

of men left the London hospitals before their time was completed to obtain degrees in Scotland, Ireland, or elsewhere. In short, the system of education forty years ago in the London medical schools, as far as there was any system, was designed to enable men to qualify at the College and Hall, or at the two Colleges, as soon as possible—this could then be done in four years, or just under—and not to encourage work for the University of London degree.

Of course, I am well aware that some very good work was done, more especially in medicine and surgery; but in obstetrics and gynecology the practice and instruction were alike insufficient. It must be remembered, when referring to the medical education of forty years ago, that those were the days of the linseed-meal poultice (in the surgical wards), antiseptics were just beginning to be used, the clinical thermometer appeared on the scene, together with the laryngoscope and the ophthalmoscope. The clinical teaching was then, I suppose, nothing like so systematic as it is now, but some of the lecturing was most excellent. I might refer to the lecturing of the late Sir John Simon, then Mr. Simon, on pathology at my old school of St. Thomas's. He used to lecture to, perhaps, hardly a score of students. It would have been of immense advantage if he could have lectured to every medical student in London. A man of his learning and intellect was, in a way, almost wasted down in the old Surrey Gardens, but there was no attempt at concentration of professional studies in those days. If I were asked, In what respect do you think the medical education of forty years ago was most deficient? I should, without hesitation, say it was deficient in three particulars: (1) preliminary examinations; (2) obstetric medicine; and (3) the administration of anesthetics; and if I were asked to-day the same question, I should give precisely the same answer.

MEDICAL EDUCATION OF TO-DAY.

Now I have referred to the regulations of the past, I will briefly consider those of to-day and note the improvements that have been effected. I may then, perhaps, venture to forecast what further advances may be made, not only in the interest of the medical student, but also to the advantage of the whole community. By the regulations of the General Medical Council no person can be registered as a medical or dental student who has not attained the age of sixteen years; some, a great many, think the age ought to be seventeen years. I am one of those. Further, no person can be allowed to register unless he or she shall have previously passed a recognized preliminary examination in the subjects of general education. The period of professional study between the date of registration as a medical student and the