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MEDICAL AND SURGICAL COLLEGE

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LECTURE, &c.

We are met this evening to recommence the labours of the Medical School, and, as usual upon such occasions, I see around me among the company here assembled, to evince their interest in our proceedings, not only those who still are, or are about to become, students, but others who have long been engaged in practice, and who have attained to that position in the profession which will always result from assiduous and honourable exertions. There are also present, others, who are not members of our profession, but who, actuated by that philanthropy which is, and I trust will long continue to be, so general in our country, give their time and attention to the management of this large charitable institution, and so co-operate with its medical officers in the great work of benevolence which it is the means of accomplishing. To all these, I desire, on behalf of my colleagues of the medical school and myself, to express the gratification which their company affords us; but it is not to these that I shall address the few remarks which I have now to offer, but to those who are about to commence at this time the studies which are to qualify them for the duties of their profession.

I conclude, that those whom I thus address have already well considered the step which they are about to take;—that they are aware of the laborious nature of the studies which will be required to enable them to pass their examinations;—that they know how arduous will be the practice of their profession; how large the demands upon their time and attention; how great the need for self-sacrificing application, to secure that distinction which it is doubtless their ambition to attain. I should not therefore wish, by dwelling on these points, to damp the energy or obscure the bright anticipations with which they commence their studies. I would rather, as one who has already passed through the course upon which they are entering, and who has since had somewhat extensive experience of the profession, hold out to them the language of encouragement, and assure them, that were my career to re-commence, I should without hesitation select again that which I have chosen.

I know of no profession which possesses greater advantages than our own. In the study of the medical sciences there is an ample field for the employment of the greatest capacity; and in the contemplation of the varied phenomena of living beings, which it brings under our notice, there are unfailing sources of the highest intellectual enjoyment. In the practice of medicine and surgery, there are frequent demands upon the noblest faculties of our nature, and constant opportunities for conferring benefits on our fellow-creatures; and it must be our own fault, if we do not obtain a fair amount of professional success, and gain the respect and esteem of those with whom we are brought in contact. I might, indeed, refer to many of those who have been educated in this school, and who have formerly held, or now fill the most distinguished places, as proofs of the success which will ever result from the steady and persevering, yet upright and honourable pursuit of our profession.

It has been objected to our studies, (as, indeed, with equal injustice to those of other branches of science) that they have a tendency to lessen our belief in the truths of revelation; but this charge is certainly without foundation. So far from such being the case, they should rather have the contrary effect:—the evidences of adaptation to the purposes for which it is designed, in the mechanism of the animal frame, would lead to the belief in the existence of an all-wise designer; and the proofs that the mind may retain its powers even to the moment of dissolution, would infer the existence of an independent and immortal spirit; and it would not be difficult to mention many members of the profession, both of the present and former times, not less eminent for their sincere piety than for their scientific attainments.

It has also been asserted that medical men, from their familiarity with scenes of sickness and distress, become less alive to the sufferings of others, and are rendered cold and unfeeling; but it has been well observed by a philosophic writer of the last century, that, while experience diminishes the influence of passive impressions on the mind, it strengthens our active principles; and thus, while by common observation of bodily pain we become less affected by it, by the frequent practice of assisting the sick and the helpless, we acquire a confirmed habit of beneficence, and should do great violence to our nature by withholding the relief which it is in our power to give. And, it is added, in this there is a wise provision for our moral improvement, as the effect of experience on the one part of our constitution tends to control its influence upon another. But it is not necessary thus seriously to argue against a charge which is so obviously untrue.

Though from the earliest periods of history we have evidence of the existence of some amount of medical knowledge, it is only within the last three centuries, that all those discoveries upon which our science is based, have been made; and it is within a still more recent period that we must date its steady and continued advancement.

