears to be intended, and was ostensibly framed to protect the regular practitioner, should be made either openly or covertly to foster the lying systems of homoeopathy, hydropathy, or the like.’

I have the honour to be, Sir, your faithful servant,  
Samuel Browne, Lic.K. & Q.C.P.I.,  
Hon. Secretary Ulster Medical Protective Association.  
Belfast, 19th March, 1860.

### FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

*Belfast Daily Mercury* 11 May 1860 &

*Belfast News-Letter* 11 May 1860

Yesterday [10th May 1860] the first annual meeting of the Ulster Medical Protective Association was held in

the Library of the General Hospital at 13 o'clock, Dr. M'Gee, J.P., President of the Association, in the chair. Amongst the other members present were—Drs. Pirrie, Patterson, Halliday, Stewart, Warnock, Murney, J.P., Browne, W. Arnold, Michael Magee, Johnston, Corry, Mulholland, Hayes,

Surgeon Browne: (Hon. Sec.) read the report of the first general meeting of the association held in last September, and also the following

REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

'Since the inauguration of the Ulster Medical Protective Association in September last, the committee has held ten meetings—two special and eight ordinary. There were, besides, several meetings of sub-committees for the purpose of business arrangements. The first act of the committee was to frame a code of bye-laws and a programme of business. Early in the month of October the honorary secretary was directed to put himself in communication with the Irish Medical and the Branch Protective Associations, as well as with the London Medical Registration Society, for the purpose of effective co-operation in matters affecting the general interests of the profession. Since that time several opportunities have arisen which enabled the various societies to act in friendly concert.

'On the 15th of December, a deputation, consisting of the chairman and honorary secretary, attended the aggregate meeting at the Limerick Junction, a most important assembly of the profession, to represent this association. As a result of the Limerick Conference, the committee sent memorials to the General and Branch Medical Councils on the subject of a separate register for Ireland; to the Chief-Secretary for Ireland, on the necessity of retaining medical inspectors under the Medical Charities Act; to the Branch Medical Council for Ireland, on the subject of compulsory vaccination; to the Apothecaries-hall of Dublin, on the sale of medicine by unqualified persons, and on the required restrictions in the retail of poisons.

'The following petition to Parliament, signed by more than two hundred medical practitioners in Ulster, and which was presented by Sir Hugh McCalmont Cairns, was sent forward in March, and a circular was addressed by the secretary to every member of Parliament for Ulster, requesting each to support the prayers of the petition. [This petition has already been published.]

'A communication having been received from Dr. Ladd, the Secretary of the London Registration Association, relative to suggestions for amendments in the Medical Act, the following were sent from this association by the committee:—

1. 'That the General Council of Education be required to insist upon the degree of B.A. or M.A. as preliminary education for medical aspirants, or the subjection of the candidate to an examination embracing a course of instruction equivalent to these degrees; and that they shall take steps to equalise and render uniform medical education and examinations.

2. 'That the councils shall appoint an inspector for each portion of the United Kingdom, at a suitable salary, for the purpose of examining all establishments where drugs are compounded, or sold by retail, and having power to destroy all impure articles.

3. 'The councils should have power to restrain all unqualified persons from retailing or compounding drugs, and they should establish stringent regulations for the safe retail of all poisonous matters or drugs.

4. 'That there shall be clear proof of identity, as well as of the qualifications of all persons applying to be registered under the Act.

5. 'That the law should be so framed that the simple act of prescribing medically, or surgically, by any unqualified person, for gain, shall be considered an infringement of the statute, as being evidence of the assumption, on the part of the prescriber, of a medical status, position, or title.

6. 'That upon any unqualified person having been found to have so prescribed, or pretended to be qualified, the onus of proving his title to prescribe or practise shall be put upon him—as every registered practitioner is supplied with a certificate of his registration by the registrar.

7. 'That the production of the registrar's certificate shall be deemed sufficient evidence of the medical practitioner who holds it being duly registered.

8. 'That there shall be greater facility for prosecuting and punishing offenders against the provisions of the 'Medical Act' than at present exist.

'9. That in addition to the general register for the kingdom, there shall be published a separate register for each portion of the United Kingdom, at a cheap rate, so as to be procurable by every person desirous of having a copy.

'10. That the 23d clause should be struck out of the "Medical Act" as it countenances quackery in its worst forms, for it seems anomalous that an Act which appears to be intended, and was ostensibly framed to protect the regularly qualified practitioner, should be made either openly or covertly to foster the lying systems of homeopathy, hydropathy, and the like.

'The committee have, in several instances, written to practitioners who were not complying with the law,

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

and have induced them to become duly registered.

'Recently the committee have received communications from country members complaining of persons in their locality assuming certain medical titles without any right to do so. They now suggest that a circular should be sent to every person so complained of, that he may send to the committee a statement of his exact qualifications, if he possess any.

'The committee have received a copy of the Poor Relief Amendment Bill, now before Parliament. They regret that it does not contain several of the provisions for which the association have petitioned, and is, on the whole, not so comprehensive as they hoped it would be. From communications they have received from the President and Secretary of the Irish Medical Association, they are led to believe, however, that the Chief Secretary will make several important amendments in the Bill before it shall become law.

'The committee have recently summoned some unqualified persons, practising in Belfast, to the Petty Sessions Court. The case is still pending, as it has been postponed on a point of law. The committee, however, have no doubt of obtaining convictions against the persons in question, and they are determined to enforce the law against all unqualified persons practising medicine, so far as they have the power. The committee having learned by experience that some change relative to the county members of committee should be made, beg leave to suggest that these gentlemen—three for each county in Ulster—should be styled corresponding members of committee, and that they should be summoned to attend at quarterly meetings only. This plan would save your secretary a considerable amount of labour, and the association some expense.

In conclusion, the committee have to report that the association is in a flourishing condition. It now numbers one hundred and fifty-six members, and several gentlemen have signified their intention of joining our ranks. The committee believe that such a course is the solemn duty of every registered practitioner in Ulster who values the rights which belong to our profession. Some there are, no doubt, who will not perceive any good in an association which does not promote their individual interests. Men having such feelings had better not join us. They cannot appreciate the moral power of an intelligent body of men associated for the purpose, not of protecting themselves alone, and the rights of their class, but also for promoting, by their united influence, the best interests of the community at large.'

