An introductory lecture, on the studies, duties, and qualifications of the medical practitioner : delivered at the opening of the seventh session of the Sheffield School of Anatomy & Medicine / by Corden Thompson, M.D., physician to the Sheffield General Infirmary, and lecturer on the principles and pratice of medicine, &c.; &c.;

Geo. Ridge.

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

ON THE

STUDIES, DUTIES, AND QUALIFICATIONS

OF THE

MEDICAL PRACTITIONER;

DELIVERED AT THE

OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SESSION

OF THE

Sheffield School of Anatomy & Medicine,

BY

CORDEN THOMPSON, M.D.,

PHYSICIAN TO THE SHEFFIELD GENERAL INFIRMARY, AND LECTURER ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE, &c. &c.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

In writing, the Author had no intention whatever of publishing, the present Lecture. The observations it contains were thrown together for a temporary purpose merely, and under circumstances of haste and indisposition, altogether unfavorable to any such intention. Nevertheless, in compliance with the wishes of his Colleagues, he ventures to give it to the public in its original form.

Sheffield, November, 1834.

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

&c. &c.

GENTLEMEN,

Six years ago, when this, the first Medical School ever established in Sheffield, was opened, I had the honor of delivering an Introductory Discourse.* Again it has fallen to my lot, to be the first to address you within these walls, after important changes have occurred in the constitution of that School. From being a private Institution, it has now become the conjoint establishment of the Lecturers. To these, new, and I think, I may safely add, valuable acquisitions have been made, in order to secure and perpetuate its efficiency. It has, too, as

* See "An Address delivered in Mr. OVEREND'S Museum at the Opening of the SHEFFIELD SCHOOL OF ANATOMY AND MEDICINE, October 1828. By CORDEN THOMPSON, M.D."

you see, changed its locality; not, however, its appellation. Hitherto, with each succeeding session, its labours have uninterruptedly been resumed, and will continue to be so, I trust, with renewed vigour and energy.

It is not my intention to enlarge on what, to me at least, appears a principle of fundamental importance in conducting Schools of this nature, namely, that the success of the Teacher should rest on the firm basis of merit and exertion on his part. This, however, seems the only effectual mode of ensuring the greatest benefit to the Pupil; and on this principle we proceed. With a suitable locality, we possess an ample collection of means for carrying on all the various branches of instruction; and we hope not to be found idle, in making appropriate use of these means. More, Gentlemen, in reference to ourselves, it were needless to say at this time, and in this place.

It is customary with some, in Introductory Discourses, to insist on the general utility, importance, and dignity of that division of knowledge which they profess. With others, to present historical details relative to the particular

branch or branches of which they are subsequently to teach the elements. Occasionally various desultory subjects are introduced into such Discourses: and, in fact, we often find them the vehicle of the most discordant and heterogeneous materials, according to the humour and caprice of the Lecturer.

Gentlemen, I should not consider myself justified in detaining you here, listening to common-place declamation on common-place matters; telling you how a fine a thing it is to be learned; how delightful to pursue the paths of literature and science; how beneficial to the mind; how useful to the man! These are topics staler and more insipid than rhimes of the olden days; and of late have been so plentifully showered upon us in pennyworths, that he who runs may read. Our object being practical utility, it will be my endeavour to render this short discourse useful and appropriate to the occasion.

We are about to open another session of Medical Instruction; to deliver Lectures on the various branches of knowledge required to be studied by those who seek to become Practitioners in Medicine. It would seem, therefore, a fit and proper

introduction to our labours, particularly in reference to those who are either now commencing, or are already engaged in prosecuting their studies, to exhibit an outline of the nature of Medical Education in general; to enumerate the various branches of science which it embraces: to sketch, in short, the studies, qualifications and duties which are requisite to form an accomplished practitioner. Such an outline, whilst it discloses to view the ample field the Student has to cultivate, will, at the same time, serve as the most powerful stimulus to his industry; will convince him of the infinite value of time; show, how undaunted his perseverance, how incessant his application, how unwearied his exertions must be. It will evince that he has something more to accomplish than the mere passing of an examination, or the obtaining of a licence to practice; that the possession of this, in fact, is but his passport to an entrance on a more extended and arduous course of labours; his title to the assumption of higher duties and responsibilities.

We are too apt to regard the medical character in a contracted light; to suppose that purely professional studies constitute that character; not reflecting duly on the previous knowledge

and acquirements which these studies necessarily exact; nor, on the numerous relations of the practitioner to society at large.