Chemistry may be said to have commenced within the last century; organic chemistry within a still shorter time; yet we owe much of our present knowledge, both in Physiology, Pathology, and Therapeutics to those sciences. By their aid we have become acquainted with various processes which take place in the healthy body, can understand the modifications which those processes undergo in disease, and are provided with a variety of remedies;—some of them formerly unknown, others presented in a simpler and much more efficient form. They also enable us to detect various poisonous substances, which may have been taken, and so by exhibiting antidotes immediately afterwards, entirely to deprive them of their injurious properties; or when some time may have elapsed since the poison has been received, and when it may already have produced its fatal effects, we are enabled to recognize the smallest portion of the substance which may remain, and so furnish the means of detecting and punishing crime. The microscope has only been employed in medical investigations within the last very few years, yet it has already afforded much valuable information, and its use is now not less essential to the practical physician than to the physiologist. It is indeed not too much to say, that in the future progress of medical science, chemical analysis and the microscope will occupy the most conspicuous places; and that by their assistance, we shall ultimately be enabled to trace out many morbid conditions now little understood, and to ascertain the mode of action of various therapeutic agents, and so to extend our knowledge of disease, and our means of controlling its ravages.

But it is not only in the collateral branches of medical science that great progress has recently been made, in practical medicine itself, the advances have been also great.

Our acquaintance with affections of the brain and spinal cord has been much extended by the discoveries of Sir Charles Bell and Dr. Marshall Hall, and we can point to numerous observations which either have led, or must ultimately lead, to great improvements in this department of practice. Thus it used to be supposed that some forms of apoplectic attack were due to the effusion of serum into the ventricles or beneath the sub-arachnoidal membrane, and the fact that persons occasionally died suddenly, in whom large accumulations of

fluid were found, was regarded as confirming this opinion. The increased attention which has been directed to morbid anatomy has shown that the two conditions have no necessary connexion ; and that when they coincide, the suddenness of death must have depended on some other cause. Indeed it is now well ascertained, that the effusion bears relation to the decrease in the size of the brain, and that this is simply due to the atrophy which affects that organ, as well as probably all others, in advanced life. Again, the knowledge which we have acquired of cerebral softening, is of most recent introduction ; and our acquaintance with the nature and causes of that affection may be referred to, as among the first-fruits of the employment of the microscope in pathological investigations. It may, however, be said, that these observations are not of practical importance ; but the information which we now possess, that symptoms closely similating those of acute inflammation of the brain may be induced by states the very reverse of inflammatory; and that affections of the auditory passages, originally of the most trivial import, may lay the foundation of serious and fatal cerebral disease, cannot be regarded otherwise than as of great practical value. It would not be difficult to enumerate many other examples of a similar description.

Our knowledge of affections of the chest has been still more remarkably advanced within the last few years ; indeed it may well be said to have undergone an entire revolution since the discovery of auscultation and percussion.

For the uncertain insight into the diseases of the lungs and pleura afforded by the seat of pain, the character of the breathing, the kind of cough, the peculiarities of the expectoration, the position of the patient, and the symptoms of constitutional disturbance, we have obtained a means of diagnosis, at once most accurate and complete. We can now not only ascertain the situation and nature of the disease, but we can precisely define its limits, and carefully note its extension and decline ; and when the conclusions arrived at prove to be incorrect, it is much more frequently from want of knowledge of the means of observation, and of proper care in their employment, than from defect in the means themselves. The information also which we thus obtain, not only enables us to form a more accurate idea of the nature of the disease, and the result which will probably attend it, but it greatly aids us in the treatment of our patients, so that, in many cases, we can readily and at little cost to the system, remove affections, which, if not at once detected and arrested, would prove entirely incurable, or only be relieved after

irreparable injury had been sustained, and by the employment of the most vigorous measures.

These remarks apply especially to the acute inflammatory affections of the lungs and pleura, but they are scarcely less applicable to other thoracic affections; and especially, to that disease, which, from the variableness of our climate, the industrial eminence which we have attained as a nation—and, perhaps, from our advanced civilization itself, is peculiarly prevalent in this country, and which it is therefore our duty, earnestly to aim at alleviating. In this disease (I need not say that I allude to consumption), physical diagnosis affords both positive information and negative evidence, scarcely less valuable than the positive. If, in some cases, it is the painful duty of the physician to pronounce that serious and irreparable disease has already occurred;—that little can be done except to afford some temporary relief, it is, at least, better that the patient and his friends should be able to obtain correct information, than be continually stimulated by delusive hopes, only to have their anticipations more cruelly, because more unexpectedly destroyed. Nor is this knowledge without its practical advantages. It prevents the physician recommending removal to a warmer climate, when such change, so far from arresting the progress of the disease, would rather accelerate it; and thus the patient is saved from being sent abroad, to spend, as used too frequently to be the case, his last hours among strangers and in a foreign country. But while, in some cases of consumption it is evident, from stethescopic examination, that no prospect of benefit can be held out, there are many other cases in which we have the gratification of pronouncing that no disease has, as yet, taken place in the lungs, or that the injury sustained is very trivial, and that, by judicious treatment, there is every prospect that the attack may be entirely warded off.