Surgeon Browne stated that, during the time the association had been in existence, a great deal more

had been done than was stated in the report. They had either got parties to register, or put parties who had been placed in a false position into a proper position. They had also been the means of amalgamating the North with the South of Ireland. There was no doubt that many parties had been disappointed at their not having done more, and many would blame the committee for not having taken up more stringently prosecutions against those who might be considered unqualified practitioners; but it was better, in all those cases, to induce the parties to leave off practice, particularly through the medium of the public press, if possible. He wished the public to understand that the motive which actuated the association throughout was not to protect themselves at all against unqualified practitioners, because there was not an individual entered upon the registry who had not an opportunity of protecting himself by appealing to the public at large, and stating that he was a registered man. But the public at large would not take the trouble of making that inquiry, and, therefore, it became the duty of that association to come forward for the benefit of the public, and expose parties practising illegally. He believed, if the society would be only worked as actively during the coming year as it had been for the last eight months, they would have a still greater accession of good for the next year, by their acts, and with the assistance and co-operation of other associations. After referring to the valuable assistance which the association had received from Dr. Mackessy, President of the Irish Medical Association, Surgeon Browne concluded by moving the adoption of the report.

Dr. Corby seconded the motion.

Dr. Michael Magee then addressed the meeting at some length on the objects and duties of the association, and expressed himself dissatisfied with the committee for not having prosecuted a larger number of quacks or unlicensed practitioners. They had formed, he said, what was now called the Ulster Medical Association, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Medical Registration Act—an Act that seemed to please few and dissatisfy all, but which, nevertheless, had this much good in it, that it had separated the wheat from the chaff, and had drawn a conspicuous line of demarcation between honest men and knaves. He was sorry to think that the committee had not given sufficient of their time and attention to the exposure of those hydra-headed monsters that had been living so long and so sumptuously, too, on their profession; and he concluded by expressing a hope that during the next year the committee would leave nothing undone to bring up every unqualified practitioner, if not for

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

conviction, at least for exposure, and expel such pretenders from amongst them.

Surgeon Browne, in the course of some observations, said the association had attended to the general interests of the profession, and to every matter in which the community was concerned. He contended that they had done in the limited period of eight months as much good as possibly could be done by people in their position. With regard to the matters complained of, he might state that they wanted the necessary authority. They were now seeking for that authority and power, and when they would get those powers he would assure Dr. Magee and the public that they would be put into active operation.

After some remarks of a similar nature from the Chairman, the report was unanimously adopted.

Dr. Patterson (Treasurer) read a statement of the accounts, from which it appeared that since the formation of the society the income had been £35 1s 10d; the outlay was £27 2s, and there was at present a balance of £7 19s 10d in hands.

Moved by Dr. Browne, seconded by Dr. Corry, and Resolved—

‘That the Report just read, together with the Treasurer’s Statement of Accounts, be now received, adopted, and entered upon the minutes.’

A Ballot having then been taken for a Chairman, and the members of Committee going out by rotation,

Dr. M’Gee, J.P., was unanimously re-elected Chairman for the ensuing year, and the following gentlemen were declared the Committee for the same period, viz:— Dr. Murney, J.P.; Surgeon Johnston. Dr. Black. Dr. Cuming. Professor Ferguson, Dr. Stewart, Dr. Heaney, Dr. Dickson. Richard Pring, Esq.; Dr. Halliday, Surgeon Warwick, and Dr. Murray, of Ballymacarett.

The following were also declared the ‘County Corresponding Members’:—

Antrim.—Dr. O’Connor, Ballycastle; Dr. Kidd, Ballymena; Dr. M’Kee, Randalstown.

Derry.—Dr. Babington, Londonderry; Dr. Cavin, Coleraine; Dr. Graves, Cookstown.

Down.—Dr. Filson, Portaferry; Dr. Jamison, Newtownards, Dr. May, Rathfriland.

Cavan.—Dr. Taylor, Bailieborough; Dr. McGaghan, Kingscourt.

Armagh.—Dr. M’Kinstry, Armagh; Dr. MacLaughlin, Lurgan; Dr. Davis, Newry.

Donegal.—Dr. Thorpe, Letterkenny; Dr. Eames, Dunfanaghy; Dr. Bagot, Malin.

Monaghan.—Dr. Fleming, Carrickmacross; Dr. Young, Ballybay; Dr. Donaldson, Clontibret.

Tyrone.—Dr. Scott, J.P., Aghnacloy; Dr. Neville, Dungannon; Dr. Fleming, Omagh.

Fermanagh.—Dr. Maxwell, Derrylin; Surgeon Robert Hayes, Lisbellaw.’

Moved by Dr. Halliday, seconded by Dr. Mulholland, and resolved—

‘That the grateful thanks of the Association be given to Dr. Patterson for his valuable services, and that he be requested to continue Treasurer.’

Moved by Dr. Michael M’Gee, seconded by Surgeon Gribben, and resolved—

‘That the warm thanks of this meeting be given to Dr. Browne for his labours on behalf of this Association, and that he be requested to act as Honorary Secretary for the ensuing year.’

William M’Gee, M.D., Chairman.

Dr. Michael M’Gee having been called to the Chair,

It was moved by Dr. Stewart, seconded by Surgeon Warwick, and carried by acclamation—

‘That the best thanks of this meeting be given to Dr. M’Gee, J.P., for his kindness in presiding, and for the many instances in which he has shown his sincere devotion to the honor and interests of the Medical Profession.’

It was then unanimously agreed that a deputation from the association be appointed to attend the meeting of the profession in Dublin on the 4th June next.

The Treasurer then announced that the annual subscription is now due.

The meeting then separated.

Michael M’Gee, M.D., Chairman.

Sam. Browne, Lic. K. and Q. Coll. Phy., &c.,  
Honorary Secretary.

At the committee meeting preceding the general meeting the following gentlemen, belonging to the Newry Chirurgical Society, were balloted for and elected, viz:— Dr. J. Colvan, Dr. J. Morrison, Dr. A. Erskine, Dr. William Starkey, Dr. Joseph Robinson, Dr. Robt. Johnstone, Dr. W. K. Nesbitt, Dr. Joseph May, Dr. Joseph Crawford, Dr. W. A. Davis, Surgeons Thomas Black, Charles Anderson, Thomas Mulligan, James M. M’Conville, Andrew M’Bride, and Arthur M’Court. Dr. S. T. Haslett, of Laghey, and Dr. Wilberforce Arnold, of Belfast, were also elected members.

### COURT PROCEEDINGS

*Belfast Weekly News* 12 May 1860

Tuesday 8th May 1860

### UNLICENSED MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Mr Edward J Carew of Academy Street; Mr Robert Johnston of Durham Street; and a Mr McCloy, were

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

summoned by Surgeon Browne, at the instance of the Ulster Medical Protective Association, 'for having on the 3rd May inst. at Belfast, wilfully and falsely pretended to be practitioners in medicine and physicians and that they did supply and prescribe medicine contrary to the 21st and 22nd Vic., cap. 90.'

Mr Seeds appeared for the prosecution; Mr Rea appeared on behalf of Mr Carew; Mr McLean for Mr Johnston, and Mr O'Rourke for Mr McCloy.