If, Gentlemen, there be a profession of which the members ought to receive a pre-eminently liberal and extended education, beyond all question, it is that of Physic. There is none, as I have elsewhere insisted, so immediately and intimately connected with the welfare, the comforts, and the happiness of men, during the period of what we call life; none, in the members of which, mankind should be able to repose more implicit confidence, nor for whom higher esteem should be entertained. Deprived of health, men do but vegetate, as it were, and breathe a sickly atmosphere of morbid hallucinations; life has no enjoyment, not having that which imparts pleasure to existence. Who that ever laboured under severe bodily ailment knows not the inestimable value of health? Yet, nor power, nor wealth, nor friends, however numerous, can restore this treasure when lost; it is the healing art alone that here proves efficacious. Surely, then, the education of its professors ought to constitute, in a State, an object of no trifling solicitude. It is, in fact, when considered in rela-

tion to human suffering that the utility and importance of the healing art become fully apparent. Coeval with the origin of man, the actions of whose frame are liable to aberration from a thousand causes, the practice of Physic and Surgery, has ever been an indispensable requisite, even among the rudest and most barbarous of our species. A still higher interest and importance does it assume in civilized and polished nations where life has greater value. With them, too, luxurious refinements, injurious habits, and the too often absurd customs and regulations of society, by multiplying the sources of disease, demand at the same time increased means of succour and obviation. Here it is that ailments appear under more insidious guises and proteiform shapes, and hence, exact greater skill and discernment in detection. There are few circumstances, indeed, in which it is more necessary for a man to possess a cool, collected, and unbiassed judgment; freedom from prejudice; acuteness of perception, and tact in eliciting truth, than at the bedside of a patient. Here, Gentlemen, effeminate tenderness, and the officious kindness of well-meaning friends prove equally unavailing. It is not the simplicity of good-natured ignorance which profits on such

an occasion, but the discernment of a clear and experienced understanding. The Medical character, in fine, ought to embrace, above all things, and in the first place, for the absence of which nothing can compensate, a sound and enlightened judgment.

Briefly, then; we see that the great aim and object of our Art is the maintenance, or restoration, when lost, of earth's chief blessing; of that which renders life dear and precious to us all,—health. Health, which is not a metaphysical or abstract entity, but a relative condition of organic beings; differing in different nations, ages, sexes, constitutions, and temperaments; modified by climate, abode, employment, habits, the successes and reverses of life, and various other circumstances. Such is the object of a Medical Practitioner; and for the attainment of so important an end, it cannot require much reflection to tell us, that his acquirements ought to be of the highest and most extended description.

I cannot, in the first place, insist too strongly on the necessity of a sufficient preparatory education, before the Pupil enters on the subjects more immediately connected with Medicine.

Without such an education, he will be more or less impeded and thwarted at every step of his future progress. But these previous studies ought, it is clear, to be conducted with a view to the Pupil's ultimate destination. No doubt, he should be instructed in the knowledge of Greek and Latin; but notwithstanding all that has been reiterated on the paramount utility of these languages, and the mental discipline attendant on their study; notwithstanding all we hear of the philosophic acumen, the just reasoning, the elevated sentiments, the graceful oratory, the example of noble acts and heroic virtues presented to us by the Ancients, I hold it to be utterly absurd for the Medical Pupil to carry their study to that extent, which some appear to deem requisite, and especially they who approve of that monkish system of education too long retained in many Universities. To say nothing of the folly of devoting a long period of invaluable and irrecoverable time to that, which, after all, is but of secondary moment; to that, which, though a great accomplishment and of some utility, is not an essential, not of a primary and indispensable nature; he must be little acquainted with the literature of his own country, who is ignorant of the brilliant eloquence, the philosophic

depth, the moral worth, the poetic beauties with which it abounds. And in the history of what ancient people shall we find a record of deeds and apothegms worthier of men and sages? Will not the study of these suffice to discipline thought, to cultivate the moral faculties, to elevate the sentiments, and infuse a spirit of honorable ambition into the mind of the Pupil? And, what is still more, will it not, at the same time, inculcate and fortify in him a knowledge of his mother tongue; that tongue of which our celebrated classics have been so disgracefully ignorant?*

What excuse shall be pleaded for one, who, pretending to a liberal education, and exercising a liberal profession, is nevertheless incapable of writing or using correctly his native language? Examine, Gentlemen, the recent Oration of Sir

* Witness the pretended criticisms of BENTLEY on the works of MILTON!

"The greatest critic and most able grammarian (classical!) of the last age, when he came to apply his learning and his criticism to an English author, was frequently at a loss in matters of ordinary use and common construction in his own vernacular idiom."—LOWTH.