There are also some forms of affection of the chest, I may instance Chronic Pleurisy, which very closely resemble consumption; so closely indeed, as, before the discovery of physical diagnosis, to have been, in many instances, wholly incapable of being detected; but which are now readily understood, and, in a large proportion of cases, equally readily relieved. Had Laennec done nothing more than furnish us with the means of discriminating these affections, he would indeed have conferred a great benefit on humanity.

But it is not only in diseases of the lungs and pleura, that the employment of auscultation and percussion afford great assistance in diagnosis and treatment. In some forms of affection of the heart, the information which they elicit is not less valuable. As in the

former class of maladies, so in this, they, in some cases, reveal to us the first inroads of morbid action, and enable us, by applying our remedies at the earliest period, to remove them. In other cases which we cannot cure, they give us a full insight into the changes which are in progress, and often point out the causes upon which they are dependant, and so enable us to place our patient upon a system, which will probably entirely stop, or if not, materially retard, their progress, and allow him to pass many years in comparative comfort and freedom from suffering. In yet other instances they can do much more than this; they enable us at once to dispel anxiety from the minds of our patients, confidently to assure them that symptoms, which they regarded as conclusive evidences of serious and incurable disease, are of the most trifling import, and to confirm the opinions thus unhesitatingly expressed, by removing the symptoms which had led them to entertain such gloomy apprehensions.

The means of investigation by which we can accomplish all this is of the most recent introduction, and nothing certainly could be more unsatisfactory than the knowledge which was possessed of cardiac and pulmonary affections, before the discovery of auscultation and percussion. I know, indeed, no more effectual way of dispelling the discouragement which we must all sometimes feel as to the imperfections of our art, and of urging us to active exertions to improve it, than to turn to the works of authors of deserved eminence, who wrote at the end of the last and the beginning of this century, and see how much that was obscure, and therefore intractable to them, is now clearly understood, and often capable of material relief or cure. There are, it is true, forms both of cardiac and pulmonary disease, of which our means of diagnosis are still very vague and imperfect, but such affections are happily comparatively rare.

I am not able, in reference to diseases of the abdominal organs, to quote proofs of the advancement of our practical knowledge, equally striking with those to which I have just alluded; but our means of distinguishing between affections which are only functional, and those which are dependant upon organic disease, are, certainly, much greater than formerly, and, in some other respects, our practice has undergone a beneficial change. I may instance the avoidance of stimulants, and the exhibition of anodynes, in cases of threatened or suspected perforation of the stomach and bowels;—and the caution now practised in giving purgatives in the early stages of fever, which may prove to be complicated with intestinal disease, in cases of constipation dependant on inflammation, or when there is reason to fear some mechanical obstruction.

The extension of our knowledge of diseases of the kidneys, may however, be referred to as among the most important accessions which have at any time been made to practical medicine, whether those affections be viewed in relation to the symptoms which they directly cause, or to the influence which they exert on the progress and results of other diseased states. Previous to the publication of Dr. Bright's memoirs, some of the observations upon which he based his views, had been known and recorded, but their true significance was not understood, and it is to his writings that we owe our present enlarged acquaintance with this department of practice. It is, indeed, not a little remarkable that, though many observers have since laboured in the same field, and that much as has been done to explain the nature of the diseased states which he described, so few of his conclusions have proved to be incorrect. Formerly those affections which are dependant on renal disease, were mostly regarded as incurable, and being so regarded, proved too frequently to be so. We now know that many of these cases are dependant upon conditions readily and completely curable, while others which cannot be entirely removed, are capable of great temporary alleviation.