Surgeon Browne, Secretary, and Dr Patterson, Treasurer, of the Ulster Medical Protective Association, attended to watch proceedings on behalf of that body.

After some conversation between the Bench and the legal gentlemen engaged on both sides, the Bench decided on postponing the case until the 5th of June next, the costs to await the decision of that day.

### COMMITTEE MEETING

*Belfast News-Letter* 18 May 1860

The first meeting of the newly-appointed committee of the Ulster Medical Protective Association was held yesterday, at the Belfast General Hospital, Dr. Stewart in the chair. Present—Drs. Patterson, Murray, Johnston, Warwick, Browne, Dickson, and Mr. Pring. After the confirmation of the minutes of last meeting, it was resolved that the committee shall meet the second Thursday in each month, at three o'clock, P.M., and that the quarterly meetings, to which the 'County Corresponding Members' shall be summoned, shall be held on the second Thursdays of August, November, February, and May, either at three o'clock, or noon, as may be found most expedient. It was also resolved that the form of circular read by the Secretary should be adopted, and that a copy of it should be sent to every one against whom a complaint shall be lodged for assuming a medical or surgical title, or for practising without a legal right or qualification to do so. The following is the circular:—

'I am directed by the Committee of the Ulster Medical Protective Association to acquaint you of a complaint which has been made to them, that you assume a professional title and practice medicine and surgery without any legal right to do so, and as your name does not appear in the Medical Register, I have to request that you will forward a statement of your professional qualifications to me, that I may submit the same to the committee. I have also to inform you that, if you do not comply with this request, and continue to practice illegally, the Ulster Medical Protective Association will take such steps in your case as our counsel may advise.'

As the Ulster Medical Protective Association feel very anxious to keep up the most friendly relations with the Irish Medical and the other Branch Associations, the committee appointed the Chairman and Secretary, along with Dr. Murray, of Ballymacarrett, a deputation to proceed to Dublin to attend the annual meeting of the Medical Association of Ireland on the 4th of June, and to represent the Ulster Society. It was also resolved to recommend to the members of the Ulster Medical Protective Association that they should use all their influence with the Fellows of the College of Surgeons of Ireland to record their votes in favor of Dr. Mackesy in the vice-chair of the College, as the committee believe that Dr. Mackesy is justly entitled to this mark of respect from his brethren of Ireland for his unwearied exertions in maintaining the honor, respectability, and the best interests of the profession, while they also believe that a more judicious selection could not be made for the important appointment in question. The committee, therefore, trust that every Fellow of this College of Surgeons in Ireland in connexion with this association will vote for Dr. Mackesy, of Waterford, the able, tried, and zealous friend of the medical profession.

### COURT PROCEEDINGS

*Belfast News-Letter* 7 June 1860

### NEWS COLUMN

Yesterday, a case of very great importance to the public was brought before the Police Court, at the suit of the Ulster Medical Protective Association, in the name of their honorary secretary, Surgeon Browne. The object of the prosecution was to endeavour to put down the system, too prevalent, of individuals practising as medical men while in no wise qualified for the duties of such an important profession. This class of practitioners, too, very generally placard the walls of our town and its vicinity, as well as neighbouring towns, with indecent bills; and, with the object in view of putting a stop to such, and of protecting the public from quackery, the association took proceedings against certain parties in Belfast, and a report of the trial will be found in our police report in another column [below]. The law has for the present been vindicated; and, as the case heard was the first brought into court, it may prove a warning to others, and be sufficient to deter them from setting themselves forth as 'duly qualified medical practitioners' until they first duly register their names in the proper quarter, and so give the public a guarantee that they do not belong to the class

generally designated by the term 'quacks.' The Ulster Medical Protective Association deserves the thanks of the community for having taken up this matter; for, while preserving their own interests they are doing that which will prove equally beneficial to the general public.

#### LEGAL COLUMN

Edward J. Carew, of Academy Street; Robt. Johnston, of Durham Street; and Michael M'Cloy, Divis Street, were summoned by Surgeon Browne, at the instance of the Ulster Medical Protective Association, 'for having, on the 3rd May last, at Belfast, wilfully and falsely pretended to be practitioners in medicine and physicians, and that they did supply, and prescribe and supply, medicine contrary to the 21st and 22nd Vic., cap. 90.

He case had been postponed from a previous day, and came on for hearing.

Mr. J. M. Thompson (barrister), with Mr. Seeds, appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. M'Lean for the defence.

Surgeon Browne, Secretary, and Dr. Patterson, Treasurer of the Ulster Medical Protective Association, attended to watch the proceedings on behalf of that body.

The case of Mr. Carew was the first called on.

Mr. M'Lean stated that his client had been informed that there would be no further proceedings taken in the case, and that Mr. Rea, who had been engaged for Mr. Carew, was now out of town,

Mr. Seeds said it was arranged on Tuesday that the case should be heard that morning.

Mr. Lyons—You are aware, Mr. Thompson, that this is an adjourned summons. The last day it was here the counsel or attorney for the prosecution could not satisfy the Bench that Dr. Browne had a *locus standi* in this court. It is for you now to satisfy us that that preliminary objection was not a right one.

Mr. Thompson said it was a very proper suggestion, and an important matter of inquiry. Counsel then cited several law authorities to show that any party might be the complainant in a criminal offence, unless in cases where the statute particularised who was to bring the complaint.

Mr. M'Lean said if there had been an information sworn in the case he would wish to see it. He believed no information had been made, although it was absolutely necessary such a thing should have been done. He received no instruction in the case at all, and was only acting for Mr. Rea. Surgeon Browne, he believed, could not make a sworn information. He knew of no complaint, and had no complaint to make.

Mr. Thompson said the rule of the law was that they might proceed without any information. If any

offence was committed against the statute law, the magistrates were bound to inquire into it.

Mr. Lyons said the Act under which they were proceeding was the lamest he had ever seen; and he thought, for the safety of the Bench, that there should be informations in the case.

Mr. Thompson then drafted an information, embodying the charges against the defendant set forth in the summons.

Mr. M'Lean objected to the information. on the ground that it was bad in substance, as it did not set forth a distinct charge against the defendant.

The Bench overruled the objection, and allowed the case to be proceeded with.

Mr. Thompson then stated the case for the prosecution, detailing the charges brought against the defendants, and remarking upon the seriousness of the offences as affecting not only the profession as a body, but the community at large. He also explained the nature of the Act of Parliament under which the prosecution had been brought, and contended that the defendant, by not being entered on the Medical Registry, violated the provisions of that Act.