In the biography of BENTLEY, lately published by Dr. MONK, we have another notable example of the effects of classical learning on English literature. A Reviewer has collected together a number of instances of the Rev. Dean's ignorance of English, not much, we imagine, to the satisfaction of the latter.

HENRY HALFORD, President of the Royal College of Physicians. Sir HENRY, we are told, is a classical scholar; and truly, if a profusion of Latin scraps in composition entitle a man to be thought so, we must admit the claims of Sir HENRY to scholarship. But which, or how many, of the reputed admirable effects of classical learning on the mind does the Oration in question evince? Certainly if there be virtue in that sort of writing which is neither one thing nor another; an insipid, lifeless compound of English and Latin; a kind of

> " party coloured dress
> Of patched and pie-balled languages,"

neither striking in matter, nor forcible in manner; then does Sir HENRY's Oration possess merit. Power, energy, eloquence, originality it has none; not even the style of a British writer; and oftener than once do we find the author betraying unacquaintance with the English tongue.

The first, then,—the most useful, the most essential and indispensable acquisition that a person can make, is a knowledge of his native language: and greatly is it to be lamented that this knowledge is so little attended to in the

education of Medical Practitioners. But the English, Greek, and Latin, are not the only languages of which the Pupil must acquire a knowledge; he must likewise study the French, the German, and the Italian. The two former of these, indeed, he ought to be thoroughly and familiarly acquainted with; and permit me to say from experience, that I consider their utility, in regard to our Profession, infinitely greater than that of the dead languages. They are, in fact, the grand storehouses of modern science; without a knowledge of them, he cannot even keep pace with the advancement of the latter, much less have any pretensions to medical scholarship.

Languages, however, whether native or foreign, are but aids or helps; the means by which a knowledge of animate and inanimate objects is attained. The Pupil must, further, be initiated in the study of General History, Geography, and Mathematics. The latter, as LOCKE has admirably remarked, are to be cultivated not with the view of becoming a Mathematician, but of learning the right use of reason; and this use they will inculcate better than all the Classics of Antiquity.

From the Pure, the Pupil will pass to the study of the Mixed Mathematics; that is to say, those branches of knowledge commonly included under the head of Physics, or Natural Philosophy, namely:—Mechanics, Hydraulics, Optics, Acoustics, Astronomy, Meteorology, Galvanism, and Electricity. Chemistry is usually not entered on till the studies strictly Medical are commenced; and along with it Mineralogy and Geology are commonly cultivated.

As a preparatory study, and one of a high order, we ought by no means to overlook Mental and Moral Philosophy.

After the Student, then, has been instructed thoroughly in the theory and use of his own tongue; after he has acquired a tolerable knowledge of the Dead and Living Languages; after he has been taught the elements of Mental and Moral Philosophy, General History, Geography, Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy, he will be qualified to enter with advantage on those studies which more immediately appertain to his future vocation. And without these preparatory studies, to a greater or less extent, he will find his future progress difficult, slow, and unsatis-

factory. In my opinion, Gentlemen, no one ought to enter on Professional instruction before the age of eighteen. By that time he may, with tolerable abilities, be sufficiently grounded in the elements of those various branches of knowledge, which he will subsequently cultivate, and become more intimately acquainted with, in proportion as he advances in life, and at the same time as he is extending the boundaries of his scientific acquirements, and pursuing his Medical studies.

Let us now briefly survey the courses of instruction which should be followed in respect to the latter. They present a range of the most important and extensive description. To enumerate, for instance, the various particular subjects that necessarily demand attention: Anatomy and Physiology, human and comparative; Anthropology; Natural History and Botany; Chemistry; Pharmacy and Materia Medica; Toxicology; Dietetics and Hygieine; General Pathology,—which treats of the nature, seat, causes, progress, terminations, symptoms, diagnostics, prognostics, morbid appearances, and principles of treatment, of disease in general; Special Pathology,—having for its object the

nature and treatment of particular diseases, both Medical and Surgical; Clinical Medicine and Surgery; Midwifery; State Medicine; Medical Police and Jurisprudence; lastly, Bibliography, and the History of Medicine.