I cannot conclude this brief review of some of the improvements which have recently been made in medical practice, without referring to the greater knowledge which we have gained of the pathology of fever. For this we are chiefly indebted to the attention which has been paid to Morbid Anatomy in France, in consequence of the discussion excited by the writings of Broussais. But we especially owe our present acquaintance with typhoid fever, to the careful observations of the symptoms during life, and the appearances after death, conducted by M. Louis. The subject has since attracted much attention in this country, particularly in London and Edinburgh, and from the mass of observations collected, I believe the conclusion come to by some pathologists, that typhus, typhoid and relapsing fevers, are not mere varieties of the same disease, but distinct specific diseases, is well founded. This view I am aware, is opposed by some of our best physicians; but, I believe, it will ultimately be established and prove of great practical importance. Measles and scarlet fever were regarded as the same disease, till so recent a period as the middle of the last century, yet we now know that they require dissimilar, even opposed systems of treatment. It cannot be denied that the prognosis in these various forms of fever is different, and it is difficult to conceive that diseases which vary so much in some respects, however closely they may assimilate in others, should not require each peculiar modes of treatment.

I have made no allusion to any advance in our practical knowledge of Asiatic cholera, and it may be freely admitted, that the epidemics we have had, have left us without our having gained any great insight into that malady, or acquired any definite or successful mode of treating it. We may, however, refer with satisfaction to the evidence so abundantly obtained, that by attention to sanitary matters, the ravages of the disease may be very greatly reduced, and that, by securing proper treatment of the cases which occur at the very earliest period, they may, in a very large proportion of cases, be prevented from becoming serious. As regards the benefit which we are capable of accomplishing in this disease, we have however, scarcely done justice to ourselves; by separating under the name of choleraic diarrhœa the milder cases from the more severe, we have given an unnecessarily unfavourable view of our practice. It is as if, in fever, pneumonia, or enteritis, we were to give the names of the diseases, only to the more severe and almost necessarily fatal cases.

From the remarks which I have made, it will be seen that it is chiefly in the art of detecting disease, of ascertaining its seat and nature, and of predicting its results, that the recent improvements have been made, and that though our power of treating disease has been advanced, the gain in this department, is rather incidental to that in the other. We may still do much to give greater accuracy to our diagnosis, and to ascertain more clearly the limits which separate functional from organic diseases, but it is in therapeutics, that there is now the greatest need for improvement. Accident or chance may, undoubtedly, have sometimes led to the discovery of remedial agents, and have pointed out the forms of disease to the treatment of which they may be applied, but such fortuitous discoveries must not be expected. In this branch of medicine, as in all others, our efforts at improvement must be based upon careful observation and experiment guided by sound physiological and pathological knowledge. We must first ascertain the actions of medicines by experiments performed on healthy bodies; we may then investigate their therapeutic powers, by observing their operation in states of disease; and when thus well acquainted with the effects and modes of action of remedies, we shall be enabled advantageously to employ them in practice. It is to Therapeutics that the attention of scientific medical men is now especially directed, and it may safely be anticipated that their investigations will yield most valuable results.

I have before alluded to the name of M. Louis, and I may now

mention, that we owe much to that writer, as the introducer of numerical calculations into medical investigations; for whatever may be thought of some of his views, there can, I conceive, be no doubt of the value of the system which he has adopted. Instead of the inexact employment of general terms, M. Louis has proposed a mode of calculation and expression at once definite and precise; and provided due care be taken in collecting the observations which are to form the basis of analysis, and that they be so classified as to insure that the facts compared are precisely similar; and provided that the observations be sufficiently numerous to avoid accidental sources of error, the deductions drawn numerically, possess an exactitude, which could not otherwise be attained. M. Louis remarks, that when, after having devoted much time and attention to the collection of his observations, he proceeded to analyse them, he constantly found that the conclusions at which he arrived were opposed to his preconceived ideas; and probably the experience of every one who has paid much attention to medical statistics, has corresponded with that of M. Louis. We unavoidably receive more readily and remember more clearly those observations which accord with our opinions or desires, than those which are opposed to them, and thus the conclusions based simply upon our remembrance of the facts, are necessarily one-sided and imperfect. It is essential, as argued by Lord Bacon, that for correct generalization from particular instances, "a severe regulation and powerful authority" should be placed upon our minds.

