

**The introductory address delivered at the London Hospital School of Medicine on the 1st October, 1846 / by T.B. Curling.**

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Curling, Thomas Blizard, 1811-1888.  
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**Publication/Creation**

London : Gilbert & Rivington, printers, 1846.

**Persistent URL**

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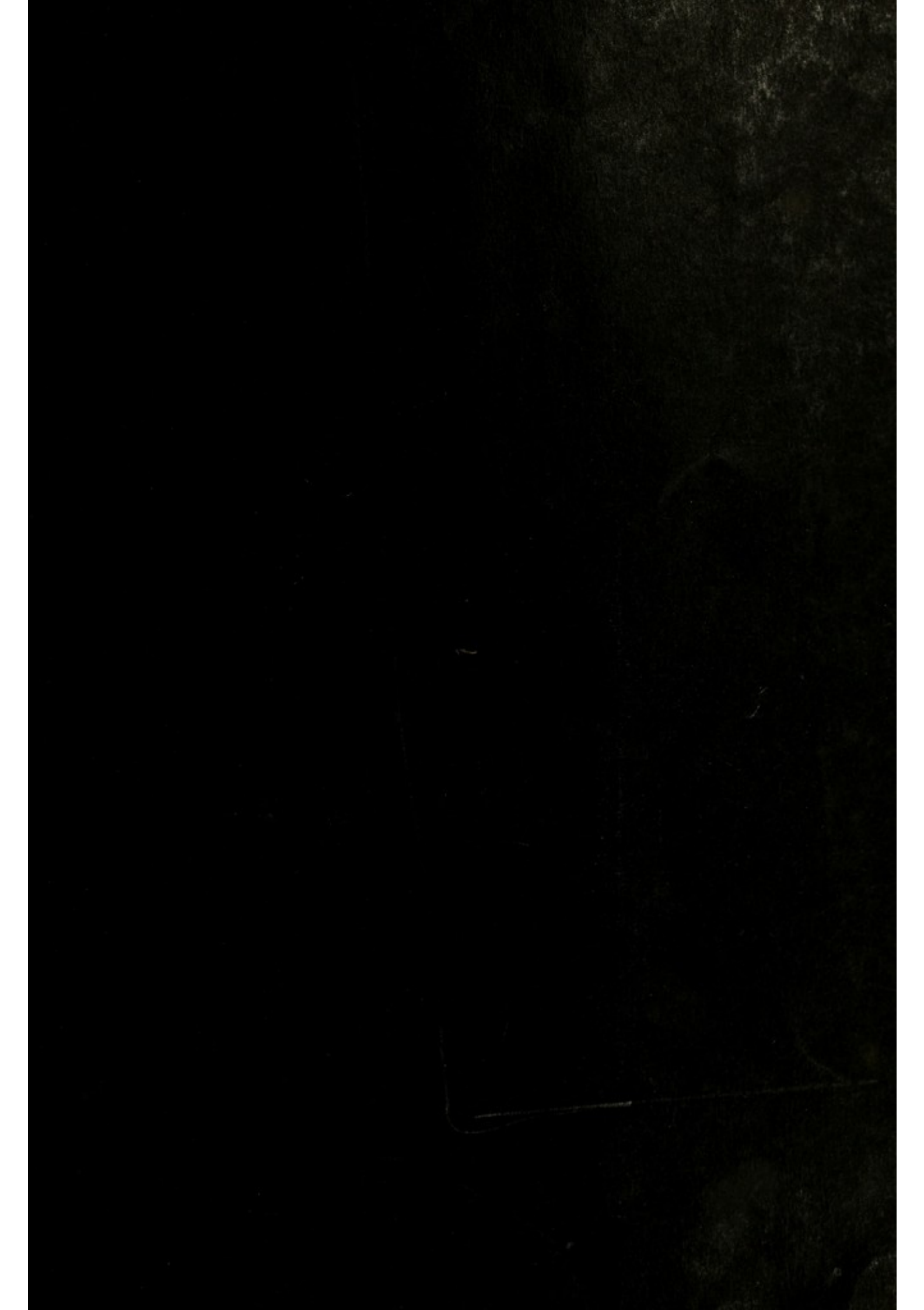
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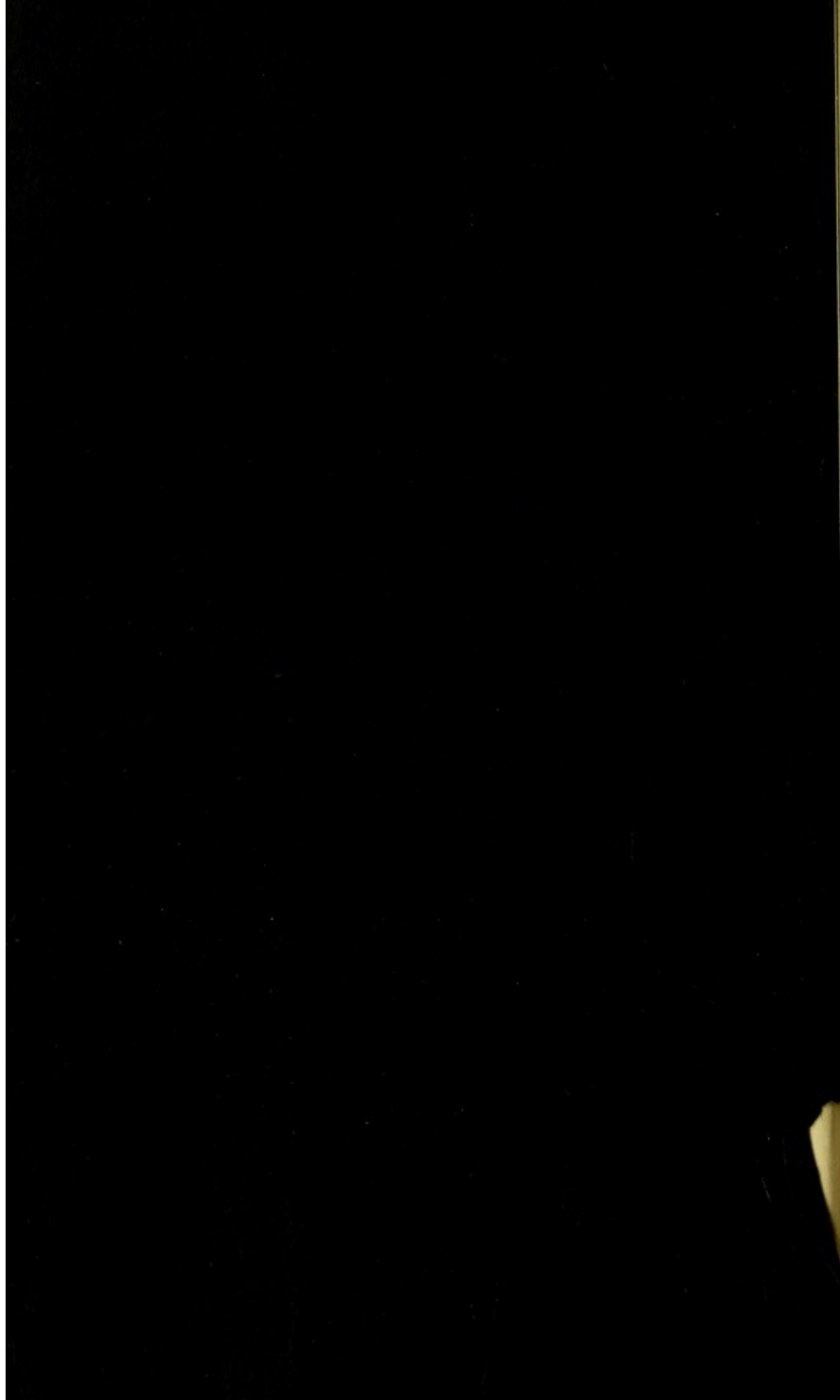
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# INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

