

**“To ask the Suffrages of the Patrons”:  
Thomas Laycock and the Edinburgh  
Chair of Medicine, 1855**

edited with an introduction by

**MICHAEL BARFOOT**

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Professor Thomas Laycock

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The honour was a prize worth fighting for, and aspirants were entitled to use every legitimate avenue to success; nor have we much sympathy with that stern resolve which would not stoop to ask the suffrages of the patrons; but there is a limit to urgency on the part of candidates and their friends, and on this occasion that boundary line of propriety has been sadly overstepped by those from whom a better example might have been expected.

*Edinburgh News*, 6 October 1855

It has been my great good fortune, it is true, to be able to rebut these painful attempts to injure me in the estimation of the Patrons, the University, and the public, by the publication of documents of which the accuracy is unquestionable; but, let it be supposed, that I had lost or destroyed the letters in question, or that I had continually to make “corrections”, what would then have been my position? I must have been inevitably borne down by hardihood of assertion, and have suffered irretrievable injury to my character and prospects.

Thomas Laycock, *Sequel*, 19 December 1857