It is true, that the data upon which statistical calculations have been based, have often been too carelessly collected, or too few in number to be entitled to any credit, and that comparisons have frequently been instituted between results obtained from dissimilar sets of facts, and, consequently, that the appearance of truth has long given to inferences the most erroneous; but it is also true, that such errors are easily avoided and detected; and that, when properly conducted, numerical calculations enable us to decide various questions, as to the natural history of disease, and the influence of different causes upon health and longevity, which could not be otherwise investigated. Of this description are, the relative liability to different diseases at various ages, in the two sexes, and in persons of various trades and professions; the duration of illness and the proportion of cures and deaths, in different diseases and under different courses of treatment, and various other questions of great importance in reference to life insurance.

As an example of the superficial and erroneous employment of

medical statistics, I may mention the conclusions which have been frequently drawn as to the success attending the employment of remedies, from the mere comparison of the number of cases treated, without taking into consideration the modifying influence of age, sex, intensity of disease, &c. On the other hand, the writings of the founder of the system may be referred to as showing the mode in which such investigations should be conducted, and the important conclusions, which, when so carried out, they are capable of affording.

It used to be a favourite saying of Dr. Cullen, that there were more false facts in the world than false theories. But there can be no doubt that the progress of medicine as a science has been greatly embarrassed by both errors. To be of any use, the observations collected should be accurate and complete; but it is not the less necessary that the inferences drawn from them should be legitimately deduced.

I cannot give a more striking instance of the danger of hasty generalization—of the readiness with which an imaginative person can invent a theory, or of the scantiness of the facts on which such a theory may be based, than by referring to the modern doctrine of Homœopathy.

Because, in some few cases, symptoms somewhat similar to those of disease, may be produced by remedies which have been found useful in those diseases, the inference has been drawn, that all diseases are to be cured by remedies which produce similar symptoms. Because in a few special instances, *active* medicines produce certain effects more readily when exhibited in a moderate state of subdivision, than when given in larger doses, it has been concluded, that all medicines have their effects increased by subdivision,—and that, too, by subdivision carried to so extreme a degree of minuteness, that the most refined chemical analysis fails entirely to detect their presence, and the mind can grasp no adequate idea of the quantity indicated.

We often hear complaints on the part of the followers of homœopathy, that medical men will not try their remedies; but this complaint is not a fair one. Experiments as to the curative powers of medicines, to be satisfactory, must be instituted on well-marked cases of disease, and the remedies must be exhibited alone;—they will yield no information, if given in ill-defined cases of disease, or in combination with other powerful agents. So long, however, as we possess remedies and modes of treatment which long experience has proved to be beneficial in such cases, medical men would be deserving of the greatest censure, were they to place the lives and health of their patients in danger, in order to test the powers of asserted remedies, which every *à priori* means of judging, would lead them to regard as inefficacious.

But the complaint is not well founded. When suggestions are made which offer a fair prospect of usefulness, medical men have not hesitated to adopt them; and thus the assertion of Hahnemann, that belladonna possessed the power of preventing scarlet fever, has been repeatedly acted upon, both in this country and on the continent; but I fear if his other observations are not more accurate than this, they must be regarded as not better founded than his theories. He seems not to have been guided by the advice of Lord Bacon, that in investigating natural phenomena, and deducing inferences from our observations, "we should add lead and ballast, not wings, to the understanding."

In the infancy of medical knowledge, the condition of the internal organs, either in health or disease, was little understood, and diseases were necessarily regarded as constituted by groups of symptoms. With the progress of science, the changes in the system became better known, and physicians were able to trace particular symptoms to the organs and states upon which they were dependant, and so to direct their treatment to the removal of the actual morbid conditions. The Homœopathic system of medicine, as it reverts to the study of symptoms as the indication for treatment, is therefore a recurrence to a past and exploded condition of science; and it is one, which, as it renders pathological knowledge of little advantage to practice, is calculated, so far from aiding the progress of medical science, to arrest it, and render valueless much that has already been accomplished.