Now, Gentlemen, from the variety and extent of the subjects enumerated, it will, I apprehend, appear manifestly absurd to suppose that twelve or fourteen months can suffice for their cultivation. These elementary studies ought to be diffused over a greater, a much greater space of time than is usually devoted to them, and each year's labour duly allotted and apportioned. The term of Professional education ought certainly not to be less than five or six years; we should say six. Few, extremely few, are duly qualified for entering on practice before the age of twenty-three or twenty-four. Nor would an extended and efficient course of studies, properly conducted, either retard the entrance on practice much beyond the age at which it is now commonly entered, or increase the attendant expenses. At present, a youth becomes an apprentice about the age of sixteen. At twenty-one he commences, in London or elsewhere, his academical studies. But, even according to the

present wretched standard of Medical education, it is utterly impossible he can obtain anything like adequate instruction, anything decent or at all respectable as an education, in less than two or three Sessions. And if he seek to rise above the common level; if he be ambitious of distinction, he must extend the number of Sessions. Thus in order to secure a respectable and tolerable education, according to the present state of things, he must enter on practice later in life than he would be enabled to do were a proper system of instruction adopted. Of course, where Provincial Schools exist, there will be an exception to this statement; but, we should recollect, the number of these Schools is very limited, and consequently the large body of Pupils are in the circumstances now described. One cannot, however, under any circumstances help remarking the evils of the present system of Apprenticeship; they are gross and flagrant. Nothing, in my estimation, can compensate for the time which is frittered away under this system.

I will not, at present, occupy your time by detailing a plan of the specific objects of study for each year, and of stated periodical examinations, in order to ensure the steady application,

and ascertain the progress, of the Pupil, though such a plan I have now before me.

What has been said will, perhaps, amply suffice to show the vast extent of knowledge to be cultivated by the Medical Novitiate; and that without active, assiduous, and unwearied exertions he cannot compass it.

But academic education, with its distinctions and honours, is far from being the close or goal of his labours. The healing is a practical art: the theory of it may have been learnt; the knowledge of man, of his nature and properties; the diseases to which he is liable; the action of agents on his frame; all these may have been well studied;—but the reduction of the knowledge thus gained, to practice; the application of general principles to individual cases; the proper and scientific management of these,—this is the difficult—this the Herculean task. "*Hic labor—hoc Opus est.*" For the accomplishment of this task, a man must possess certain natural gifts; an acumen and a tact, which, whilst capable of great improvement, are incapable of being conferred by teachers.

It has been justly observed, that there are some branches of study so confined within themselves, and so capable of accurate deduction and precise definition, as to be completely independent of all others, and to require the exercise of a clear apprehension and correct memory only for their pursuit. Other departments, however, defy all attempts to subject them to the didactic method, and require the exercise of a peculiar address, a judgment or a tact which can be formed only by indirect means. Now Physic is one of these departments in which there is a frequent necessity for an incommunicable faculty of judgment, a sagacity, which, from extending beyond the simple combination of what can be taught by precept, has been termed transcendental. And there is no other way of cultivating these powers than by a much more extensive range of elementary study than appears to a common and superficial observer to be in any way connected with the immediate objects of the Profession. It is in the practice of his Profession that the Medical Man preeminently requires quick and accurate perceptive powers—a clear and ready judgment. From Lectures and books, the Pupil passes to observation and practice; thus, by degrees, he

adds to knowledge, experience. Yet without the tact and faculties we speak of, he sees, but does not note; he witnesses much, but gains not experience—makes no advances. With him, as it was in the beginning, so it is, and will ever be. He continues a mere routinier. And though we hesitate not to subscribe to the general truth of the maxim, that every man's chance of success will be proportionate to his merits and talents, yet even the routinier, by art and manner, may so far succeed as to obtain practice. This, however, is not the success of him, who, to Professional acquirements, unites the other qualifications of the Medical character. The Healing Art offers, indeed, an ample field for the exercise and display of genius. To excel in it demands a greater range of acquirements, a larger compass of knowledge, than is necessary in any other science. In no vocation, perhaps, is a more comprehensive mind required. Other learned Professions have certain fixed and established laws, certain statutes, to which all questions are referrible, and by which they are to be settled and adjusted. A steady application and retentive memory are here the chief requisites. In Physic, the case is far different. The principles of the Science may have been

learnt, but in the application of those principles to the particular circumstances of a patient, every man must depend on his own judgment. In examining the history, symptoms, and progress of disease; in deciding on its precise seat, nature, and complications; in judging of its probable course and issue; in drawing the indications of cure, and forming the plan of treatment, each individual case will present something peculiar, something different from other cases; something, in short, which demands an especial exercise of the perceptive and reasoning powers of the Practitioner. At every step in practical Medicine, his acumen and judgment will be called into action, and this, too frequently, by circumstances of the most difficult and perplexing kind—circumstances which it is not possible to foresee, much less to teach beforehand, or to lay down positive and fixed rules for guidance under their occurrence.