LONDON HOSPITAL

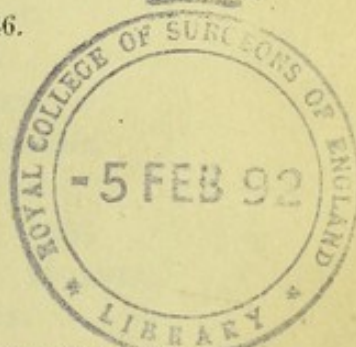
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE,

ON THE 1st OF OCTOBER, 1846.

BY

T. B. CURLING,

LECTURER ON SURGERY, AND ASSISTANT SURGEON TO THE HOSPITAL, ETC.



PRINTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CLASS,  
FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

LONDON.—1846.



LONDON:  
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,  
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

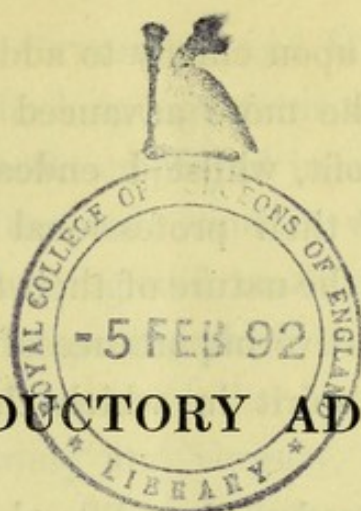
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JOHN ADAMS.







## INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

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IN undertaking, gentlemen, to greet you this day, on which the labours of the Winter Session are commenced at the London Hospital Medical School for the sixty-first time, I have some reason to fear that I may fall short of the occasion, and leave cause for regret that this duty had not been entrusted to a more experienced teacher; but it is a duty from which I could not shrink, and I confidently rely on your kind indulgence whilst I endeavour to perform to the best of my ability the task which my colleagues have confided to me.

I may take it for granted, that you all attend here for a common object, that of becoming members of the medical profession. Many of you are no strangers to our school, but return, after an interval of rest and relaxation, to resume with renewed vigour the labours in which you have already made some progress. It is to those who attend here for the first time, to become initiated in duties upon the proper performance of which depend their success and happiness in after-life,



that I feel called upon chiefly to address myself; but I trust that even the more advanced students may not listen without profit, whilst I endeavour to represent the true ends of their professional education, to give some insight into the nature of their future occupations, to explain the relative importance of their studies, and the manner and spirit in which they deserve to be pursued.

Ours is a learned and a liberal profession. It is said to be a learned profession, in virtue of the scientific attainments and cultivated minds of its more enlightened members; and it is regarded as a liberal profession, in right of those general accomplishments, moral qualities, and honourable feelings, which entitle the possessor of them to the character and designation of a *gentleman*. You must maintain that character, and I sincerely trust that you have all come here determined and well prepared to do so; that you have received a sound preliminary education, such an education as cannot fail to form a most valuable introduction to your medical studies, and a solid foundation for professional success. A good general education is very necessary for all intended for the learned professions, but is of essential importance to those destined for the study of medicine, which embraces so many and such varied subjects and pursuits. I need scarcely remark, that no one can be qualified to commence his studies here, who does not possess a competent knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages. A great many of the works of our profession, indeed nearly all the old standard authorities, such as the



works of HARVEY, SYDENHAM, and HALLER, are written in Latin. It is the language from which the majority of the technical terms employed in anatomy, medicine, and surgery are derived; and it will be constantly required in the writing and reading of prescriptions. From the Greek language, which is admirably adapted to the purposes of nomenclature, are derived many of the terms of anatomy and surgery, as well as of chemistry and botany. An acquaintance, therefore, with Greek is required to enable you to comprehend the descriptive terms of the scientific medical works published in the present day, even if you have no ambition to peruse the writings of the fathers of medicine, of HIPPOCRATES, ARETÆUS, and GALEN. The study, then, of the rich and beautiful languages of antiquity is an important part of your early education. They are not only necessary for the full understanding of the subjects proper to medical science, for the interpretation of its technical language, and for the study of its history, but they tend to discipline the mental faculties, to correct the taste, and to give a grace and polish to the pursuits of the leisure hours.

