

covery. You and they knew that it was almost universally unpopular, that to the great bulk of the profession it was simply odious and that very few paid it without protest or demur. You and they knew (Annual Announcement, 1890-91, p. 144) that to enforce the payment of this detestable tax, even by the members of the Medical Council, it was found necessary to instruct the treasurer to deduct the arrearage of each from his sessional indemnity. And yet, sir, knowing all this, and, consequently, fully aware that there was something radically wrong with the tax itself, instead of faithfully and fearlessly searching into the causes of its unpopularity, and endeavouring either to have it abolished or to have it equitably assessed on both the interests served, and thus made just and acceptable to all, you and they pursued the fatuous course which has brought you where you now are! Truly "*Quas Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.*" That you and they had a lively conviction that the profession would resent, and deeply resent, the precious legislation of 1891 is sufficiently attested by the Council roll-call on the afternoon of June 13th, 1890, as given in the Announcement of 1890-91, p. 131, whence it appears that, though you were all present on every other occasion, half your number then deliberately absented yourselves so as to shirk the vote. It may be a question among soldiers, whether the poltroon who skulks or runs away from the field of battle, or the traitor who boldly deserts to the enemy on the eve of the fight, most richly deserves the execration of his fellows. Probably, however, in the coming elections, the independent portion of the medical electorate will see but little or nothing to choose between those of you who, in a most important crisis, ran away—basely deserting the post of duty and of honour,—and those of you who defiantly aided the irresponsible elements

of the Council to perpetrate an unpardonable outrage on the profession.

I have now discussed, as I promised to do, the ethics of the professional tax. The facts set forth, though but feebly expressed, are quite sufficient to convince any unbiassed reader that the electorate must continue to resist payment of the so-called Annual Assessment until its objectionable features are removed. There are some other points, of interest to the profession, to which I would gladly advert were it not that space in your journal is so grudgingly given as to compel me to desist. The character of the Council's last effort to increase the Annual Assessment ought to be exposed. Great pains were taken to allow nothing to transpire, either in the Medical Journals or in the Annual Announcements, as to the nature of that attempt. True, as now appears, the direct amount asked for was only \$5, but \$5 with an added fine of \$1 for every six months it was suffered to remain unpaid, which made it incomparably worse than a straight \$10 annual tax. Thus the indebtedness of a member of the College, six years in arrears, would amount to the aggregate of \$15, \$13, \$11, \$9, \$7, and \$5, or to \$60 in all. A practitioner ten or fifteen or twenty years in arrears could clear himself with the Council only by the payment of \$140, or \$285 or \$480. What fascinating visions of brilliant financial possibilities must have recommended such a scheme to a Council, so competent as the present one, to spend all the money by any plan procurable! Take your time, Gentlemen, no need to pay up before we begin to press you for your arrears. The profession was saved from this delectable concoction only by the firmness and good sense of the legislature, but what can we think of the men who deliberately proposed it and sought to obtain permission and power to enforce it? How can any