Syllabus of the course of lectures on medical logic, delivered in Marischal College and University, Aberdeen / by Francis Ogston.

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SYLLABUS

OF

THE COURSE OF LECTURES

ON

MEDICAL LOGIC,

DELIVERED IN

Marischal College and University, Aberdeen,

BY

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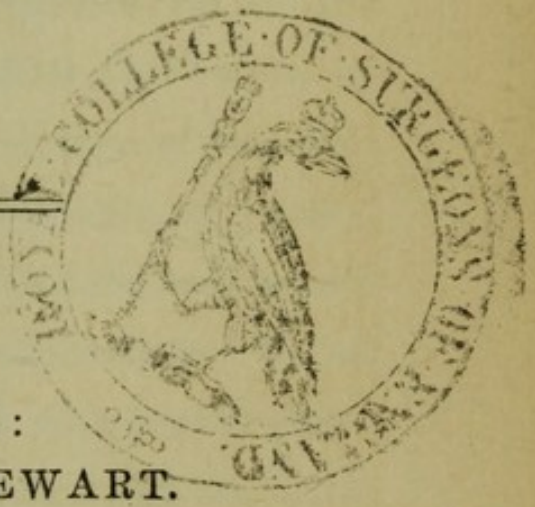

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PREFACE.

THE following Syllabus may require a few words of explanation.

The Author, in proceeding to prepare a Course of Lectures on Medical Logic, found some difficulty in adopting such a plan for his prelections on this important subject, as would at once meet the views of the Founder of the new Chair in Marischal College, and justify to the Profession the addition of another branch of study to the Medical Curriculum, already sufficiently extended. The only treatise, of any note, available as a Text-book, being that of Œsterlin, he resolved for the sake of the Pupil to observe the general arrangement of this author, as in most respects unobjectionable. He had not gone far, however, before perceiving that beyond such a general adherence to that arrangement, he could not, in the farther prosecution of his subject, allow himself to be restricted to the limits of this Author's treatise. Accordingly, in the details of his subject, he has availed himself, not only of the works of the earlier writers on pure Logic, together with such

of our best Medical authors as have touched incidentally on this Science, but also to a large extent of the labours of contemporary Logicians, amongst whom the very highest place is to be assigned to John Stuart Mill, whose doctrines, the Author has followed Œsterlin, in endeavouring to apply to the particular questions and objects of Medical Science.

Marischal College,
October, 1858.

SYLLABUS OF LECTURES

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Instances in point.

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The worth of our Experimental processes impartially estimated.
Main source of their superiority to simple Observation:
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Multiplication of the chances of mistake, from the extension of our means of research afforded by Experiment:—
Temptations to overhasty conclusions.
Contradictory results obtained by different Experimentalists.
General insufficiency of single or limited Series of Experiments.
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Exceptional instances.
Examples in Medical Science.
Rigid scrutiny required in instances of this sort.
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Artificial generation of morbid processes in Animals:—
Limited extent of these.
Difficulties in the way of their extension.
Futility of the methods usually employed for that purpose.
Reason of this.
Blame in such cases not always attributable to the Practitioner.
Comparative rarity of Experiments in Therapeutics.
Experiment, strictly so-called, a resource unknown to the ancients.
Defects of the earlier Experiments.
Experiments of Paracelsus, and of the Iatro-mathematical sect.
Bacon's claim to the title of 'the father of Experimental Philosophy.'
Bacon not himself a successful Experimentalist.
Recentness of the introduction into Medicine of well planned, and properly conducted, Experiments.

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Methods of Experimental Inquiry.

Methods of agreement, and of difference, pointed out by Bacon.

Objects which these methods, respectively, are calculated to fulfil.

'The method of agreement,' and its results generally.

The extent of its applicability to Medical Science.

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'The method of Difference,' and its results.

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Illustrations.

Comparison of, and contrasts between, the two methods.

'Joint-method of Agreement and Difference.'

'Method of Residues.'

'Method of Concomitant Variations.'

The application to Medicine of the modern methods of research recommended.

Our urgent need of more varied exposition of facts, and more searching and better planned Experiments.

Inherent worthlessness of our Hospital returns.

Defects of our Naval and Military Reports.

Fundamental error pervading these.

Lecture XXII.

Hypotheses in Medicine.

Abuse of Hypotheses, prior to Bacon's time.

Consequent undue distrust of these.

Their legitimate use again recognised.

Natural bent of the uneducated mind towards them.

General prevalence of Hypotheses in ancient Medicine.

Some exceptions known.

Abuse of Hypotheses in later times.

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Loose Hypotheses under the garb of Modern Science.

True character of real Hypotheses.

Use of Hypotheses as a temporary expedient.

Their merely provisional character, frequently lost sight of in Medicine.

Important part played by Hypotheses, in the purer Sciences, in Medicine, and in common Life.

Hypotheses, as a step towards Deductions from Experimental Truths.

Undue tenacity of Hypotheses, unverified, and opposed to facts.

Surprising vitality of Pseudo-theories, and Pseudo-sciences:

Modern instances without, and within the Profession.

Highest legitimate use of Hypotheses.

Subsidiary uses of them.

Extended sway of Probabilities in Medicine.

Theories, correctly speaking, rarely attainable in Medicine.