A knowledge of the two modern languages, French and German, is also desirable, I may say indispensable, to enable you to keep pace with the rapid march of medical science, and to avail yourselves of the numerous improvements made in the celebrated universities and schools on the continent. There is, however, no language a thorough knowledge of which is so essential, and which the student of medicine should be so careful not to neglect as his own, which he is con-



stantly employing in the varied intercourse and correspondence of a busy professional life. Some acquaintance with the science which treats of quantity and figure is also necessary, as it tutors the mind to reason correctly and closely, to avoid the errors of speculation, and to detect the fallacies of systems; and let me remark that a sufficient amount of mathematics for this purpose may be easily and readily acquired. A knowledge, too, of physics,—of mechanics, optics, hydraulics, and pneumatics, must be included in the preliminary attainments necessary to qualify you for entering upon your medical studies. The application of these auxiliary sciences will be required at every step in your progress. The admirable adaptation of parts in the construction of the skeleton, the arrangement of the joints, the action of muscles, the offices of the heart, arteries, and veins in carrying on the circulation, and the wonderful mechanism of the eye and of the ear, cannot be properly understood or appreciated without some acquaintance with natural philosophy.

In these various departments of knowledge to which I have alluded, I trust you are already more or less instructed. If not,—if you find yourselves wanting in any of them, let me entreat you to lose no time in supplying the deficiency. By the steady devotion to these subjects of what little leisure you may be able to command, even of a few hours weekly, you may succeed in remedying the defects in your early education, and in storing up much valuable information, which may prove of essential service to you in after-life.



By Medicine, we understand a science and an art, that has for its object the relief of pain and the cure of disease. The subject of our study, therefore, is the human body—its construction and actions—its organization as modified by various influences—its derangements and decay. In fine, the science of medicine embraces the physiological history of man under every variety of circumstance and condition. Upon this knowledge is based the Art of Healing, an art which consists in the practical application of the rules thence deduced in preserving health and removing disease. It must, then, be your first business to study the structure and functions of the human body ; in other words, — to cultivate the two sciences which are denominated Anatomy and Physiology. I might tell you of the interest and beauty of these sciences, of the delight which the study of the complex machine of the human body, and of its wonderful actions, cannot fail to afford to every intelligent mind ; but these are truths with which the eloquence of a PALEY and a BELL have, I doubt not, already fully impressed you. Besides, it is not as interesting and attractive branches of science, that anatomy and physiology are to be pursued. You are to study them as the foundation of that knowledge which is to enable you to acquire and practise the art of healing with success ; to qualify you to become members of the medical profession. I prefer, therefore, to dwell rather on the professional importance which you will find attached to even the simplest as well as the minutest points of structure, and to impress on you how greatly every step that is made in a know-



ledge of these subjects will avail you in your pursuit of the art of recognizing and curing disease. You should at once devote a great portion of your time and attention to the study of anatomy. You should regularly attend the lectures on descriptive and surgical anatomy, and likewise the demonstrations during the first winter session, and also begin early to dissect, taking care to lose no occasion of examining and unravelling the parts of the human body for yourselves; for no impression is so durable and so accurate as that which results from the slow process of a careful dissection. And let me remind you, that anatomy is one of those subjects which very few find means of cultivating after the completion of their hospital studies. Few can, in after-life, command the conveniences and appliances for this purpose. You have opportunities now which you may never again possess, and if you neglect these opportunities you can scarcely hope by any subsequent application to become good practical anatomists, or to become fitted to follow your profession with comfort and satisfaction; you will, in fact, be incompetent to meet the common exigencies of surgery, and can only hope to blunder on in ignorance and doubt.

It is, I think, a great advantage, that in the schools of London, descriptive anatomy, and that anatomy which teaches the relative position of parts, are taught by lecturers engaged in the active duties of their profession. Their minds being bent on the practical bearing of that which is before them, they must naturally impress upon the attention of the pupils points that



are likely afterwards to prove useful to them in practice. At any rate this is a mode of teaching followed by my colleague, MR. ADAMS, and I know it adds much to the interest and value of his lectures. Until lately, it was the custom for anatomy and physiology to be taught as one science ; indeed, the two are so intimately blended that the lecturer on descriptive anatomy must necessarily give many important lessons on the functions of the different parts and organs of the body which are before him. So much progress, however, has in recent years been made in our knowledge of structural anatomy, and of the properties of the elementary tissues of the body, by the aid of an improved chemistry, and more perfect instruments for microscopical research, that it has been found convenient, in the different medical schools, to form a separate class for general anatomy and physiology. This course is entrusted at this hospital to a gentleman of high scientific reputation, whose admirable works on physiology and physiological anatomy are in the hands of every student. To those gentlemen who may have no higher ambition than to be successful in passing their examinations and obtaining their diplomas, it is possible that the subjects of this course may seem dry and uninviting ; but pupils who earnestly desire to become thoroughly acquainted with medicine, and who as members of a liberal profession cultivate the science for its own sake, cannot fail to take the liveliest interest in DR. CARPENTER'S lectures. The subjects treated of are of the deepest importance in reference both to pathology and practice ; and let me tell you, that without an acquaintance with the advances lately made in



minute anatomy and physiology, with the facts and theory of cell-development, and with the laws of life, you cannot hope to comprehend the phenomena of disease, or the effects of remedies upon them. You must be content to stand still whilst science is advancing, and to remain routine instead of becoming thoughtful and enlightened practitioners. I could present you with many examples of the influence of physiological anatomy in improving the art of medicine. It is now some years since a distinguished physician, DR. BRIGHT, showed that dropsy was often associated with a peculiar change in the organization of the kidneys. The discovery of this connexion was most important, for the disease, though it had previously been entirely overlooked, was soon found to be a very common and a very fatal one. The treatment of it, however, was uncertain and unsatisfactory. Nor could it be otherwise; for the true nature of the morbid change in the kidneys, which produced the constitutional disorder, was not made out; indeed, the healthy structure even of this organ had not been unravelled. By the aid of the microscope this has since been done; the ultimate structure of the kidney has now been fully displayed, and the consequent researches lately made into the nature of BRIGHT'S disease have yielded results which cannot fail to lead to a more rational, and, we may confidently hope, to a more successful treatment of it. Some knowledge of the elements at least of anatomy is essential for the proper understanding of these lectures. They will not be delivered until after Christmas, when some progress has been made in the other anatomical course; and I strongly



recommend you, especially the more advanced students, to be constant in attending them, and by personal observation of the parts exhibited in the microscope, and by reading on the subjects treated of, to endeavour to keep pace with the progress of your teacher.

