

Texts and Documents

- 2^d Easily; putting y^o patient to as little pain as possible yet not sparing him to his Cost.
3^d Safely; The Surgeon is not to be too venturesome or foollhardy yet to go about his Duty Duly and regularly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the President and Council of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh for permission to publish their manuscript; and to their Librarian and the Librarians of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and the Wellcome Historical Medical Library for their advice.

A SPANISH ROYAL DECREE OF 1617 CONCERNING THE EXAMINATION OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

THE Medical Ordinance of Phillip II of Spain, of which the following is a translation, bears the title of:

Permitaca, en que se da la orden que se ha de tener en el examen de los Medicos y Cirujanos, y en el Protomedicato, y demas ccasas que en ella se declaran. Madrid, Juan de la Cuesta, 1617.

ROYAL DECREE

in which is laid down the order to be observed in the examining of Physicians, Surgeons and Court Physicians, together with other matters herein mentioned. Printed in Madrid by Juan de Cuesta, 1617.

Sold at the shop of Francisco de Robles, Bookseller to Our Lord the King.

PHILIP BY THE GRACE OF GOD King of Castille, Leon, Aragon, The Two Sicilies, etc, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Brabant, etc, Count of Hapsburgh, Flanders, etc, Lord of Vizcaya, etc, Sovereign of the East and West Indies, etc, etc. TO the Most Serene Prince Philip Our Beloved Son and to the Princes of the Blood, Prelates, Dukes, Marquesses, etc, Lords of Our Council, Judges, etc, and all other Our Subjects to whom these presents shall come GREETING. KNOW YE that We are informed by learned persons zealous for the common good that in these Our Kingdoms, Duchies, etc, there is much lack of reliable Physicians so that they are wanting even to attend upon Us and Our Royal Family. THAT in the lifetime of the King Our father (Whom God receive) a remedy was sought a law being made in the year 1588 in which instructions were laid down to be followed by the Chief Physician and other Examiners in the examination of Physicians, Surgeons and Apothecaries. THAT this not sufficing, His Majesty issued a further Decree in the year 1597 giving instructions to be followed in the examination of Physicians and many other matters. All which not sufficing and seeing that the said faculty was in a state of decline, We laid the matter before Our Council that, informed by learned persons as to the cause thereof, We might devise a remedy. For which reason the Lords of Our Council sent to the three principal Universities of Our Kingdoms that the Faculty of Medicine be convened in each one of them. And after many such meetings it appeared that the principal reason for the lack of good Physicians is to be found in the method of teaching during past years adopted in Universities (for it is this that determines, for good or ill, the standard of the Faculty), namely; the wasting of time in vain disputes and irrelevant matters which have no bearing on the cause, diagnosis and cure of diseases; the not reading, as used to be done, the writings of Galen, Hippocrates and Avicenna but the wasting of time in dictation and not reading aloud the original texts. For in times past the Faculty produced good

Texts and Documents

students who knew the original texts, both the questions and the explanations in them, and discussed them during the lecture without the present method of writing and dictating throughout the class. Moreover any student who knows Latin can take down a dictation in his exercise book and be none the wiser for it; nay, he can copy the same from the exercise book of another without troubling to attend the lecture at all. AND the other principal cause appears to be the method of conducting the examination which is held before the Senior Physicians. For in these examinations the students are obliged to recite, word for word, the entire 'Institutes of Mercado', the memorizing of which is such a labour that they are unable to pay any attention to their other studies and, what is more, the Institutes omit all reference to the pulse, fevers, purges, and diagnosis, all which things the student should know something of and be examined in. AND the said conference having closed and made its report to Us and Our Council, We have determined to maintain in force the said previous laws and to promulgate in addition the following regulations which are to be observed minutely by all those concerned under pain of Our extreme displeasure. Namely;