Constable Cairns, examined by Mr. Thompson—On the 3rd May last, I went to the residence of the defendant, 17, Academy Street. I had previously seen bills of his on walls through the town. When I went into the shop I asked a woman could I see the doctor. She went up-stairs and sent the defendant down to me. On seeing him, I asked if he were the doctor? and he said he was. I told him I had got a very severe cough and a pain in the chest, He opened a door, and told me to go into a little room where there was a lot of empty bottles. He then told me to loose my breast, and he made one of those telescopes (stethoscopes) with an old account-book (Laughter.) He put it to my chest and applied his ear to it. (Renewed laughter.) After talking a lot of 'bladders and nonsense' about having got £5 for curing parties in Newtownards, and £100 from the late Marquis of Waterford for medical treatment, he told me I was like a big tree that had grown up without any substance in me. (Great laughter.) I told him I had been with Dr. Corry, and he said—'Corry is no doctor at all'-(laughter)—and that he (Carew) had just got three of his patients that week, for whom Dr. Corry could do nothing, but who were now getting on well under his treatment. He also stated that before he dirtied paper with ink his charge was £5 to a gentleman. I told him I was no gentleman, and he replied that his lowest charge was £1 to a man like me. (Laughter.) I told him I had not so much as £1. I gave him 10s., and he took credit for the other 10s., which I was to pay him when he would cure me. He said he could not make that bargain with me, but that

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

the sooner I would give him the other ten shillings the better it would be for myself. (Laughter.) I was then to give him 5s. the following Saturday, and the other 5s. in the week after. He said there was no mistake but that he would cure me once he took it on hands. He said I wanted 'new machinery'—(laughter) —and observed 'that there were as many diseases following a man as there were hairs on his head, and that it took a smart man like him to know six of them at a time.' He further stated that there had been three of the foremost doctors in Belfast with him that day getting information from him about curing their patients—(laughter)—and that he would give them none, because they understood nothing about his mode of curing. He gave me a little pill about the size of a pickle of hempseed, and a spoonful of liquid, which I took. I told him I was a stranger in town, and that I had seen his bills on the corner. I asked him if he had any in the house. He said he had, and gave me one. He gave me this handbill. [This bill informed the public of the efficacy of Mr. Carew's cures; that his consulting department was conducted by 'a regularly qualified medical practitioner;' and also, that he charged according to the nature of the case, and the means of the party.] The defendant told me that he gave a man £10 a-year for posting up those bills, I asked him would the medicine do me any good that night, and he said that I must go to him for three days running, and 'every other day' until I was cured. I told him I wished a receipt for the 10s. lest my mother might think I had gone on the spree. (Laughter.) He then gave the following:—'I have this day received 10s. from Mr. Thos. Cairns for a cure of a chest affection.—3rd May, 1860. E. J. Carew.' He told me he was the doctor when I went into the shop.

Cross-examined by Mr. M'Lean—When I said I was from the country, and a stranger in Belfast, it was a lie. When I said I got the 10s. from my mother it was a lie. It was Inspector M'Ilroy sent me to Mr. Carew's establishment. He did not tell me to tell the lies. He told me not to let Mr. Carew know that I was a constable. Inspector M'Ilroy gave me the 10s. I did not know who got M'Ilroy to act in the case. I was bound to obey him.

Surgeon Browne, examined by Mr. Thompson—I am Honorary Secretary to the Ulster Medical Protective Association. In that capacity I allowed my name to be used in this case, and by directions of the committee. The President of the Association is Dr. M'Gee, J.P., and the Treasurer Dr. Patterson. Professor Ferguson and others are in the council.

Mr. Thompson—I now tender the Medical Registry as evidence. According to the Act of Parliament it was evidence in the case, and the defendant is bound to show that his name is in it or ought to be in it.

Mr. Lyons—Prove it before you tender it as evidence.

Mr. Thompson said they did not require to prove it; the words of the Act were—'Purporting to be a copy.' What he handed in purported to be a printed copy, published by authority.

Mr. M'Lean contended that it was necessary to prove it as in the case of any document coming out of the hands of the officer of a court. The Secretary to the Medical Association in Dublin held the original list, and a copy of that should be signed by him, and it would then be very necessary, under the Act, for some one in Belfast to prove the handwriting.

Mr. Dunville thought the words 'purporting to be a copy' set the matter at rest.

Mr. Lyons said they would receive it as evidence.

Mr. M'Lean said his next point was that, according to law, any information should set forth the time and place, when and where, the alleged offence was committed. The information of Surgeon Browne only set forth the time and the residence of Mr. Carew, but did not say where the offence had been committed. He, therefore, called on the Bench to dismiss the case.

Mr. Lyons said that would have been a good point if made before the evidence had been given; but the evidence made up for the want in the information.

Mr. M'Lean would have raised the point earlier, but he could not read the information, and had only just received a copy of it.

Mr. Lyons said they ruled against Mr. M'Lean on that also.

Mr. M'Lean said he then came to his defence. He had only to hand in a certificate or diploma from the Apothecaries' Hall, Dublin, in order to show that the defendant was properly qualified; and he would examine medical gentlemen in court to prove that it was a proper certificate or diploma.

Surgeon Browne, examined by Mr. M'Lean—I could not tell is this [document handed witness] a certificate of the Apothecaries' Hall, Dublin.

Dr. Patterson, examined by Mr. M'Lean—I could not say that it is a certificate of the Apothecaries' Hall, Dublin. Perhaps Professor Ferguson could.

Professor Ferguson, examined by Mr. M'Lean—My opinion is that this is a diploma of the Apothecaries' Hall, Dublin. It is in the name of 'Edward J. Carrooe.'

Mr. Lyons—What date?

Witness—It is dated 1834.

Mr. Lyons—There has been no evidence given yet as to the man's name.

Mr. M'Lean—I intended to raise that point, but I will now prove that the defendant is the gentleman named in this diploma.

Surgeon Browne, examined by Mr. M'Lean—He

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

had corresponded with the secretary of the Apothecaries' Hall, Dublin, in relation to this matter, and received a letter saying that 'Edward J. Carew' was the same individual who had received a diploma from that hall in 1834 as 'Edward J. Carrooe.'

Mr. M'Lean said they had the opinion of a late Attorney-General that any gentleman holding a diploma from the Apothecaries' Hall, Dublin, could practise in medicine in any part of her Majesty's dominions.

Mr. Lyons—But show us that Mr. Carew is registered under the Act.

Mr. M'Lean contended that it was not compulsory on any gentleman to register; but he could not recover fees in a civil court unless he had registered.

Mr. Lyons held that the defendant, having set himself forth in the printed bill which he gave Cairns as 'a duly qualified practitioner,' was bound to register, or to suffer the penalty if he practised.

After some discussion as to this legal point,

The defendant said he would register properly under the Act.

Surgeon Browne said that was all they wanted.