Whilst, however, the exercise of our Profession is confessedly difficult, as well as laborious, it is a noble and dignified calling. The art of Physic, says HIPPOCRATES, is the most excellent of all arts, and the *philosophic* Practitioner a truly divine character. Certainly, Gentlemen,

there cannot be a more soothing, a more consolatory, or cheering art, than that which we profess; and the many and signal instances of its triumph over disease and suffering, whilst they render it one of the most important of human vocations, afford, at the same time, to its followers, moments of the sincerest pleasure and gratification. The importance of Physic, indeed, is sufficiently testified by its being coeval with the history of man; by its existence, in some form or other, in every clime, in every nation and people of the earth; its respectability and dignity, by the splendid talents that have, in all ages, been devoted to its culture; and by the increasing interest and honor with which it is universally regarded in the most civilized countries, in which it has ever held the rank of a liberal Profession. And well it may: for viewed simply in itself, independently of any external or adventitious gloss it may assume, it possesses high and intrinsic value; attractions of no ordinary kind, interest of no common character.

Nature, it is true, every where presents objects, of which the study is calculated to impart admiration and delight; but in a still higher degree do we experience these emotions, when

contemplating the most finished work of creation. Admitting, as we presume all do admit, the superiority of man, when compared with the rest of created beings, can we, at the same time, refuse to acknowledge the paramount interest which must attend the investigation of his mental and physical attributes? Can there be any subject in natural knowledge of a nobler or more elevated description; or one in which man is more nearly and deeply concerned? Is there any object worthier of contemplation, more fitted to raise the mind from nature up to the DEITY, than the human organization? *Quæ compositio membrorum, quæ conformatio lineamentorum, quæ figura, quæ species, humana potest esse pulchrior?* To examine the various beauties of this admirable structure, study the nature and correlation of its parts, trace the matchless order and design which reign throughout their distribution and mutual adaptation; to investigate the properties and actions of these parts; and the modifying influence of various agents in the production of disease; study how the latter may be averted or subdued, and health with all its enjoyments preserved; this constitutes our business, and our employment. Nor can there be, we imagine, a pursuit worthier

of man; more elevated in its nature; more ennobling in its effects. Kings themselves have not thought it an unbefitting occupation; and some of the brightest ornaments of the human race have been its votaries.

But, Gentlemen, whilst I have not concealed from you the mental toil, the labour, and the difficulties attendant upon the study of this noble art, so I must not refrain from stating that there are yet other difficulties and perplexities, besides those of a scientific nature, with which the Practitioner has to contend in the exercise of his Profession.

Ignorance, prejudice, and superstition have, in all ages, formed a triple coalition, against which reason seems to wage unequal combat. But it is more especially against the prosecution of Medical Science and inquiries, that this coalition has exerted itself; and from one or other of its elements, or from all combined, the Practitioner continually experiences disappointment, opposition, and rebuff. These obstructions, however, ought not to discourage him; they are to be expected, and considered as unavoidable. Even the best and wisest plans of treat-

ment are often frustrated by one or other of the causes now mentioned, and discredit unjustly thrown on the medical attendant. Frequently, too, in some difficult and tedious case, when flattering himself that he has, at last, ensured success, will he find all his hopes blighted, by these same causes, in the most provoking manner. There is no remedy here but patience; and this leads me to observe, in the next place, how necessary a virtue, in the medical character, patience becomes. Each day will try it more or less; and especially when you reflect that the trial is too often made at the expense of Professional reputation. The exercise of this virtue will naturally beget prudence and circumspection; and call forth ingenuity in devising such measures as shall seem best adapted to ensure the fulfilment of medical and dietetical prescriptions.

To patience, Gentlemen, the Practitioner must add *kindness;* a sympathy for the sufferings of his patient. I do not mean a puling effeminacy, a whining sensibility, or a hypocritical affectation of tenderness; but that genuine fellow-feeling for a sufferer, which is equally removed from weakness and from indifference; which, whilst it bespeaks the humanity of the

Practitioner, interferes not with the due exercise of his judgment. This feeling, of course, is a natural endowment; like the tact and sagacity of which we before spoke, it cannot be imparted by tuition; it is an inbred faculty, that may be nurtured and cultivated, but cannot be implanted. It forms at once an ornament, and an essential endowment of the medical character. It is, moreover, a requisite of great moment in securing the confidence of patients, than which few things are more important. By a certain plausibility of manner, and the assumption of an apparent kindness, a person may, it is true, partially succeed in this respect. But nearly all men have an intuitive faculty of distinguishing real from feigned sympathy; they discern that which is genuine from that which is spurious. There is a something in the former which cannot be simulated; and the confidence procured by the latter is, at least, unstable and unsatisfactory. Whatever art may be employed here, and however sedulous men may be in manifesting an apparent anxiety and solicitude, yet they do labour in vain. Let such strive on; in the language of the immortal GOETHE we may address them—

"Doch werdet ihr nie Herz zu Herzen schaffen,
Wenn es euch nicht von Herzen geht."