A familiar and exact acquaintance with healthy structure forms the best foundation for the study of diseased appearances, or of what is termed *Morbid Anatomy*. Nothing in late years has conduced so much to the progress of practical medicine, as the cultivation of this department of our profession. It has led to the substitution of truth, and theories based upon facts, for the absurd speculations and conjectures of the early writers, and has given an entirely new character to pathology. I advise you to begin early to attend the post-mortem examinations. The appearances presented by morbid and even healthy parts are so various, and exhibit such numerous shades of colour and alterations of form under the different circumstances of age and states of decomposition, as well as in the different stages of disease, that they cannot too frequently come under your observation. It is often very difficult to determine the precise boundaries between health and disease. You may, too, readily mistake the effects of morbid action for its causes, and view changes that take place during the last moments of existence, or even after death, as evidence of previous disease in parts where none really existed. Now, it is only by experience in post-mortem investigations that you can learn to avoid these and similar errors. Besides, there are at hospitals



conveniences for pursuing these inquiries, which you cannot have in private practice. Lose no opportunity, then, of attending the demonstrations in the dead house, for, if attentive and observant, you can rarely be present at one without gleaning some useful information. This duty will, however, afford the highest interest and greatest profit to those who have seen the cases during life, have attempted to distinguish the diseases, and have watched their progress and the effects of remedies upon them. Your labours on these occasions will be superintended by DR. DAVIES, who, I doubt not, will manifest the same inquiring spirit and zeal in the cultivation of pathology, which contributed to raise for his father the high reputation which he enjoyed as a scientific physician. You will further enjoy the advantage of having the intimate changes in morbid structure demonstrated to you in the microscope by DR. PARKER, who has devoted much attention to these pursuits, and has had the opportunity of becoming conversant with the recent researches of our distinguished continental brethren in microscopic pathology. I cannot quit this subject without alluding to the impediments which unfortunately exist to the satisfactory prosecution of pathological inquiries. I should be very loth to advocate any disregard of the very natural prejudices and feelings of the humbler and uneducated classes of society; yet I cannot but think, that we may yield too much to such prejudices and feelings, and that they may be unreasonably consulted to the serious detriment of medical science. Cases of fatal disease of great importance occasionally occur at the hospital, where we



are refused the opportunity of making a post-mortem examination ; and our disappointment is proportionately great, when, after watching such cases with anxiety and interest, we are denied the means of solving our difficulties and doubts. Now it rarely happens among educated persons, that a strong wish for an inspection is expressed by the professional attendant without permission for its performance being granted ; and I firmly believe, that, if in fatal cases of unusual interest at the hospital an examination were not exactly asked as a favour, but assumed and performed as a matter of course, and its necessity afterwards explained to the friends, we should very rarely hear of any serious complaint, provided always that the operation were conducted with every regard to decency, and without any uncalled-for mutilation.

I have thus far noticed only those branches of medicine which relate to the human body itself, to its structure and functions, and the alterations to which they are liable. I have dwelt upon them, because, from the first commencement of your attendance, they must be constantly the subjects of your observation and study. But there are other departments of knowledge which must also engage your attention at an early period, and which are essential to your progress in the acquisition of medical science. Of all the sciences, Chemistry is undoubtedly the most important in its application to the useful purposes of life. The arts, manufactures, and agriculture, have been extensively advanced by the splendid and wonderful discoveries of the chemist. But to none of the arts of life has



chemistry rendered larger service than to medicine. It has helped us to discover the elements, and disclose the composition, of the fluids and tissues of the body, to elucidate the laws of life, to explain not only the nature of changes going on in the system during health, but also to account for many of the phenomena of disease, and to reveal the characters of the products of morbid action. But chemistry does far more for us than this. It forms the very basis of Pharmacy. By its aid we are able to separate from the mineral kingdom numerous substances applicable to the treatment of disease; to extract from the vegetable, active principles which operate with tenfold energy on the system, and to form from both kingdoms new materials and new combinations of the greatest value and efficacy as remedial agents. It informs us, moreover, of the nutritive qualities of different kinds of food, assists us in our selection, and enables us to detect and to avoid those substances which exert a baneful influence on the body. Chemistry is a study so fascinating, and is rendered so attractive by the beauty and interest of the experiments with which it is illustrated, that there is little fear of its being neglected; but the subject is so comprehensive, that I feel called upon rather to warn you from bestowing too large a portion of your time on the more popular branches of the science, some of which more properly belong to the province of physics, and to invite your attention more particularly to that important division of the science, Organic Chemistry, which has made such remarkable progress during the last few years, and a knowledge of which will be of the greatest



service to you in the study of physiology and pathology, and is really indispensable to enable you to understand the recent advances which have been made in these branches of medical science.

Botany is another subject with which you are required to possess some acquaintance. It will, however, occupy your attention in the summer session, when you will have ample time to acquire a sufficient knowledge of it for the purposes of your profession; whilst those who attach themselves to this pleasing study will find it capable of affording not only interesting information, but agreeable and healthy recreation. Botany might, I think, very properly form one of the preliminary subjects of a professional education, instead of being introduced into the medical curriculum. Some insight into it is almost necessary as an introduction to the study of the *Materia Medica*, which will demand your attention during the first session of your attendance. This extensive and important department teaches the nature, qualities, and composition of the articles used in medicine, and the manner of their preparation. It explains also their modes of action on the living body, and their uses and application for the relief and cure of disease, which constitutes the subject of *Therapeutics*. This course is conducted by a gentleman<sup>1</sup> whose profound knowledge of the subject, as displayed in his works, has justly obtained for him an European reputation, and whose lectures are richly illustrated by valuable samples and specimens. A cabinet, moreover, well supplied

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Pereira.



with all the useful and more important drugs has just been fitted up in the hospital library for the use of the pupils.