The Bench then postponed judgment for one month, in order to allow the defendant to register

### S. BROWNE *v.* M'CLOY.

Mr. Seeds said the defendant had left the town, and they would withdraw the case.

### S. BROWNE *v.* JOHNSTON.

Mr. Thompson said, inasmuch as the law had been vindicated, they would withdraw this case also.

Mr. Seeds—Or let it be dismissed.

Mr. Carew said it was a hard thing that they should prosecute a man who had a diploma and let others off. He also wished to know if he would not be allowed his costs?

Mr Lyons said the Bench had postponed the case for a month, and if, in the meantime, the defendant did not register himself, they would give the complainant full costs.

## PRESENTATION OF PETITION

*Belfast News-Letter* 15 June 1860

### REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS &c.

On Tuesday [12 June 1860], in the House of Commons, a petition was presented by Sir. H. Cairns, from the Ulster Medical Protective Association, in favor of the Government Birth, &c., Registration (Ireland) Bill, and praying for some alterations.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Belfast News-Letter* 10 August 1860

Yesterday [9 August 1860], a quarterly meeting of the Executive Committee of this association was held in the library at the General Hospital—Dr. Dickson in the chair.

Surgeon Browne, Hon. Secretary, read the minutes of last meeting, which were approved. He went on to observe that both the Registration Bills, which had been before the House of Commons, had been withdrawn. In some measure he was sorry for that, as he thought Mr. Cardwell's might, if it had been passed with certain amendments, have been of great advantage to the public, and in a less degree of the profession, There was a strong probability that a Bill would be introduced next session, and it was their duty to make every exertion with the view of having another measure brought forward. Another Bill in which they had considerable interest—namely, the one for the amendment of the Poor-law— had been entirely changed, and was now simply a continuance Bill to keep the Commissioners in office for two years from September next, when their powers would otherwise have ceased. It was probable that another Bill would be introduced, and they should be very vigilant as to any clauses introduced which might materially affect the profession.

The Chairman—Is there any necessity for appointing a committee to watch over it?

Surgeon Browne said that the Council, which met every month, would attend to it. He then suggested that the Ulster Society should become connected with the Irish Medical Association, either by payment of a sum of money, or in some other way.

A long conversation ensued as to the rules of the Irish Medical Society, and the feeling of the committee was that, while maintaining their own provincial organisation, they should co-operate with that society in every possible way. Ultimately, on the motion of Dr. Murney, the Secretary was instructed to write to the Irish Medical Association to state that it was the wish of the Ulster Medical Protective Association to co-operate in all matters for the benefit of the profession, and to inquire in what way, in their opinion, they could join in advancing their common object, and also what subscription would constitute members of the Ulster Medical Protective Association members of the Irish Medical Protective Association,

Dr. Patterson, the Treasurer, said that the dispensary medical officers were not supporting the association as they should do.

Surgeon Browne said that they were more called upon to join it than any others. He did not believe the

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

medical officers of dispensaries were under dread of the Poor-law Commissioners, and, from what he had himself heard and seen, he did not believe the Commissioners were at all enemies to the profession. Indeed, on one or two points, his mind was completely changed after the explanations he had heard made.

A letter was read from Dr. Thomas Babington, of Derry, withdrawing his name from the committee and from the association, in consequence of the course taken by the members at the previous meeting in reference to the Poor-law Amendment Bill.

Dr. Patterson said that Dr. Babington was a county infirmary man, and it could hardly be expected that he would remain a member, when the association had not supported the claims of the Infirmary doctors.

Surgeon Browne—I think they took a very wrong view of the clauses they referred to.

The Chairman—It strikes me that they were very favorable to them.

Dr. William Browne was unanimously elected a member of committee, in the room of Dr. Babington.

Dr. Patterson reported that 96 new members had been admitted during the year.

Surgeon M'Gowan, of Trillick, and Dr. Shannon, of Poyntzpass, were balloted for and elected members.

The remaining business was routine.

### COMMITTEE MEETING

*Northern Whig, Belfast 12 October 1860*

The committee of this association met yesterday [11 November 1860], at the General Hospital, Dr Stewart in the chair.

After the transaction of the ordinary business, Dr Browne, the Honorary Secretary, brought under the notice of the committee the names of several persons reported as illegally practicing medicine, to whom he had sent the approved cautionary notice. From some of these persons he had received satisfactory replies, but in other instances the statement were evasive.

After some discussion, it was resolved to bring these cases under the notice of the next quarterly meeting, in November, that such steps might be taken regarding unqualified practitioners as likely to put a stop to their illegal and dangerous proceedings.

The Secretary likewise read letters from Dr Quinan, the Secretary of the Irish Medical Association, and from Dr Mackesy, of Waterford, relative to the commission which is likely to be appointed to enquire into the working of the Irish Poor Law.

The meeting expressed the ardent desire of the Ulster Protective Association to co-operate with the other medical societies in procuring for the country and for the profession a better administration of the law than there is at present; and the secretary was directed to convey to Drs Quinan and Mackesy the views of the committee on this very important subject.

The chairman then directed attention to a case reported in the local papers recently, relative to a 'medical man' having been brought before the magistrates and fined for a trespass, etc., on the County Down Railway. On investigation, however, by the Ulster Protective Association, it was found that the individual in question is not connected with the Medical Profession, as his name does not appear either on the Medical Register or on any authorised professional list.

The committee thanked Dr Stewart for noticing the case, as they felt the profession had no right to have the person referred to ranked among them.

### QUARTERLY MEETING

*Belfast Weekly News 17 November 1860*

Thursday [15 November 1860], the quarterly meeting of the committee of the above association was held in the library of the General Hospital, at eleven o'clock—Dr Patterson in the chair. Amongst those present, besides the Chairman, were Surgeon Browne, Dr Brown (Derry), Dr Stewart, Dr Cumming, Dr Murray, Dr Johnston, and Dr Black.

### COMMITTEE MEETING

*Belfast Daily Mercury 25 January 1861*

The monthly meeting of the committee of this society was held yesterday [24 January 1861], at 12 o'clock, in the Belfast General Hospital, when, after the transaction of the ordinary business, it was resolved that a report, based upon the replies received from the medical officers of workhouses and dispensaries in Ulster, in answer to queries recently submitted to them, should be drawn up and submitted to a general meeting of the profession, to be called by public advertisement in the newspapers, and by circular to the members of the committee. It was also resolved that meetings shall be held on the 31st inst., at noon, in the Belfast General Hospital, and that questions relative to the amendments required in the Poor Law, Medical Charities, and Vaccination Acts, should then

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

be brought under discussion. A resolution was likewise adopted directing the secretary to advertise the intended meeting in the Northern Whig, Belfast News-Letter, and Daily Mercury, and also in the Newry Telegraph and Londonderry Sentinel. The chairman, treasurer, and secretary, having been requested to prepare the report for the general meeting, the committee adjourned.