Medical Men are often accused of insensibility and want of humanity. No doubt, considering their number, some of this description will be found amongst them, as amongst all other classes. But, that they naturally become so from the influence of their Professional avocations, is, I conceive, an erroneous notion. Men, more humane and compassionate than many who have adorned our Art, cannot be found in history. By daily witnessing scenes of misery and distress, a truly compassionate man does not become callous to suffering; but he acquires a degree of firmness and self-possession, without which it would be impossible to exercise his calling, and act with that clearness, decision, and promptitude often so urgently demanded by circumstances.

Again, Gentlemen, this sympathy, springing as it does from the heart, will manifest itself not less towards the poor than the rich. In this respect it differs totally from the simulated. And, in very truth, nothing is so calculated to excite the deepest feelings of commiseration as sickness conjoined with poverty. He, who can behold them together without experiencing an unusual emotion of pity, must be insensible

indeed to human woe. It is, then, this union of science with humanity, that imparts perfection to the Medical character, and constitutes it, what HIPPOCRATES has styled, divine. Such a character may truly be said to be a ministering angel of relief to the sick; his very approach brings consolation and satisfaction to the sufferer;—

"Onward he moves; disease and death retire."

Further, Gentlemen, in the Medical Practitioner are required the most rigid temperance and sobriety; the strictest honor, the most scrupulous regard for the privacy of families. Where clearness of perception and judgment are so essentially requisite, so incessantly called into play, the avoidance of all causes whatever, which tend to obscure the one, or impair the other, must be studiously and sedulously observed. And when you reflect on the circumstances under which the Practitioner is often called to visit families; on the necessity for his being acquainted with the previous history and details of individuals, in order to his rightly judging of the nature of complaints, and determining a proper mode of treatment; how strictly

private and confidential such circumstances and details are; it will be manifest to all, that the most honorable secrecy is imperatively demanded of the Practitioner. Without this honor and secrecy he cannot enjoy the confidence of his patients; he cannot become acquainted with all those circumstances, often of a delicate nature, so essential to the drawing of correct conclusions. Consequently he neither does justice to himself, nor to those whom he treats. These, too, it should be remembered, he often sees under the most disadvantageous circumstances; oppressed by care, anxiety, and the pains of disease; at one time labouring under morbid peevishness and irascibility of temper; at another gloomy, dejected, and desponding. He is peculiarly called upon, therefore, to exercise towards them that charity which suffereth long and is kind.

Once more, Gentlemen; the Medical ought to be a man of the most upright and independent character; a man, whose moral courage will not fail him when he has public duties to discharge. There are spirits low, and mean, and grovelling; spirits governed simply by the maxim, "Put money in thy purse,"—and which for this pur-

pose compass sea and earth; submit to indignity and insult; fawn and flatter; with the most oily of tongues, assume the smoothest of faces; hesitate not to renounce their own judgment, nor even to prostitute conscience; are all things, in short, to all men, that by any means they may *secure practice*. Such men have their reward; not, indeed, in the conscious satisfaction of an upright, intrepid, and manly conduct; but in the merited contempt of their Professional Brethren, and an indwelling sense of degradation.

He, who, on subjects of public interest and importance relative to his Profession, possesses not the courage and independence to assert and maintain what he deems just and right; who, through fear of some personal attaint, sacrifices a public good; is unworthy of his Profession. Well indeed would it be for the latter, did its Members exhibit more generally that open manly independence which becomes them, and less of that servile and sycophantish spirit, which, whilst it is derogatory to the character of an honest man, betrays a consciousness of inferiority; of some lack of ability or acquirements; of some want of those general merits which may justly expect and claim success.