The different courses of instruction which I have hitherto noticed, are all more or less essential to the main end of your professional studies. There are others, however, the object of which is to teach more directly the practical application of medical science. These are the lectures on Medicine, Surgery, and Midwifery. As these lectures cannot be properly understood until some progress has been made in your knowledge of those subjects to which I have already called your attention, your attendance on them may be deferred to the second and third sessions of your studies here. The chief object of these lectures will be to teach you the leading principles and doctrines of pathology and practice. They will embrace the history and progress of the healing art; the well-ascertained facts of pathological science; the theories of morbid action; a general outline of the characters of particular affections; the recognized modes of treatment, and those practical rules and precepts which have stood the test of experience. You will readily perceive the important assistance which such a comprehensive and systematic survey of our art is calculated to afford, in bringing before you a connected view of the existing state of medical science, in simplifying its doctrines, collecting its scattered facts, pointing out its deficiencies and the sources on which we may confidently rely for its continued advancement. The instruction communicated in these lectures is in-



tended to qualify you for clinical study or observation of the sick in the wards of the hospital, where alone you can become familiar with medicine as an art, and learn to apply the rules and doctrines of diagnosis and practice taught in the class-room. You may have attended the lectures on medicine and surgery diligently, have read steadily upon the subjects as they were described, and even be able to pass a creditable examination on them; and yet, when brought to the bed-side, not know how to examine or interrogate a patient, be incapable of detecting a disease, and quite incompetent to decide what mode of treatment is most suitable for the case under your notice. This knowledge can only be acquired by study and observation of the living body. There the great masters of our art gained that consummate skill and tact, which enabled them to predict results with so much confidence, and apply their remedies with so much success. For the means then of acquiring this practical knowledge, you must enter the wards of a public hospital, where you will find not only an ample field of observation in the various cases of injuries and disease collected within its walls, but patients placed under circumstances peculiarly favourable for tracing the origin of disease, watching its symptoms and progress, observing the effects of remedies upon it, and following the case to its final result, whether recovery or death. You will likewise have the opportunity of becoming familiar with the mechanical part of surgery, and of witnessing the repeated performance of the smaller as well as of the capital operations, and seeing the after-treatment



of such cases. Manual dexterity in operations may be acquired by practice in dissection, and frequent performance of operations on the dead body; but that confidence and calm judgment so requisite in the trying circumstances and emergencies of a difficult or dangerous operation, can only be obtained by repeated attendance and experience in these painful scenes. I think, then, I have said enough to convince you what strong claims hospital practice prefers upon your time and attention. You should enter upon it early, for although the knowledge obtained in the class and dissecting rooms will render your visits to the wards more profitable, still the advantages of personal observation of the sick are so great, and experience in disease is so valuable, that the student cannot begin too soon to avail himself of all the opportunities of gaining them within his reach. Much may pass under his notice which he is unable fully to appreciate and understand, but which he will nevertheless recollect and turn hereafter to good account when better informed. Besides, early experience of the value and direct application of anatomical knowledge will give interest to studies sometimes dry and irksome, but in which a sense of utility will encourage the pupil to persevere. Those medical officers who have undertaken the duties of clinical instruction, by remarks at the bed-side, and lectures on stated occasions, will teach you how and what to observe; pointing out the symptoms in the case before you, by which the existence of disease is to be recognized, calling attention to those by which the particular affection is marked and distinguished



from other disorders, explaining the circumstances upon which a prognosis or opinion as to the result is formed, stating the reasons why a certain plan of treatment is pursued, and the grounds for varying or altering the remedies: and in the event of death, they will show how far their views have been borne out by the morbid appearances, and in what manner the symptoms may be explained, and the fatal result accounted for. You should preserve accurate notes, taken on the spot, of all you witness at the patient's bed-side and in the post-mortem examinations. However roughly and imperfectly you may at first record what you see and hear, you will improve as you proceed, and by degrees acquire a valuable collection of facts, and a register of exact observations, to which you can afterwards refer with confidence under circumstances of difficulty and doubt.

As you advance in the knowledge of healthy and morbid anatomy, you will become prepared for acquiring that most difficult part of our art, the faculty of recognizing and detecting disease. This art requires the aid of the senses disciplined and practised in observation. The eye must be tutored to read in the features and complexion, and in the form and movements of the body, the outward expressions of disease, to recognize, in fact, in the hue of the skin and general characters of the frame, and in the tongue and excretions, appearances which cannot be adequately represented in words. From the ear, too, well-instructed we derive valuable assistance in detecting the existence of some of the most serious internal diseases, the



nature of which cannot be revealed by other modes of investigation. By the exercise of the sense of touch we obtain important information in examining the pulse, in ascertaining the nature and characters of deeply seated tumours, and the condition of internal organs, and in detecting displacements and injuries the result of violence. Even the senses of smell and taste may, in some cases, render us useful service. It is in the practice of the art of discriminating disease that the accurate observer and enlightened practitioner chiefly manifests his superiority and skill. The routine practitioner may in ordinary cases pursue his accustomed task with safety and benefit to his patients; but if any difficulty occur,—if a case becomes complicated,—if there arise symptoms between which he can trace no connexion, then it is that he feels himself wholly at a loss, and guessing at the causes of disorder, his practice necessarily becomes empirical and dangerous. Whereas the sound anatomist and physiologist, one accustomed to observe, inquire, and reflect, by exercising his well-trained powers of investigation, would most likely grapple successfully with the difficulty,—would succeed in interpreting symptoms apparently most confused, and in finding out links in the chain of phenomena of which the other never dreamt, and of which indeed his inferior and less active mind could have no conception. Within the last thirty years, the methods of investigating the nature of the numerous forms of internal disease have been vastly improved. By percussion and auscultation, by chemical analysis and microscopical examination of the ex-



cretions and of morbid products, we have now means of detecting disease which were unknown to our predecessors ; and it must be admitted by all, that in this respect medicine has made most important advances. The detection of disease and injuries, it is true, will not always enable us to remedy them ; still it is a great advantage to be able to pronounce a sound and decisive opinion as to the result of any case submitted to our care, to distinguish the slight from the dangerous, and the curable from the incurable,—to determine the circumstances which render an operation desirable from those in which this painful resource can only end in disappointment, and to know in what cases to hold out to the patient a confident hope of a favourable result, or when to warn the friends of a probable termination, which our art unhappily affords us no means of averting. The art of discriminating disease is necessarily fallible. Much depends upon the skill, tact, and natural powers of the individuals practising it, as also upon the extent of their opportunities for observation ; whilst the symptoms of disease vary so greatly, that there are no certain rules for our guidance, each case forming a subject for separate study. The consequences of mistakes, however, are often so serious, that I cannot urge too strongly the importance of your sedulously cultivating this essential department of medicine. We must all aim at perfection, if we cannot attain it, and by cherishing every faculty, improving every opportunity to the utmost, and by availing ourselves of the results of accumulated experience, we must strive to avoid those errors and uncertainties in doctrine and practice



which have exposed us to suspicion and reproach, which have brought ridicule upon our art, and favoured the extravagant pretensions of the three great heresies of our day, Homœopathy, Hydropathy, and Mesmerism, as well as the more daring claims of ignorant and unprincipled quacks.