While, however, we thus point out the errors of others, we must not forget that the prevalence of erroneous medical doctrines and practices must, to some extent, at least, be traced to the imperfection of our own knowledge, and the consciousness of this should stimulate us to renewed exertions. It is the duty of the physician to be willing to try carefully all means which afford the prospect of aiding him in his struggle with disease and death, and to retain those which prove to possess valuable properties; and thus, whatever is at any time brought forward, from whatever source it be derived, will ultimately come to constitute a part of legitimate medicine. We must endeavour to acquire a more accurate acquaintance with the functions of the human body, by which we shall be enabled more fully and clearly to understand the changes which constitute disease,—to study more closely the phenomena of different morbid changes, and ascertain their natural tendencies to terminate in the restoration of health, in permanent impairment of function, or in death, so that we may direct our efforts to the assistance or prevention of those tendencies; and, lastly, to become better acquainted with the pathological and thera-

peutic actions of the remedies which we employ, so that we may be able to exhibit them with a full knowledge of the effects they may be expected to produce. It is by investigations of this description that medical science must be advanced, and as they are fully carried out, they will doubtless ultimately render our profession, to use the language of a recent writer, "not less great in its achievements than it now is in its aspirations."

But I fear that I have deviated too widely from the special object of this lecture, and I am warned that the time which I can devote to it, is drawing to a close.

I have endeavoured, in the remarks which I have made, to show you that medical science is actively progressing, to indicate the means by which its great recent advances have been accomplished, and to point out the way in which its future improvement must be sought. I wish to convince you that in adopting the profession as your pursuit in life, you are entering upon a field of study which affords an ample scope for the exercise of all your talents; and a prospect, not only of acquiring a knowledge of the state of science as it is, but of doing something to extend its limits; for we may all hope, by diligent attention to the cases which fall under our notice, and careful study of the mode of operation and effects of the remedies which we prescribe, to add something to the sum of knowledge which has been accumulated.

It remains for me to encourage you to an energetic prosecution of the studies upon which you are about to enter.

If in any profession or calling in life knowledge is power, essentially so is it in our own. Without an accurate and comprehensive acquaintance with the various branches of medical science, we must all be alike incapable of practising our profession with advantage to our patients, or with credit and a conscientious feeling of satisfaction to ourselves.

Aim, therefore, at acquiring an intimate knowledge of the different departments of medical science. Without drawing any invidious comparisons between our own and other schools of medicine, I may be permitted to say that you will here have every facility for becoming acquainted with all the branches of your profession. In the College you will receive instruction from well qualified lecturers, aided by all the appliances for efficient teaching; and in the wards of the hospital you will have the most ample opportunities of seeing disease, of acquiring familiarity with the employment of the means of diagnosis, and of observing the application of the various remedial agents, in the practice of experienced medical men.

Let me urge you diligently to avail yourselves of the opportunities

which will thus be afforded you. Do not despise those subjects which will first claim your attention, and which, from their elementary character, may appear of less importance, for if you neglect to familiarize yourselves with them at the commencement of your career as a student, you will sustain a loss which you will find it difficult, if not impossible, hereafter to supply. A competent acquaintance with your profession can only be obtained by proceeding from the study of the more elementary, to the investigation of the more advanced departments. Without a knowledge of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Botany, Materia Medica, and Anatomy, you will be incapable of undertaking, with advantage, the study of Physiology, Pathology, and Therapeutics; and, without a good acquaintance with all these subjects, you will fail to attain that practical knowledge of medicine and surgery, which must be the great aim of all your studies, and to which all your other acquirements must be subservient.

I would particularly recommend you to take careful notes of the lectures which you attend; for, independently of the value which such notes may possess in after life, there is nothing which assists so much to fix facts in the memory, to show us the extent and the accuracy of our knowledge, and to accustom us to a clear arrangement of it, so as to render it readily available, as the practice of reducing our observations to writing.

Of late years it has become common, both in this country and on the Continent, for medical men to limit, more or less exclusively, their attention to one branch of the profession; and, provided the practitioner has previously acquired a good general knowledge of his profession, and is familiar with the practice of all its departments, such a limitation may not be without its advantages, in giving him a greater insight into the class of cases which he selects for his special study. But if such exclusive practice be adopted without a previous general knowledge, it can scarcely fail to be injurious to the professional character of the individual who adopts it. Indeed, I could, without difficulty, refer to medical men of undoubted talents and attainments, who, from having their attention directed too entirely to one class of cases, have been led into errors which they would have avoided, had their sphere of observation been more extended.