Worthlessness of purely arbitrary Hypotheses.

Instances of Hypotheses of this sort, from different periods of Medical History.

Utility of rational conjectures based upon observed facts.

Praiseworthy activity of modern Practitioners in this direction:—

Too desultory in its character.

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Analogies in Medicine.

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Analogies objected to, on like grounds with Hypotheses:

Both alike impossible to be dispensed with.

Much of our ordinary and of our scientific language, based on Analogies.

Genera and Species of diseases, founded on these.

Analogy as auxiliary to Induction.

Analogies to be judged of, on the same principles as Hypotheses.

Object of Comparison in Medicine :

Often our sole guide in practice.

Superior adaptation of Analogies for daily use.

Practical Medicine essentially a nice balancing of probabilities.

The Scientific Physician not necessarily the best Practitioner.

Combination of Science and Art in British Medicine.

Separation of the two in other countries.

The Numerical method in Medicine.

Statistics charged with authorising opposite conclusions in Political Science.

The same objection urged against Statistics in Medicine.

How far this charge admissible in either Science.

Caution called for in the application of Figures to the support of general conclusions.

Circumstances calling for Numerical precision.

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Figures, the ultimate appeal in many disputed cases.

Figures, as standards of Comparison, and data for Reasoning.

Proper, and improper applications of them, to Medical Science.

Reasonable and unreasonable expectations from their employment.

Aggregates, only to be thus successfully elicited.

Circumstances which may destroy the value of Aggregates.

Method, all important, in the collection, and in the selection of the facts in Statistics.

Correct Averages not deducible from limited numbers.

Mutual support yielded by Averages, and 'Extreme Ratios.'

Extreme values, as the test of Numerical Theories.

Illustrations from Forensic Medicine.

Lecture XXIV.

Language, Terminology, Definition, Description.

Language as the embodiment of ideas, and the instrument of our higher mental operations.

Language essential to Education.

Language as the means of fixing thought, and serving for its diffusion.

Language as the groundwork of all our Logical operations.

Words, by turns, our servants and masters.

Medicine fortunate in the language of its Founders.

Like favourable position of our Teutonic neighbours, in regard to their own language.

What Philology has done for Ethnography :—

Light thrown by it on the early History of Medicine.

Illustrations from Toxicology, and Materia Medica.

Abiding influence of the language of ancient Medicine.

Unsuccessful attempts to modernize our existing Nomenclature.

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How far attributable to the pliability of these Languages :—

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Difficulty of engrafting new ideas on old names :

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Etymological Obscurity of many Modern Adaptations :—

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Arbitrary and Metaphorical characters of many of our names.

Terms in Medicine, which have lost their original significance.

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Language, to be useful, must fulfil certain obvious requirements.

Failures, in this respect, of our Technical Language.

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A reflection of the imperfections of our Science.
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Reform in the Science must precede the reform of our Nomenclature.

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The retention of ancient Classical terms, how far advisable in Medicine.

Advantage of such terms being accompanied with apt English Synonyms :

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The want of such terms obstructive of the popularity of Medicine :—and
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The capabilities of our Saxon roots, in this respect, undervalued.

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Neglect of these in Medical writings.
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Description, as a substitute for Definition.

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Faults less excusable here.
Correct Description often our only resource : and
The best safeguard against the perversion of our views.
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Requisites of fitting Descriptions.
Faulty Descriptions in Medical writings.

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The want of this limitation a prevalent characteristic of our Periodical Literature.

The success of Monographs, by eminent writers of the day, traceable to the absence of this defect :

Its prevalence, in Systematic works, a reason for their being seldom studied.

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Classification.

The basis of certain Sciençes.

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The object of Scientific Classification.

Extensive acquaintanceship with the subject-matter, a requisite for successful Classification.

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Character of the early Classifications in Medicine.
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Inherent defect of any merely Natural system in Medicine.

Inelastic character of our existing Nosologies :

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The undue multiplication of Sub-species, necessitated.
Appearance of simplicity, gained at the expense of perspicuity.
Inadequacy of the existing Classification, for the purposes of the Registrar-General :
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Such Species only encountered fully in some of the other Sciences.
'Typical forms,' occasionally recognisable in Pathology.
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Fallacies, mainly negative in their character.

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Effect of these on the position of the Profession in public estimation.

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Sources and supports of such mistakes :

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Credulity.
False Theories.
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Popular with non-professional persons.
Its effect on our current language.
Injurious effects of it in Medicine.

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The existence of a great First Cause not denied.
Unity of plan, and
Universal adaptation of means to ends, observable in Nature :
Consistent with the belief of a sequence of Secondary Causes.

Mistakes of Bacon and his followers on this subject.
Futility of the search for 'efficient' Causes.
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Bacon's classes of 'Idols.'

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Parallel instances, in ancient and modern Medicine.

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Parallel instances, in ancient and modern Medicine.

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Prevalent, in Philosophy, Science, and common Life.
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Extent of their prevalence in Pseudo-Medicine.
Bearings of these on the position of the regular Practitioner.
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Unscientific character of much of our Sanitary Literature.

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Common source of their origin.
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'Reasoning in a circle :'
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Errors arising from Confusion of Language.

Illustrations from recent Medical works.

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Remarks apologetic and explanatory.

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