1. Firstly, That the Professor read the works of Galen, Hippocrates and Avicenna aloud to his students, the professor having the book in his hand and the students one in theirs so that they can understand him. The professor is to read first the heading of the chapter and then the doubts, questions and explanations which may arise from the heading. And he must concern himself only with what is relevant to the cause, diagnosis and cure of diseases and not waste his own and his students' time in irrelevancies.
2. Professors whose duty it is to hold classes of an hour and a half's duration must read aloud from the book for one hour and explain the subject matter and for the remaining half hour they may give dictation on what has been read. Similarly those who teach for an hour only may dictate for a quarter of an hour. We are aware that this is already the rule in Universities, but it has never been properly obeyed by the Professors for the reason that no punishments are imposed; to remedy which We Command that a Professor who does not comply with this rule shall lose his fee in respect of the class in question. For the second offence the punishment shall be doubled. For further offences, he shall be deprived of his salary for the whole year. Moreover the Chancellor and Beddels of the University shall make report of any such defalcation to Us and the Lords of Our Council so that We may take the necessary steps to deprive any such Professor of his Chair.
3. Whereas We are informed that many Universities give degrees in medicine without possessing any medical course or Chair of Medicine and thus send out Physicians qualified only in name but with no proper knowledge of their subject, We Command that no medical degree be issued except for the three principal Universities or from such Universities as have at least three Professors and seven qualified lecturers, who shall be possessed of a medical degree.
4. Students who come up to be examined before the Senior Physicians shall not be admitted to the Examination unless they produce written evidence that they have duly studied at one of the three said principal Universities or at such other Universities as are mentioned in the preceding section.
5. No student may present himself for examination before the Senior Physicians unless he has had two years of actual practise as a doctor and can show written evidence thereof witnessed by the doctor with whom he practised.
6. The Senior Physicians shall examine the student upon the doctrines of Galen and Hippocrates, but they shall not expect the students to have the doctrines word for word and by heart, as was formerly expected in such examinations. And they shall be examined only on the more important points; firstly, on anatomy and then upon fevers and symptoms thereof together with the examples provided by Galen, as also the pulse, purges, urine, etc, all of which they will have studied during their course and be acquainted with during their two years of practical experience. And the questions must be varied as much as possible from year to year, so that the students, not knowing what questions to expect, will be obliged to study the whole syllabus.

Texts and Documents

7. Those who are studying to be Surgeons shall not be examined upon the doctrines of Galen and Hippocrates only, but shall be expected to have studied bone-setting, which is a most important part of surgery. They shall not be admitted to the examination without written proof that they have had practical experience for the space of one year under a practising bone-setter.
8. The certificates of those who have passed the above-mentioned examinations must be signed by the Senior Physicians.
9. If any of the Senior Physicians is unable for good cause to attend the examination, his place may be taken by some other Physician appointed by him.
10. The Senior Physicians who also hold the post of Examiner shall be paid one Hundred thousand maravedis a year and Physicians who are examiners sixty thousand, both irrespective of the number of examinations they hold. In this way the old practice will be prevented of their taking longer over each examination than is necessary and drawing it out over several days so as to earn higher fees. Any Examiner who fails to be present at the Examination shall pay a fine to be determined by Ourselves in Council.
11. For the examinations of Surgeons and Apothecaries, the Examiners shall be appointed from among practising Surgeons and Apothecaries by the Senior Physicians, and the Beddel of the University shall inform such Surgeon or Apothecary of the appointment the night immediately preceding the examination, so that they shall have no opportunity to accept bribes.
12. The aforesaid examiners shall be given 4 Reales as a fee, 2 for the examination held in the Examination Hall and 2 for the practical examination held in the hospital.
13. Examiners shall be paid their travelling expenses.
14. The examination Certificates shall be on paper and not parchment, so that the students shall not have to pay a high price for the certificate itself.
15. Whereas many people act as Physicians without any medical qualifications and deceive and injure the ignorant people, We impose the following fines for any such deception, that is to say, etc (details of fines). And whereas there are many forged medical certificates in circulation, We strictly enjoin the Mayors and Councils of Our Cities to make suitable visitation at frequent intervals to those who are practising as Physicians within their jurisdiction and to examine their Certificates to see if they be genuine.
16. Whereas Apothecaries, when they expect a visitation of their place of business take care to provide themselves with good medicines, which they borrow from others, but at other times sell medicines of poor quality, We order that such visitation be paid by the Senior Physicians at irregular intervals, to the end that the said Apothecaries have no warning when they shall be visited.
17. An Apothecary's shop which has been closed down as punishment for selling bad medicines shall not be re-opened without the consent of 3 Senior Physicians.
18. Whereas many Physicians and Surgeons, when once examined, depart to remote villages of Our Kingdoms and take no care to keep up their studies but rather forget all they have learned, We Command that when any such person, after undue time spent away from the capitals of Our Kingdoms, shall return thereto he may be examined a second time, without cost to himself and at the discretion of the Senior Physicians.
19. GIVEN IN OUR PALACE OF THE PARDO this fourth day of November in the year of our Saviour one thousand six hundred and seventeen.

(signed) I THE KING

(Signed) THE ARCHBISHOP OF BURGOS

Written by Pedro de Conteras, One of His Majestys Private Secretaries

John Guest Gornall

Victor Pradera, 81-1, Dcha,
San Sebastian,
Spain.