### EDITORIAL

*Belfast Daily Mercury* 1 February 1861

We have in Belfast a Society that is called the 'Ulster Medical Protective Association.' Such a body, we admit, is greatly needed, and if it only discharged its duties independently and fearlessly, it would confer vast benefits on the Profession, and also on the public.

But we observe that while every exertion is made to serve the Profession, no attention whatever appears to be bestowed on the interests of the public. In the report of the Sub-Committee, which we publish, it will be seen that the primary consideration is the Medical Profession. We do not intend to bore our readers by going through the recommendations of the Committee seriatim, but they may judge of the fact that the 'Protective Association' is not unmindful of its own interests when it demands for Dispensary Doctors 'keep of a horse and car-hire!'

It is far from our intention to be understood as opposed to an amelioration of the Dispensary Doctor's position in Country Districts. On the contrary, we consider that under the new law they are inadequately paid, and exposed to great hardships. In fact, the new law is an absolute failure, and does not work anything like so well for the poor as the old Dispensary system.

But what we object to is, that this Association appears to think the poor were made for its profit—that there is no interest to be consulted but the Medical. We could point to many cases not unworthy of the Association's attention, assuming that in their 'Protective' character they desire to maintain the honour and dignity of the Profession.

### COURT ACTION

*Dublin Medical Press* 22 May 1861

BELFAST POLICE COURT.  
(Before W. T. B. Lyons, Esq., J.P.)

### CHARGE AGAINST A

#### NON-REGISTERED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.

Robert Johnston of 117, Durham-street, appeared on summons to answer the complaint of Surgeon Browne, Honorary Secretary to the Ulster Medical Protective Association, 'That he did wilfully and falsely pretend to be a surgeon at Belfast, in the county of Antrim, on the 8th of April, 1861, and also on the day previous and on the day subsequent thereto, and did at the same time and place take or use the name or title of surgeon, he, the said defendant, not being a registered medical practitioner within the meaning of the Act 21 and 22 Vic., chap. 90.'

Mr. Seeds and Mr. McLean appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. Young for the defence.

Dr. Patterson and Surgeon Browne attended to watch the case on behalf of the Ulster Medical Protective Association. Mr. Seeds briefly stated the case for the prosecution.

Mr. McLean then produced a card containing the following intimation:— 'Mr. R. Johnston, Surgeon, Accoucheur, &c., 117, Durham-street. Particular attention given to the diseases of women and children.'

Eliza Hamilton, examined by Mr. McLean—I know Mr. Johnston; he attended my sister, the deceased; he lives in 117, Durham-street. When my sister took ill, I went to Mr. Johnston, in consequence of a card having been sent to my sister's house. I presented that card to him.

To Mr. Young—I cannot read.

To Mr. McLean—I afterwards gave the card which I presented to Mr. Johnston to Dr. Corry. When I went to Mr. Johnston's house I asked him to come to my sister. I showed him the card I have referred to, and he gave it back to me. I told him how my sister was, and he said if she got worse to come back to him. He afterwards attended upon my sister. My sister died shortly after her confinement. Mr. Johnston was paid for his services before he left the room. He was paid 7s. 6d. That was all he demanded. He keeps a shop—like an apothecary's shop—at his own house.

Cross-examined by Mr. Young—My sister had been ailing for some time. I cannot read that card [produced]. The card given me by Mr. Johnston I brought home. I left it on the shelf in my sister's house. I will not swear that this [produced] is the card.

Mr. Lyons— All that this witness has proved is that the man Johnston attended her sister, prescribed medicine for her, and received his fee. That woman's evidence broke down altogether. She said she left the card on a shelf in her sister's house. She could not say whether the one produced was the one she presented to the defendant or not. It might have been changed

fifty times for all she knows of it.

Dr. Corry was next examined, and deposed that he did not know whose handwriting was at the bottom of the card produced, that the deceased died from tetanus, and that he had attended her.

Nancy Hamilton, examined by Mr. McLean—I live in Stanfield-street; the deceased was my sister-in-law; I was in her house when she was confined, but not longer; Mr. Johnston was the medical man who attended her; I called him doctor; I cannot read writing, but I can read what is on this card [produced]. I see on it 'Robert Johnston.' I never saw the card before: he was present when my sister was confined: he did not prescribe medicine for her while I was there; he got his fee.

Mr. Lyons said he had not yet any proof before him that the defendant intended to pass himself off as a medical man. The evidence of the first witness was, that she had gone to Mr. Johnston's with a card, that he had prescribed medicine for her sister, and that he had received a fee of 7s. 6d.

Mr. McLean—She said she went to Dr. Johnston's, and that, in consequence of her presenting some card, he said: 'Come back if your sister is worse.' She went back to him, and he attended the deceased during her confinement, and prescribed medicine for her. The second witness proved that during her confinement he attended deceased.

Surgeon Browne then handed in the Medical Registry, on which the defendant's name did not appear.

Mr. Seeds—We close our case now.

Mr. McLean—No: we will re-examine the first witness.

Mr. Young objected to this, observing it was quite wrong to re-examine witnesses in a penal case such as the present, particularly when nothing arose out of the cross-examination.

Mr. McLean said that the statute under which the prosecution was brought was one passed for the purpose of preventing the public being imposed upon by parties pretending to be able to render proper assistance to sick persons.

Mr. Seeds—One of the witnesses proved distinctly that Johnston acted as a medical man, and received a fee for his services.

Mr. Lyons—You have not proved that he was there as a medical man. The evidence is certainly not conclusive on that point. This card is, of course, the main thing to rely upon to show that he went there as a medical man, and the woman who went to him with the card cannot read, and will not swear that was the card she showed to him.

Mr. McLean—We submit that this person keeps a shop in Durham-street, and that that shop is an

apothecary's shop—that he has been addressed by the witnesses here as doctor, and answered to that name—that the deceased was in childbirth, and that the card taken by Eliza Hamilton to him was the identical card presented afterwards to Dr. Corry.

Mr. Lyons—The question is, did he practise and wilfully and falsely pretend to be a surgeon. I do not think we have strong evidence of that.

Mr. McLean—We thought it was only necessary to bring him before the court.

Mr. Lyons—Is there any name over his door?

Mr. McLean—No.

Mr. Lyons—If this man is disqualified, I am here to punish him if he has acted as a medical practitioner.

Mr. Seeds then recalled the first witness.

Mr. Young objected to her being examined, and observed that the case for the prosecution, which rested upon the identity of the card, had signally failed.