The practical duties of an accoucheur cannot be learnt within the hospital walls, but ample opportunities of making yourselves familiar with this branch of medicine will be afforded by your teacher. This department, which includes the diseases of women and children, is inferior to none in interest and importance; and its successful practice involves a minute acquaintance with anatomy and physiology, surgical skill and tact, and an intimate knowledge of medicine.

I have still to speak of another branch of our profession closely allied with legislation, the exercise of which requires a clear and ready judgment, acuteness, and so full and so accurate a knowledge of the different sciences connected with medicine, that there are few in the profession who are fully capable of undertaking its various duties. I allude to Forensic Medicine. As has been truly said by an eloquent professor<sup>1</sup>, "The vices of Nero, Caligula, and Caracalla have been surpassed by the refined enormities of our own days. Society, which developes the powers of man, gives refinement to vice as well as to virtue; and in proportion as vice has become more cunning, the searching law has redoubled its energies to hunt it out. Poisoning,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Grant of University College.



suffocation, burning, secret wounds, starvation, torture, suicide, rape, hanging, drowning, infanticide, are among the prerogatives of our species, and the subjects of study for the medical jurist. How many a victim has sunk unheeded into the grave, and left the murderer to steal unsuspected through the rest of life. But now the carcase gone to shreds, can be made to stand in appalling judgment against the murderer, and render him the poison grain for grain." These duties ought properly to be confided to a public officer educated for the purpose. It cannot reasonably be expected that medical men continually engaged in attendance on the sick, can be prepared for the detection of poisons, requiring the profoundest knowledge of chemical analysis, and for the decision of nice and delicate points which can only be determined by persons constantly practised in anatomical investigations. But in the absence of any recognized authorities the public makes these demands upon us, and a course of instruction in medical jurisprudence has been instituted to assist in qualifying students for the very difficult and responsible duties they may be called upon to perform.

Such then are the pursuits and duties, which will require your close and serious attention during the sessions. Slight as is the sketch which I have given you of them, I must have said enough to convince you how much is to be accomplished and mastered in the short period allotted to your studies. Let me earnestly entreat you to apply to them at once with diligence and regularity ; to set out with a fixed determination to persevere throughout the whole session. Few things



give more concern, and prove more discouraging to a teacher, than to find students who have commenced with zeal, flagging in their attendance, becoming by degrees less and less attentive and constant at the lectures, until their presence here degenerates into an irksome task, which is at length wholly neglected. Persist in getting up from day to day the subjects brought under your notice. Endeavour to master them at once. Do not postpone till to-morrow the work of to-day. The student who indulges habits of indolence and procrastination will find that the to-morrow of energy and exertion will never arrive. The difficulties which seem to impede his progress may be surmounted, if at once encountered with resolution and spirit; but if these difficulties be suffered to accumulate, they will by constant additions acquire a magnitude which it may cost him a hard struggle to reduce, and which he may even be led to contemplate and turn from with dismay. There is, perhaps, no impression so fatal to the student's progress as the reliance which is felt on the power of the ingenious system of catechising, called *grinding*, to deceive and impose upon the examining bodies. Pupils who have pursued their studies without pretence, who have really worked at their profession, may find a clever system of examination, by refreshing the memory, leading them to reflect, and habituating them to answer clearly and accurately, of valuable service, especially when preparing for examinations which embrace many various subjects. But when it is known, that the ingenuity and talent of a Grinder can enable students of shallow



understanding and scanty information to pass muster with success, and even with approbation, the system becomes one of undeniable evil, and it reflects no credit on the public medical bodies, that greater efforts have not been made to abolish so pernicious a custom. I fear that it will not be got rid of, until examinations of a practical character, on those subjects which the pupils are required to attend, are regularly instituted at the close of each session; and all I can do, therefore, is to warn those who rely on this practice for success in obtaining their diplomas, that the knowledge thus gained is superficial, fleeting, and of no practical value, and that the privileges acquired by the deception can never redound to their honour or afford any solid satisfaction. I must here urge upon you the great importance of submitting yourselves, in all cases, to the examinations which precede the adjudication of rewards and prizes. However fearful you may be in consequence of junior standing or any other disadvantage of falling short of victory, the preparation for the trial, the necessary review of the state of your own knowledge which it occasions, the detection of your deficiencies and inaccuracies while it is yet easy to correct them, and the greater self-possession which you obtain from being subjected to frequent rehearsals, so to speak, of those great ordeals which you are afterwards to undergo at the conclusion of your studies,—these are so many benefits within the reach of the least hopeful, that I would entreat all of you to avail yourselves of these most useful means of preparation for subsequent and more important success.



Clever students who neglect their prescribed studies, sometimes endeavour to create an impression that they never work, and that all they have acquired has been gained without labour, being the result of the inspiration of genius. Those who exhibit this weak and vain affectation, often work in secret, in order to excite admiration. I must caution you, however, against such absurd pretensions and folly. I do not mean to deny that the natural powers and capacity of one man may not greatly exceed those of another. But this I assert, that, unless these powers are cultivated in due season, the possessor of them will be left behindhand in the race of life ; that no subsequent application can compensate for time misspent, and that a person of moderate capacity, with habits of regular and persevering industry, will far outstrip the man of the greatest natural powers who wants equal steadiness and application. I say, that no one can succeed in any pursuit or profession without labour, and that no man however gifted can rise to eminence without incessant, untiring industry.

*Pater ipse colendi*

*Haud facilem esse viam voluit.*

Many circumstances at the present period incline us to look with peculiar interest to the position of the Medical Schools in this metropolis. There is much in the flourishing state of imposture and quackery—in the disturbed condition of medical politics, and in the indifference of the Legislature and of the public to our interests and wants, to pain, if not to damp the hopes of the true friends of our profession : but if we can



any where discern brighter prospects—if we can perceive a sure source of improvement in medicine as an honourable profession, it is in the efforts which are now making to raise the standard, and elevate the character of medical education in this country. I need, then, no apology for occupying your attention for a short time, whilst I briefly allude to the origin of this and of the other schools of London, connected with the great hospitals.