But if the adoption of such limited practice be undesirable in the qualified medical man, the confining the attention exclusively to one branch of the profession, cannot be too much discouraged in the student. Whatever, therefore, be the line of practice which you propose to adopt, study equally every department of medical science, and give to each its due amount of attention. I am the more induced

to offer this caution, from knowing that pupils are apt to pay too much attention to one branch of study,—to give more close attendance to the surgical wards, for instance, than to the medical. Such a plan cannot fail to lessen your efficiency as practitioners; and it is scarcely less opposed to your acquiring a full knowledge of the department in which you desire to obtain especial proficiency, than to your becoming generally well acquainted with your profession.

I would advise you assiduously to study the phenomena of disease, as you will observe them at the beside of the patient. For the descriptions which you will find in books, the more marked and simple cases of disease are necessarily selected, and it is to such that the directions for treatment are intended to apply. But in actual practice, you will find that such cases are of comparatively rare occurrence; that the phenomena of disease are constantly varied; the lines of demarcation between different forms imperfectly marked and difficult to trace; and the indications for treatment often very obscure and sometimes apparently contradictory. It is only by long-continued personal study, that we can acquire the power of tracing out the relation of the symptoms, of accurately estimating their importance, and judiciously directing the employment of remedial means. It is thus only that we can learn when and how we must interfere with the course of disease, and what we may safely leave to the remedial efforts of nature; that we can avoid becoming either expectant and inert in our practice on the one hand, or too confident and hasty in the employment of active remedial agents on the other; and that we can hope, as individuals, to obtain excellence in the practice of our profession, or to do anything towards its future improvement. In acquiring this practical knowledge of medicine much may be gained from the instructions of experienced teachers, but much must remain which can only be learned by your own personal observations.

In your practical studies do not confine your attention to the cases which you will see in the wards of the hospital, but visit also the out-patients' rooms. In the former, you will observe a larger proportion of serious diseases, and will have greater opportunity of noting their symptoms, and watching the effects of remedies; but among the out-patients, you will see more of those trivial affections, which, when established in practice for yourselves, will constitute the mass of cases you will be called upon to treat, and a knowledge of which is therefore of great importance to you.

Do not also content yourselves with following the practice and listening to the remarks of your teachers, but study for *yourselves* the cases which fall under your notice; form an opinion of *your own*

as to the nature of the maladies, and the results which will probably attend them, and when fatal terminations occur, investigate the effects of diseased action, as you will find them displayed after death. Above all, accustom yourselves systematically to record the several peculiarities of the cases you attend, for you will find that this plan will train you to an accurate method of investigation, the value of which in your future career, it is impossible too highly to estimate.

By thus cultivating habits of accurate observation on the practice of others, you will become fitted for undertaking the responsibilities of practice yourselves, and you will enter upon the active duties of your profession with that consciousness of power and well-founded self-confidence which is essential to success.

The time at which you commence your studies is one very favourable for your future advancement in the profession. By the great increase of emigration to the Colonies, now in progress; by the free opening of the East India Company's Service, to those who prove themselves best qualified, without reference to patronage or influence; and by the great increase in the medical staffs of the army and navy, required by the war in which we are unfortunately engaged; not only are the opportunities of obtaining public appointments increased, but the competitors for private practice are fewer, and thus the chances of your establishing yourselves advantageously at home, are greater.

Let me assure you that, whatever be the sphere of practice which you may select, your diligence as a student here, the amount of attention which you devote to acquiring a knowledge of your profession, and the distinction which you may gain, will materially conduce to the accomplishment of your wishes.

Since the changes which have recently been made in the position of the medical officers in the navy, that service has, I believe, become not less eligible than the army, and an appointment in either may justly be an object of your ambition. While we cannot too much regret the hostilities in which the country is engaged, we may yet rejoice, that, on this, as on former occasions, the medical profession has nobly responded to the call for its aid. Though from inexperience of the requirements of actual warfare, the medical department of the army has not accomplished all that was expected of it, we can point to the conduct of many members of our profession, who have displayed a devotion, may I not say a heroism, amid sickness, suffering, and death, not less exalted than that which has been shown by their companions in arms.

It is the high privilege of our profession, that when its members