After some discussion between the Bench and the legal gentlemen engaged in the case,

Eliza Hamilton was recalled, and in reply to questions put to her by Mr. Lyons, stated, with much reluctance, that she was in the room when her sister was confined, that while there the defendant said to her that something was wrong with her sister, and that he would be obliged to use means to remedy it, which he accordingly did in her presence.

Mr. Lyons said he thought he had now quite enough of evidence for the prosecution to show that the defendant had certainly acted as a medical man.

Mr. Young then addressed the Court at some length for the defendant, contending that no evidence had been given to prove the charge made against his client—namely, that he had wilfully and falsely used the title of surgeon in violation of the Act.

No witnesses having been examined for the defence, and after some discussion between Mr. Young and the Bench as to what 'pretending to be' a surgeon meant,

Mr. Lyons postponed judgment in the case for three months, in order to afford the defendant an opportunity of qualifying himself; and if, in the meantime, he should be convicted of practising as a surgeon, he would fine him in the full sum of £20 for every such offence.

Mr. Seeds said that Browne did not wish to press the case, and that he was quite satisfied with the course taken by his worship.

Mr. Lyons—I know myself that all the association want is to have properly-qualified men for the public.

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

### SECOND ANNUAL MEETING

Dublin Medical Press 22 May 1861

On Thursday, the 9th inst., the Annual Meeting of the members of the Ulster Medical Protective Association was held in the library of the General Hospital, at twelve o'clock, Dr. McGee, J.P., in the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, and letters of apology for non-attendance were announced from Dr. Filson, Dr. Kidd, Ballymena; Dr. Davis, Newry; Dr. Jamison, Newtownards; Dr. McIntire, Coleraine; Dr. Neeson, Aghalee; Dr. Maxwell, Derrylinn; Dr. Ferris, Larne; and Surgeon McGreevy, Antrim.

Surgeon Browne, hon. sec., read a letter which he had received from the Secretary of the Irish Protective Association, stating that the next annual meeting of that body would be held on the 3rd June next in the Royal College of Surgeons, when several matters of great importance to the profession and the community in general would be brought forward, and expressing a hope that the meeting would be largely attended by country gentlemen.

On the motion of Dr. McLaughlin, seconded by Dr. Warwick, the letter from the Irish Protective Association was referred to a committee to take whatever steps might be considered desirable in the matter.

Surgeon Browne then read the following Annual Report:

'The Committee, in meeting the members of the Association after the lapse of twelve months, beg to submit the following report of their proceedings.

'During the year eleven ordinary and two special meetings have been held, and the following is a summary of the business transacted at these meetings. At the meeting held on the 17th of May, 1860, it was deemed advisable to have a form of notice lithographed, a copy of which the Secretary was directed to send to every unqualified person practising medicine or surgery, and against whom a complaint had been sent in. The annexed notice was therefore adopted:—

#### "MEDICAL PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION.

"Sir,—I am directed by the Committee of the Ulster Medical Protective Association to inform you of a complaint which has been made to them, 'that you assume a professional title, and practise medicine without any legal right to do so,' and as your name does not appear in the Medical Register, I have to request that you will send to me a statement of your professional qualifications, that I may submit the same to the Committee. Should you not comply with this request, I am directed to say that this Association will take such steps as our counsel may advise in your case."

'The Secretary has reported that he has sent a copy of the preceding notice to twenty-one persons who were reported to the Committee as practising without any legal qualification. In the majority of instances these letters have had a good effect, either in eliciting from the persons complained of satisfactory replies, or in compelling them to abandon open practice. Soon after the last annual meeting the Secretary, by direction of the Committee, prosecuted three persons for illegal practice—one of them was ordered to register or be fined, one fled from town, and the prosecution against one was withdrawn by advice of counsel. But the Committee have the gratification to state that against this same individual, who continued to violate the law, a conviction was recently obtained, inasmuch as he has been directed to qualify for registration, if he can, within three months, or incur the full penalty, and in the meantime he is not to attempt to practise. These results are so far satisfactory that they prove that where an instance of illegal practice can be brought home to an unqualified man he will likely be convicted; but it is evident that the law, as it now stands, should be amended, so that unqualified persons practising medicine could be more summarily dealt with than at present, and with this view the Association lately joined the London Medical Registration Association in a strong and urgent memorial to the General Medical Council, calling upon them to take steps to have the Medical Act, 1858, amended accordingly.

'In June the Committee sent forward a petition on the Registration Bill, which was presented to Parliament by Sir Hugh Cairns; and at a special meeting, held the same month, they adopted a series of resolutions relative to the Registration Bills, then before the House, complaining of the penal clauses against medical men, and respectfully calling upon the Members of Parliament for Ulster to use their influence to have the obnoxious clauses withdrawn. In August both Bills for the Registration of Births and Deaths in Ireland, along with the Medical Charities and Poor-law Amendment Bills, were for the time abandoned.

'Again this session, Mr. Cardwell and Lord Naas have introduced Bills for the Registration of Births, Deaths, &c., in Ireland. The Committee, on the part of the Association, have expressed their approval of the general principles of the Chief Secretary's Bill; and as it and that of Lord Naas have been referred to a Special Committee of the House, your Committee have taken steps to have witnesses from this Association examined relative to the contemplated provisions of these measures: meantime they recommend that a form of petition similar to that drawn up by the Cork Association be presented on

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

behalf of our body—

“TO THE KNIGHTS, BURGESSES, AND CITIZENS IN  
PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

“The petition of the undersigned medical practitioners humbly sheweth,—That petitioners highly approve of the general principle of the Bill for the Registration of Deaths, Births, and Marriages, brought into your honourable House by the Right Honourable the Secretary for Ireland and Mr. Bagwell, and that petitioners will always feel it their duty to carry out, as far as in them lies, the provisions of the Bill, being convinced that the interests of science, and of their own particular profession, as well as those of the community in general, will be thereby served. That petitioners, however, at the same time, feel that a particular clause (the 43rd) in said Bill, will bear hardly on the profession at large, by imposing a penalty for not furnishing within a limited period a certificate of the death of a party on whom they may have been previously in attendance, and subject them to legal prosecution, even where infraction of the clause may arise from causes over which they in their professional avocations have no control, and thereby, in addition to the penalty, put them to serious costs. That petitioners, therefore, humbly pray your honourable House to have the said 43rd clause either expunged from the Bill, or so modified, that it will not lead to punishment, for what may be a mere unintentional omission on the part of medical practitioners. And petitioners will ever pray.”