I will now suppose, Gentlemen, that both by nature and art; by native talent and disposition, as well as by an extended course of studies and instruction, the Pupil is sufficiently prepared to enter on the practical duties of his Profession. I will also suppose him actively employed in the discharge of these duties. Need I mention how toilsome and trying these prove? Yet they constitute but a portion of the labours of a conscientious and scientific Practitioner. He has not simply before him the task of retaining knowledge already acquired, but that also of advancing with the advancement of his Art; of making himself acquainted with the improvements, almost daily effected, in Medicine and the various collateral branches of Science. When you consider the number of British and foreign periodicals devoted to the former alone, as well as that of the distinct treatises which are continually issuing from the press, it will be manifest that this is no easy task; that, without the most assiduous and unwearied industry, it cannot be accomplished. Then, again, you must not forget the frequent hurry, the fatigue and mental anxiety, inseparable from Professional avocations. Such causes of obstruction to the onward progress of the Practitioner are

not readily overcome. To sit down and pursue, with composure, medical studies and researches, when weary in body, or when chagrined in mind, either by untoward accidents, or the obstinacy and perverseness of mankind, is no easy matter. Indeed, there are few things more irksome at the outset; few things more difficult of attainment than this habit of study under such circumstances. Yet, Gentlemen, he who aims at honorable distinction; who wishes not to become a mere routinier, a sort of drudge, pacing the same ground over and over again, like the horse in a mill; he, in short, who is anxious faithfully to discharge the duties that devolve upon him, must acquire this habit of application, learn to use profitably those hours and half-hours which are ever and anon presenting themselves, and which are apt to glide away insensibly, and be for ever lost. How much diligence and perseverance can effect; what formidable obstacles they can surmount, is not less surprising than generally acknowledged.

There has been so much accomplished, of late, in the scientific world, and so great a diffusion of general knowledge, that Medicine has naturally partaken largely in the improvements

of the times. The labourers in this particular field of Science have doubled and tripled their numbers. Hence, it has become a laborious task to follow each in his respective department; to keep pace with the researches of the Anatomist, the Physiologist, the Pathologist, and the innumerable writers on practical Medicine and Surgery.

It would be impossible for me to sketch, even faintly, within the compass of a Lecture like the present, the chief improvements that have, of late years, been effected in Medicine. But to call your attention to one or two illustrations. There are few Practitioners, I imagine, now present, who do not well remember how prevalent the system of the justly celebrated CULLEN once was in this country. Most of us, no doubt, have been well schooled in his Nosology; yet, as a guide for the Student, every one, at all acquainted with the present state of Medical Science, must confess it to be worse than useless. It is not merely superficial and defective in the extreme, but directly conducive to error.

A distinguishing feature of Modern Medicine appears in those unwearied exertions made by

its cultivators, in observing and recording facts. Instead of framing subtle theories and systems to account for every thing, in the manner of BOERHAAVE, HOFFMAN, STAHL, STOLL, CULLEN, KAEMPF, REIL, BROWN, DARWIN, and others, medical men are busily occupied in storing up materials, out of which, at some future period, an imperishable edifice may be reared.

There are few men, in modern times, who have effected more, or produced greater changes in the face of practical Medicine, and to whom, therefore, we are more indebted, than the celebrated BROUSSAIS. His indefatigable and extensive researches in Morbid Anatomy, the valuable series of facts he has published to the world, his unrivalled history of Chronic Inflammations,* justly entitle him to be regarded as the Veteran of Modern Pathologists; whilst his critical examination of medical doctrines and systems† equally entitles him to be considered as the greatest of Modern Medical Reformers.

* Histoire des Phlegmasies, ou Inflammations Chroniques, &c.

† Examen des Doctrines Médicales et des Systèmes de Nosologie, &c.

And, though in the warmth of zeal, for none is free from error, he may occasionally have pushed his notions too far; still, the importance, both of his facts and doctrines, is now pretty generally admitted; and the most salutary changes have been induced by the latter in the practice of our Art. The bold, unflinching, and even uncourteous manner, in which he assailed prevailing notions and systems, naturally stirred up opponents, and, at the same time, roused attention generally to his works. BROUSSAIS had watched nature; and from his observations, advanced deductions of the most important order,—the fruit of long years devoted to the examination of the dead. His constant appeal to nature compelled others to appeal to the same source. Hence arose a numerous class of Pathologists, who applied themselves with care to the examination of appearances after death, and a comparison with these of the symptoms that existed during life. The rapid advances thus produced, in a few years, in Morbid Anatomy—in a knowledge, in fact, of the nature and seat of numerous disorders; and the influence exerted by this knowledge in rendering the treatment of such disorders, at once, more efficacious and simple, are circumstances too well known to require