Medical schools are appendages to the hospitals of this metropolis of comparatively recent date. These great establishments were founded solely for the relief of the sick and destitute poor, not, like some recent institutions, for the purposes of medical instruction. It is only in late years that the managers and friends of the large hospitals, with more comprehensive views of benevolence than their predecessors, have endeavoured to render these institutions conducive to the extension of that science, on which the relief and prevention of diseases depend. They have seen the wisdom of making them the means of diffusing the benefits of a sound medical education. They have found that the machinery of these establishments must be incomplete without providing a body of men capable of performing the arduous and responsible duties of house surgeons and dressers; and they have learnt that, without such assistance, the objects of the charity cannot be economically and efficiently carried out.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, there were only two institutions in London for the sick and lame, the Royal Hospitals of St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas. The governors of one of them wholly



refused to allow the attendance of pupils; and at the other, nine only were admitted at one time. These stringent rules must soon afterwards have been relaxed, and ready access afforded to pupils; for we find that lectures upon surgery were delivered first at St. Thomas's Hospital, by CHESELDEN, and at St. Bartholomew's, by PERCIVAL POTT in 1765: but I am proud to say that the first medical school established in avowed connexion with a public hospital, under the sanction of its patrons, and embracing the chief subjects of medical science, was that opened at this hospital just sixty-one years ago. Lectures on anatomy had, by permission of the governors, been delivered within the walls of the hospital for some years previously, by SIR WILLIAM BLIZARD and DR. MACLAURIN. To extraordinary zeal and energy SIR WILLIAM BLIZARD joined an ardent love of his profession, and to his exertions in rousing the governors to a just sense of the importance of promoting medical education, we owe the origin of this school at so early a period. In 1783, the treasurer of the hospital, and chairman of the House Committee, with the medical officers and several other friends of the institution, formed themselves into a committee to receive subscriptions for defraying the expense of a suitable building for a medical school. At this period the navy was so badly supplied with qualified surgeons, that the men engaged in this service perished by thousands, from the effects of wounds, disease, and neglect of all salutary measures. In an address to the friends of the London Hospital, which was circulated to solicit their aid in establishing this school, one main ground for requesting their support was to endeavour to remedy



so serious an evil, by supplying this important service with properly educated medical officers. Owing partly to the exertions of this committee, but chiefly to the liberality and public spirit of SIR WILLIAM BLIZARD, the building in which we are now assembled was opened for a complete course of medical instruction in October, 1785. Several teachers now living have claimed the credit of having introduced clinical teaching into the hospitals of London, but a prospectus of this school which I now hold in my hands shows that long previously, so early indeed as 1792, lectures on clinical cases were delivered at this hospital by the learned and accomplished DR. COOKE, and by DR. HAMILTON, the father of my respected colleague<sup>2</sup>. The zeal and abilities of the teachers of this school,—of BLIZARD, COOKE, HAMILTON, and DENISON, soon raised it to a reputation which attracted numerous pupils, some of whom gained great distinction in their profession, and amongst others JOHN ABERNETHY, who came here to study anatomy and surgery, and who, in a graceful tribute to SIR WILLIAM BLIZARD in one of his published works, freely acknowledges his obligations to him as his earliest instructor in these branches of medical knowledge. The reputation of this school was maintained for many years by two eminent surgeons, THOMAS BLIZARD and RICHARD CLEMENT HEADINGTON, whose characters

<sup>2</sup> In later prospectuses it appears that DR. FOX, and afterwards DR. FRAMPTON, were associated with DRs. COOKE and HAMILTON. These lectures seem to have been subsequently discontinued, as my friend and former préceptor, DR. BILLING, states in his "Principles of Medicine," that in 1822, when he was elected Physician of the London Hospital, no clinical lectures were given in London, and that in the same year he commenced this important branch of medical education.



were in striking contrast. MR. BLIZARD, possessing a fine manual tact, was distinguished not only as a most dexterous operator, but also as one of the best practical surgeons of his day. He did not shine in the lecture-room, but taught with most success in the wards, by example, even more than by precept. MR. HEADINGTON, on the contrary, less remarkable as a practical surgeon, was more eminent as a teacher of anatomy and surgery; and none, who like myself have had the pleasure of listening to him, can forget his forcible manner of imparting knowledge—a manner at once so perspicuous and so impressive that the dullest could not fail to understand, and the intelligent to be delighted. I cannot conclude this brief sketch of the history of our school, without a passing allusion to two teachers, who in late years undoubtedly supported its credit and contributed to its success. The first, DR. DAVIES, was most popular and successful as a teacher, especially on his favourite subjects, the morbid anatomy of the heart and lungs, and the diagnosis of the diseases of these organs by auscultation; and he only relinquished his exertions in this theatre and in the hospital, when unfortunately an insidious disease deprived him of all power of continuing them. Deeply have we felt the loss of a valued colleague and friend. The other, who has been but recently taken from us, MR. JOHN SCOTT, was not happy as a public lecturer, but he was earnest, and spared no pains and no expense to illustrate his subjects. He was devoted to his profession, and taught with great advantage in the wards; and his pupils must confess that they owe much of their success in the treatment of chronic local disease to the practice which he incul-



eated, and the example which he set them in the skilful application of dressings and bandages.

To recur to the progress of medical education in this metropolis, it appears that St. Bartholomew's very soon followed the example of this hospital, MR. ABERNETHY having, with the support of the governors, succeeded in establishing a medical school there in 1788. About the year 1793, a school was formed in connexion with the adjoining hospitals, St. Thomas's and Guy's; and the lectures given at these two institutions constituted a complete course of medical instruction. The schools of St. George's, the Middlesex, and Westminster hospitals, are of much later date than the others. They were founded, in fact, so recently as within my own memory, chiefly to supply the wants, and remedy the inconveniences, experienced at these institutions on the dissolution of the private schools in their vicinity,—of the celebrated school of the HUNTERS in Windmill-street, and that of MR. BROOKES in Great Marlborough-street.