“The Committee have recently, through your Secretary, had communications from several influential members of the Legislature relative to having the views of the profession in Ulster brought before the Committee of the House of Commons, now inquiring into the working of the Irish poor-laws, and specific promises have been given that witnesses will be examined upon those points which affect the medical profession. That your Committee might be in possession of the sentiments of a large number of medical men, and thus be prepared to come before the Legislature with something of a specific character, queries were submitted to every medical officer in connexion with work-houses and dispensaries in Ulster. Replies were returned from a large number, and from these a special report was submitted to an extraordinary meeting of the Association, held in the month of January. At that meeting several important resolutions were passed, but as these have been published in the journals they need not be repeated here.

‘Since then an appeal has been made to all the medical gentlemen in connexion with the poor-laws in Ulster, asking for subscriptions to aid the Association in defraying parliamentary and other expenses connected with matters specially affecting

their interests, and the treasurer will be able to inform the Association in what way the appeal has been responded to. Before closing this report, your Committee may say they have every reason to believe that the Association has done much to promote the interests of the public as well as those of the profession. They consider that in promoting the interests of the medical practitioner, who is called to administer to the wants of the sick poor—whose protector the doctor is—they benefit the entire community. In protecting the humbler classes of society from the rapacity of unqualified persons and sordid quacks—the working classes being peculiarly liable to be victimized by these pretenders—your Committee are convinced the various medical associations have effected unquestionable good, and they hope that this, as well as every other similar Association, will continue their best efforts in pointing out to the Legislature and to the public those matters which their education and experience show to be either beneficial or prejudicial to the community. Hitherto this Association, since its formation, has worked harmoniously with the other medical societies of the kingdom. To the Cork Association and the Council of the Medical Association for Ireland, your Committee are indebted for many useful suggestions and friendly acts, and they beg here to record their thanks to Dr. Armstrong, the indefatigable Secretary at Cork, to Dr. Quinan, the courteous Secretary of the Irish Council, and also to Dr. Mackesy of Waterford, the tried, energetic, and unwearied friend of the medical profession. In conclusion, your Committee trust that the meeting this day will urge upon the entire profession of Ulster the propriety of becoming members of the Protective Association, and thus aid in establishing the position they should hold in society—namely, a united body, protecting their own interests, and at the same time cooperating to advance every measure by which the welfare of the public may be promoted. By order of the Committee, Samuel Browne, Hon. Sec.’

Professor Ferguson moved that the report and statement of accounts be adopted and entered on the minutes.

Dr. Rankin seconded the motion, which passed.

Surgeon Browne moved that Dr. Stewart be appointed Chairman of the Association during the ensuing year.

Dr. Michael McGee, in seconding the motion, said the Committee had carefully discharged their duty in watching over the interests of the profession during the past twelve months. It would be well if he could say as much for the profession. There were in Ulster 490 registered practitioners. They had in the county

## The Ulster Medical Protective Association

Antrim, of course, including the 85 practitioners in town, 120 members, and in Down there were 81. It must, therefore, be admitted from these calculations that the Association had, comparatively speaking, received very little support from the profession generally.

The motion was then carried by acclamation.

Dr. McGee said he had great pleasure in vacating the chair in favour of Dr. Stewart. From the experience he had had of his valuable services, his energy and strict attention to the interests of the profession—interests by which he could not be personally benefited—they might rest assured that the duties of the chair would be performed in a much more efficient manner than they had been since the formation of the Society. He did not resign the office from any unwillingness on his part to give his services, but having so much time occupied elsewhere, he thought that no man should enjoy the honours of the office unless he performed strictly the duties connected with it, and he felt that during the next year he could not do that. He was sure that Dr. Stewart would be able to perform efficiently all the duties he would be called upon to discharge. He had great pleasure, therefore, in making room for him.

Dr. Stewart begged to tender all present his best thanks for the great honour they had conferred upon him, he must say unworthily. Nothing could give him greater pleasure than doing everything in his power for the advancement of the interests of the profession, and he considered that in advancing the interests of the profession they were advancing the interests of the public at large. He was sorry to hear from Dr. Michael McGee that they had so small a number of members, especially now when bills of such magnitude concerning the interests of the profession at large were before Parliament. He concluded by again returning thanks to the meeting for having appointed him as chairman for the next year.

The committee and officers were then re-elected.

Dr. Stewart was called to the chair, and on the motion of Dr. Ferguson, the best thanks of the Association were offered to the late chairman.

Dr. McGee acknowledged the vote of thanks.

The proceedings then terminated.

### ULSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY INAUGURAL ADDRESS

*Belfast News-Letter* 3 November 1862

Saturday last [1 November 1862], at three o'clock, the first Winter session of this important provincial association of medical practitioners—being an

amalgamation of the parent 'Belfast Medical Society' (founded in 1822), the 'Belfast Clinical and Pathological Society,' and the 'Ulster Medical Protective Association'—was inaugurated in the society's rooms, 33, High Street, by an excellent address from the president, Professor Ferguson, of the Queen's College, Belfast. The attendance of members on this interesting occasion was large and influential, and the eloquent address of the president was listened to with much attention. The cordial thanks of the meeting were, on the motion of Dr. Browne, R.N., voted to the president for his able address, with a unanimous request that he would permit it to be printed and circulated freely amongst the members. The Treasurer of the Society (Dr. J. W. T. Smith) having next made a financial report of the number of members and state of the funds, which was of a most satisfactory nature, the meeting adjourned.

### BANBRIDGE UNION MEETING (EXTRACT)

*Northern Whig* Belfast 1 June 1868

Banbridge, 21st May, 1868.

At a meeting of the medical officers of Banbridge Union, held at the Downshire Arms Hotel, on the above date—Present—Dr. Malcomson, in the Chair; Dr. Tyrrell, Dr. Harman, Dr. Weir, and Dr. Crawford.

Proposed by Dr. Weir, and seconded by Dr. Harman, 'That Dr. Crawford be appointed Secretary.'

A letter of apology from Dr. Davison to Dr. Crawford being read, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to:—

1st. That—'Inasmuch as Medical Officers employed under the Poor Law Board are liable to be called on at any hour of the day or night, independent of the risks to health and life, from contagion, &c., to which they are exposed, their exclusion from the benefits of the Superannuation Act, upon the plea that their whole time is not engaged in the public service, while almost all other Poor Law and Government Officers are so provided for, is an injustice to the Medical Officers, which loudly calls for removal.'

2nd. That—'The Petition of the King's and Queen's College of Physicians be adopted by us, and a copy of same be sent to our County Members, requesting their co-operation and support'

3rd. That—'A copy of these Resolutions be sent to 'The Irish Medical Association,' and to 'The Ulster Medical Protective Association,' requesting their advice as to our future proceedings, and their co-operation with us, and, also, expressing our opinion of the necessity of having a General

*The Ulster Medical Protective Association*

Representative Meeting of Union Officers, to be held in some Central Town in the North of Ireland (say Portadown), at as early a date as possible, for the purpose of pressing our claims on the Legislature.'

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