dwelling upon on this occasion. But suffer me briefly to remind you of the state of our knowledge in this country not many years ago in regard to the gastro-intestinal mucous membrane. In a work, by Dr. PEMBERTON, on diseases of the Abdominal Viscera, first published, I believe, in 1806, and which, for many years, was considered as excellent and classical in its kind, the sum and substance of all that we find relative to inflammation of the mucous membrane of the intestines amount to this—I copy the author's own words:—"Pain confined to some one part of the abdomen, constant though not acute, and varying little in degree; not increased by slight pressure; little or no abdominal tension, though the pain continue long. Pulse 112; bowels generally costive." Extraordinary as it may appear to some, this is absolutely every thing which the author writes on the symptoms and pathology of enteritis; and considering the errors it contains, its brevity may now, at least, be excused. But, after reading these few lines, and then calling to mind the admirable researches of BROUSSAIS, BILLIARD, LOUIS, ANDRAL, and others, on this subject, the volumes, in fact, of which it has formed the basis, we shall have some no-

tion of the progress of improvement in modern Medicine. Still, Gentlemen, so great are the lets and hindrances encountered in the prosecution of Morbid Anatomy, in this country, that we possess but one original work of any merit on the diseases in question;—namely, that by Dr. ABERCROMBIE; and which, after all, it must be acknowledged, is very defective. In estimating the value of the knowledge we have thus gained respecting affections of the digestive tube, we must not forget, that such affections are amongst those which, it is of the utmost importance for a practitioner to be well acquainted with, since they are not only serious in themselves, but modify greatly the treatment of others.

It was not, however, to a particular part of the human frame that Pathologists confined their investigations and studies; the impulse once given, and the importance of morbid researches becoming daily more apparent, no apparatus of the body has escaped attention. I need scarcely remind you, here, of the valuable contributions that have been made to our knowledge of organic affections of the cerebro-spinal system by the researches of LALLEMAND, PARENT and MARTINET, ROSTAN, BOUILLAUD, C. P. OLIVIER, ROCHOUX, ANDRAL, and ABERCROMBIE.

But of the various ailments to which the frame of man is subject, there are none, perhaps, respecting which our knowledge has been so much extended and perfected; none, which we can distinguish with so much accuracy and delicacy, as those of the chest. Yet prior to the discoveries of the immortal LAENNEC, they were amongst the most obscure of complaints, and their pathology but little understood.

Nothing will better evince the truth of what I now advance, than a comparison of any treattise on diseases of the heart and lungs, written prior to the discoveries in question, with the productions, on the same subject, that have been published since; as for example, those of LAENNEC himself, of BERTIN, BOUILLAUD, ANDRAL, HOPE, and others. The influence which such improved knowledge must necessarily have in rectifying and simplifying our treatment of these affections is too obvious to require commentary.

Did not the limits of a discourse like the present forbid an extension of these illustrations, still, after what has been said, you would think me tedious, probably, were I to dwell longer on the rapid progress of Medical Science and on

the necessity this progress creates for constant and unwearied application in the acquisition of knowledge. Such, in brief, are the advances that have been made, such the improved methods of investigating and detecting disease, as well as of its treatment, that a new race of Practitioners may be truly said to be springing up; and they, who from sloth, apathy, or obstinate attachment to ancient systems, neglect the cultivation of these improvements, are becoming antiquated and of other days. But, Gentlemen, you must remember, I have said little of the British labourers in this field of science, and nothing of the German and Italian. A host of the most learned, enlightened and successful cultivators of our art will be found in Germany. On Anatomy and Physiology, on Chemistry, Surgery, and the practice of Medicine, works of the very first order are continually appearing in that country. And, in reference to Medical Literature, no language is so rich as the German. The Italians, too, though fewer in number, are, nevertheless, active and offer much that is worthy of attention.

The hour, Gentlemen, forbids my trespassing longer on your patience; enough, however, may

have been said to demonstrate the importance of an extended and liberal education to the Medical Practitioner; and that he who enters the Profession of Physic does not enter on a life of indolence and ease; that, in fact, from the beginning of his studies, to the very termination of his career, he has obstacles and difficulties to surmount of no ordinary kind; toils and fatigues to undergo that happen not to other men. Let not, however, the Pupil be discouraged; his studies possess a degree of interest that will sweeten the labour he must spend over them; in proportion to his talents, acquirements, and integrity of conduct, will be his success; and though he cannot accomplish every thing at once, one by one, industry will remove the obstacles that lay before him; perseverance and habit will render that which, at first, is irksome, or even painful, easy and agreeable; the mind will acquire a facility of application and reflection, which may, perhaps, at one time, seem unattainable; difficulties may momentarily daunt, but success must never be despaired of; assiduity and industry will eventually triumph, so true is the maxim—*Labor omnia vincit.*

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