Gentlemen, it is a pleasing task to notice the efforts which are now making by the governors of the different hospitals to promote and elevate the character of medical education; by the establishment of collegiate institutions; by the founding of scholarships and prizes, and giving general encouragement to deserving students. How different from the apathy and indifference with which these important national objects were once regarded by the guardians of these institutions! They now seem fully alive to the conviction, that, after accomplishing the primary object of all hospitals, that of providing relief for the sick and destitute poor, there



was no consideration more worthy of their regard—no object to which their energies could be better devoted, than rendering these noble establishments instrumental to the training of a body of men skilled in medical science, and fitted to go forth into the world to engage in the sacred duties of their profession. I know not, indeed, where to place a limit to the blessings that may result from their enlightened endeavours. No longer confining their benevolence to the hospital poor, they seek to meet the wants of every station—to ease the pains, as well of the labourer in his cottage, as of the monarch in his palace; and not at home only, but to conquer disease, and to combat death in every land; to save the colonist from the fatal fevers of an unhealthy clime; to lessen the perils of the sailor on the ocean; and to stop the bleeding wounds of the soldier on the battle-field.

I have great pleasure in announcing, that the governors of this hospital have determined on awarding two gold medals annually to such students attending the medical and surgical practice, as the medical officers may represent to have most distinguished themselves in the performance of their respective duties. I entertain no doubt that this liberal act of the governors will tend to keep alive amongst the students of this school a proper spirit of emulation, and to encourage perseverance in that steady course of industry which alone can lead to honour and success; and I trust that there is not one amongst you who will not feel anxious and proud to gain a distinction which must convey to your friends so gratifying a proof of devotion to your hospital duties, and of kind attention to the patients under your charge.



I have, in the course of this address, cursorily alluded to several changes in our arrangements, which have been rendered necessary by the progress of medical science and altered circumstances of medical education, or which have been made with the object of rendering this hospital in every way an efficient school of instruction. I will not manifest such bad taste as to declare, that you cannot meet in the other excellent schools of London with equal facilities for the successful prosecution of your studies; but I can conscientiously assert my belief, that the diligent student will here find ample opportunities of making himself thoroughly acquainted with every department of his profession. The different courses are provided with whatever apparatus, diagrams, specimens, and other means of illustration, may be useful or necessary as aids in the communication of knowledge. We have at hand a museum, not perhaps so showily and expensively arranged as some to be seen elsewhere, but one especially rich in morbid preparations and useful specimens calculated to elucidate the progress of disease. But, after all, these various means of instruction are very secondary to that invaluable field of observation presented by a large and well-conducted hospital. Of ours we justly feel proud,—of its airy and cheerful wards, and of the admirable provision made by the Committee of Management for the comforts and conveniences of the patients; and owing to its position in the vicinity of the docks and numerous manufactories, this hospital, in one respect, is certainly unrivalled, viz. as *a school of surgery*. The casualties which are



daily, I might say hourly, admitted, are so numerous, that during your attendance on the practice you will have opportunities of learning, and indeed of taking part in the treatment of all the more important, as well as of the minor cases in surgery. It may be known to many of you, that about two years ago the governors of the hospital, in order to afford more efficient assistance to urgent cases of accident immediately on their admission, determined on the appointment of three house surgeons, and likewise made alterations in the arrangements for the dressing pupils. It having been represented to the House Committee that these changes had lessened the advantages of this hospital as a school of instruction, by depriving the pupils of the opportunity of witnessing the casualties occurring in the night, the governors lately consented to restore to the dressing pupils the privilege of residence here during the night, as well as in the day-time, and to restrict the number of house surgeons to one. This last appointment, which cannot fail to be of great practical value, will be given to pupils who have proved their fitness for the office by exemplary conduct as dressers, and who have passed their examination and received their diploma at the College of Surgeons: and the dressing pupils will, I doubt not, cheerfully and gladly avail themselves of the advice of an officer whose instructions will be to superintend their duties, and render them every assistance without trenching on their privileges, or diminishing their opportunities of acquiring practical information in the management of the cases. Another change which has been made with



the object of increasing the advantages of the surgical practice, is the arrangement of the pupils in one list, which will afford them the privilege of taking in and dressing under all the surgeons, instead of their duties being limited chiefly to the practice of only one. They will be able, therefore, to make themselves more fully acquainted with the views and mode of treatment of all three surgeons, and feel the obligation of giving their attendance more frequently in the wards. This was the system practised when I was myself a student at the hospital; and I have always considered the alteration made afterwards as operating injuriously to the pupils. So great is the benefit to be derived from taking part in the first treatment of the cases of accident admitted into the hospital, and having personal charge of the patients, in qualifying the students for the practice of surgery, that it has also been determined that the class of visiting pupils shall be abolished, so that no one can hereafter quit this institution without having at least possessed the opportunity of becoming a good practitioner, and helping to maintain the reputation of this hospital as a School of Surgery.

Gentlemen, in tracing the progress of medical education at this hospital, I have paid a feeble tribute to the memory of the more distinguished teachers by whose exertions this school was established and successfully supported. We must not boast the possession of the same talents and the same powers of acquiring and imparting knowledge which they displayed: of these you will be the judges. But we will emulate their zeal and energy, and this I may say, that we have the same earnest desire to render ourselves useful to



the pupils—that we are deeply sensible of the responsibilities of the office we have undertaken, and are firmly resolved to perform our duties to the best of our abilities. Gentlemen, let us all feel that we are co-operating for a great and good purpose; let the industry and attention of the pupil stimulate the ardour and exertions of the teacher; let each of us feel that the fame and credit of this school depend on his individual labours; let such be the feelings, such the springs of action, and success must crown our efforts. You will return to your homes to exercise your honourable calling with the bright prospect of a prosperous career, and that peace of mind which ever results from the faithful discharge of the duties of life. You will look back to this hospital with attachment as your *alma mater*,—as the scene of useful labours and delightful associations; and we shall have the proud satisfaction that we have not toiled in vain,—that we have assisted in the education of a class of gentlemen resolved to uphold the dignity of our profession, and qualified to advance its humane and noble objects—to soothe the pains of the afflicted—to carry comfort to the house of sickness—to protract life and ease the pangs of the dying—

So shall *we* learn, while all things speak of man,  
*Our* duties from all forms; and general laws,  
 And local accidents, shall tend alike  
 To rouse, to urge; and with the will, confer  
 The ability to spread the blessings wide  
 Of true philanthropy.

THE END.



